

# **Edinburgh Child Protection Committee**

**Annual Report March 2005-2006**

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## **PREFACE TO ANNUAL REPORT 2005-6**

### **Edinburgh Child Protection Committee**

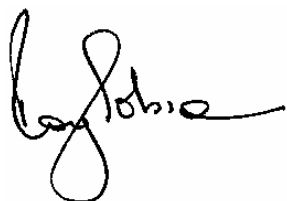
This is the first report of the newly constituted Edinburgh Child Protection Committee. Overall there has been good progress in meeting the Committee's objectives with work still to be progressed, particularly in the area of child protection public awareness, implementing the child protection inter-agency training strategy and the revised Lothian and Borders Inter-Agency Child Protection Guidelines in the autumn of 2006.

The Committee has met on a bi-monthly basis since its inaugural meeting in August 2005.

The Chair is the Director of the Children and Families Department and the Vice-Chairs are Senior Officers from Health and the Police. This assures governance collectively and on behalf of the constituent authorities.

Since the Committee's inception, there have been positive developments in:

- Establishing the co-located Child Protection Investigation and Review Team of staff from Social Work, Police and Health by August 2006.
- Establishing the Training and the Practitioners' Sub-Groups of the Committee.
- Piloting an initiative giving direct electronic access to the Edinburgh and the Lothians Child Protection Register at remote sites, currently the Sick Children's Hospital in Edinburgh and St John's Hospital in Livingston. This initiative includes extensive health improvement and has been recognised nationally as good practice. Plans are well advanced to extend direct electronic access to other remote sites.
- Modernising of the Child Protection Register, which will be moving to a new electronic record system in January 2007 and which will enable more sophisticated recording of information to protection children.
- Improving reporting on child protection issues, both to the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee and to the Council.
- Detailed analysis of trends and pressures in child protection work.
- Implementing of validated procedures for Serious Case Reviews, completing one such review by August 2006.
- Developing a strategy for child protection public awareness.
- Recruiting a Lead Officer to the Committee, hopefully to be in post by August 2006.
- The commissioning in Edinburgh of two pieces of independent research seeking to gain the views of children, young people and families in receipt of child protection measures.
- Inter-agency self-evaluation in preparation for the forthcoming Joint Inspection of child protection.



Roy Jobson  
Chair of Edinburgh Child Protection Committee  
June 2006

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** The last annual report completed for the then Edinburgh and the Lothians Child Protection Committee and the Edinburgh and the Lothians Child Protection Office was in 2003 and covers the period 1/1/03 to 31/12/03.
- 1.2** In line with the “Protecting Children and Young People: Child Protection Committees” national guidance (February 2005), the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee was established in 2005 and first met on 1/8/05.
- 1.3** The Committee works to the strategic plan agreed by Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders Executive Group (ELBEG) and the Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders Co-ordination Group (of which the chair of the Edinburgh Committee is a member).
- 1.4** The Edinburgh Lothian and Borders Child Protection Office implements the work of the Co-ordination Group and carries out functions on behalf of the wider strategic body, some of which relate to and impact on the work of the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee.
- 1.5** New governance arrangements have been agreed for inter-agency strategic childcare decision-making in the local authority area under the auspices of the Children & Young Peoples’ Strategic Partnership.
- 1.6** There have been significant changes in the management of the operational delivery of child protection Social Work services since 2005 as a result of the integration of Children and Families and Social Work Services with the former Education Department Services. The new Children and Families Department was established in 2005 and the Director of the Department is the Chair of the Committee.
- 1.7** The Children and Families Department has adopted a neighbourhood model of service delivery for Schools, Early Years, Community Learning and Development and Practice Team Children and Families Social Work Services. The process of establishing and bedding in the neighbourhood model during 2005-6 has been successful but it is still in its early stages of further development, including further possibilities for neighbourhood working within the Department and with other agencies.
- 1.8** Centralised Children and Families services for the whole of the City of Edinburgh have been established and include residential childcare, fostering and adoption, Children with Disability and Youth Justice. There is also a central service for Service Development (Social Work Services), led by the Chief Social Work Officer for Children and Families, Social Work and a central Strategic Planning section responsible for the Integrated Children’s Services Plan.
- 1.9** The post of Lead Officer to the Child Protection Committee, required by the Scottish Executive Guidance (February 2005) to implement its core functions, has not yet been filled. A second round of interviews in May 2006 has resulted in a recommended appointment and it is anticipated that a Lead Officer will be in post by August 2006. The lack of a Lead Officer has hindered the development of the Committee’s functions.
- 1.10** There have, therefore, been major organisational and policy changes during 2005-6, including preparing for the joint inspection of child protection services in Edinburgh, which will take place in February 2007.

