

NEXT STEPS IN THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES REFORM PROGRAMME

by Boyd McAdam, Head of *Getting it Right for Every Child* Team

Next steps to strengthen services for children have been unveiled by the Scottish Executive. A number of legislative reforms supporting the delivery of services for children across Scotland have been announced which will have a positive and lasting impact on the way services are delivered and the role children and young people have to play in this. The proposals affect everyone who is directly or indirectly involved in working with children – and co-ordination of reforms is critical to the care, protection, support and life chances of Scotland's children.

Legislative framework

The Executive is proceeding with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Bill that sets out provisions to improve the protection of vulnerable groups. The Bill will prevent those who are unsuitable to work with children and adults at risk from doing so. It will also put in place the legislative framework needed to deliver the new vetting and barring scheme recommended by the Bichard report and to make other changes to tighten protection. It is also planned to include provision for information sharing to protect children at risk.

Plans to consult on legislation to support the implementation of *Getting it Right for Every Child* have also been announced. Consultation on a draft Children's Services Bill will take place later in the year with a view to the introduction of legislation early in the next

Parliamentary Session. This legislation will establish the framework for reforming children's services and for strengthening and modernising the Children's Hearings system.

Peter Peacock, Minister for Education and Young People has reaffirmed that the child should be at the heart of what everyone does and that children, young people, families and carers should get the help they need when they need it. Mr Peacock said, "These reforms are vital to ensure that children get the support they need to cope with the challenges of life in the 21st Century."

Views given in response to the *Getting it Right for Every Child: Proposals for Action* (June 2005) consultation are being taken into account as part of the implementation of the reforms.



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There has been widespread support for the reform proposals. Copies of the Analysis of Consultation Responses are available on the website www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2006/03/13105254 along with the report into children's views on advocacy.

Offering support

Clearly these reforms are complex and far-reaching. They depend not just on legislation but mainly on helping agencies to change systems, to work closely together and to support practice change to the benefit of the child. The Scottish Executive is keen to support agencies to implement the proposals contained in *Getting it Right for Every Child*. A single assessment, record and plan is currently being developed. This will form the core tool for each agency working with children to record issues in the child's life and to help form a single record about the child when one needs to be created. All relevant information about a child's needs, the chronology of key events and the action being taken to help the child will be available for those who need and have permission to see it. This will reduce bureaucracy and free up more time for working with children. Additional tools and practical support will also be provided to assist practitioners and enable more direct work with children, young people, families and carers.

Pathfinder projects

As part of this work, a 'pathfinder' project has been established in Highland to: find ways of overcoming barriers to change; for scoping and developing the tools and training needed, and; to inform how best to achieve practice change. Information about the pathfinder project is available at www.forhighlandchildren.org/htm/girfec/girfec.php see also the accompanying article: Putting *Getting it Right for Every Child* into Practice.

Additional pathfinders are being considered in other areas to explore particular aspects of the *Getting it Right for Every Child* implementation and to identify new ways of working. They will be evaluated as part of the development of *Getting it Right for Every Child* and to highlight lessons for wider dissemination.

The plan is ambitious. Legislative changes will require the development of guidance and training materials and will take time to implement. But significant practice change should start now, informed by the pathfinders. We know a great deal is already taking place and that good practice models exist across the country. The Scottish Executive is keen to work with partners to harness the best, to do more of it and work in a smarter way to make a real difference to the lives of children across Scotland.

For further information, please contact the team at gettingitrightforeverychild@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

The ongoing story of the review of the Children's Hearings System . . . a long time in the telling but the end result should be well worth the wait!

As more experienced panel members are aware, the first phase of the review of the children's hearings system started some three years ago and looked initially at the basic principles of the system. Having established that they remain every bit as valid today as they were almost 40 years ago, the second phase of the review was launched by the Scottish Executive early last summer.

In common with many other panel members I had expected the early summer months of 2006 to be the time for some long-awaited announcements about the outcomes from this part of the consultation and for some clear indications as to future plans.

