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For Highland's Children - Bulletin 7

July 2005

This bulletin includes news of:

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

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.