## **2.0 FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE**

- 2.1** The Edinburgh Child Protection Committee is the key strategic body for the local authority area of the City of Edinburgh Council.
- 2.2** Its primary functions are: to contribute to the development of strategic planning of integrated services for children that promote and safeguard their safety and to lead effective inter-agency communication at a local level.
- 2.3** The Committee's constitution is attached in Appendix 1.
- 2.4** The membership of the Committee reflects the requirements of the constitution and the current membership list is attached in Appendix 2.
- 2.5** The Committee meets bi-monthly and is chaired by the Director of the Children and Families Department. The Vice Chairs are from Health and the Police. A sample agenda is attached in Appendix 3.
- 2.6** In December 2005 the Committee established 2 sub-groups i.e. an inter-agency training sub-group (chaired by one of the Vice Chairs) and a practitioner/service users' sub-group (chaired by the Service Development Manager who has been undertaking many of the functions of the Lead Officer pending the recruitment of the Lead Officer). The training sub-group meets 6-8 weekly and the practitioners/service users sub-group meets 8 weekly. The work of these 2 groups will be detailed later in the report.
- 2.7** A Consumer Involvement Officer for the Children and Families Department was appointed in February 2006 and her initial focus is to consult with services on how to improve child protection services.
- 2.8** The dedicated resources available to the Committee are currently split between a number of staff i.e. part of the workload of the Head of Service Development (CSWO for Children and Families) and part of the workload of the Service Development Manager referred to in 2.5. Once the Lead Officer is in post, there will be a full-time post to service the Committee and implement its Work Plan. The Head of Service Development and the Service Development Manager will still have ongoing responsibilities. The Head of Service Development is also the Keeper of the Child Protection Register for Edinburgh, the Lothians and the Borders.
- 2.9** The budgets committed to specific child protection policy, procedures and inter-agency training and lead roles are detailed in Appendix 4. This includes Edinburgh's share (22%) of the costs of the Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders Child Protection Office.
- 2.10** The Lead Officer requires to complete a Business Plan in conjunction with the Committee, particularly in relation to prioritised inter-agency training and Committee publicity.

### 3.0 EVALUATION AND INSPECTION

3.1 In line with the publication of the “Children’s Charter” and the “Framework for Standards” in 2004, which particularly emphasised the role of area Child Protection Committees in consulting with children and young people in receipt of child protection services, the City of Edinburgh Council commissioned MORI Scotland to conduct in-depth interviews with relevant children and their parents/carers.

3.2 The research was reported to the Child Protection Committee in April 2006. Out of a large sample, unfortunately only 9 respondents were identified. The issues, which emerged were:

- a) Child Protection Case Conferences are too formal
- b) Children/young people do not want to attend Case Conferences.
- c) It was very difficult to engage service users in a discussion about their experiences of child protection services

Given the small sample, further research work will be undertaken by the Consumer Involvement Officer, a Senior Research and Information Officer and Child Line, with families using the services of Child and Family Centres. It is considered likely that parents/carers actively working with Children and Families staff on strategies to reduce risks of child protection are more likely to engage with researchers. The timescale of this research is June to December 2006. The aim is to ask for service users’ views on their needs as well as their experience of child protection processes.

3.3 Also in 2005 the Children and Families Department commissioned Edinburgh Youth Social Inclusion Partnership to research how well children and young people are involved in child protection processes. This research focussed on one Practice Team and was aimed to provide valuable evidence for self-evaluation of child protection in terms of the joint inspection. The findings of this piece of work are currently being evaluated.

3.4 The preparation for the joint inspection of child protection in Edinburgh is led, within Children and Families, by the Quality Improvement Manager liaising with lead professionals in Health and the Police.

3.5 The Joint Inspection Reference Group was established in early 2005 to manage the process. The group is multi-agency and includes representatives from Children and Families, Lothian Health, Lothian & Borders Police, Housing, Children’s Reporter and the voluntary sector. The group met several times during 2005 and in early 2006 began the process of compiling an inter-agency self-evaluation.