However, what may have appeared to many to be a relatively straightforward follow up consultation has developed into something much more complex. It now encompasses every aspect of how children's services need to be delivered across Scotland to ensure the best

possible outcomes for children and young people identified as being in need of those services. Not surprisingly, this greatly expanded remit, coupled with the need for action to be taken in other crucial areas impacting upon the safety of children, has led to delay all round.

While disappointing, it came as no surprise in June of this year when Margaret Curran, Minister for Parliamentary Business, announced the legislative programme for the next session of Parliament and confirmed that the Children's Services Bill would not be introduced until much later than we had expected. In 'Next Steps in the Children's Services Reform Programme' Boyd McAdam puts a timeframe around the implementation of the *Getting it Right for Every Child* agenda while in her article, Rhona Morrison, Chair of Highland Panel, gives a very good insight into what we may all expect in the future in a 'GIRFEC' environment.



George Anderson,
Chair of CPCG

The Children's Services Reform Programme is both complex and lengthy but there is light at the end of the tunnel – but we're not there yet, nor will we be for some time. For many valid reasons delays have already occurred and with each delay there is another degree of uncertainty planted in the minds of panel members about the real nature of our ongoing role. It is to the credit of all members that we have continued to fulfil our role within the children's hearings system during this period of heightened uncertainty. Against a backdrop of increasing numbers of referrals, often with accompanying alarmist press reporting, and ever more complex cases coming to hearings, panel members continue with the job of making decisions in the best interests of children.

The vision expressed with *Getting it Right for Every Child* that sees every child being offered and receiving the necessary level of services when they need it and for as long as it is required is irrefutable, there can surely be no argument against it. However, until that situation is the everyday norm across the whole country with every child being both offered and voluntarily accepting the necessary level of service, there will always be a role for panel members. Innumerable decisions are made every day and at every level by those involved in providing services for children and that is very clearly the way it should be. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that children's hearings remain by far the main decision making body whose

decisions are legally binding in respect of children and local authorities. Where any degree of compulsion is necessary for a child either to accept, or be allowed by others to accept intervention, there will always be a role for independent scrutiny and decision making.

As panel members we have always been strong advocates for early intervention and remain fully supportive of all professionals in their attempts to engage at an early stage with children and families. The direction to professionals being given under 'GIRFEC' can therefore only be welcomed – but with a caveat: do not overlook or underestimate the pivotal role of children's hearings in the decision making process.

Calling ex-children

The 2006 national children's panel recruitment campaign was successfully launched on 29 August by Robert Brown, Deputy Minister for Education and Young People, along with players from Gretna Football Club and children from Kilbowie Primary School.

There has been a lot of activity over the last few weeks and your CPAC will have been busy with local activities to attract people from your community to apply. Many of you will have signed up to help.

The theme of 'ex-children wanted' proved very popular last year so we used it again this year. That meant we wanted to hear from anyone aged over 18, regardless of background or experience, who felt they could contribute to helping children and young people in their area.

The campaign ended on 6 October and so far it is looking like it has been successful once again.

So a big thank you to everyone involved!



Honoured for services to the Children's Hearings System

Two long-serving children's panel chairs and a CPAC member were awarded MBEs in recognition of their service to the Children's Hearings System. Edith Blake, formerly Chair of Highland Children's Panel, Prof Stephen Phillips, formerly Chair of West Dunbartonshire Children's Panel and Peter Ward formerly Chair CPAC of the Joint CPAC for Falkirk, Clackmannan and Stirling, were all delighted to receive their awards.



"This award acknowledges not only the voluntary work I have done, but also that of the hundreds of volunteers that I have been involved with in the Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling areas over the last thirty-two years. This must also include the work of the thousands of people involved in the children's hearing system throughout Scotland."

Peter Ward



"It is the recognition for the whole system and everyone involved in it that makes receiving an Honour something special, although for myself I felt a bit embarrassed as I have only been doing something that has given me great pleasure to do."

