



*Renfrewshire Child
Protection Committee*

1

CONSTITUTION

March 2005

***“Agencies individually and collectively,
demonstrate leadership and accountability
for their work and its effectiveness”***

(Framework for Standards: Standard 8)

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RENFREWSHIRE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION

1. **Name**

- 1.1 This multi-agency partnership forum will be known as Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee (RCPC).

2. **Aims and Objectives**

- 2.1. The original aims and objectives of the RCPC, in accordance with guidelines set out in the Social Work Services Group circular 4/96, are shown at Annexe 1.
- 2.2. This revised Constitution follows Scottish Executive guidance on the role and purpose of Child Protection Committees, issued in January 2005 ("the Guidance"). It is shown in diagrammatic form at Annexe 2.
- 2.3. The Guidance describes Child Protection Committees as the "primary strategic planning mechanism for inter-agency child protection work in each area". It emphasises the importance of the Committee in working effectively with other planning structures whose activities affect the protection of children, within and between agencies, in particular those of integrated children's services planning and Community Planning.
- 2.4. RCPC will lead inter-agency work to implement initiatives arising from the Scottish Executive's 3-year Child Protection Reform Programme. In particular it will ensure that services are evaluated in preparation for the multi-agency Inspection of Child Protection services in Renfrewshire.
- 2.5. The RCPC will take forward across the partner agencies the 8 central

themes of the Framework for Standards in Child Protection launched by the Scottish Executive in March 2004:

- q Children get the help they need when they need it
- q Professionals take timely and effective action to protect children
- q Professionals ensure children are listened to and respected
- q Agencies and professionals share information about children where this is necessary to protect them
- q Agencies and professionals work together to assess needs and risks and develop effective plans
- q Professionals are competent and confident
- q Agencies work in partnership with members of the community to protect children
- q Agencies, individually and collectively, demonstrate leadership and accountability for their work and its effectiveness.

2. **Functions of the RCPC**

3.1 The Guidance defines the 3 principal functions of a CPC as:-

- q Public information
- q Continuous improvement; and
- q Strategic planning

3.2 **Public information:** the RCPC will agree a Communications & Media strategy which will raise awareness of child protection issues within communities, including children and young people; promote the work of the agencies in protecting children to the public at large; and provide information about where members of the public will go if they have concerns about a child.

3.3 **Continuous improvement of child protection work:** the RCPC has a key role in the continuous improvement of child protection work. A number of functions relate directly to this key role, including:

- q Policies procedures and protocols - the RCPC will ensure that constituent agencies have in place their own up to date policies and procedures; regularly develop, disseminate and review inter-agency policies and procedures; and ensure that protocols are developed around key issues where there is agreement that this is required;
- q Management information - the RCPC will have an overview of information relating to children and young people on the child protection register; receive regular management information reports including an analysis of trends; identify and address the implications of these reports for services; and ensure that these reports inform the inter-agency child protection strategy;
- q Quality assurance - while individual agencies have responsibility for quality assurance within their own agencies, the RCPC will have responsibility for the development and implementation of inter-agency quality assurance mechanisms. The RCPC will agree, implement and review multi-agency quality assurance mechanisms for inter-agency work, including auditing against the Framework for Standards; ensure that these quality assurance mechanisms directly contribute to the continuous improvement to protect children and young people; contribute to the preparation for the integrated system of inspection of child protection services; consider the findings and lessons from the inspection process nationally and in relation to the inspection of their area; and report on the outcome of these activities, and make recommendations, to the Chief Officer group, who are accountable overall for the quality of services including child protection systems;
- q Promotion of good practice - the RCPC will have the responsibility to promote good practice, address issues of poor practice and encourage learning from practice. The RCPC will have in place mechanisms to identify and disseminate lessons from past and current practice, including systematic reviews of significant cases; ensure that these lessons directly inform training and staff development; and identify opportunities to share these lessons more widely;
- q Training and staff development - the RCPC will be responsible for promoting, commissioning and assuring the quality and delivery of inter-agency training. The RCPC will have an overview of single agency child protection training and consider the implications for inter-agency training; plan, review and quality assure inter-agency training and development activities; have in place, and review at least annually, a programme for inter-agency child protection training; and ensure relevant, effective and consistent inter-agency training is provided for practitioners, managers, non-statutory agencies and for

RCPC members themselves.

3.4 **Strategic planning** - the RCPC will be the key local body in terms of the planning of child protection work. This needs to be done in conjunction with other planning mechanisms and priorities, in particular integrated children's services planning and community planning.

