

Greater Glasgow NHS Board

Board Meeting

Tuesday 16th December 2003

Board Paper No. 2003/77

Director of Planning and Community Care

Reforming Child Protection

Recommendation:

- **the Board notes progress to strengthen our arrangements to protect vulnerable children and respond to Scottish Executive requirements.**

A. BACKGROUND

1.1 Over the last two years a number of important reviews and inquiries have highlighted significant issues about the protection of vulnerable children. These include:

- “Its Everyone’s Job to Make Sure I’m Alright”, A Review of Child Protection, December 2002;
- Victoria Climbié Inquiry report, January 2003;
- Caleb Ness Inquiry, October 2003;
- Hidden Harm: Responding to the needs of children of problem drug users, June 2003.

1.2 These reports and inquiries highlight significant issues for the NHS particularly:

- tackling child protection concerns where our patient is not the child;
- sharing information with other agencies;
- ensuring all NHS staff are aware of child protection issues;
- ensuring clear systems to enable concerns to be raised and addressed;
- delivering corporate leadership and commitment to child protection.

1.3 We have a complex set of guidance for NHS staff and work with several Local Authority Child Protection Committees, to address interagency issues. Ensuring that we comprehensively address the points, issues arising policy review and inquiries

1.4 We have already begun to change child protection arrangements as an outcome of considering the Victoria Climbié Inquiry, the recommendations of which we have worked through in the Child Health Strategy Group and as an outcome of working through “Its Everyone’s Job to Make Sure I’m Alright”, in the Local Authority Child Protection Committees but it is clear that we need to strengthen working across the NHS.

EMBARGOED UNTIL MEETING

- 1.5 We are therefore in the process of establishing a Greater Glasgow wide NHS Child Protection Group with terms of reference to:
- ensure the NHS is effectively and influentially represented on Local Authority Child Protection Committees. This includes ensuring that the NHS acts on issues identified through the Local Authority processes;
 - ensure all NHS staff are aware of and discharge their responsibilities for child protection;
 - ensure the NHS has clear policies on interdisciplinary working, information sharing and assessment arrangements;
 - ensure that the NHS has a detailed plan of action, with clear responsibility and timescales to address the outcome of recent UK inquiries and emerging Scottish Executive guidance;
- 1.6 Rosslyn Crockett will chair this group on behalf of the NHS Board. Membership will include staff from all Trusts to ensure we agree and deliver the changes required to improve the protection of vulnerable children.

B. SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE PROGRAMME

- 2.1 The Scottish Executive has established a child protection reform programme, covering the development of standards, a children's charter and review of Child Protection committees.
- 2.2 The attached letter from the three lead Ministers confirms the importance placed on achieving change and improvement. We are asked to respond to the letter by:
- providing an assurance that we have completed a full review of our own services and their relationships to other agencies;
 - confirming that either we are satisfied arrangements are effective or have identified areas for further action;
 - confirming robust quality assurance mechanisms are in place.
- 2.3 The revised corporate arrangements for child protection and the work outlined above, already underway, will go some way to enabling us to respond to the Ministers' letter. However, two points are worth highlighting - the national lead which the Reform Programme can offer needs to focus on helping local systems address the difficult issues. In addition, we expect that a number of challenging issues will arise from our review, notably the availability of expertise and resources to support the protection of vulnerable children, the challenge of training and updating large numbers of NHS staff.
- 2.4 We also believe that a revised, multi-agency national inspection approach is fundamental, as are model frameworks for effective child protection systems.

C. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The NHS in Greater Glasgow has increased its focus on child protection and will continue to identify and address shortcomings. Leadership and support from the Executive will remain critical.