Edith Blake



"While my first reaction was 'Why Me?', such recognition can only be good for the Hearings system and I hope the publicity may encourage others to join and current panel members to stay longer."

Stephen Phillips

Putting *Getting it Right for Every Child* into practice



By Rhona Morrison, Chair, Highland Children's Panel

Whether we have been panel members for a year or twenty-five years plus, the questions raised at Hearings have always been the same –

- WHY HAVEN'T AGENCIES WORKED TOGETHER?
- WHY HAS INTERVENTION NOT TAKEN PLACE BEFORE NOW?
- WHY IS EVERYONE NOT INFORMED ADEQUATELY?
- WHERE IS THE CHILD IN ALL OF THIS?
- IS IT ABOUT WHO DOES WHAT, FINANCES, WHO TAKES RESPONSIBILITY AND WHY SHOULD A SUPERVISION ORDER BE NECESSARY FOR ANY ACTION TO BE TAKEN?
- ARE THERE ANY AVAILABLE RESOURCES?

Scottish Ministers are committed to ensuring every child in Scotland gets the help they need when they need it. They are committed to reducing the bureaucracy that gets in the way of ensuring children are protected and, where necessary, that action is taken to protect others from children's behaviour.

As well as legislating to place new duties on agencies to co-operate with each other and share information, the Executive also plan to place a new duty on professionals to be alert to the needs of children and take action to meet them.

New ways of working

In Highland we are running a "Pathfinder Project" to implement *Getting it Right for Every Child*, as developed through public consultation, in which we as panel members have had a major input. This means new ways of working and a smarter way of achieving improved outcomes for children and our young people and ensuring they get the help they need when they need it as quickly as possible.

Moves to modernise children's services and children's hearings are now underway to ensure we are *Getting it Right for Every Child*. An inter-disciplinary team is working on a collaborative basis to develop new working practices and pilot new approaches that will lead to a single, joined up system for dealing with children who need support.

The Highland 'GIRFEC' Team, has representation from Education, Health, Social Work, the Police and SCRA and will develop the tools professionals need in order to do their jobs better, including a single assessment record and plan, practice guidance and skills development. They will provide information for parents and practitioners, placing the needs of families and children at the centre. Consultation with parents, children and professionals will take place throughout the process.

This activity, in conjunction with the Scottish Executive and commissioned experts, will help develop national practice tools, training materials and guidance – using a 'bottom up approach' with children, families and professionals involved in their development.

Further collaboration is taking place on the creation of a 'prototype' of an IT solution to facilitate information sharing and our experience will be made available to support national roll out and testing with a wider group of children. The work will help develop IT system specifications to enable agencies' own operating systems to be adapted to support the single assessment, record and plan.

Whilst *Getting it Right* does involve a single planning process for all children, including a single plan for those children with multi-agency needs, there is no proposal in Scotland for a national database. Instead, it is intended that details of children held on existing systems (health, education, social work and police) will be accessed as required for key information about a child and where there are concerns that multi-agency action is needed to address these concerns. Only at that stage would a single record be created as required.

Identifying barriers

The *Getting it Right* approach in Inverness has a roll out date of September 2006 and a great deal of work has gone in to preparing for this. Highland agencies will take this forward incrementally, learning as they go – identifying the barriers to change at local and national level. The Highland Team will therefore play a key role finding out what gets in the way of joined up working and what prevents more timely and appropriate responses. Their findings will inform the Scottish Executive and local managers and policy makers, so that they can undertake change where this is necessary – structural, financial, legislative, cultural – locally and/or nationally.

The implementation of *Getting it Right for Every Child* is an ambitious programme and a significant challenge for all those who work with children. It requires a fundamental shift in how children are helped and supported. This will take time. All agencies in Highland are committed to working with Executive colleagues to develop and disseminate further information on what these changes will mean in practice.

