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For Highland's Children - Bulletin 7

July 2005

This bulletin includes news of:

- Joint Committee Seminar – 19 August: *"Getting it right for every child"*
- Child Protection Inspection Report
- Integrated Assessment Framework
- *For Highland's Children 2*
- Integrated children's services website

Inverness Area Childrens Services Forum news starts at page 3, and includes:

- Children's Champion Interview.
- 2 new Senior Family Liaison Officers for Inverness.
- Colin's / Sue's returns from secondments.
- Integrated Children's Services Planning.
- Liaison Evaluation / Network Seminar.
- Did You Know?
 - *About Child Poverty?*
 - *Impact of Changes in School Nutrition?*
- Early Years Services (Surestart-funded):
 - 3 new Community Early Years Workers.
 - 6 P/T Support Workers (Early Years).
- Counselling in schools:
 - Another school joins the pilot.
 - Development research imminent throughout Highland.

Getting it right for every childin Highland & Scotland

The Scottish Executive have published a far reaching consultation paper on the future of the Children's Hearing system and integrated children's services, called 'Getting it Right for Every Child'. This proposes streamlined processes and new statutory duties on agencies. It envisages earlier and more coordinated interventions, and fewer referrals to a strengthened and modernised Children's Hearings system.

Peter Peacock, Minister for Education & Young People says: "Everyone has a responsibility to do the right thing for each child and we must all work towards a unified approach, with less bureaucracy and more freedom to get on and deliver services for children."

These proposals will affect all agencies and services that provide care and support for children and their families.

This consultation paper will be the subject of a Joint Committee Seminar:
19 August at 9.30am – 2.00pm, in Highland Council Chamber, Inverness

Phase 1 of the Children's Hearings Review confirmed the support for the principles of the Children's Hearings system. It also highlighted some serious concerns. Accordingly, this new consultation paper is based on improved partnership working and early preventative measures.

It is envisaged that the seminar will involve plenary inputs and workshops, with key local and Scottish Executive speakers.

To reserve a place at the seminar, contact: kay.ballantyne@highland.gov.uk

Getting it right for every child: a summary of what is proposed

- ❑ Reduced bureaucracy and one plan of action which is underpinned by coordinated assessment of the child's needs.
- ❑ Better information for children and families, about what is expected of them and the professionals involved with them.
- ❑ Before referral to another service, agencies should take responsibility and do all they can to support the child. Automatic referral to another agency should be the exception.
- ❑ Building on the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, new statutory duties on all agencies, including: to identify children who are in need, to act on Children's Hearings decisions, to appoint a lead professional, and to be accountable for their actions.
- ❑ Compulsory measures should only be used where they are essential to deliver action for a child that cannot be achieved without such intervention. Revised grounds to be based on two tests - significant need and the likely need for compulsion.
- ❑ New arrangements to oversee standards and procedures for the Children's Hearings System.

The consultation paper is at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/06/20135608/56098>

Integrated Assessment Framework

While 'Getting it Right for Every Child' provides national guidance on an integrated assessment framework, work is progressing in Highland towards implementation in early 2006. A multi agency Reference Group is supporting a dedicated team, to develop a model that fits with existing and proposed structures and processes. Local meetings have taken place across the authority, to test out the model with practitioners and managers.

For further information, or to be involved in any of the consultations, contact: marj.stewart@highland.gov.uk

Child Protection Inspection Report

The report of the pilot child protection inspection has been published by the *Services for Children* unit. It concludes that children and young people in Highland are well protected. It is available at: <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/Highland%20Final%20Draft%2009-06-05.pdf>

The Child Protection Committee will incorporate recommendations from the inspection report into an action plan, with agreed timescales to further improve child protection services in all agencies across the authority.

Integrated children's services website

A new homepage for integrated children's services in Highland has been created, to make information more easily accessible. It is at: <http://www.protectinghighlandschildren.org/>

This homepage will provide information about child protection, and a compendium of relevant documents is already hosted there (with more to follow).

