

# Report

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Report to:	<b>Social Work Resources Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>23 January 2008</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director ( Social Work Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Consultation with parents, carers and children who are subject to child protection registration</b>
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## 1 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ Advise of the development of Child Protection Audit in Social Work Resources and on the 2007 consultation with parent, carers and their children involved in the child protection process
- ◆ Note the actions required arising from the findings of the consultation

## 2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the consultation findings are noted

## 3 Background

- 3.1 The 2007 consultation with parents, carers, children and young people is the follow on from the 2006 child protection audit of children on the child protection register. The child protection quality indicator considered in this consultation related to (3.1) *Involving children, young people and their families in key processes* referred to in the quality indicator framework "*How well are children and young people protected and their needs met*".
- 3.2 The consultation focused on parents', carers' perspectives of the child protection process and their views and opinions. Areas explored during the consultation with parents and carers included the information shared with them about the process prior to the case conference meeting, preparation for the initial child protection case conference itself and if their views were taken into account in decisions made about their children.
- 3.3 The consultation also focused on children and young people's views and their involvement in and perspectives of the child protection process and whether their views were taken into account. This was to help understand what life is like for them in these circumstances and to ensure that appropriate action is taken to protect them.

## **4 Key Findings**

- 4.1 This consultation found that there are benefits for parents and carers in involving them in the child protection process. Most of the parents said that the child protection process had been explained very or quite clearly to them. Less than half said their views were taken into consideration all, or most of the time, with the majority saying their views were taken into account only some of the time. Most strongly agreed or agreed they had been adequately prepared for meetings and that their rights were fully explained to them. All the parents and carers said they were clear why people were involved and what their respective roles were.
- 4.2 In this sample, the parents and carers were the main focus of social work intervention to prevent further harm to their children arising from abuse or neglect. In some cases they also were a primary source of protection for their children from abuse by others. The majority have a key role in the child protection process and in implementing the child protection plan to ensure better outcomes for their children. The parents' and carers' readiness to accept help, their relationship with the social worker and the parents' and carers' responses to previous intervention impacted on the outcome for an individual family. The participation of extended family members in implementing the child protection plan also contributed to better outcomes for the children and young people.
- 4.3 Some parents and carers have a better understanding than others in recognising their child's needs and the ability with support to put them before their own parental needs and wants. The focus of intervention differed in each situation but there were some common issues. These included issues of neglect, poverty, housing, parental mental health issues, isolation in the community, substance misuse and domestic abuse.
- 4.4 Children and young people were consulted about their understanding of and their involvement in the child protection process. All the children knew who their social worker was and just under half knew why they or their family have a social worker. Most said they would speak to their mum and/or dad if they felt unsafe. Almost all said the help they get from their social worker helps them feel safe, either all of the time or most of the time. The vast majority said that the help they and their family received from their social worker made a big difference in making life better for them. The majority knew that meetings took place to make sure they are safe. They said they understood what was happening about them and their family and felt that people listened to what they had to say.
- 4.5 Overall the consultation demonstrated that children and young people's experience of family life even within the same family can be different as can be their perception of the child protection process and the outcome of intervention for them. It was encouraging that the children and young people felt supported and were able to speak to their parents, social worker or others about what was happening in their lives. They were also able to identify other supports to them including extended family support, for example, grandparents. A few of the children and young people were ambivalent about social work intervention in their lives even if that intervention was to protect them from harm.

## **6 Action Plan**

- 6.1 Listening to parents, carers, children and young people and respecting their views remains at the centre of providing services to meet their needs. To keep parents,

carers and their children fully informed and supported remains an ongoing priority and is part of our continuous improvement agenda.

- 6.2 Areas for further improvement identified from this consultation with parents, carers and their children were:
- To continue to improve practice in the involvement and participation of parents, carers, children and young people in the child protection process.
  - To support children and young people to be more directly involved in decision making about their lives.
  - Where appropriate to give children and young people the choice as to whether they do, or do not attend a case conference or other child protection meeting.
  - To ensure that children and young people are seen within the appropriate timescales and have the opportunity to see their social worker on their own.
- 6.3 The areas for improvement identified from this consultation confirmed those areas for further development already identified in the 2006 child protection audit and have been already incorporated into the action plan that followed. Staff are aware of the need to evidence how best to involve parents, carers and their children appropriately in the child protection process. This includes making better use of existing reports to record parental, carers' and children's views and involving them in meetings as appropriate.
- 7 Employee Implications**
- 7.1 Staff have been briefed of the findings and the action required to address the issues that emerged from the consultation.
- 8 Financial Implications**
- 8.1 None.
- 9 Other Implications**
- 9.1 There will be a Child Protection inspection by HMle of all child protection services in South Lanarkshire in February/March 2008. It will be important to take appropriate action on the findings of this consultation in order to continually improve our practice and most importantly the outcomes for the most vulnerable children in South Lanarkshire.
- 10 Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**
- 10.1 None.

**Harry Stevenson**  
**Executive Director (Social Work Resources)**

13 December 2007

**Link(s) to Council Objectives**

- Improve lives of vulnerable children, young people and adults
- Improve community safety

**Previous References**

- Child Protection audit 2006

**List of Background Papers**

- Consultation with Parents and Carers report 2007
- Consultation with Children and Young People's report 2007

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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