Implementation of *Getting it Right* will include:

- All staff taking responsibility for action to improve children's lives.

- Reduced bureaucracy.
- When there are concerns about a child, a proportionate, appropriate and timely response with a clear approach to staged intervention within Police, Health and Education services, and clear routes to multi-agency involvement and compulsory measures should that be necessary.
- Better information for children and families, about what is expected of them and from the professionals involved with them.
- Where more than one agency is or needs to be involved, one assessment and plan of action will be agreed and a lead professional assigned.
- Referral to the Reporter and the Children's Hearings system is based on two tests – significant need and the likely need for compulsion.
- Further developing changes in culture with different ways of working to deliver effective children's services within a unified approach; responses that deliver the vision for Scotland's children and strengthen families' capacities to care for their children well and meet their needs.

Evaluation

How will we know if we are *Getting it Right for Every Child*? The Scottish Executive's implementation plan, sets out a range of criteria. Full details are available on the website (details at the end) and will be assessed against the experience of children, families, communities, staff, and agencies. The Scottish Executive, with the experience of the Highland pathfinder, is working to develop evaluation mechanisms which will be applied to the Highland

pathfinder and on a national basis.

Representatives from the Scottish Executive are very active participants in the pathfinding process – with joint, fortnightly meetings bringing together the Highland Team with their national counterparts – and key

contributors from other areas of Scotland – with their respective expertise/experience of integrated children's services.

Clearly a huge amount of work still requires to be undertaken – drafted, tested, endorsed – if Highland is to be 'fit for purpose' in a few months time. In the interim, the Highland Team welcomes thoughts and ideas about this challenging agenda.

More detail about the Highland 'GIRFEC' Pathfinder are available at www.forhighlandschildren.org/html/girfec/girfec.php and on the children's hearings website.

"Everyone has a responsibility to do the right thing for each child and we must all work towards a unified approach, with less bureaucracy and more freedom to get on and deliver services for children. This will mean earlier help and the child getting the right service at the right time for their particular needs."

Restorative justice in the hearings system



by Alison Wright, SCRA and Derek Brooks, SACRO Restorative Justice Team

For some time now, Children's Reporters have been using Restorative Justice services available throughout Scotland, to respond to some young people who have been involved in offending.

Where Reporters know that the offending is admitted by the child and parents, and there is an identifiable victim involved, referral to Restorative Justice offers a meaningful way to help the young person acknowledge responsibility for their behaviour and to think through the consequences for and impact on the victim involved. The victim may well be involved in the process, but not in all cases.

The document 'Restorative Justice Services in the Children's Hearings System' (available at www.restorativejusticescotland.org.uk/youthjustice.htm) sets out the principles for using Restorative Justice with young people, along with defining criteria and a

protocol for referrals. This document covers both Reporter practice and referrals from Children's Hearings.

Most referrals come from Reporters and other agencies at the early stages of involvement with a young person. In most cases the young person will not be referred to a hearing when they are involved with a restorative justice service. However, the option of referring to a hearing remains open to a Reporter; therefore there may be a report from the restorative justice service in the papers for the hearing.

Even where a restorative justice service has not been involved, a hearing considering the case of a young person who has

committed an offence can refer the young person to such a service. The specific criteria and the recommended procedure are stated in 'Restorative Justice Services in the Children's Hearings System'.

As one of the key principles of Restorative Justice is the voluntary involvement of the young person, it would be contrary to this principle to make participation a condition of a Supervision Requirement. The next Review hearing (where this occurs) should get some feedback on the outcome of the referral.

The following is an example of a Restorative Justice process:

A young person was charged with shoplifting from a small business. An RJ facilitator met with

those involved to explain their options. They decided to participate in a conference, which includes support people. The facilitator then spent several sessions helping them to prepare for the meeting.

At the conference the young person began by saying what he had done and why. The shop owners

expressed how it had made them feel – their fear, the anger and impact on their business. The young person apologised for what he had done. His parents said how sorry they were too, and explained that they were trying to resolve some of the underlying issues.