Very soon, this page will also provide access to the e-version of *For Highlands Children 2*. While the hard copy comes off the printers in July, and will be updated annually, the web pages will be kept up to date as action plans are progressed.

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STOP, REWIND and FORWARD!!

Colin Macaulay returns to his Integration Manager's post in April with Sue Roddick returning to Culloden SWS as Senior FLO. It can honestly be said that Sue has enjoyed this past year much more than Colin, who has aged with all the statistics and meetings involved in his marathon task of creating the Highland's Integrated Children's Services Plan. *[UPDATE: In his rush to get back, Colin broke his leg and ankle. Now very unlikely to be selected by Walter Smith!]*

Kay Ballantyne has been seconded to Council Headquarters - covering for Lyn Brown (*Best wishes for a speedy and full recovery Lyn!*). Administrative assistance in the interim will be provided by Suzanne Silburn (*Welcome Suzanne!*) - who can be contacted at 01463-663822 - or by email at Suzanne.silburn@highland.gov.uk.

Inverness now has 2 new Senior FLO's. Sylvie Nichols has returned to the Carsegate team as a SFLO after a brief sortie in Nairn and Marianne Morritt has become the third SFLO following her return from the west coast - Marianne's post is funded through the Sure Start funding for Early Years provision in Inverness. This takes the number of these posts in the Inverness area to 3.

Further service enhancement of our Social Work Children & Families Teams will be progressed within the next few months.

Watch this space!

SURE START

First steps have already been taken in the new Sure Start provisions for Inverness. Three Community Early Years Workers commenced in January and are now based at Craighton Avenue. Six part-time Support Workers (Early Years) commenced their induction training on 28 January and will be based initially at the Family Resource Centre in Limetree Avenue, Dalneigh.

All of these workers are employed by SWS but their work, in the main, will be referred via Health staff, particularly Health Visitors.

The Community Early Years Workers are based with their day to day manager, Health Visitor, Christina Edgar. Referrals for the Support Workers will be via the two SWS Children and Families teams.

Welcome aboard folks!

Changes for the Better!

Did you know that over the past couple of years there have been some fantastic changes in school nutrition:

- *Chip Sales down by 45%;*
- *Fruit juice and water up by 600%;*
- *Fresh fruit and vegetable consumption doubling year on year.*

Thanks to all those staff in schools - in education and in catering - for their enthusiasm.

LIAISON ARRANGEMENTS

After 115 telephone evaluations of liaison arrangements were made during Dec/Jan, Inverness held a Network Seminar on 21 February to consider the initial issues arising. Attendance at the seminar was very good,

with lots of opportunities to network - it was also great to see a large number of our Health colleagues there. Hopefully the Early Years Liaison Groups will benefit from the discussions around the good practice that makes for productive arrangements.

A clear indicator of the evaluation so far was that although quite a few schools in Inverness have Liaison Arrangements in place there is a wide diversity in practice and productivity - aligned to this is the fact that there are still schools with no arrangements in place.

One of the successes of the seminar was that several attending schools are now looking to identify their core members and commence liaison groups.

The evaluation will now go into its second stage and reports will be made in due course. Anybody who wishes information relating to the initial statistics and issues arising from the evaluation should contact sue.roddick@highland.gov.uk and she will e-mail you the presentations used at the seminar.

COUNSELLING FOR SCHOOLS

An interim evaluation of the Inverness Schools Counselling Service has been completed and in the very near future it is hoped that there will be somebody identified to undertake research into the potential development of this type of post throughout Highland.

