

<i>item:</i>	8
<i>report:</i>	CYP06/10

HIGHLAND CHILD PROTECTION INSPECTION **by Jon King**

Summary

This report updates the Committee on the forthcoming inspection of child protection services.

1. Background

- 1.1 As previously reported to the Committee, the Minister for Children & Early Years has commissioned a second national cycle of child protection inspections, which will take place over three years, and which commenced in late 2009.
- 1.2 Highland's child protection inspection takes place from 18 January – 5 February. Albeit there have been three previous visits by HMle, this will be the first time that Highland services have been inspected outwith a 'pilot' arrangement, and therefore also the first time that the inspection will involve formal grading.
- 1.3 The last visit in May 2008 was a follow-up inspection. It concluded that services had made good progress in improving:
 - effectiveness of help for children and young people
 - public awareness
 - assessment of risks and needs
 - sharing of information
 - effectiveness of management of services.
- 1.4 It also concluded that there was 'very good progress' in leadership, and that services were 'well placed to work together to continue to improve child protection services for children living in the area.'

2. The inspection

- 2.1 There will be 13 inspectors from HMle Services for Children, based in Inverness, Caithness and Lochaber, but also visiting other areas.
- 2.2 HMle have made clear that the inspection will be evidence based and proportionate, and that it is intended to support service improvement. Indeed, we have found previous inspections to be helpful, supporting

us to improve practice and achieve better outcomes for children and families.

2.3 The inspection will include focus group meetings with staff across agencies, and the close analysis of 33 cases from the last year, involving meetings with practitioners in core groups, children and families. It also includes the analysis of best practice, and in Highland this will involve:

- Police information sharing
- Children's Services Workers
- The launch of the updated Child Protection Guidance.

2.4 The inspection will make use of the Child Protection Committee's annual self-evaluation. This is presently being finalised, and a copy will be posted on the website at www.protectinghighlandschildren.org prior to the start of the inspection.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to welcome the inspection of child protection services in Highland as part of this second national cycle of inspections.

Jon King

Head of Children's Services