The shop owners suggested that, to make amends, he could work at their shop

for four Saturdays. Two of the Saturdays would pay for the stolen items, and he could keep the rest.

The shop owners were so pleased with his work that they offered him a job. He couldn't accept, as he was starting college. But they gave him a good reference. (See www.restorativejusticescotland.org.uk/YJ1.htm.)

Opening of New Hearings Centre in Aberdeen

by Stewart Innes, Chair, Aberdeen Children's Panel

The new Hearings Centre in Aberdeen was officially opened on Tuesday 27 June by Robert Brown MSP, the Deputy Minister for Education and Young People.

The Hearings Centre is about a mile from the old one and is now in The Exchange, Market Street. There are two Hearings Rooms which are open and bright and with air conditioning tend to be cooler rather than the oppressive heat we used to experience, especially during those hearings when feelings can be high. There



Claudia Leith, Chair, Aberdeenshire and Stewart Innes, Chair, Aberdeen Children's Panel.

are four waiting rooms which means that families can have their own private space. The Reporter's staff occupy open plan offices on the 1st and 2nd floors, with Aberdeen City

occupying the 1st Floor and Aberdeenshire occupying the 2nd Floor. The offices are bright and airy. Everyone agrees that this is a vast improvement on Albyn Place.

Voyage of discovery for long-serving panel members

by Maureen Mazzei, Children's Hearings Branch

Heavy snow and rain did not dampen the high spirits of dozens of intrepid panel members who turned out on 13 March to celebrate the outstanding contribution to the hearings system of a number of their long-serving panel colleagues.

Showing true pioneering character, they braved the elements to join Deputy Minister for Education and Young People, Robert Brown, and the Scottish Executive's Children's Hearings Branch at Discovery Point in Dundee for an evening of mingling and socialising with fellow panel members.

Mr Brown welcomed guests and spoke of Scottish Ministers' appreciation of the contribution made by panel members to the hearings system. He went on to present three panel members who had served 25 years with exquisite and

appropriately themed 'Tay' design engraved ship's decanters from the Edinburgh Crystal collection.



(Left to right)
Front: Barbara Paterson
Back: Alyson Bel; Jacqueline Lawrie; Michael Pank
South Lanarkshire Children's Panel

Guests enjoyed wine (and soft drinks), accompanied by an excellent buffet, which was served throughout the evening. There was an opportunity for guests to take a guided tour of the exhibition, and the highlight of the night for many was to go on board the ship 'Discovery', the Royal Research Ship which set sail for Antarctica in August 1901 under the command of Captain Scott. The adverse weather conditions on the night (the like of which would have been encountered by Captain Scott himself!!) only added to the adventure for the participants.



(Left to right)
Front: Jan Banks; Valerie MacDonald
Back: Roger Muhl; Mairi Maclean
Highland Children's Panel

Gerard McEneaney, Fife Panel Chair, commented: “The venue was excellent, the food was superb and plentiful, and I thoroughly enjoyed the company of all the other panel members from around Scotland. My colleagues from Fife also enjoyed the evening and the opportunity to talk to other panel members.”

Stewart Innes, Aberdeen City Panel Chair, and his Aberdeen colleagues also enjoyed their jaunt from Aberdeen. Chair of South Lanarkshire panel Babs Paterson added, “I think it went really well. It was great to see so many folk from all over the country that had made the effort in spite of the weather.”

This annual event on the children’s hearings calendar clearly continues to be well received and appreciated by panel members ...
So ... until next year then.



(Left to right)
Front: Fiona Baird; Gavin Deas
Back: Derick Blair; Gerard McEneaney
Fife Children’s Panel



(Left to right)
Mary Agnew; Ernest Ross; Patricia Smith
Midlothian Children’s Panel

Weather conditions defeated a further four panel members who had reached their 25th jubilee, and they were unable to attend. However, local events were arranged at which they were presented with their decanters by head of Children’s Hearings Branch, Gordon Watt.