3.6 The Children and Families Department produced a self-evaluation against each of the quality indicators that will be used during the inspection. This is currently being updated. An Action Plan based on this is being compiled.

3.7 Self-evaluation training for Social Work staff has been offered as a CPD opportunity and around 200 have attended training using the Quality Indicators from ***How well are children and young people protected and their needs met?***

3.8 A ‘case sampling exercise’ following the same model as the inspection process was conducted during late 2005. 23 child protection cases were subject to a self-evaluation exercise and the outcomes submitted to Quality Development. This included cases from the Child Protection Register, children recently de-registered

and children referred to Pupil Support groups and Child Family Centres. An External Validation team comprising officers from Children and Families and Lothian Health are currently devising methods to validate the findings of the exercise. A report of the outcomes will be produced in late August 2006.

- 3.9** Regular 'Joint Inspection' updates have been produced and sent to all establishments.
- 3.10** Briefings for staff on the Joint Inspection process have taken place during 2005/06. Audiences included Senior Officers, Head Teachers, Practice Teams Managers, Unit Managers, Quality Improvement Managers and other departmental staff.
- 3.11** A communications strategy has been produced in conjunction with staff from the Communications Section.

#### **4.0 EDINBURGH CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE'S WORK PLAN**

- 4.1** The current work plan for the Committee is attached in Appendix 5.
- 4.2** Once the Lead Officer is in post, the work plan will be refined and re-ordered under the 9 headings suggested for this annual report.
- 4.3** Additional points under the headings are made below with information from the ongoing work of the Committee, items considered at meetings and action taken included.

#### **5.0 PUBLIC INFORMATION**

- 5.1** The Consumer Involvement Officer has been active in the area of improving public information on child protection since her appointment in February 2006. She gave a presentation on her initial plans to the Child Protection Committee on 4 April 2006 and she is a member of the practitioners/service users sub-group.
- 5.2** The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Review of Social Work and the work of Child Protection Reform Team ascertained that members of the public have difficulty in knowing whom to contact if they have concerns about a child. The role and remit of Children and Families Social Workers is also frequently misunderstood and this affects the public perception of the profession.
- 5.3** There has been work done by North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee and made available nationally on leaflets suitable for public awareness of child protection.
- 5.4** Children and Families Social Work in Edinburgh requires up-to-date branded leaflets, both on general reporting of child protection and specific social work services. The Child Protection Committee also requires general information leaflets.
- 5.5** The Consumer Involvement Officer is currently consulting with various service users and professionals on the suitability of the North Ayrshire leaflets. This includes consulting with the voluntary sector and Health.
- 5.6** It is anticipated that Edinburgh leaflets for the public and for specific social work services will be published in the summer of 2006. These will, obviously, be useful for inter-agency purposes.

- 5.7** In addition, once the Lead Officer is in post, the Consumer Involvement Officer will work with the post holder on a wider public awareness campaign. Interim work on this is ongoing. It requires to link to the proposed website of the Child Protection Office.
- 5.8** The intention nationally to have a one reporting line for child protection is of interest to the Edinburgh Committee, which has indicated to the Scottish Executive willingness to be part of a further pilot (given there has already been a pilot in Moray).
- 5.9** By September 2006, Edinburgh will have co-located Police, Health and Children and Families Social Work staff to deal with all Initial Referral Discussions (IRDs) on child protection across the City. The detail of this development will be given later in this report. This team would be the ideal place to pilot a single reporting line number.

## **6.0 POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS**

- 6.1** The Edinburgh and Lothians Inter-Agency Child Protection Guidelines are currently being revised and are likely to have the force of procedures.
- 6.2** The procedures will:
- Take the form of a core document, which clearly sets out agency and individual duties whilst reinforcing joint responsibility across agencies.
  - Incorporate current Scottish Executive guidance, reflect the Children's Charter, Framework for Standards and take cognisance of the Quality Indicators.
  - Include best practice as identified by Inquiry Report publications and through consultation with professionals both within and outwith the ELBEG area.
- 6.3** It is intended that the following will be delivered:
- A set of Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures for Edinburgh and the Lothians.
  - A list of associated procedures, protocols or practice notes that may require to be produced or considered to compliment the Procedures.
- This list of associated procedures etc. will include documents on specific issues e.g. underage sex, children and young people who offend and also agency specific documents, which compliment the new Procedures.
- 6.4** The project commenced on 21 November 2005, with the appointment of the Project Officer. While significant work has been carried out and areas of key significance have achieved much agreement, there is still considerable work to be done before completion of a full first draft document and therefore this is likely to go beyond the proposed May 2006 date.
- 6.5** Project team members are conducting limited consultation throughout the process of developing each section of the Procedures. The draft document will be circulated to the Child Protection Committees for wider consultation as they decide, with each committee feeding back their observations or recommendations, on a committee basis for consideration. Following consideration of any observations the products will be submitted to Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders Executive Group, via the Child Protection Co-ordinating Group for consideration and approval.

