

To: SOCIAL WORK (OPERATIONS & SERVICES) SUB COMMITTEE		Subject: GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD - PHASE ONE CONSULTATION ON REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S HEARING SYSTEM
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 7 DECEMBER 2004	Ref: JD/MH/JS	

1. Purpose of Report

To inform Committee of the Summary Report on the responses to Phase One Consultation on the Review of the Children's Hearing System.

2. Background

- 2.1. In April 2004 the Scottish Executive published a consultation pack entitled "Getting it Right for Every Child" as part of the first phase of the review of the Children's Hearing System.
- 2.2. The first phase of this review was designed to seek news on the principles and objectives of the Hearing System as well as a number of key issues facing the system.
- 2.3. The second phase will involve further consultation on any detailed changes in structure or legislation that are necessary to develop and improve the Children's Hearing System.
- 2.4. The consultation process included written responses to the document and a series of events, including road shows and a specific event for young people.
- 2.5. 732 completed written responses on the consultation have been received. 541 individuals responded.

This representing:

75% of the total response received
70% of these had some direct involvement with the system
58% involved as volunteers (largely panel members)
10% involved as a professional

3. Key Findings

- 3.1. The sound principles and objectives which place the child at the centre of the system were viewed as important.
- 3.2. Better evaluations on the impact of interventions and on the general effectiveness of the Children's Hearing System is required.
- 3.3. There was strong support for retaining a generalist system rather than a move to a more specialist model.
- 3.4. There were mixed views on how the Children's Hearing System should interface with Child Protection procedures. The need for more integration and co-ordination was agreed but no consensus on how this could be achieved in practice.

- 3.5 Views differed on the impact of Parenting Orders under the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act and what influence Hearings should have over parents.
- 3.6 There was general opposition to a Family Hearing System but there was strong support for more resources for family support initiatives and the use of mediation and a family conferencing service.
- 3.7 Recruitment of local people was viewed as the best way of involving local communities in the Children's Hearing System. Some concern was expressed about confidentiality but there was general agreement that more information and outcomes should be made available.
- 3.8 There was an acknowledgement that concerted efforts were required to include young people in both the recruitment and training of panel members.

4. Financial/Personnel/Legal/Policy Implications

- 4.1 The principles and objectives outlined in the Review are welcomed by North Lanarkshire and are in line with the Children's Services Plan vision for services to vulnerable children and young people.
- 4.2 The need for additional resources to implement Hearing decisions and improve evaluation processes will impact not only on the Children's Hearing System but also on other agencies such as Social Work and Education.
- 4.3 The implementation of Youth Justice National Standards and recommendations from the working group Children's Hearing Code of Practice aim to improve standards on time intervals and outcomes for children and young people.
- 4.4 The importance of family support work and mediation and family conferencing has already been embraced by the Authority and a number of services have been developed and commissioned, such as:
- Early Intervention Teams
 - Family Group Conferencing and a substantial investment has been made in restorative justice approaches.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Committee is asked to:
- (i) request the Director of Social Work to provide a report following the completion of Phase 2 Consultation on the Review of the Children's Hearing System.
 - (ii) note the contents of this report.



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Director of Social Work
November 2004

For further information on this report please contact Susan Devlin, Manager Children Families and Justice Tel: (01698 332190)