The full list of those receiving awards is:

- Karen Morrison, Glasgow
- Peter Mortimer, Glasgow
- Alastair Smith, Glasgow
- Jessie Gavin, North Ayrshire
- Andrew Deane, Renfrewshire
- Norma Black, Renfrewshire
- Isobel Bone, South Ayrshire



(Left to right)
Front: Jessie Gavin, North Lanarkshire Children’s Panel
Back: Andrew Deane, Renfrewshire; Robert Brown
Deputy Minister for Education and Young People;
Peter Mortimer, Glasgow Children’s Panel



An Inspector Calls – Child Protection Inspections, the East Lothian Experience

by Diane Watt, Chair, East Lothian Children’s Panel

The Child Protection Audit and Review in 2002 recommended that a further national review of child protection should be undertaken three years after the audit. In March 2004, Scottish Ministers announced a multi-disciplinary inspection that would cover all the relevant services in each local authority area in Scotland. The aim of the inspection was to ensure that children are being protected, to help agencies improve their service and to share good practice.

The inspections are to be undertaken by the Services for Children’s Unit within HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) which consists of a multi agency inspection team with representatives from the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA), the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (Care Commission), Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (QIS) and HMIe.

The unit completed the two pilot inspections on services for protecting children in East Dunbartonshire and Highland Council areas.

Two members of the HMIe unit briefed panel chairs at their January meeting as observations of children’s hearings and meetings with panel chairs and panel members are an integral and important part of the process. It was at that meeting that I found out that East

Lothian was to have the honour (!) of being the first local authority to be inspected.

Preparing for an inspection is a huge team effort involving staff from all of the agencies working with children. The Authority Reporter and a panel member have been asked to recount their experiences.

The SCRA Experience

‘Key partner agencies (SCRA, East Lothian Council, Police and Health) received notification on 23 January that the joint inspection would commence on 2 May 2006. On the face of it, it may appear that being given 14 weeks’ notice would be ample time to prepare but in effect I found myself involved in Key Contacts meetings for the inspection from the start. Before the Inspectors descended on 2 May, the Key Contacts (including me for SCRA) had to complete and return a Key Contacts list and a Pre Inspection Return (PIR). For me, this entailed collating information on the children referred to SCRA prior to 23 January 2006 on care and protection issues. The child details would be given a unique identifier by the East Lothian coordinator and this number would be used across the agencies. The Pre Inspection Return also contained Key Contacts information and details of the Panel Chair. We also had to agree upon various practical

aspects of the inspection, from where the inspectors would be based to a detailed timetable for Stage 2 of the visit.

After the return had been received by the Inspectors, we received a list of the files they wished to examine. The Inspectors wanted to inspect 50 cases of which a large number were known to SCRA. The case files therefore had to be transported to the Inspection Base at Haddington on the Thursday before the inspection was due to commence, where they were kept in a secure room within the Council's headquarters until after Stage 1 of the inspection was completed.

Stage 1 involved the Inspectors reading the files from all the agencies on each of the 50 children during the week commencing 2 May. From these 50 files, they chose a smaller sample for closer scrutiny.

Stage 2 began on Monday 15 May – a busy two-week period when the Inspectors observed case

conferences, meetings and, more pertinent to SCRA, a number of Children's Hearings. SCRA support staff had sent children and families letters with hearings' notifications explaining that inspectors may wish to observe their hearings and speak with them afterwards. A leaflet provided by HMIe was also enclosed. As with any observer, the children and families had the right to refuse to allow the inspectors to observe. Of the six hearings sessions scheduled for the two-week period, the inspectors observed five, taking the opportunity to speak with children, families and panel members after the hearings. The Inspectors also interviewed the Authority Reporter, an East Lothian case reporter and the Panel Chair.

The Inspectors provided verbal feedback to the Key Contacts at the beginning of June with the draft written report due in September.

