

The Highland Council
ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
21 August 2013

Agenda Item	21.
Report No	ACS/81/13

Notice of Children's Services Inspection

**Report by Directors of Education, Culture & Sport and
Health & Social Care**

Summary

This report provides notice to members of a joint inspection of children's services in Highland, due to take place in October/November 2013. The inspection will examine how well public services work together to improve outcomes for children, especially children in need.

1. Background

- 1.1 In September 2011, Scottish Ministers requested that the Care Inspectorate lead on the development and coordination of a new model for the scrutiny and improvement of services for children and young people.
- 1.2 The Care Inspectorate tested out a process for inspecting services for children during 2012. It is now beginning a programme of inspections of services for children across all 32 local authority areas, to be completed by March 2017.
- 1.3 The bodies taking part in each inspection will include the Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS), and Healthcare Improvement Scotland. The Care Inspectorate will also collaborate with Audit Scotland.
- 1.4 The scheduling and conduct of these joint inspections is intended to be intelligence-led, taking account of the Shared Risk Assessment process and National Scrutiny Plan for local authority services published annually by Audit Scotland.

2 Notice of Inspection

- 2.1 The Chief Executive of the Care Inspectorate wrote to Highland Chief Officers in May 2013, indicating that a joint inspection of the provision of services to children in the Highland Council area will be conducted over 13 days between Monday 28 October and Friday 29 November 2013.

3 Inspection Process

- 3.1 Briefing sessions will be arranged for elected members and officers involved in the inspection process.
-

- 3.2 The following Highland community planning partners have provided lead officers to plan for the inspection:
- Highland 3rd Sector Partnership
 - Highland Council (Education, Culture & Sport and Health & Social Care Services)
 - NHS Highland
 - Police Scotland
 - Scottish Children's Reporters Administration
- 3.3 A pre-inspection return was required by the Care Inspectorate on 19 July 2013. This listed and detailed governance processes and structures in the Highland Community Planning Partnership, and identified agencies and officers involved in the management and operation of children's services.
- 3.4 The pre-inspection return also listed those children involved in Children's Hearing, looked after children and child protection processes over the past year. This will be used to identify around 100 cases for examination during the inspection.
- 3.5 We have been asked to provide a number of self-evaluative 'position statements' with regard to strategic planning and service delivery. We intend that these will follow from ongoing self-evaluation in teams and units, and the evaluative work undertaken by the *For Highland's Children 4* Improvement Groups.
- 3.6 The inspection will focus on services for children in need including family support services, services for children with disabilities and children in need of care and protection, including children who are Looked After. This will include implementation of *Getting it right for every child*.
- 3.7 Inspectors from the various scrutiny bodies, as well as some associate (lay) inspectors, will collect evidence by: examining background information, reading case files, attending meetings and engaging with children, young people, parents and staff from relevant agencies, against the following broad timetable:
- week of 28 October: scoping of the inspection
 - week of 4 November: file reading
 - weeks of 18 and 25 November: scrutiny activity
- 3.8 The Care Inspectorate state that they appreciate that they will need to consider and address the logistic challenge of ensuring good coverage across all of the authority.
- 3.9 The local co-ordinator for the inspection will be Ian Kyle, THC Children's Planning Manager, who can be contacted at ian.kyle@highland.gov.uk
- 3.10 In the week beginning 02 December 2013, there will be an opportunity for a professional discussion on the inspection findings with Chief Officers, community planning partners and/or their nominated representatives.
-

- 3.11 A written report will follow in 2014, and this will be reported to the Adult and Children's Services Committee.

4 *For Highland's Children 4*

- 4.1 Members will be aware that work has been continuing to an advanced stage on the preparation of *For Highlands Children 4*, and the first full draft was provided to members at a seminar in June. Inevitably though, this confirmation of a multi-agency inspection of children's services will delay publication, as any recommendations will require to be included in the various action plans.

5 Implications

- 5.1 There are no resource, risk, legal, equality or climate change implications from this report.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note this report.
--

Bill Alexander
Director of Health and Social Care

Hugh Fraser
Director of Education, Culture & Sport

Date: 2 August 2013