

**To: Safer and Stronger Renfrewshire Thematic Board**

**On: 16 May 2016**

**Report by:**

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**Update on Ministerial Statement on Child Protection**

**1. Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to bring the Board's attention to the statement made by the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Angela Constance on Child Protection.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Board is asked to note the contents of the report.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 In a statement to Parliament, Education Secretary Angela Constance announced a comprehensive review of the child protection system in Scotland saying that the review will strengthen the steps taken when children have experienced, or are at risk from harm.
- 3.2 It will make recommendations by the end of 2016 and focus on:
- Child Protection Committees;
  - Initial Case Reviews;
  - Significant Case Reviews;
  - The Child Protection Register.
- 3.3 It was also stated that the inspection programme will be revised. It is likely that we will move away from the much wider inspection that was undertaken in Renfrewshire and published in December 2015, with changes focussing on the experiences of and outcomes for children in need of protection and children and young people who are subject to corporate parenting.
- 3.4 The statement also indicated a review of Child Protection legislation. Specifically, the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership will undertake an assessment of the impact of the Children's Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011 in order to identify action to strengthen consistency and effectiveness. The findings will be reported on later in 2016.
- 3.5 In relation to the issues of neglect, a review of current legislation will be undertaken to ensure effective measures are in place to protect children from actual or risk of

harm. Existing models of practice will be tested to develop models of best practice and a holistic picture of neglect across the country will be developed.

- 3.6 There will be a focus on promoting and supporting leadership and a national leader's summit is planned to take place in June 2016.
- 3.7 The Education Secretary also announced funding for the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland to extend its improvement work into the Child Protection arena.
- 3.8 The timescales for the introduction of degree level qualification for residential child care workers were also announced. This will come into effect for managers, supervisors and new starts from October 2017 and for the rest of the workforce, October 2019. Residential services provide support to our most vulnerable children and it is appropriate that we have skilled and experienced staff within the service. There will have a significant challenge is meeting this target as this level of qualification is required nationally.
- 3.9 Ms Constance stated "We have much to be proud of in the way we care for our children, but I want to make sure the systems to protect them when they are at risk are as robust as possible and able to act when harm has taken place."  
  
"We already have child protection committees in every local authority area, we have modernised the children's hearings system and we have invested in professional development for all those working with vulnerable children and families. But we want to do more... We are taking action now to protect our most vulnerable young people. I am determined to have the strongest possible system in place to protect children effectively, efficiently and with their best interests at its heart."
- 3.10 The ministerial statement follows recommendations made in the Care Inspectorate's Triennial Review and a report by Jackie Brock from Children In Scotland: Safeguarding Scotland's vulnerable children from child abuse.

#### 4. **Resources**

- 4.1 The Safer and Stronger Renfrewshire Action Plan identifies the resources requirements for each individual action.

#### 5. **Prevention**

- 5.1 The Action Plan framework allows the Safer and Stronger Renfrewshire Thematic Board to plan resources and direct investment towards prevention and early intervention.

## **6. Community Involvement/Engagement**

- 6.1 The Action Plan has been developed through the Safer and Stronger Renfrewshire Thematic Board and sub groups whereby the third sector is widely represented.

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