- 6.6** Training issues will arise from the introduction of the Procedures. The ELBCPO



Training and Development Officer is aware of this and together with the Guidelines Review Project Officer is considering an implementation strategy.

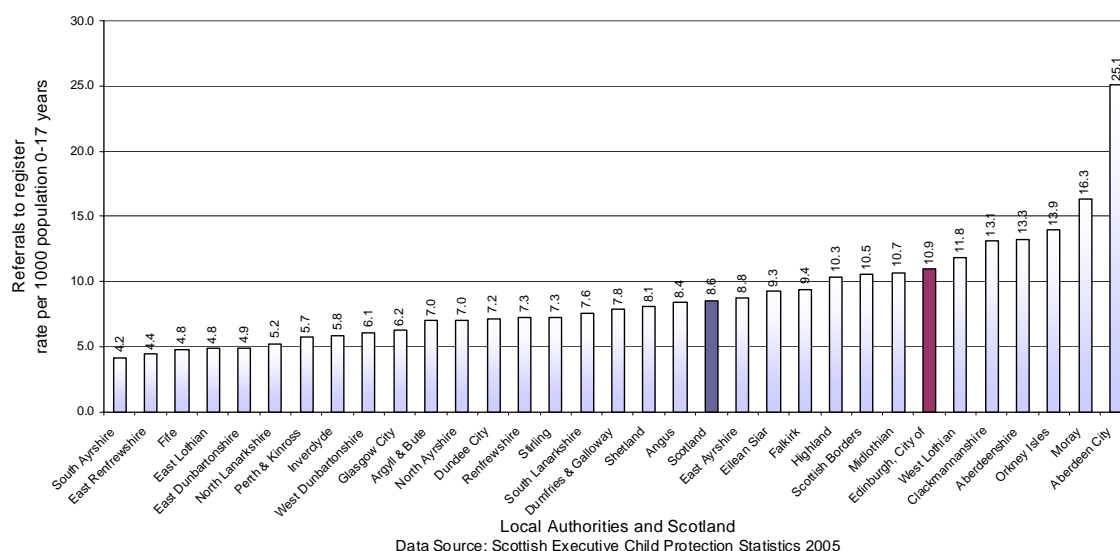
- 6.7** In the light of the Colyn Evans case in Fife and the subsequent SWIA report, a report is going to the Executive of the Council on 20/6/06 in relation to the implications of this report for Edinburgh.
- 6.8** A draft Inter-Agency Protocol on Case Conferences and Risk Management of Sexually Harmful Young People was presented to the Committee on 7/2/06. This Protocol, once adopted, answers many of the criticisms made against Fife, and has subsequently been approved by the Children and Families Senior Management Team and incorporated into an Executive of the Council report.
- 6.9** There are, however, funding issues as a second Sex Offender Liaison Officer to deal with young people under 16 with sexually aggressive behaviour require to be resolved before the Protocol can be implemented.
- 6.10** The Guidelines for agencies in Edinburgh & Lothians: Protecting Children Living in Families with Problem Substance Use were launched in November 2005 for all agencies working with parents with substance misuse problems. Some initial training on the guidelines was done in January and February 2006. However, the training sub-group has indicated more volume training requires to be done. This is crucial given the prevalence of substance misuse at this time.

