

## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

### Report by the Executive Director of Social Work and Health

Report to Council: 24 June 2009

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**Subject: Follow Through Inspection of Services to Protect Children in West Dunbartonshire**

#### **1. Purpose:**

This report is to inform members of the publication of the Report on the Follow Through Inspection of Services to Protect Children in West Dunbartonshire and to report on the findings of that Inspection.

#### **2. Background:**

- 2.1** Members will be aware that Inspections of Services to Protect Children are undertaken on a Multi-Agency basis and arranged through the Child Protection Committee which is made up of representatives from across the relevant agencies with responsibility for Child Protection. The Committee meets regularly to discuss issues of local and national interest concerning the protection of children; promote inter-agency working and training; and ensure that local protocol and procedures are in place for responding to child protection concerns.
  - 2.2** Members will recall that an Inspection of Services to Protect Children was carried out by HMIE in December 2006 with a Report published in June 2007.
  - 2.3** In March of this year, a Follow Through Inspection was undertaken and the Report was published in May. This is available to view on the HMIE website. ([www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk)).
  - 2.4** The inspectors report on progress against the Five Key Action Points from the original report and the result of that inspection is generally positive and acknowledges the good work undertaken, progress made, and commitment to improving services.
- #### **3. Main Issues in the Follow Through Inspection**
- 3.1** In terms of Continuous Improvement, the inspectors noted that the Child Protection Committee had effectively led a number of important improvements to services particularly in relation to public awareness and child protection processes.

- 3.2** The inspectors noted very strong professional relationships leading to marked improvements in partnership working.
- 3.3** The Follow Through Inspection evaluated the progress made against the Five Key Action Points as follows:
- 3.3.1** Develop and implement a co-ordinated strategy to raise public awareness of child protection. **Very Good**
- 3.3.2** Improve the processes for the immediate assessment of risk, and ensure that initial assessments are followed up with a more comprehensive assessment of risk and needs. **Good**
- 3.3.3** Ensure the full involvement of health practitioners, particularly medical staff, in child protection processes. **Good**
- 3.3.4** Improve the involvement of children and their families in decisions about their lives. **Satisfactory**
- 3.3.5** Develop a systematic approach to gathering the views of children and their families about services and use this information to ensure service improvement. **Satisfactory**
- 3.4** The Child Protection Committee will incorporate any further work identified by the inspection into the Business Plan for the coming year in order to ensure continuing commitment to improving services.
- 3.5** The Follow Through Inspection concluded that the Child Protection Committee in West Dunbartonshire had made significant progress since the initial inspection in 2007 and that services were well placed to work together to continue to improve the quality of services to protect children. HMIE will make no further visits in relation to the June 2007 Report.
- 3.6** West Dunbartonshire Council plays a major part in the work of the Child Protection Committee and a positive report on improving services to protect children in West Dunbartonshire reflects well on the services provided by the Council which contribute to this.

#### **4. Personnel Implications**

There are no personnel implications.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications beyond the Council's existing contribution towards the budget of the Child Protection Committee.

## 6. Risk Analysis

Issues raised in the report will require to be progressed. Child Protection is a high profile activity, affecting the lives of some of the most vulnerable children and young people in our society. Failure to have good systems and practice in place leads to considerable public censure.

## 7. Conclusion and Officer's Recommendations

- 7.1 The Follow Through Inspection of Services to Protect Children in West Dunbartonshire notes significant improvement and is encouraging of the commitment shown by all agencies to work together to provide better services to vulnerable children and their families.
- 7.2 Members are asked to note the outcome of the Follow Through Inspection and the continuing work of the Child Protection Committee and partner agencies in taking forward any further action required.



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**Appendices:** Joint Follow-Through inspection of services to protect children and young people in the West Dunbartonshire Council area. May 2009.

**Background Papers:** Report

**Wards Affected:** All