

An t-Eilean Sgitheanach & Loch Aillse Sgìreil Sheirbheis na Cloinne

SKYE & LOCHALSH AREA CHILDREN'S SERVICE FORUM

Core

Tuesday 30th January, 2007

1.30 pm – 4 pm

Girl's Hostel, Portree

PRESENT:

Eileen Burnham	Childcare & Family Resource Officer
Kate Earnshaw	Clinical Co-ordinator, Skye
Laurence Young	Area Education Manager
(Chair)	
Maureen Keough	Area Children's Service Manager
(part Chair)	
Charles Stephen	Integration Manager
Jean Gillies	Senior Family Liaison Officer
Eileen Steele	Senior Family Liaison Officer
Ann Lloyd	Deputy Head Teacher, Plockton High School
Don Esson	Depute Head Teacher, Portree High School
Wilma MacDonald	Area Learning Support Team Leader
Kath McAvoy	Area Team Leader, Social Work
Hazel Johnstone	Student Nurse
Helen Gilpin	School Health Nurse
Bob Leadbetter	Area Principal Educational Psychologist

APOLOGIES:

Andy Mackay	Community Learning & Leisure Officer
Alison Hudson	Assistant General Manager, MHCHP

IN ATTENDANCE: Maggie Tytler Administrative Assistant

2.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD – 5 th December 2006 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Family Liaison Officer Presentation – Charles confirmed Elaine Sinclair had attended this meeting• SWIA Inspection – Maureen has had positive feedback• Future meetings will be set when new structure is in place.• The Chief Executive are looking at Children's Services. <p><u>Action</u> Charles to discuss the role of the ACSF with John McDonald, Area Manager.</p>
3.	SFLO PLANNING PRESENTATION – Jean Gillies/Eileen Steele/Ann

Lloyd/Don Esson/Wilma MacDonald/Helen Gilpin/Hazel Johnstone

Eileen explained that she and Jean would open the presentation explaining Integrated Services in the Early Years Sector. Followed by Wilma explaining what is happening in the Primary School Sector with Don and Ann talking to the Secondary Sector. Jean to conclude with issues to be addressed.

Start with Early Years – Eileen talked about North Skye and Portree Early Years meetings which are held monthly and comprise of SFLO, Health Visitors, Midwives, Family 1st Co-ordinator and the Community Early Years Worker.

The CEYW post (Maggie Willoughby) was filled in Summer 2006 and is based alongside the Portree Health Visitors.

The Early Years Liaison Group meet monthly to share information and discuss any child there are concerns for.

Jean took up the role of SFLO in October 2005. The Early Years Liaison Group consists of herself, Health Visitors, Midwives, representative from Family First and the CEYW and the Home Visiting Teacher whenever possible, as well as other professionals if a particular case requires it.

The Community Early Years Worker (Colleen Baird Ferguson) started in 2005. She has played a significant part in the development of Integrated Children's Services. Colleen normally works with 4 or 5 families.

Early Years monthly meetings help implement the action plans from the Skye and Lochalsh Area Children's Services Forum.

Wilma informed the group that Integrated Children's Services – ICS delivery is now a routine aspect in some primary schools.

Liaison Groups are held when there are issues that require multi agency involvement. 135 Liaison Groups were held during 2005/2006. The most successful were solution focused.

School staff, School Health Nurse, Education Psychologist, SFLO, parents and sometimes the child are involved in the meetings. If necessary others invited to attend. Referrals to Caseworking Sub Group have been made.

The primary sector has endeavoured to meet the Key Outcomes of the Service Plan.

Challenges ahead:-

- Ensuring information is received and understood in all sections of each service sector
- Changing from Area Management to ASG
- Meeting training needs
- Developing the good work already undertaken

Wilma relies on Liaison Group funding for staffing and was concerned this would not be continued after this financial year.

Don Esson – Portree Liaison Group meeting dates are planned out on a yearly basis. Referrals come from principal teachers, Social Work, Health, Young Carers. Other link agencies have also made referrals. The core group consists of parent/carer, sometimes the pupil, Depute Head Teacher (who Chairs the meeting), relevant principal teacher of Support, Educational Psychologist, School Nurse, SFLO and an Admin Assistant.

