

## **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE – 17<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2003**

**REPORT ON: NATIONAL AND LOCAL REVIEW OF CHILD PROTECTION**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK**

**REPORT NO: 164 - 2003**

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

This report provides information on the publication of “It’s everyone’s job to make sure I’m alright”, the Scottish Executive Report of the Child Protection Audit and Review. Copies of this report are available for inspection in Member’s Lounge and have been passed to Corporate Secretaries. This audit was conducted on a national basis and has implications for the local authority in its findings and recommendations. This committee report contains proposals resulting from these findings and recommendations.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee agrees to:

- 2.1 Note the content of this report.
- 2.2 Approve the commissioning, by the Director of Social Work, of a second audit of Child Protection practice in Dundee City Council. This will be undertaken by Dundee University. This follows a similar audit carried out in 2001.
- 2.3 Approve the commissioning, by Dundee City Council, of an independent audit of the current and future work of Dundee Child Protection Committee
- 2.4 Instruct the Director of Social Work to take a lead role in developing and implementing a detailed action plan in response to the findings and recommendations of national and local audits and other relevant reports.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cost of the proposals are estimated to be £7,000 and will be met from those departments and agencies represented at the Child Protection Committee.

#### **4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The provision of child protection services in the City is consistent with the Council's objective to ensure that people live without fear of personal violence or abuse. The audits and resultant action plans will ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively in order to protect and promote the well being of some of the most vulnerable children and young people in Dundee.

#### **5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Child protection services are based on partnership working among agencies and with children, young people and their families. This report takes account of the rights and needs of vulnerable children and young people, including those from minority ethnic communities and those with disabilities. It will ensure that services are developed and provided in ways, which promote social inclusion and equality of opportunity.

#### **6.0 MAIN TEXT**

##### **BACKGROUND**

The Child Protection review was a national audit of the practice of police, medical, nursing, social work, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and education staff. It was based on a sample of 188 cases, which covered the range of possible concerns about children from early identification of vulnerability to substantiated abuse or neglect.

The findings and recommendations of the review are recorded in the Report of the Child Protection Audit and Review "It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright" (Scottish Executive, 2002). The recommendations are aimed at reducing child abuse and neglect in Scotland and improving services for children who experience abuse and neglect (Appendix 1 List of Recommendations in the Report of the Child Protection Audit and Review).

The report contains 17 recommendations. The recommendations identify action that can be taken immediately to protect children and improve services as well as action that needs to take place over a longer timescale.

##### **REVIEW OF DUNDEE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

Professor Norma Baldwin, University of Dundee, is the current chair of Dundee Child Protection Committee and contributed to the National Review. Professor Baldwin believes that a review of the local committee to take account of the recommendations from the National Review will expand and strengthen the inter-agency work across departments and agencies within Dundee.

Professor Baldwin has indicated that Mr Brian Fearon has the appropriate skills and experience to carry out this review and he has expressed his willingness to undertake this piece of work. Mr Fearon works independently and is the current chairperson of Clackmannanshire Child Protection Committee, was previously the Director of Social Work and Housing in East Dunbartonshire and worked with Dumfries and Galloway Council following the death of Kennedy McFarlane. Committee members are therefore asked to support Mr Fearon's appointment.

Following completion of the audit at the end of April 2003 a report and action plan will be submitted to committee for consideration.

##### **Conclusion**

The National Review of Child Protection in Scotland and recent reports into the deaths of children in tragic circumstances has underlined the need for those departments and agencies involved in child protection to review the work of the local committee.

The review of the work of the Child Protection Committee will be carried out in conjunction with a second independent audit of current practice and the development of a local action plan. This action plan will address issues highlighted in the findings and recommendations of the national audit and other recent reports from enquiries on the death of children.

The principal purpose of the recommendations contained in this report is to protect vulnerable children living in the city.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with the Chief Executive, the Director of Support Services, the Director of Education, the Director of Finance and the Director of Neighbourhood Resources and Development.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

“It’s everyone’s job to make sure I’m alright” (Scottish Executive, 2002).

## **9.0 SIGNATURE**

Alan G Baird  
Director of Social Work

Date 7 February 2003