

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by The Executive Director of Educational Services

Community Health and Care Partnership: 2 February 2011

Subject: Child Protection Committee Communication Strategy – Public Information

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To provide information to the Members of the Community Health and Care Partnership Committee on the revised Public Information Strategy which forms part of the Child Protection Committee Communication Strategy.

2. Background

- 2.1** The West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee has a duty to produce and disseminate public information about protecting children and young people. This statutory duty is carried out through the development, implementation and regular review of a Communication Strategy which includes the following elements:

- Raising awareness of child protection issues within communities, including children and young people;
- Promoting the work of agencies and the protection of children to the public at large;
- Providing information about where members of the public will go if they have concerns about a child and what could happen.

- 2.2** The West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee has a range of sub-groups tasked with taking forward the key strategic objectives as laid out in the Annual Report and Business Plan of the CPC. One of the strategic objectives is public information, and this aspect of work is taken forward by the Public Information Sub-Group.

- 2.3** The Public Information Strategy sits within the overall West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee Communication Strategy. The overall Communication Strategy is currently under review and will be the subject of consultation at the next Child Protection Committee meeting.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The Joint Inspection of Services to Protect Children Report of June 2007 had as a point for action, the need to develop a recognised, co-ordinated strategy in relation to public awareness. This task was allocated to the Public Information Sub-Group which has developed a range of activities and now agreed a plan to support these activities through a co-ordinated strategy involving all Council services and partner agencies.

3.2 Much of the planned activity within the Strategy is simple and will fit within existing channels of communication and information sharing at minimal additional cost. The development and implementation of the Strategy is supported by Council's Public Relations Section.

3.3 The Public Information proposals and Strategy were discussed and endorsed by the Corporate Management Team at their meeting of 19 October 2010 and were endorsed by the Education and Lifelong learning Committee on 15 December 2010.

4. People Implications

4.1 There are no people implications in relation to this report. All of the activity outlined would be undertaken by staff within the Council and partner agencies, who have either a general or specific commitment to protecting children.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The Child Protection Committee has a small budget which can be used to finance aspects of the Public Information awareness campaign. Given the current financial climate, many of the activities are designed to use existing communication systems and publications thus minimising any additional costs.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 West Dunbartonshire Council and partner agencies have an obligation to safeguard children. As outlined in the West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee Annual Report and Business Plan, the CPC has endorsed a range of activities which are required to meet those obligations. Developing a co-ordinated strategy to raise public awareness of child protection issues is a key strand within the overall CPC Activity. Failure to take forward this aspect of the Strategy could potentially result in neglect or abuse being undetected, or unreported by the community. As a development of a co-ordinated strategy was an action point from the previous Joint Inspection of Services to Protect Children, lack of an implemented strategy with evaluation measures, would be highlighted in future inspections.

7. Equalities Impact

7.1 Screening for equalities impact indicates there are no issues.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 The West Dunbartonshire CPC has identified the need to develop and implement a co-ordinated strategy to raise public awareness of child protection. The Strategy has been developed through the work of the Public

Information Sub-Group and has the endorsement of the Corporate Management Team.

- 8.2** It is recommended that the CHCP Committee endorse the Public Information Strategy as part of the wider Child Protection Committee Communication Strategy.

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Appendices: West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee – Public Information Strategy

Background Papers: Child Protection Committee Annual Report 2009-2010 and Business Plan 2010-11

Wards Affected: All Wards