Extension Liaison Groups held if needed. Depending on the needs of the case the following may attend – Depute Head, representative from Health, Teacher, Support for Learning Key Teacher, friends of parents, support Groups, Highland Youth Action, Primary Mental Health, Young carers, Looked After Children, School Hostel, Careers and Police.

	<p>Don suggested training on the following topics to progress the service:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral formats • Solution Focused Meetings • Changes to service structure <p>Ann was happy with the support Plockton High School receives when required. However, she would like more specialised staff and support workers available. Monthly dates are set but not always required. There are less individuals to attend the meetings compared to Portree and there is no admin support to take minutes. There is no regular contact from Youth Action. Ann also pointed out that accommodation facilities in Plockton High School are extremely inadequate.</p> <p>Jean pointed out that there some points to be addressed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on the Solution Focused approach • Clear, regular updates on Getting it Right For Every Child and the Integrated Assessment Framework • What is the role of the ACSF and the Caseworking Sub Group • Clarification on the role of the SFLO • There is a need to have universal referral forms etc • Lack of admin support • Confidentiality – some agencies are a bit reluctant to share information <p>Professionals want training which is based locally and multi agency.</p> <p>The Forum explained that Getting it Right For Every Child is a work in progress and as soon as they have concrete information it will be disseminated. Charles suggested compiling a resume of where Getting it Right for Every Child is at the moment. With regard to the role of ACSF – the core business is working on the ACSF Development Plan. Managers from Education, Social Work and Health attend the meetings and circulate relevant information.</p> <p>There is a lack of resources which if in place could improve the integrated working which is already being done. Such as:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently no Children’s Service Worker for Skye • An improved counselling and mental health service – Eileen Burnham pointed out that there is an adult counselling service available from the voluntary sector and a meeting of local professionals has been arranged to look at the possibility of setting up a service for children.. <p>Maureen thanked those presenting. A lot of useful information was collected.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss issues at next ACSF
4.	<p>CHILDCARE PARTNERSHIP – Eileen Burnham</p> <p>Cost of Childcare Facility at Broadford Primary has increased but unit has been ordered. CALA are having discussions with Eileen regarding managing the facility.</p> <p>Parenting Courses:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taster session to be held before Easter – Teenage Years • Incredible Years – one held in Portree on 23rd January and another in Broadford on 14th February <p>For more information please check link below.</p> <p>http://www.forhighlandschildren.org/htm/parenting/incredibleyearscourse-skye-</p>

	2007.pdf
5.	<p>AGENCY REPORTS</p> <p><u>Health – Kate Earnshaw</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing – issues which could pose a problem in the next few months. Health Visitor on sick leave and another on a phased return. Addiction Nurse on sick leave. Malcolm Baxter to leave in the Summer. <p><u>SW – Maureen Keough</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing – Eileen Steele (Senior Family Liaison Officer) has returned from sick leave back. Another full time member of social work staff is on sick leave. • Not much developmental work being done at the moment because of imminent change in structure. <p><u>Education – Laurence Young</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management changes to be incurred due to the new structure.
6.	<p>LEARNING DISABILITY – Kate Earnshaw</p> <p>Nothing to report.</p>
7.	<p>PRESENTATION TO RPG – Charles Stephen</p> <p>It has been noted that recent application to RPG have slipped. The following basic principles should be followed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications should only come to RPG where Area Service Managers believe there is a strong case for an out of authority or ISS/ISMS placement, or where there are significant issues that would benefit from senior management involvement and consideration (eg a parent’s placing request, or a possible contrary view from a Children’s Hearing). • There must be clear evidence that the application is being made by Area Service Managers, and applications that do not evidence local consensus are likely to be sent back for further discussion. • Applications must be supported by a report that includes the assessment and intended plan with appropriate options, addressing social care, health and educational issues. While this may require investigation of the viability of potential placements, this investigation should not imply that any placement will take place. • Timeslots at the RPG will now only be granted by the previous Friday, and on receipt of the report. Any late reports will only be accepted in extraordinary circumstances, and by agreement with the chair of the RPG. • Applications should be presented at the RPG by both social workers and educational psychologists, with other specialist staff where appropriate. Where such staff are not present, the discussion may be postponed. It is the case manager’s responsibility to organise this representation.
8.	<p>ASG FUNDING APPLICATIONS - All</p> <p>Charles received two funding request which he thought were main stream curriculum resources and should be funded from the DSM Budget not ACSF. It was later pointed out that the items requested would increase independence, confidence and improve children self esteem.</p> <p><i>The group agreed funding.</i></p>
9.	AOB

