

Dundee's future lies with its children and young people. They deserve the best this city can give them. We will provide the protection they need, when they need it, to keep them safe from harm.

Using Information to Improve Services

At its last meeting, the Chief Officer Group (COG) discussed the development of systems that will collect information that tells us if we are making a difference.

In common with everywhere else in the country, we have become competent at gathering data that is informative and helpful, but is purely quantitative - it tells us how many, how few, how often, etc. We now need to develop this so we know that this and other information is telling us what impact we are having on the lives of people and whether our services are providing good outcomes for those children, young people and adults who use them.

This will push us to continually identify the information can tell us about the impact our services are having and whether we are providing positive outcomes. It requires us to be smart at joining-up the information we get from electronic databases with what we learn from the variety of self-evaluation practices that we are now beginning to roll out. And, most of all, it will require each of us to openly and honestly assess what we do: Celebrate and share what does make a difference - learn what does not and how to improve.

Chief Officers approve proposals for Case File Audit

The CYPPC Lead Officer, Donald MacKenzie, presented a paper to the COG proposing amendments to the model he had previously tabled. This followed on from Donald having spent a day in Paisley talking to colleagues from the Renfrewshire local authority area, about their experiences of carrying out case file audit, for which they were rated very highly.

All the staff that Donald met in Paisley spoke to of the huge boost to self-esteem that was experienced by those involved in the evaluation. It helped people appreciate, first-hand, the value of looking at practice in such detail. It led to people realising that they could apply these principles of thinking about practice, to our everyday work. Indeed, the longer-term benefits in terms of reflection on practice and self-assessment of quality were as valuable as the formal audit activity that took place.

In order to allow services time to implement any findings and recommendations flowing from case file audit, the COG agreed to a proposal that we conduct a once-per-year, instead of a twice-yearly, exercise. This will be preceded by a 2-day team development/training session that will include input by Dundee's HMle Link Inspector, Jacquie Pepper. The two weeks allocated for this, in 2010, are weeks commencing 23rd and 30th August. The process will mirror the methodology employed by HMle.

The COG has also confirmed that the people who are part of the team will be totally freed-up from all other duties for the two-week period of the audit. It is hoped that people directly involved in the delivery of services will want to be part of the audit 'team'. More information about this will come from each agency.

Adult Support and Protection Committee (ASPC)

Professor James Hogg, independent chair, and Laura Bannerman, Manager of Community Care services in Social Work updated the COG on the development and work of the ASPC.

Professor Hogg picked up on some of the points discussed when he last attended the COG in October 2009 and, in doing so, set developments in Dundee in the context of national policy, objectives and developments. The Chief Officers heard that adult support and protection arrangements in Dundee were developing appropriately with all services that should be involved, participating.

Professor Hogg also reported that following earlier discussion about how the overall governance role that the COG thought it should appropriately take in respect of the ASPC, he was asked to prepare a paper on governance for consideration at the national level.

Child Protection Improvement Plan

Earlier in the year, the COG decided that it would hear, in some detail, from one of the Task Group chairs at each of its meetings in order to monitor progress towards achieving the objectives in the plan.

The first of these was Bert Sandeman as chairperson of the Integrated Children's Services Task Group. Bert had provided a report that set out the areas being covered by the group. A key part of this was the section that explained how a framework has now been developed that will promote the involvement of members of the community in informing the development of services in Dundee. Various different ways of involving children, young people and adults in giving their views about the services that currently

exist, as well as views about what improvements need to be made, will be used. We want to ensure that as many people in Dundee as possible can have the opportunity to give their views on their public services that exist to support and protect people who may be vulnerable and/or at risk.

Bert also provided information on the development of Practitioner Forums. These offer a tremendous opportunity to people working in localities to come together and consider not only the development of practice in that locality, but to ensure they have a collective voice feeding into the city-wide development activity that is taking place. Anyone not already involved with their local practitioner forum is encouraged to get a hold of information and become part of it.

And No Bats!!

Everyone involved in the development of the replacement for Seymour Lodge, being built at Kings Cross, was delighted when the independent report stated that there was no issue with bats possibly roosting in the building due to be demolished to make way for the new centre. The existence, or possible existence, of bats, given they are highly protected, could have led to a lengthy delay in progressing the work.

But that potential barrier has been overcome, so now it's all go!

As always, any views or comments you have about this briefing note or child protection services in general, should be fed back through the office of the Children & Young Persons Protection Committee at dundeeprotects@dundeecity.gov.uk.