

AGENDA ITEM No. 5

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: SOCIAL WORK (OPERATIONS & SERVICES) SUB COMMITTEE	Subject: MULTI-AGENCY CHILD PROTECTION SELF EVALUATION PROCESS
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK	
Date: 03 OCTOBER 2006	Ref: ST/NMcM/JH

1. Purpose of Report / Introduction

To advise committee of the multi-agency self-evaluation process which is being undertaken in respect of child protection practice within North Lanarkshire, involving NHS Lanarkshire, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, Strathclyde Police and the Council (Social Work, Education, Housing and Property Services and Community Services).

2. Background

- 2.1. Following the national audit and review of child protection practice in 2002 (It's Everybody's Job To Make Sure I'm Alright), the Scottish Executive advised that multi-agency child protection inspections would be undertaken, followed by broader multi-agency inspections of children's services on a local authority basis.
- 2.2. The inspections will be led by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) and methods will include:
 - Interviews with staff, children, young people and families
 - Observation of practice and intervention
 - Sampling of recording practice.
- 2.3. An inspection timetable has been developed, and while the North Lanarkshire inspection is scheduled to take place in 2007/2008, the date has not yet been confirmed
- 2.4. The inspections will consider the management of child protection practice across agencies at both at strategic and operational levels.
- 2.5. In preparation for the inspection, all agencies in North Lanarkshire are currently involved in self-evaluation activity to identify areas of strengths, areas of improvement and challenges for each agency, individually and collectively.

3. Proposals / Considerations

- 3.1. The self-evaluation activity commenced in January 2006, at the request of the Children's Services Strategy Group and Child Protection Committee. It is being co-ordinated by a Quality Improvement Officer, who has been seconded from the Education Department.
- 3.2. Lead officers from NHS Lanarkshire, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, Strathclyde Police and the Council (Social Work, Education, Housing and Property Services and Community Services) are facilitating the work in each agency.
- 3.3. Each lead officer has organised a focus group within their own agency to consider current practice against quality indicators as set out in the document "How Well Are Children and Young People Protected and Their Needs Met" (Scottish Executive, 2005). This document lists eighteen quality indicators against which each agency will be inspected.
- 3.4. Within social work, the focus group arranged sessions with staff across each of the six localities to ensure the self-evaluation activity is both understood and informed by staff.
- 3.5. The first phase of the self-evaluation exercise is currently being collated, and the findings will be reported to the Children's Services Strategy Group and Child Protection Committee.
- 3.6. The findings for social work will inform the work of the Child Protection Departmental Working Group. This group will take forward the challenges/areas for improvement identified and incorporate these into a comprehensive action plan.
- 3.7. The second phase of the self-evaluation exercise will then commence which will involve agencies discussing their own findings, against the findings of other agencies, to enable one multi-agency plan to be compiled.

4. Financial / Personnel / Legal / Policy Implication

- 4.1. The self-evaluation exercise has been co-ordinated by a Quality Assurance Officer, seconded from Education. This seconded post has been funded via Changing Children's Services Funding as agreed by the Children's Services Strategy Group.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1. Committee is asked to:
 - (1) note the contents of this report.


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Director of Social Work
29 August 2006

For further information on this report please contact Susan Taylor, Manager, Children Families & Justice on telephone 01698 332032 or Nicola McMurray, Social Worker (Child Protection) on telephone 01698 332223