

# DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Issue 4

April 09

Protecting Children Together

## Beth Smith: Chair, Dumfries and Galloway Child Protection Committee

I am pleased to introduce the 4th edition of the CPC newsletter which is designed to keep you up to date with national and local events.

This continues to be a challenging year for everyone concerned with protecting children and young people as there has been a great deal of national attention and interest as a result of several high profile enquiries.

Dumfries and Galloway Child Protection Committee (CPC) continues to be actively involved in monitoring and reviewing local practice to ensure that we are continuously improving and being the best that we can be. Children and young people are kept safe by the many positive contributions made by frontline staff in their day to day work.

On 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009 I leave Dumfries and Galloway Council and will step down as the Chair of Dumfries and Galloway Child Protection Committee.

I have chaired the Committee since March 2005 and since then we have successfully faced many challenges such as the implementation of the new guidance for CPCs in 2005, the three year Child Protection Reform Programme and HMIE Joint Inspection in 2007.

2009 will see the commencement of the next phase of Joint Inspection with a stronger focus on self-evaluation. With this in mind, we have already begun the task of case file audit and will present findings to CPC and Chief Officers by the end of the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing commitment and support during my time in Dumfries and Galloway and to wish you all the very best for the future.

Best Wishes

Beth



## HMIE Inspection

HMIE have recently announced a further cycle of Joint Inspection of services to protect children across Scotland. Having almost completed the inspection of all 32 local authority areas, the programme will commence again prior to Summer 2009. There will be some important changes to the inspection model. Firstly, the evaluation framework will change to bring into line with other inspection models. Secondly, inspection will be more focussed and will be informed by previous inspection and self evaluation. Additionally, inspection will be combined with any follow through activity which is planned for that area. The CPC will publish plans for Dumfries and Galloway as soon as they are announced.

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## Message from Vice Chair

At the time of Beth's appointment as Chief Social Work Officer here, child protection structures and functions in Dumfries and Galloway, despite the recommendations of the Hammond Report, were still not truly fit for purpose. Despite some considerable obstacles, Beth has presided over steady progress in building and acting on action plans, the

production and implementation of new policies and procedures, the modernisation of the Child Protection Committee, an increase of resources into child protection services, increased and improved training for staff and changes to culture and relationships, all of which have been of considerable benefit to the system as a whole. I am sure that the Child Protection Committee would agree that the child protection system in Dumfries and Galloway is in a better and safer place today than it was when Beth first took up post.

As Vice Chair of the committee and on behalf of it, I would like to thank Beth for her significant contribution to child protection in Dumfries and Galloway over the years and to pass on best wishes for her future.'



PROTECTING CHILDREN TOGETHER

## Substance Misuse Sub Committee

Since 2006, the Child Protection Committee and the Alcohol and Drugs Action Team (ADAT) have worked closely together to address the many issues presented by children affected by parental substance misuse (CAPSM). Work in this area is co-ordinated by the Substance Misuse Sub Committee of the CPC with the Lead Officer (ADAT) as Chair and Lead Officer (CPC) as Vice Chair.

In conjunction with STRADA (Scottish Training on Drugs & Alcohol) this group has developed local protocols based on Getting Our Priorities Right (GOPR), the Scottish Government good practice guidance for working with children and families where substance misuse is an issue.

The protocols were formally launched at the CPC Confer-

ence in June 2007, and implemented in November 2007. The Conference was followed up by Locality Forums with over 200 staff in attendance

In support of this, we have a GOPR co-ordinator who collates information about local children known to be affected by substance misuse, assessments that have been carried out and, if necessary, care plans are in place to meet their needs. The Senior Child Protection Officer now manages the GOPR Co-ordinator.

In addition, the CPC is in the latter phase of an extensive three tier staff training programme which underpins the GOPR protocols and delivers this to:

- Managers
- Frontline Staff and professionals

- Staff who need awareness training

As part of Self Evaluation commencing in April 2009, we will take a closer look at cases where children are affected by substance misuse.

At a national level, we are working with Scottish Government who have established a Project Board to drive forward implementation of chapter five of 'The Road to Recovery', focusing on actions to support children and young people affected by parental substance misuse.

Details of the CPC, and GOPR protocols can be found on the CPC website at [www.dumgal.gov.uk/childprotection](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/childprotection)

## Private Fostering

Private Fostering is a term used in legislation to describe an arrangement where a parent or guardian places their child in someone else's care who is not a close relative for a period of 28 days or longer.

Although this is a private arrangement, the Local Authority has a duty to serve the welfare of every privately fostered child. Within Dumfries and Galloway a Social Worker from the Fostering and Adoption Team will complete a series of checks and interviews and then complete a report as to the welfare of the child.

The Social Worker will then visit the placement at regular intervals (at least every 3 months in the first year and 6 monthly thereafter).

Both the parents and private foster carers have a legal duty to inform the Local Authority about private fostering arrangements. However in general the public are unaware of this duty.

