

ANGUS COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE.....17 February 2009
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE.....26 February 2009
EDUCATION COMMITTEE.....5 March 2009
STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE.....17 March 2009

HMIe FOLLOW-THROUGH JOINT INSPECTION OF SERVICES TO PROTECT CHILDREN
IN THE ANGUS AREA

REPORT BY THE DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH,
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

This report advises elected members of the outcome of the full follow-through inspection of services to protect children in the Angus area. A copy of the follow through inspection report is appended to this committee report.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the committees:-

- (i) note the contents of this report;
- (ii) instruct the relevant Directors to report back to the respective committees at a future date with an action plan to address the issues highlighted during the follow-through inspection.

2 INTRODUCTION

In 2002, the Scottish Executive undertook a multi disciplinary audit and review of child protection across Scotland. A subsequent report, *"It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright"* recommended that a national review of child protection should be undertaken by a multi disciplinary team in all areas in Scotland.

The "Services for Children Unit" was established within Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in March 2004 to undertake these inspections. The aim of the inspections is to ensure that children and young people are being protected, to help agencies improve their services and to share good practice.

A joint inspection of services to protect children in the Angus area was conducted in 2006 and the report of this inspection was published in February 2007 (Previous Reports nos. 638/06, 162/07, 498/07).

In June 2008 Chief Officers of the key agencies (Tayside Police, NHS Tayside, Social Work and Health and the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration) were notified of a follow-through inspection of services to protect children in the Angus area.

3 THE INSPECTION PROCESS

The follow-through inspection took place in two phases:

Phase 1 involved the provision of updated information regarding services in the local area, updated local interagency child protection guidelines, a copy of the action plan

produced in response to the findings of the full inspection, the CPC annual report and business plan and submission of a self evaluation report regarding progress made since the inspection. This phase was completed by 22 August 2008.

Phase 2 took place during the week of 20 October 2008. This involved a briefing from Chief Officers to HMle regarding progress made in responding to the main points for action in the original inspection, case file reading and interviews with staff from the key agencies.

4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The aim of the inspection was to assess the extent to which services were continuing to improve the quality of their work to protect children and young people and to evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report. The findings in respect of the main points for action are as follows:

MAIN POINT FOR ACTION	HMle EVALUATION
Develop clear and shared thresholds of risk to ensure staff consistently apply procedures for reporting and responding to concerns	Good progress had been made
Ensure the full involvement of health and medical staff in child protection processes	Good progress had been made
Improve the processes for assessment of need and ensure that children who require compulsory measures of care are identified and receive this when they need it	Very good progress had been made
Improve the recording, monitoring and assessment of health practitioners	Very good progress had been made

HMle concluded the *“Angus Executive Group for Child Protection and the Angus Child Protection Committee (CPC) has taken very effective action to implement the main points for action. Through the strong leadership of the CPC, services had continued to work well together and were active and productive in improving the provision for children in need of protection”*.

As a result of *“effective performance shown by services in taking forward improvements”* HMle intend to make no further visits to Angus in relation to the initial inspection report of February 2007. It is worthy of noting that a further round of child protection inspections is planned within the next 3 years. A copy of the full inspection report is appended to this committee report.

An action plan will be produced by the Chief Officers of the key agencies to address issues which were highlighted in the report.

HMle noted the efforts in Angus to gather the views of children and young people through the use of *“Viewpoint”* an online interactive tool, to inform child protection meetings and to evaluate the effectiveness of services. HMle have since indicated they wish to feature this as an area of good practice on their website.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At this stage of the inspection process there are no direct financial implications. However once the action plan has been agreed there may be financial implications for the key agencies responsible for the protection of children in Angus.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Rights implications arising as a result of the recommendations contained in this report.

7 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The issues dealt with in this Report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An equalities impact assessment is not required.

8 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus:

Outcome 5 – Children and young people in Angus enjoy the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health.

Outcome 8 – Children are protected from abuse, neglect and harm by others at home, at school and in the community.

9 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Finance and the Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

10 CONCLUSION

This is the second occasion Child Protection Services in Angus have been inspected in this way. This follow-through inspection has given all the agencies who work together to protect children the opportunity to reflect on practice and to consider how services should be improved in the future.

R Peat
Director of Social Work and
Health

Jim Anderson
Director of Education

Ron Ashton
Director of Neighbourhood
Services

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or financial information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.