## 7.0 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

**7.1** Statistical information on child protection registration is given below.

**7.2** Over the past three years the number of children referred to the Child Protection Register has continued to increase for the City of Edinburgh. A total of 882 children were referred to the Register and subject to Child Protection inquiries over the twelve months to 31 March 2005. This is an increase of 178 children, equivalent to a 25.3% rise in referrals. **The increase in Child Protection referrals in Edinburgh of 25.3% within two years is considerably higher than the Scottish average.**

**2. Children referred to the Child Protection Register for the year ended March 2005: rate per 1000 population aged 0 -17 years**



- 7.3 The number of Edinburgh children on the Register at 31 March 2005 was 237. This figure had stayed relatively stable over the preceding years with 332 children on the Register at 31 March 2003 and 326 children on the Register at 31 March 2004. **The number of children placed on the Child Protection Register fell between 2004 and 2005.**
- 7.4 The rate of children on the Child Protection Register at 31 March per 1,000 population aged 0 to 15 years is 3.3 for the City of Edinburgh. **Edinburgh's rate of registration has come much closer to the Scottish average.**
- 7.5 The number of children referred to a Child Protection Register as a rate per 1000 children aged 0 to 17 years varied greatly across Scotland. These differences between local authorities across Scotland are to some extent a result of differences in the Child Protection policies and procedures operating in each council area and cannot be interpreted simply to reflect differences in the incidence or prevalence of child neglect or abuse. **Edinburgh has the seventh highest rate of Child Protection inquiries in Scotland.**
- 7.6 For the City of Edinburgh in the year 2004/05, of the 882 new children referred to the Child Protection Register, 211 were then the subject of an initial case conference, which represents 23.9% of all new children referred. **There were 61 fewer initial case conferences in 2004/05 than in 2003/04.**
- 7.7 For the City of Edinburgh in the year 2004/05, of the 882 new children referred to the Child Protection Register, 172 were then registered following the case conference, which represents 19.5% of all new children referred. **The percentage of referrals proceeding to registration in the City of Edinburgh (19.5%) is below the Scottish average (25.1%).**
- 7.8 In Edinburgh at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 43.9% of children on the Child Protection Register had been on the Register for less than six months and 9.3% of children had been on the Register for more than two years. The percentage of children on the Register for over two years has been decreasing annually from 18.1% at 31 March 2003 to 14.1% at 31 March 2004 and at 9.3% Edinburgh is much closer to the national average. **Edinburgh has been successful in reducing the number of children on the Child Protection Register for two years or more.**
- 7.9 The outcome of the initial case conference in the majority of cases is that the child is placed on the Child Protection Register. In the City of Edinburgh 2004/05, 172 children were placed on the Child Protection Register following the case conference; this represents 81.5% of all the children who were subject to a case conference. **Most children considered by initial Child Protection Case Conferences in Edinburgh were placed on the Child Protection Register.**
- 7.10 Physical neglect is the main category of abuse identified in 2004/05 (38.9%), followed by physical injury (25.6%) and emotional abuse (14.2%%). The number of children registered due to physical neglect has risen from 54 in 2002/03 to 81 in 2004/05, while the number registered due to physical injury have fallen from 98 in 2002/03 to 50 in 2004/05. The number of children registered due to sexual abuse has been decreasing annually since 2002/3 when there were 24 children in this category to 2004/05 when there were 14 children registered due to sexual abuse. **The number of children on the Child Protection Register under the category of Physical Abuse has fallen significantly but the number registered under Physical Neglect has risen.**

Figure 2

Table 9. Outcome of case conference and category of abuse identified for the City of Edinburgh

| Category of abuse   | 2002/03                 |                     |            |              | 2003/04                 |                     |            |              | 2004/05                 |                     |            |              |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------|--------------|
|                     | Outcome: Not registered | Outcome: Registered | Total      | Total %      | Outcome: Not registered | Outcome: Registered | Total      | Total %      | Outcome: Not registered | Outcome: Registered | Total      | Total %      |
| Physical injury     | 4                       | 98                  | 102        | 47.0         | 5                       | 85                  | 90         | 33.1         | 4                       | 50                  | 54         | 25.6         |
| Sexual abuse        | 2                       | 24                  | 26         | 12.0         | 11                      | 18                  | 29         | 10.7         | 4                       | 14                  | 18         | 8.5          |
| Failure to thrive   | 0                       | 1                   | 1          | 0.5          | 0                       | 1                   | 1          | 0.4          | 0                       | 0                   | 0          | 0.0          |
| Emotional abuse     | 0                       | 23                  | 23         | 10.6         | 0                       | 34                  | 34         | 12.5         | 3                       | 27                  | 30         | 14.2         |
| Physical neglect    | 0                       | 54                  | 54         | 24.9         | 3                       | 87                  | 90         | 33.1         | 1                       | 81                  | 82         | 38.9         |
| No abuse identified | 11                      | 0                   | 11         | 5.1          | 28                      | 0                   | 28         | 10.3         | 27                      | 0                   | 27         | 12.8         |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>17</b>               | <b>200</b>          | <b>217</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>47</b>               | <b>225</b>          | <b>272</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>39</b>               | <b>172</b>          | <b>211</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Data source: City of Edinburgh Council Child Protection Statistical Return to the Scottish Executive 2005

