



Child Protection Committee

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee Communication Strategy

April 2006

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Introduction

The North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee (CPC) is made up of representatives from across the main statutory and voluntary organisations throughout North Ayrshire. The purpose of the Child Protection Committee is to ensure that local agencies work together to protect children from harm and give them the best possible chance in life.

The Child Protection Committee believes that partnership working can be enhanced by good communication between the member agencies at strategic and policy level, and between professionals working together. It also believes that good communication with children and young people, parents and carers, members of the public, and voluntary and community groups is important too, if child protection measures are to be effective.

The Scottish Executive document, **Protecting Children and Young People - CPCs**, states that in relation to:

Public Information:

CPCs are required to produce and disseminate public information about protecting children and young people. Each CPC will develop, implement and regularly review a communications strategy that includes the following elements:

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

CPCs will determine the level of public knowledge of and confidence in child protection systems within their area and address any issues as required within business plans.

(Scottish Executive – Protecting Children and Young People – CPCs)

Communication and Co-operation:

Effective communications and co-operation, both within and between professions and agencies, is essential to the protection of children.

Each CPC will:

- Demonstrate effective communication and co-operation at CPC level;
- Actively promote effective communication and collaboration between agencies;
- Identify and, wherever possible, resolve any issues between agencies in relation to the protection of children and young people;
- Demonstrate effective communication with other inter-agency bodies;
- Demonstrate effective communication about the work of the CPC with staff in constituent agencies; and
- Identify opportunities to share knowledge, skills and learning with other CPCs

(Scottish Executive – Protecting Children and Young People – CPCs)

This Communication Strategy sets out the key strategic objectives and how they can be implemented. This will ensure effective communication in all aspects of the work and interests of the Child Protection Committee. It is envisaged that this Communication Strategy will operate for 3 –5 years, subject to ongoing review.



Background

- The North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee was officially re-launched in July 2004.
- Information and promotional material has been produced and circulated widely. These include posters, leaflets, folders, bookmarks, business cards, exhibition systems, roller banners, wristbands and novelties.
- A North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee website has been set up, and is maintained and updated on a regular basis.
- A range of publications have been produced and circulated.

These include:-

‘Protecting Children and Young People in Community Groups’
(Guidance for voluntary/community groups);

Information for Service Providers booklet for staff;

Getting Our Priorities Right (full protocol and practitioner’s summary) – Inter-Agency Working with Families where Substance Misuse is an Issue

- Child protection issues have been highlighted in North Ayrshire Primary Schools through the arts and drama projects. These include “The Huge Bag of Worries”, and “What’s Bugging You?”;
- A CD Rom ‘How things work?’ – A Guide to Child Protection has been produced for children and young people (in conjunction with Children’s 1st);
- Practitioner Forums have been set up;
- A Child Protection Trainer has been appointed and an extensive training programme developed;
- Information Sharing Protocols have been set up and agreed between partner agencies; and
- Integrated Assessment Frameworks are being set up between partner agencies.

In addition to the activities and items listed above, the Child Protection Committee continues to provide a regular multi-agency forum for discussion and planning, and has set up sub-groups to work on specific areas of interest. These are the Training Sub-Group, the Auditing Sub-Group, and the Information Sub-Group.

Strategic Objectives

The overall aim of this Communication Strategy is to build on the good practice and achievements since the Child Protection Committee was set up, using what has been learned to identify 6 key areas that are essential to good communication. These provide the Strategic Objectives.

1. To raise awareness of the work of the CPC and improve understanding of child protection work.
2. To provide clear and succinct up to date information on child protection.
3. To ensure that children, young people and adults have information on how to seek help in relation to child protection concerns.
4. To ensure that consistent CPC information and key messages are disseminated throughout partner organisations.
5. To improve communications between partner agencies.
6. To ensure that the CPC establishes good links with policy makers at regional and national level as well as locally, and disseminates information from these sources throughout partner agencies.

Implementation

Strategic Objective 1

To raise awareness of the work of the CPC and improve perception of child protection among the target audience.

Task	Person(s) responsible	Time scale	Resource implication
To raise public awareness of CP issues through advertising in local press (eg advertising new publications etc)	Information Sub Group M Hawthorn M Gilmour	Ongoing	Staff time Information Budget
Work with Council and partner Communication Services to get positive news releases out to local press regularly	M Hawthorn M Gilmour	Every 8-12 weeks	Staff time
Circulate news to all partners on the Committee for them to distribute through their own networks	M Hawthorn	Every 8-12 weeks	Staff time
Use partner agencies own internal newsletters to circulate key messages.	Individual Information Sub Group members	Every 8-12 weeks	Staff time
Arrange displays of promotional material, roller banners, exhibition systems throughout North Ayrshire, eg in libraries, supermarkets, shopping malls	M Hawthorn	Ongoing	Staff time
Attend seminars/events etc to maximise opportunities for awareness raising	Individual Information Sub Group members	Ongoing	Staff time
Continue to use established links with nursery, primary and secondary schools to raise awareness and increase understanding of CP issues	M Hawthorn L Crone A Hunter	Ongoing	Staff time Information Sub Group budget Surestart Funding £30,000

Implementation

Strategic Objective 2

To provide clear and succinct up-to-date information on child protection.