Since Jan Thompson commenced as Schools Counsellor in August 2004 another school has taken advantage of her services - taking the number of schools involved in the pilot to 4 - Inverness High School, Inverness Royal Academy, Culloden Academy and Millburn Academy.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES WORKER TRAINING

Another pan-Highland 2 day training event took place for this group of staff on 21/22 February. Reflecting back less than 2 years since the commencement of this post it is encouraging to see the development of confidence and shared practice that goes on at these events. All the CSW's present received a copy of the Highland CSW evaluation completed by Margaret Kinsella and Sue Roddick - Final Report should be available by the Autumn. If anybody wishes an advance look at the report (it's an interesting read!!), can check it out with Sue (sue.roddick@highland.gov.uk)

Themes and presenters at the training were;

- ▲ Food and Behaviour - Dave Rex, Child Health Dietician
- ▲ Inter-Agency Working; Prevention and Protection for Vulnerable Children - Mary Cosgrove, Marj Stewart (both SWS) and Gordon Macleod (Police)
- ▲ Working with Vulnerable Children & Young People; Resilience and How to 'Bump it Up' - Jim Kane and Linda Thom (can't seem to get rid of these two!!)
- ▲ Education and Health; Outcomes for Looked After Children - Valerie Gunn and Jane Park from the LAC Team.

Very many thanks to all of the presenters for a great 2 days.

Next training event is scheduled for 9th and 10th June 2005.

INTERVIEW WITH INVERNESS AREA CHILDREN'S CHAMPION - COUNCILLOR GILLIAN MCCREATH



**Councillor Gillian McCreath
Ward 62: Westhill & Smithton**

- Depute Chairman of Highland Council's Resources Committee;
- Depute Chairman of Inverness Area's Housing & Social Work Committee (Children's Services and Young Tenants).

Q1. When did you become the Children's Champion for Inverness?

A1. Around 4 years ago. The Joint Committee decided that it would be helpful if there was a dedicated person in each of the council areas to promote children and young people's issues at every opportunity.

Q2. What does it actually mean?

A2. I think we are all trying to make it up as we go along!! I just try at all the various committees to think of how issues will affect young people, how could they become more involved - and then try to persuade the other members.

Q3. Are there now more opportunities for young people to have their voices heard – and if there is do they take the opportunities?

A3. I believe there are now many more opportunities – pupil councils for example are great. Some of the primary school ones are extremely active and enthusiastic. There are also things like the Youth Forum and Youth Voice which give youngsters all sorts of chances to get involved in activities as well as new ideas and projects. There are still areas where we could improve youth involvement – it's still the biggest complaint from young people that there is nothing for them to do locally. Transport and cost are major barriers to their involvement in many areas.

Q4. What gives you the most pleasure in the role of Children's Champion?

A4. Meeting young people.

Q5. Any funny stories?

A5. I'll tell you later!!

“Who are you referring to?”

Did YOU miss the last Inverness ACSF Network Seminar?

If so, slides of the various presentations are available from Suzanne.

A great opportunity to network and become better informed of old and new services.

Next seminar scheduled for Monday 5th September – put it in your diaries NOW!

Did you know? – About Child Poverty?

Are things getting better?

A recent UNICEF report highlighted the impact that government policy can have:

“.....the UK is one of only four countries where there has been a significant fall in child poverty rates over the latest 10 year period for which data are available.

When relative poverty is measured at 40 per cent of the national median (as opposed to 50 or 60%), the UK rises higher up the league which suggests the UK is doing a better job than some others at protecting the very poorest children.

The UK Government is singled out for its commitment to reducing child poverty and the report suggests it is on course for reaching its first target of a 25 per cent reduction by 2004/2005.

But the UK still has one of the highest child poverty rates in the rich world – 15.4 per cent of the child population. Norway is the only country where child poverty can be described as ‘very low and continuing to fall.’ ”

However, a recent report from the Health Development Agency examined links between childhood injuries and poverty:

- Children from the poorest families are 5 times more likely to die from accidental injuries than the most affluent children;*
- House fires are 16 times more likely to claim the lives of the poorest children;*
- Children from the poorest families are 5 times more likely to die as a pedestrian.*