A public awareness campaign was carried out in Dumfries and Galloway in 2006/2007 regarding Private Fostering. This included information to all GP surgeries, all education providers, posters throughout the region and articles in local publications.

If any one is aware of a private fostering arrangement or wishes to check whether an arrangement may be private fostering please contact Jackie Gattey, Senior Social Worker, Fostering and Adoption on 01387 260680.

## Whistle Blowing and Child Protection

In the wake of a number of high profile child abuse cases both in Scotland and in England, there has been increased public scrutiny of child protection services in an effort to minimize the possibility of further tragic events.

Every Council, Police Force and NHS Board in Scotland has in place 'whistle blowing' and internal complaints procedures. Every child protection practitioner should be aware of what they can do to report any concerns they may have that cases are being mismanaged, or that capacity problems are preventing them from giving at-risk children the support that they need.

They should also be confident that any such concerns will be taken seriously and acted on appropriately.

It can be difficult to speak out about these kinds of problems, but we must encourage a climate of openness and transparency rather than apportioning blame.

In Dumfries & Galloway, Police, Health and

Council employees each have access to their own agency's whistle blowing policies. Details of how to access these policies are given below.

As Adam Ingram, Minister for Children and Early Years stated in his letter to Child Protection Committees at the end of 2008 :

'I know that Scotland's front line practitioners are doing a difficult job very well, and I hope that you will help empower them to report any concerns they have, to help us protect Scotland's children.'

Whistle blowing policies are available by accessing :

NHS Dumfries & Galloway—Freedom of Speech Policy

Dumfries & Galloway Council—Policy on Raising Concerns in the Council

Dumfries & Galloway Constabulary—Is there a rotten apple in our barrel?

## Child Thai Boxing

The Scottish Government recently wrote to us about child Thai boxing, highlighting the potential child protection issues associated with an activity which is not a recognised sport and, as such, is not necessarily subject to the standard Child Protection Charter governing regulated contact sports. Scottish Ministers recognize that the safe participation of our young people in physical activity is an excellent thing and would not want to create barriers to participation. The letter that they recently issued suggested only that appropriate assurances should be gained that individual clubs have acceptable child protection practices and procedures in place. Ministers would not expect to see local clubs closed which are able to demonstrate their compliance with standard equivalent to those set out in the Child Protection Charter.

## Protecting Children Together

### CPC Multi Agency Training & Events Calendar 2009—2010

#### 2009 Events

**19th May** - Annandale & Eskdale Child Protection Locality Forum—Kirkconnel Hall Hotel, Ecclefechan

**20th May** - Wigtownshire Child Protection Locality Forum—Wigtown Town Hall, Wigtown

**21st May**—Stewartry Child Protection Locality Forum - Dalbeattie Town Hall, Dalbeattie

**22nd May** - Nithsdale Child Protection Locality Forum - Police HQ, Cornwall Mount, Dumfries

**8th & 9th September** - Stewartry Tier 2 Training—Dalbeattie Town Hall, Dalbeattie

**24th September** - Child Protection Committee Annual Conference—Easterbrook Hall, Dumfries

**3rd November** - Annandale & Eskdale Child Protection Locality Forum—Kirkconnell Hall Hotel, Ecclefechan

**4th November**—Wigtownshire Child Protection Locality Forum—Stranraer Rugby Club, Stranraer

**5th November**—Stewartry Child Protection Locality Forum—Dalbeattie Town Hall, Dalbeattie

**6th November**—Nithsdale Child Protection Locality Forum—Police HQ, Cornwall Mount, Dumfries

**10th & 11th December**—Wigtownshire Tier 2 Training—Wigtown Town Hall, Wigtown.

#### 2010 Events (Venues to be confirmed)

**25th & 26th February**—Joint Stewartry & Wigtownshire Tier 2 Training

**1st & 2nd March**—Nithsdale Tier 2 Training

**4th & 5th March** - Nithsdale Tier 2 Training

**25th & 26th March**—Annandale & Eskdale Tier 2 Training

**18th May**—Annandale & Eskdale CP Locality Forum

**19th May**—Wigtownshire CP Locality Forum

**20th May**—Stewartry CP Locality Forum

**21st May**—Nithsdale CP Locality Forum

**7th & 8th September**—Stewartry Tier 2 Training

**No Date Yet**—CPC Annual Conference

**2nd November** - Annandale & Eskdale CP Locality Forum

**3rd November** - Wigtownshire CP Locality Forum

**4th November**—Stewartry CP Locality Forum

**5th November**—Nithsdale CP Locality Forum



### Dumfries & Galloway Child Protection Committee Who's Who

#### Chair of the Child Protection Committee

Beth Smith, Group Manager Social Work Services, Dumfries & Galloway

#### Vice-Chair of the Child Protection Committee

Dr Derek Cox, Director of Public Health, NHS Dumfries & Galloway

#### Child Protection Committee Support Team

Mike Briggs, CPC Lead Officer

Karen Peat, CPC Development Officer

Claire Paterson, CPC Support Officer

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