**7.11** For nearly half of the children subject to a case conference in 2004/05, the primary known or suspected abuser was the mother for 101 children (47.9% of children), the father for 46 children (21.8% of children) and the parent's co-habitee for a further 12 children (5.7% of children). **Mothers make up almost half of the known or suspected sources of risk for children on the Child Protection Register.**

**7.12** Overall, there were slightly more boys than girls on the Child Protection Register in the City of Edinburgh as at 31 March 2005 and the percentage for each gender is 54% males and 64% females for all ages of children. This is the converse of the gender ratios for referrals in the year. **Slightly more boys than girls are on the Child Protection Register.**

## **8.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE**

- 8.1** Activities in terms of quality assurance under the joint inspection preparation, has already been referred to.
- 8.2** 23 cases were subject to child protection self-evaluation and practitioners reportedly found this an excellent process, which will be encouraged in neighbourhood working, particularly child protection Case Conference core groups.
- 8.3** The Committee adopted a Serious Case Review procedure in October 2005 and currently one case is being reviewed under this procedure.
- 8.4** Lessons to be learned and inter-agency recommendations will be presented to the Committee on 14/6/06.

## **9.0 PROMOTION OF GOOD PRACTICE**

- 9.1** A key responsibility for the Lead Officer will be to analyse and disseminate findings and recommendations from local and national inspections and enquiries.
- 9.2** In the last 6 months, the findings of the SWIA report on the Western Isles and the Fife case have been presented to the Committee. Other reports are in hand.

- 9.3** The practitioners/service users sub-group has met three times and the minutes evidence good practice issues, as well as matters which need to be taken forward (sample agenda attached Appendix 6).
- 9.4** The remit of this group is:
- To provide practitioners with an inter-agency forum for discussion on practice and procedural child protection issues
  - To report relevant practice issues to Edinburgh Child Protection Committee
  - To be informed and consulted by Edinburgh Child Protection Committee on relevant matters
  - To enable service users to comment on and be consulted about the service they receive
  - To identify ways in which service users and practitioners can recommend service improvements
- 9.5** Further work requires to be done by the Lead Officer in circulating good practice more widely to practitioners in all agencies, perhaps by e-mail briefings or newsletter.
- 10.0 TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT**
- 10.1** The training sub-group has been active since its establishment and has produced a draft inter-agency training strategy (attached Appendix 7).
- 10.2** The current strategy is focussed primarily on the needs of the core child protection statutory sector and a development will require to be made to extend this to the voluntary sector and other related local authority departments such as Services for Communities.
- 10.3** One aspiration of the inter-agency strategy is to co-locate Health, Children and Families and Police trainers to optimise resources. However, funding and premises to do this are not yet available.
- 10.4** Training also needs to take account of single agency requirements and the Children and Families Department is currently recruiting a child protection trainer in employee development for leading the development of former social work staff training.
- 10.5** Additional child protection training needs require to be analysed for meeting the SSSC registration requirements. Guidance is awaited on this from SSSC.
- 10.6** The City of Edinburgh Council has developed a Performance Review and Development system of appraisal for all its staff on a rolling basis. Children and Families staff will become subject to the PRD from 2006-8. This will replace former Social Work Department's appraisal system and will identify child protection and other related training needs. Currently, the Children and Families Department is setting up a course for supervising Senior Social Workers on the emotional impact of child protection work on staff.
- 10.7** The Child Protection Office has recently appointed an inter-agency Lothian & Borders child protection trainer. Links will be developed with the Lead Officer and both staff will be members of the training sub-group.