At the end of the process the hope is that we will all



Maureen Cree
Authority Reporter

learn about what we in East Lothian do well as regards Child Protection Services, and perhaps more importantly identify areas upon which we could improve.'

The Panel Member's Experience

"I must confess to being less than enthusiastic when the Inspection of Children's Services was intimated by Diane during one of our monthly meetings. I'm sure Diane is well used to the wave of gloom such an announcement can induce on unsuspecting panel members!

The inspection was to include a week spent looking at the functioning

of the Hearings system including looking at case information, speaking to Reporters, observing Hearings and speaking to families both prior to and after Hearings sessions.

As is often the way with new things, the detail was a bit lacking, only adding to the lack of general enthusiasm. My initial thought was, 'great! Another bunch of officious government induced individuals with no knowledge of the Hearings system coming to tell us how to do it!'

However nothing could have been further from the truth!

The Inspector who came to the Hearing I was chairing was in fact someone who themselves had been a practitioner in various aspects of children's services. And while she did not have a great deal of direct Hearings experience, was very clear that she did not want her presence to be a burden to the panel members, and more importantly to the family. She was happy to discuss how it could work best, and was clear that the family needed to be comfortable with her presence.

She met the family – who had been in the 'system' some time - prior to the Hearing to explain her role, and ensure it was fine with them. After the Hearing she spent some time talking to the family again out of the Hearings room.

She returned to discuss with us in general terms what the family's view of services they have received were.

The family had stated that they were very pleased with supports given to them over a number of years by the local authority.



James Belton

I'm pleased to say that they also said that at this Hearing – and at previous ones – they had always felt that their views were heard and taken fully into account by panel members.

Finally, the inspector was keen to get the views of panel members on how they saw the service received by families through the Hearings system, and in particular how they viewed the way various agencies worked with families."

SCRA annual statistics show that the number of children who are referred to hearings on care and protection grounds continues to rise year on year. Our participation in these inspections over the next three years should serve to reassure us that how well Scottish children and young people are protected is being scrutinised and that the children's hearings system continues to play an important role.

Further information about the inspections can be found on www.hmie.gov.uk

How much do you know about acronyms?

The winner of the competition in the last edition of the Communicator is **Stewart Turner** from Argyll and Bute Childrens Panel. Congratulations! A copy of the Kenneth Norrie book will be with you shortly.

Answers:

ACPOS – Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland

ADSW – Association of Directors of Social Work

ASBO – Anti Social Behaviour Order

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CHRG – Children’s Hearings Representative Group

CHTO – Children’s Hearings Training Officers

CPAC – Children’s Panel Advisory Committee

CPC – Child Protection Committee

CPCG – Children’s Panel Chairman’s Group

CPO – Child Protection Order

GIRFEC – Getting it Right for Every child

LA – Local Authority

NCH – National Children’s Home

PFS – Procurator Fiscal Service

SACP – Scottish Association of Panel Members

SBR – Social Background Report

SCRA – Scottish Children’s Reporters Administration

SEED – Scottish Executive Education Department

SR – Supervision Requirement

SSA – Scottish Safeguarders Association

SWIA – Social Work Inspection Agency

This year’s National School is taking place at Dunblane Hydro from 3-5 November. Due to the timing of this publication places have now been allocated but a DVD will be available after the event for those who are interested in what the speakers had to say.



‘FIT FOR LIFE’ Hearings and Children’s Health

Over the weekend the school will look at all the aspects that contribute to the healthy child, how panel members can identify health issues in hearings and help promote positive physical and mental well-being for children and young people.

Speakers include:

Linda De Caestecker – Acting Director of Public Health, Greater Glasgow Health Board

Zoë Dunhill – Clinical Director for Women and Children, Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh

Sally Bonnar – Consultant Psychiatrist, Centre for Child Health, Dundee

Mags McGuire – Scottish Executive Health Department

The Corner Project – Dundee Health and Information Project

It should be an interesting and stimulating weekend.