Task	Person(s) responsible	Time scale	Resource implication
Review all public promotional and information material regularly, to ensure that information is appropriate and up-to-date.	M Hawthorn S Winton	Every 8-12 weeks	Staff time Information Sub Group Budget
Review and up-date the CPC website	M Hawthorn E Steven	Every 6 months	Staff time
Make all publications available on the web site in downloadable format.	M Hawthorn E Steven	Ongoing	Information Sub Group budget
Set up website to allow a designated CPC representative to add, or update, content.	M Hawthorn L Willetts P Hettrick	February 06	Information Sub Group budget
Set up monitoring facility on website, to enable Committee to gain information about usage.	M Hawthorn L Willetts	February 06	Information Sub Group budget

Implementation

Strategic Objective 3

To ensure that children, young people and adults have information on how to seek help in relation to child protection concerns.

Task	Person(s) responsible	Time scale	Resource implication
Ensure that all information and promotional material about the Child Protection Committee is readily available throughout North Ayrshire, including on the website.	M Hawthorn Individual members Information Sub Group	Ongoing	Staff time Information Sub Group budget
Ensure that all partner organisations disseminate agreed information throughout their own networks.	Individual members Information Sub Group	Ongoing	Staff time
Continue to work through existing links with nurseries, schools and colleges throughout North Ayrshire, to ensure that children and young people have access to information about how and where to seek help, and other CP issues.	M Hawthorn L Crone A Hunter	Ongoing	Staff time Information Sub Group budget Surestart funding
Set up focus group(s), as appropriate, of young people to review information, and identify information needs both for keeping themselves safe and for addressing concerns they may have about others.	M Hawthorn M Paterson A Morrell S Winton	June 06	Staff time
Explore innovative ways of promoting CP awareness and information sharing for children, young people and adults, including CD Rom, DVD, Advertisements, setting up parents groups, working with existing groups eg church groups.	M Hawthorn M Paterson A Morrell S Winton	Sept 06	Staff time Information Sub Group budget Surestart funding

Implementation

Strategic Objective 4

To ensure that consistent Child Protection Committee information and key messages are disseminated throughout partner organisations.

Task	Person(s) responsible	Time scale	Resource implication
Review distribution networks of partner organisations. Each partner agency to provide up-to-date distribution and contact lists, and nominate representatives to co-ordinate dissemination of consistent information.	M Hawthorn Named rep from individual agencies	April 06	Staff time
Set up meetings of communications/media representatives from each partner agency to share information and discuss promotional/awareness-raising activities.	Communications reps from individual agencies	At least twice per year	Staff time
Review style, status and circulation of minutes from CPC sub-groups.	M Hawthorn Individual Sub Group members	May 06	Staff time
Make current/recent minutes available on the website, and old ones accessible to CPC members in archived format.	M Hawthorn	March 06	Staff time Information Sub Group Budget

Implementation

Strategic Objective 5

To Improve communication between partner agencies.

Task	Person(s) responsible	Time scale	Resource implication
Carry out periodic reviews of membership of the CPC and ensure that most appropriate people represent each partner agency.	CPC Chair	Every 6-12 months	Staff time
Ensure shared understanding of the nature, and key priorities of all partner agencies, and the role they play in child protection, by requesting each partner agency to provide a short written statement to be included in the Annual Report.	M Hawthorn	Jun 06	Staff time
Facilitate and encourage good networking between partner agencies and individuals representing them, eg by sharing contact details at training events/practitioner forums/staff briefings.	C McLean	Jan 06	Staff time Training Sub Group Budget

Implementation

Strategic Objective 6

To establish good links between North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee and policy makers at local, regional, and national level and to disseminate information from these sources throughout partner agencies.

Task	Person(s) responsible	Time scale	Resource implication
Ensure that the CPC continues to participate fully in the West of Scotland Regional CP Lead Officers Group and CPC chair group.	M Hawthorn	6 weekly	Staff time
	CPC Chair, S Paterson	6 weekly	Staff time
Continue to contribute to the Scottish Executive National Forum	M Hawthorn CPC Chair, S Paterson	3 monthly	Staff time
Take part in Ayrshire wide projects in partnership with East and South Ayrshire CPCs.	M Hawthorn	Ongoing	Staff time
Participate in, and where appropriate, set up training initiatives at local, regional and national level.	C McLean	Ongoing	Training budget
Actively pursue international research and links via the internet. Attract other funding opportunities.	C McLean L Willetts	Ongoing	Staff time

Monitoring and Evaluation

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to evaluate the take-up and effectiveness of projects undertaken by the CPC and its partner agencies.

These will include:-

- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- 'Whats bugging you' drama workshop – questionnaires by teachers and young people
- CPC Evaluation forms
- Childrens 1st Advocacy
- Feedback from Community Learning and Development Hack Pack Group, Young Persons Conference
- Focus groups
- 'Soft' information on difficult-to-measure aspects
- On-going review of the CPC's activity
- Website (Statistics on website usage)
- Self Evaluation (HMIE Inspection requires CPC and staff to self-evaluate in preparation for the inspection)
- Staff Training (evaluations completed by staff)

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