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maureen wanted to draw the groups attention to a recent publication 'Extraordinary Lives'. Attached is a short resume of this document. <i>See appendix 1</i> http://www.swia.gov.uk/swia/files/B41614%20LAC.pdf Maureen suggested discussing at the next ACSF meeting. • Head Strong Project – this is a joint initiative between Health and Education. Agony Aunt and Drop in Sessions start this week.
10.	Date of Next Meeting Tuesday 13 th March 2007 1.30 pm – 4pm Elgin Hostel, Portree

Extraordinary lives – published by SWIA in 2006

Review has six key messages:

- Looked After children can overcome adversity in childhood and lead successful adult lives.
- Too many adults have low expectation of what Looked After children can achieve. Children and adults can do well when they are well cared for.
- Relationship with skilled adults can help Looked After children and young people develop successfully.
- Children and young people Looked After away from home need stability and the chance to put down roots. Being moved frequently from one care setting to another is damaging and often restricts their access to education and health care.
- Tackling disadvantage and discrimination still experienced by many Looked After children requires planning at every level in a Local Authority and between them and their partners in delivering Children's Services. Champions are needed to make sure Local Authorities and their partners provide the best possible care.
- Developing an understanding of what children and young people think about services intended to help them supports effective engagement and long term service planning.

Rural Disadvantage:

Children and young people living in rural and remote areas are represented in all types of care settings. Becoming Looked After can have particular implications for them e.g. Plans to sustain them in their own community can be hampered by limited resources and placements a long way from home.

For children with disabilities living in remote communities are disadvantaged, as a short break can mean a long journey and high cost.

Safe

Getting the balance between safety and risk taking is difficult for any parent. People who care for Looked After children have additional matters to consider e.g. birth parents wishes, legal status etc. Difficult to balance these with allowing the children to lead as ordinary a childhood as possible

Key issues:

- Need for us to date guidance on overnight stays.
- Need for up to date training and materials for staff working with children who have been sexually abused.
- Need to develop a national strategy on allocation and priority, funding, and support for young people in and leaving secure care.
- Need for accreditation and quality assurance for specialist programmes.
- Young people are concerned about appropriate and safe restraint.

Nurturing

Stresses the importance of promoting the development of resilience for children who have experienced separation, dependent on positive relationships which give them a sense of belonging and attachment.

To achieve this must reduce turnover in staffing, placement moves, and changes of Social Worker and prioritise direct work with children.

Links with birth parents, regular school attendance, friends and social networks all create stability. Suggested new Permanence Order will provide a means of securing a child's placement without breaking previous connections.

Widespread frustration among young people about the support available after leaving care. Often contact with residential staff and foster carers ceases.

Key issues

- Need to create greater stability in the residential childcare workforce.
- Need to make sure staff have time and training in making thorough assessments and care planning.
- Need to make sure all leaving care are supported whilst they continue to need support.
- Assessing the impact of current arrangements.
- Make post adoption support available to all adoptive families.
- Make sure ex Looked After children in prison receive support while in custody and on release.

Health and Active

The cause of poor health outcomes for this group is their history of unmet need prior to being accommodated, compounded by the lack of systems to adapt to a mobile population. Some Childrens 'hidden' disabilities may be disadvantaged if their condition is not identified when they become Looked After.

Children in residential care (with disrupted backgrounds) likely to self harm, misuse drugs and show signs of depression. This highlights the need for therapeutic resources for them.