## **11.0 COMMUNICATION AND CO-OPERATION**

- 11.1** The Committee has a high level of attendance across agencies.
- 11.2** The Chair of the Committee and the Keeper of the Register sit on the Edinburgh, Lothian & Borders Co-ordinating Group.
- 11.3** The sub-groups have attracted a high degree of interest, participation and inter-agency work.
- 11.4** There is a good deal more work required to be undertaken by the Lead Officer in developing staff and public awareness of the Committee itself and linking to the information disseminated by the over-arching Executive and Co-ordination Groups and the Child Protection Office.
- 11.5** The Chair of the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) is represented on the Committee and the DAAT development worker on the training sub-group.
- 11.6** Development of liaison with related bodies such as children's services planning and community planning is a Work Plan target but requires more work done to enhance relationships by the Lead Officer.

## **12.0 PLANNING AND CONNECTIONS**

- 12.1** The annual report will be reported in the Integrated Children's Services Plan.
- 12.2** More work requires to be undertaken in the area of planning and connections as outlined in 11.6.
- 12.3** There are internal single agency child protection fora in the Children and Families Department (Departmental Business Meeting), the Police (Police Forum on Child Protection) and Health (Child Protection Action Group).

## **13.0 LISTENING TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

- 13.1** The main developments related to this have been reported in 3.1 to 3.3.

## **14.0 OTHER POINTS RELATED TO THE COMMITTEE'S WORK**

- 14.1** In August 2006 co-located Health, Children and Families Social Work and the Police will operate a City wide service for co-ordination of Initial Referral Discussions at senior level on all suspected child abuse cases.
- 14.2** The aim of this team, which has been planned since the O'Brien report, is to improve the speed and consistency of response across the City of initial investigations of child protection and chairing of initial case conferences.
- 14.3** The Police personnel based in the co-located building at Vega House, South Gyle encompasses those officers working in Child and Family Protection, Domestic Abuse, Juvenile Liaison and Sex Offending.

The Child Protection Office staff will also move to the premises. However, maintenance of the Child Protection Register will continue at present from the

current site at Shrubhill until the necessary IT connections are installed.

- 14.4** The Police have chosen to use the umbrella title of “**Amethyst**” for all of these services, an informal, neutral and non-threatening name. The Social Work aspect of this service, the Child Protection Investigation and Review Team, is likely to operate under the same generic label but hold a discrete identity within this. The Child Protection Investigation and Review Team comprises: 1 Team Leader, 6 Senior Social Workers and 1 Administrative Assistant.

The referrals for the Police services will be directed through one number. Staff making IRD referrals will initially make contact with a receptionist who will divert their call to the appropriate available staff member, whether Police Officer or Senior Social Worker. Police and Senior Social Worker's will ensure the necessary sharing of information within Amethyst and communication with Neighbourhood Social Work Practice Teams, as investigating Social Workers will remain in Practice Teams.

- 14.5** The newly appointed Senior Social Workers will undertake some induction, team building and training from 19 June 2006 for 3-4 weeks. The proposed operational start date is 14 August 2006. The CPIRT will begin work by assuming responsibility for IRDs. Tasks in relation to Case Conference Chairing will be assumed at a date to be determined by the progress and outcome of further recruitment to the Senior Social Worker posts.

- 14.6** Draft operating procedures for CPIRT and Neighbourhood Teams have already been drafted and can be put in place upon the operational start of CPIRT. Procedures for Swift are being drawn up to dovetail with these business processes.

- 14.7** In November 2005 a Project Manager from the Police was seconded to the Edinburgh, Lothian & Borders Child Protection Office to lead the work in reviewing the Edinburgh & Lothians Inter-Agency Child Protection Guidelines.

- 14.8** There are also important developments in North Edinburgh relating to a proposed domestic abuse pilot with the aim of improving services to children experiencing or affected by domestic abuse from later in 2006.

- 14.9** New legislation such as the outcome of the consultation on the Scottish Vetting & Barring Scheme and the introduction of the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2005 will require to be taken account of in the future work of the Committee.

- 14.10** Implementation of the Vulnerable Witness Act requires a dedicated location to be found in Edinburgh for adult and child vulnerable witnesses, whose needs require them to give evidence outwith court buildings. Work is ongoing to find such a location, which is proving extremely difficult, primarily due to the need for it to be for sole dedicated use and the lack of office space in Edinburgh.

## **15.0 FUTURE PLANS MARCH 2006 – MARCH 2007**

- 15.1** The current work plan of the Committee, as stated, requires to be themed and re-defined by the Lead Officer under the headings proposed by the Scottish Executive.

- 15.2** For the purposes of this report, key action points have been highlighted to be incorporated into the work plan at a later date.

