

To: Social Work Committee		Subject: Scottish Family Policy Charter
From: Director of Social Work		
Date: 8 January 1997	Ref: SP/KT	

#### 1.0 Purpose of Report

To advise the Social Work and the Education Committees of the Scottish Family Policy Charter and to ask for the respective Committees' endorsement of the charter. This report has been jointly produced by the Education Department and Social Work Department.

#### 2.0 Introduction

The Scottish Family Policy Charter has been prepared by the Scottish Trade Union Congress in association with One Plus and One Parent Families Scotland. They believe that Scotland's Children and Parents need a Family Policy which protects the rights of families and gives Scotland's children a stake in its future. The Charter is set in the context of high unemployment and one in three children living in poverty which put family stability at risk.

#### 3.0 Key Principles

The key principles outlined in the charter are as follows:

- \* Citizenship - all people should have the basic right to participate in civic and political life.
- \* Freedom of Choice - the government should support families in their caring duties.
- \* Children's Rights - children have a right to be heard.
- \* Equal Opportunity - men and women should have equal opportunities.
- \* Public Services - the provision of public services and facilities should be expanded.
- \* Social and Economic Rights - the recognition that poverty is caused by economic and social inequalities.
- \* Individual Rights - the state has a responsibility to both protect vulnerable individuals and tackle the causes of violence.

#### 4. Key Policy Statements

The Charter outlines the need for the government to publish an annual 'Family Impact Assessment' which evaluates the impact of all new legislation and identifies areas for future action. The following key policy statements are identified:

- \* Economic Policy - a central aim of National Economic Policy should be to promote the well being of children and families.
- \* Employment - a strategy for full employment based on adequate wages, job security and employment protection is required.
- \* Education and Training - both adults and children should have access to education and training.
- \* Social Security and Child Support - welfare benefits should redistribute income from rich to poor.
- \* Child Care Provision - a national child care strategy is required to provide accessible and affordable child care.
- \* Childrens Rights - the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should be fully implemented.
- \* The Law - the legal system should ensure that everyone receives equal treatment.
- \* Housing - a national housing strategy is required to ensure every family can afford decent, warm and safe housing.
- \* Health - the NHS and its partner agencies in the statutory and voluntary sectors should deliver services which are accessible, publicly funded and free at the point of use.
- \* Family Support - high quality support services should be available to all families.
- \* Immigration and Asylum - policies should be fair and non racist towards those seeking asylum.

## 5.0 Summary

The Scottish Family Policy Charter aims to; foster policies which recognise the different forms of families; highlight policies which compensate for the damage that poverty causes to individuals and promote positive family policies which recognise the government's duty to support families. Both the Education department and the Social Work department support these key principles and statements included in the charter.

## 6.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- 1 Note the contents of this report.
- 2 Endorse the Scottish Family Policy Charter.
- 3 Note that this report will also be presented to the Education Committee for their endorsement.



Jim Dickie  
Director of Social Work