

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
11 JUNE 2008**

SUBJECT: CELEBRATING SUCCESS

BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to share with Committee some of the successes and positive developments within Children & Families Services in recent months.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section *D (23) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the functions of the Council as a Social Work Authority.*

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the successes and positive developments that Children & Families Services have achieved in recent months.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As part of the process of keeping the Committee up to date on the wider activity of the service and as a means of celebrating success in that context, it is intended to present reports to Committee on events, activities and initiatives undertaken by or on behalf of Children & Families Services.
- 3.2 This information has been collated for the committee's information at **APPENDIX 1** to this report.
- 3.3 The items included in reports to Committee will also be communicated within the Department through regular staff newsletters.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- (a) Corporate Development Plan/ Community Plan/ Service Improvement Plan**

None

(b) Policy and Legal

None

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

None

(d) Consultations

None

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 It is recommended that the committee notes the successes and positive developments within Community Services in recent months.

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Background Papers:

Ref:

Fostering & Adoption

Early in 2007 the Fostering and Adoption team engaged with a new online learning provider called Akamas and decided to pilot their new course which was specific to foster care.

Four courses were purchased at this time and Ian Meredith one of our foster carers has just completed the Akamas level 3 online training 'Advanced skills in foster care'. Ian is the first Scottish Candidate to complete this course and the first male in the UK. Ian says that the course has increased his confidence and enabled him to reflect on his practice. Ian and his wife Charlotte have been foster carers since 2003 and throughout that time have had children in placement almost constantly both longer term placements and short emergency/ respite placements.

The training agenda for foster carers is extensive and the addition of the online learning has added a further dimension. The Akamas course focuses on child development, issues of attachment and trauma, and team working. It is a flexible learning tool which carers can engage with at their own pace and at the time of day that suits them, either when children are at school or in many cases when children are asleep. This year a further eight places have been purchased on

this course which have been taken up by both foster carers and our support work team.

Ian and Charlotte have taken part in many training courses offered by the fostering team and always use the learning to enable them to develop their practice. Ian feels that the support and training he receives is 'second to none'.

In March 2008 Carole Carthew and Ruth Jeffries, social workers with the Fostering & Adoption Team, received their Post Qualifying Award in Social Work, having completed PQ 1 – 6. Ruth and Carole have completed this award over a four-year period. Part of the PQ award (PQ 2-5) was a role specific input 'Best Practice in Family Placement', which another Social Worker, Verna Burkinshaw also completed. This course which was presented by the British Agencies for Adoption & Fostering (BAAF) covered all of the areas which the team is involved in on a day to day basis and is put into practice regularly.

NCH Moray Support Families Project: Practice Development Pilot (Working with Children who have been Neglected)

NCH Supporting Moray Families Service have secured funding to develop their partnership work with Moray Council Children and Families Teams to deliver a practice development pilot working with children who have been neglected. Most of the families included in this pilot will have children on the Child Protection Register under the category of neglect; however the pilot might also include some families where there is a risk of neglect but no registration.

The pilot will be based within the NCH Supporting Moray Families service; building on that existing service; as well as contributing to its development.

This work will involve seconding a member of staff from one of the Children and Families teams who will take up the role of senior practitioner within the Moray project leading on this pilot.

The direct work delivered with families will provide an intensive assessment and intervention response that establishes a detailed picture about:

- the nature of concerns and specifications of the risks to the child
- the impact of current home circumstances and parenting practices on the child and their development
- the kind of change that is required for the child to remain safely within the family home
- the child/ young person's views, wishes and feelings

This will inform decision making about future plans and identify the support required to maintain the child safely within their own family network.

The work may also include a 28 day residential assessment as part of the intervention programme: this to be considered as appropriate in relation to individual referrals.

Supported Lodgings Project

The Throughcare & Aftercare Service's Supported Lodgings Project was part of a pilot inspection for the Care Commission in respect of their new assessment processes. We have recently received the inspection report and were awarded the following grades:-

- Quality of Care and Support Grade – 4 (Good)
- Quality of Staffing Grade – 4 (Good)
- Quality of Management and Leadership Grade – 4 (Good)

The inspection report and grades represent the Care Commission's assessment of the quality of the areas of performance, which were examined during this inspection. As this is a pilot inspection, the grading will not be published and we will be subject to a formal inspection later this year.

This experience has provided us with an insight into areas requiring further development. However, it can be noted that the project received a lot of 'very good' grades, unfortunately not fully recognised in the final scoring system. We received 4 very good grades, 4 good grades and 1 adequate grade.

In addition Moray Staff have collaborated with the Care Commission in finalising arrangements for the national inspection of Supported Lodgings Projects.

Reflections from Con Hogan from the 'Working together to improve the lives and well-being of our children seminar'

During the last week of March I had the opportunity to visit and work in Moray, through the good offices of Children's Services headed by John Carney. Following are some impressions of the people and work in this crucial arena.

First, I need to say that my perspective has been shaped by many experiences around the world in the children's arena, including Australia, Norway, The Republic of Ireland, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Israel, and even Chile. I mention these, not for frequent flyer mile bragging rights, but to let you know that the work going on in Moray is among the most advanced that I've seen.

The Realtime Evaluation process that is in the early stages is breakthrough work in the assessment of client baselines and the resulting ability to accumulate important information useful for frontline workers and strategic initiatives. The testing of 'outcome' ideas during my visit, which give us all the ability to determine whether or not we are making progress over time regarding the well-being of our children and families, is another example of local interest in working together to improve well-being. The phrase 'What can you do to contribute to the well being of our young people' was on the tips of many tongues during the seminars and meetings held during my visit.

Even more impressive is the overall quality and experience of the people I met at all levels, from frontline workers to the leadership.

There is no question in this man's mind that the Moray Council, its partners and the people who serve those who need our help is very serious about getting ahead of the many difficult challenges ahead. These challenges have to do with an increasingly difficult resource environment (which at this time is a world wide phenomenon), coupled with certain serious trends such as opiate use among young families, and the risk that this presents to the young children in these families.

It was a true privilege to be part of your world and your solid planning and thinking for the visit week. It is so very true, that working together, we can improve the well-being of the people we serve.

I wish you the very best in your work.

Cornelius 'Con' Hogan
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