**15.3** The Edinburgh Committee's work plan needs to be informed by and inform the work plan of the Child Protection Office. The Work Plan for the latter is attached in Appendix 8.

**15.4** **Public Information**

**15.4.1** A programme led by the Consumer Involvement Officer and the Lead Officer (once recruited) is in hand with the aim of having improved public awareness, better public information and possibly a pilot single number for reporting child abuse by the end of 2006.

**15.5** **Policies, Procedures & Protocols**

**15.5.1** The revised Inter-Agency Child Protection Guidelines for Edinburgh & the Lothians possibly with the force of procedures will be launched in the autumn of 2006. Much work on a single agency basis will remain to be done to give guidance to staff on the detailed working of the procedures. Training on an extensive scale will be required.

**15.5.2** The draft Inter-Agency Protocol on Case Conferences and Risk Assessment of Sexually Harmful Young People will hopefully be adopted by the Executive of the Council in June 2006 and thereafter implemented once the funding for the second SOLO for under 16 year olds has been identified.

**15.6** **Management Information**

**15.6.1** Ongoing statistical reports and analyses of the statistics will be done throughout 2006-7.

**15.6.2** Child Protection Register online will hopefully be extended from the existing hospital sites.

**15.7** **Quality Assurance**

**15.7.1** The Joint Inspection Reference Group will continue to generate self-evaluation work in preparation for the inspection in February 2007.

**15.7.2** Regular updates will be given on the preparation for inspection at the Committee.

**15.7.3** Further Serious Case Reviews may be undertaken if staff resources permit. They are extremely time-consuming for staff with other key responsibilities. A service improvement would be to have a multi-agency team of reviewers available for Edinburgh, Lothian & Borders, as work to establish a culture of learning from practice requires to be promoted and fits with the developments outlined in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Review of Social Work Report "Changing Lives".

**15.8** **Promotion of Good Practice**

**15.8.1** Appointment of the Lead Officer to dedicate resources to this is crucial. Key fora are the practitioners/service users sub-group and single agency child protection development meetings. The Lead Officer will also make national links and be able to network through the Chairs and Lead Officers meetings.

**15.9** **Training and Staff Development**

- 15.9.1** A draft inter-agency training strategy has been drawn up.
- 15.9.2** The Committee needs to consider the staffing and other resourcing of the strategy, which is based on the Child Protection Reform Programme's proposed strategy. Funding is required to implement the volume training required. This requires decisions in summer of 2006.
- 15.9.3** Training across agencies will be prioritised for rolling out the revised Guidelines (probably to be called Procedures). This requires to take place in the autumn of 2006.
- 15.10** **Communication & Co-operation**
- 15.10.1** Action points have been detailed in the body of the report. The dissemination more widely of the role, functions and remit of the Committee itself is urgently required to be done by the Lead Officer in the autumn of 2006, including making the minutes of the Committee meetings more widely available and developing a website.
- 15.11** **Planning & Connections**
- 15.11.1** Action points under this heading are also primarily for the Lead Officer once appointed.
- 15.11.2** The Committee needs to consider devoting an away day in the autumn of 2006 to develop more strategic and themed objectives with the help of the Lead Officer.
- 15.12** **Listening to Children & Young People**
- 15.12.1** As with public awareness, there is a plan in hand from June to December 2006 to improve this aspect of service delivery and hopefully reduce the stigma of child protection processes.



## **16.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 16.1** Child Protection is a complex process of itself.
- 16.2** The Edinburgh Child Protection Committee is operating in a particularly complex environment. More clarity is required on the roles of the Executive and Co-ordinating Groups, their relationship to the Edinburgh Committee, including publicising the work of the individual Groups and Committees to key stakeholders and clearly defining roles.
- 16.3** The Edinburgh Committee has been successful in establishing 2 sub-groups and inter-agency training, practice issues and the involvement of service users in being consulted about child protection processes have all made good progress.
- 16.4** The difficulties in recruiting a Lead Officer to the Committee has hindered some of the key action points for the Committee, but this will be remedied by the autumn of 2006.
- 16.5** The work of the Committee has evidenced good inter-agency working and a willingness and enthusiasm for collaborative work.
- 16.6** Good progress has been made in Quality Assurance but this requires to be built upon during 2006-7 in preparation for the joint inspection of child protection.
- 16.7** The revised Inter-Agency Guidelines will be launched in the autumn of 2006.