

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE - 18 DECEMBER 2006

REPORT ON: STANDARDS FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND THE AMENDED CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 705 - 2006

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information on local standards which have been developed in respect of the department's child protection practice and services. These standards form part of a performance management framework. This report also provides information on the implementation of the department's amended Child Protection Procedures which will be distributed and implemented throughout the department from the start of 2007. A copy of the full standards and Social Work Department Child Protection procedures has been passed to each of the Group Secretaries and is available for inspection in the Members' Lounge.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee:

- 2.1 Note and approve the contents of the report, the standards and the amended departmental Child Protection Procedures.
- 2.2 Authorise the Director of Social Work to ensure the implementation of these standards and procedures as part of a performance management framework.
- 2.3 Note that a review of the standards will be undertaken within the Social Work Department's Service Plan 2007-2010

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4.0 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Child Protection Standards address the need to continually improve the quality of practice and service delivery for children, young people and their families and the local community, when child protection services are required.

The departments SWD Child Protection Procedures have been amended and revised, taking into account the findings of recent child protection enquiry reports and local audits of

practice. They have been produced as part of a parallel process in the development of the Dundee Children and Young Person's Protection Committee's Multi-Agency Guidance.

Anti-Poverty Implications

- 4.2 Providing effective child protection services for children and young people can help to alleviate some of the impact and consequences of poverty on their lives.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The content of the standards encompass the rights of children and young people to be provided with equitable services to meet their diverse needs. The standards also detail the roles and responsibilities for those staff who have a duty, under legislation, to protect and improve the lives of children, young people and their families.

6.0 MAIN TEXT

- 6.1 The HMIE - Services for Children Unit have emphasised the importance of complementarity between inspection and local self-evaluation activity. To develop and maintain effective child protection practice robust and ongoing self-evaluation activity, based on local standards, is required; alongside independent inspection by national agencies. These two types of activity must complement each other to ensure co-ordinated evaluation and continuous improvement.

Agencies with a lead role in providing child protection services are expected to evaluate their performance, through systematic processes of evidence-based self-evaluation, which produce strategic action plans to improve the quality of the services provided. To achieve this requires a set of local standards which are linked to the *Quality Indicator Framework* used by the HMIE Services for Children Inspection Team. This will ensure that self-evaluation and inspection are complementary, with inspection verifying self-evaluation outcomes within a quality improvement cycle.

The important outcomes from these activities are: that local services are having a positive impact on the lives of children, young people and families; the levels of service required are recognised and maintained; and, improvements are identified to make things better for children, young people and their families.

- 6.2 In order to meet this aim, all staff involved in providing child protection services need to understand the standards required and what is expected of them, in terms of the responsibilities involved in providing a good quality child protection service.
- 6.3 The child protection standards have been developed to provide front-line practitioners, managers and the department as a lead child protection agency with clear criteria against which they can measure their child protection practice, systems and services. The standards will be used to audit and monitor performance and ensure continuous improvement as part of the departmental Performance Management Framework.

The Child Protection standards are based on:

- Its Everyone's Job to Make Sure I'm Alright (Scot Exec 2002)
- Protection Children and Young People: Framework for Standards and Children's Charter (Scot Exec 2004)
- SWD Audit Framework (Collation of Recommendations - SWD 2004)
- How well are children and young people protected and their needs met?: *Self-evaluation using quality indicators* (HMIE 2005)
- SWD Child Protection Procedures (SWD 2006)

- Dundee CYPPC Inter-Agency Child Protection Guidance (CYPPC 2006)
- SWD Assessment Framework (SWD 2006)

6.4 The Child Protection Standards are in three parts:

PART ONE CHILD PROTECTION STANDARDS FOR PRACTITIONERS

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| Standard 1 | Practitioners are listening to and respecting the views of children and young people |
| Standard 2 | The welfare of children and young people is the paramount consideration when responding to concerns about them |
| Standard 3 | Practitioners are recognising and assessing children and young people's needs within CP assessments |
| Standard 4 | Practitioners focusing on the individual needs of the child or young person within CP Plans |
| Standard 5 | Children and young people's needs are being met and they are being protected from significant harm |
| Standard 6 | Children, young people and their families are involved in the key processes affecting their lives |
| Standard 7 | Practitioners are recording, storing and sharing information at a level which meets operational standards |
| Standard 8 | Practitioners are continuously developing knowledge and skills to improve the quality of their practice |

PART TWO CHILD PROTECTION STANDARDS FOR MANAGERS

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| Standard 1 | Appropriate action is being taken in response to child protection concerns |
| Standard 2 | Managers are maintaining effective child protection referral systems |
| Standard 3 | Complaints about child protection services and allegations against staff are being managed effectively |
| Standard 4 | Standards are maintained regarding the recording, storing and sharing of information |
| Standard 5 | Managers are ensuring that child protection assessments about children and young people at risk are undertaken within agreed timescales |
| Standard 6 | Managers are ensuring that effective child protection plans are in place to protect children and young people |
| Standard 7 | Operational managers are implementing and maintaining child protection procedures and information systems |
| Standard 8 | Operational managers are prioritising and managing child protection referrals and resources |

Standard 9 Managers are leading and directing child protection services and practice development

PART THREE CHILD PROTECTION STANDARDS FOR THE DEPARTMENT AS A
LEAD CHILD PROTECTION AGENCY

- Standard 1 The department has a clear vision and is committed to continuously improving its child protection services
- Standard 2 The department is protecting children and young people and is providing effective child protection services
- Standard 3 The department is maintaining relevant child protection procedures and related protocols
- Standard 4 The department is recruiting, retaining, developing and supporting staff
- Standard 5 The department is promoting and supporting partnership working, joint planning and training

Adoption of these standards will improve the outcomes for children, young people and their families when child protection services are required and provided.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) were consulted in the preparation of this report. Further consultation took place with Social Work Staff.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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Director of Social Work

Date: 7 December 2006