One study found primary age children Looked After away from home five times more likely to have mental health problems. Many front line health professionals have not received training on mental health issues in relation to young people and self harming. Role of Looked After children nurses strongly commended.

Key issues:

- Monitoring health outcomes for Looked After children up to the age of 21.
- Making sure all health professionals have some mental health input and specifically in relation to young people and self harm.
- Putting in place more specialist resources for all children and young people who have been abused, including those sexually abused.
- Encouraging CHPS to better co-ordinate health services for Looked After children.

Achieving

Educational outcomes for Looked After children remain poor in comparison with other children. Progress has been made but slow! Suggests quality of educational provision in residential special schools shows significant weaknesses. Must recognise pupils will often have experienced major disruptions in their education.

Report Learning with Care (HMIE + SWSI 2001) sets out what can be done to help them achieve their potential. Key factors identified as the learning environment, family and home circumstances, health and social and environmental factors. Suggests must be given urgent priority by Senior Educational personnel working with Social Work.

Key issues:

- Demonstrating that meeting the needs of Looked After children is the concern of the Local Authority as a whole.

- Developing incentives to recruit and retain teachers with appropriate qualifications to work in day and residential schools for pupils with SEBD.
- Supporting and developing the role of LAC designated teachers.
- Reporting on ethnicity of Looked After children and tackling racism in schools.
- Identifying what is currently working within school to support Looked After children (both at home and accommodated).
- Developing a shared understanding between Teachers, Social Workers and Health Professionals of one another's roles.

Respected and Responsible

Recognises genuine involvement of children and young people in decision making is complex and hard to achieve.

Consulting children is time consuming: Must ensure they are properly understood many barriers and pressures inhibiting the process, audits of case records suggests two thirds of case records do not clearly identify and record children's views.

Role of kinship carers significant. Suggest that there is a need for a shared working definition of what this means and standard approach to assessment, support and financial assistance.

Key issues:

- Improving practices for responding to challenging behaviour by young people in care homes.
- Need for a national definition of a child being Looked After in kinship care.
- Improving consistency in the assessment of kinship carers between Local Authorities,
- Ensuring kinship carers are paid enough to properly support children in their care.

Included

Role of elected members to make sure that the interests of children come first and should do their utmost to ensure the children in public care get a good start in life (Government response to Children's Safeguard Review 1998). May respondents considered corporate parenting not sufficiently understood or applied in Scotland.

All residential care workers required to hold HNC plan level 3 SVQ. Suggests in Scotland as a whole 60% of staff have not achieved this (one third working towards qualification).

Many reports have identified the need for foster carers to be adequately trained and supported in recognition of their changing and increasingly demanding role.

Current trends suggest the demand for foster carers will continue to grow (responses to parental drug misuse and increasing use of shared care arrangements).

Information about quality and effectiveness of services to support families is lacking. Review conducted in 2002 (growing support Scottish Executive) identified some key messages. Multi-level and multi-method approaches have most impact, well structured nurseries and family centres can make long term benefits, intensive visiting most effective and input needed for months if not years.

The increasing influence of parental drug misuse must be recognised and responded to.

The Utting Report (DOH 1997) identified privately fostered children as some of the most vulnerable and least supported children living away from home although not within the scope of this review this group are highlighted as in need of safety and protection.

Key issues

- Working in residential child care needs to be made an attractive career option.
- Progress must be speeded up towards a well trained and qualified residential care workforce.
- More foster carers needed to be recruited as well as better supporting existing carers.
- More carers from minority communities and different faiths needs.
- Incentives needed to encourage the establishment of flexible shared care arrangements.
- More needs to be known about what works in helping children return home.
- Young people carers and parents must be included in decision making.
- Greater investment in young people is needed to help them become successful adults.

Conclusion – The single most important thing that will improve the futures of Scotland’s Looked After children is for Local Authorities to focus and improve their corporate parenting skills

Recommendations based on this conclusion:

All Chief Executives should make an annual report to their Council on the outcomes achieved for Looked After children.

Consideration should be given to appointing a Senior Manager with specific responsibility for Looked After children throughout the Authority at a strategic level.