3.5 The contribution of the RCPC to strategic planning falls into 3 broad categories:

q Communication and co-operation:- effective communication and co-operation, both within and between professions and agencies, is essential to the protection of children. The RCPC will demonstrate effective communication and co-operation at RCPC level; actively promote effective communication and collaboration between agencies; identify and, wherever possible, resolve any issues between agencies in relation to the protection of children and young people; demonstrate effective communication with other inter-agency bodies; demonstrate effective communication about the work of the RCPC with staff in constituent agencies; and identify opportunities to share knowledge with other CPCs;

q Planning and connections: - there needs to be clarity about where the RCPC will link into other multi-agency partnerships and structures. The RCPC will clearly identify the key links that are required to be made with other bodies, and ensure that these links are made; in conjunction with other bodies, identify issues where either joint working would be beneficial or duplication could be avoided and ensure that action is taken to address these issues; and have in place, and regularly review the effectiveness of, joint protocols around particular identified issues;

and

q Public information: - as 3.2 above.

3 **Role of Chief Officers**

- 3.1 The Guidance requires that Chief Officers work collectively to identify and commission inter-agency activity with respect to child protection. They must account for this work and its effectiveness.
- 3.2 The Chief Executive, Renfrewshire Council, shall be responsible for convening a Chief Officers' group sufficiently frequently to effectively discharge its responsibilities in relation to the protection of children and young people. This Group will also comprise the Chief Executive of NHS Argyll & Clyde [or his representative] and the Chief Constable of Strathclyde Police [or his representative, the Renfrewshire Divisional Commander]. This group will meet to agree the annual Report of the RCPC and the Plan for the next year, and at least once during the year to monitor progress.
- 3.3 Chief Officers, working together, have the following roles and responsibilities:
- q individually and collectively, to demonstrate leadership and accountability for child protection and its effectiveness on behalf of their agencies, including the effectiveness of the RCPC itself
 - q agree a plan, including operational priorities for protecting children, and ensure the allocation of resources to the RCPC who will support the implementation of the Framework of Standards and the Children's Charter across agencies
 - q ensure that the RCPC links to other planning fora under the Chief Officers' control, in particular the structures for integrated children's services planning
 - q agree the constitution for the RCPC, including the delegation of roles and responsibilities to take forward multi-agency issues in respect of child protection on their behalf and invest it with the authority to do so
 - q agree the agencies to be represented on the RCPC
 - q appoint, or agree the appointment of, a Chair of the RCPC and in doing so ensure that the Chair has the time, resources and dedicated support to properly fulfill the role
 - q appoint representatives from their own agencies to the RCPC with the appropriate authority and responsibility to best take forward the functions required
 - q invite nominations from other agencies to be represented on the RCPC

- q agree reporting mechanisms with elected Members and Board members that cover the work of the RCPC and the implications for their locality. This should include at least annual reporting

- q agree and endorse an annual report and plan for the RCPC. Initially, it would be expected that separate RCPC reports and plans would be available to demonstrate implementation of the Scottish Executive's guidance and the contribution of RCPC to the protection of children and young people. From 2006/07 the RCPC Annual Report and Plan will form a section of the Integrated Children's Services Plan.

4.4 The Chief Officers have a collective responsibility to ensure that the RCPC has the resources, including staff time and finance, to fulfill the agreed Plan. Resources will be agreed by the Chief Officers group and reviewed as part of the Plan for the annual report. Resources will include:

- q provision of sufficient dedicated time for RCPC members to fulfill their roles and responsibilities;

- q provision of finance to support the activities of RCPC, including inter-agency training;

- q professional, operational and administrative support to the Committee itself;

- q commitment of time from staff not directly involved in the work of RCPC to contribute to specific projects;

- q provision of sufficient time in agencies for child protection work and for activities necessary to ensure competent and confident staff and continuous improvement.

4 **Membership**

5.1. Each Chief Officer will ensure that their representative on the RCPC is sufficiently senior and has the level of authorisation to make the required policy and resource commitments to realise the agreed Child Protection Plan on behalf of their agency. For Renfrewshire Council, representatives should be at Head of Service level or equivalent; for Health, Director level or equivalent; and for Strathclyde Police, at an equivalent senior level.

5.2 Members of RCPC will:

- q represent the commitment of their agency to promoting the welfare of children and young people, preventing abuse and neglect, and the protection of children and young people
- q have the delegated authority to make strategic and operational decisions on behalf of their agency in relation to child protection
- q facilitate communication between the RCPC and their agency
- q contribute their skill and expertise to the work of the RCPC.

5.3 The RCPC will be responsible for ensuring that members are able to maximise their contribution to its work, including:

- q ensuring that they reflect the contribution that all agencies have to make to child protection work
- q providing support and training opportunities for RCPC members
- q ensuring that new members are fully briefed on the work of RCPC and their role within it.

5.4 As a minimum, the following services will be represented on the RCPC:

- q Elected Members
- q Renfrewshire Council Social Work Department
- q Renfrewshire Council Education & Leisure Department
- q Renfrewshire Council Housing and Property Services
- q NHS Argyll & Clyde
- q Drug and alcohol service providers
- q Strathclyde police
- q Procurator Fiscal
- q Scottish Children's Reporter's Administration & Children's Panels
- q The voluntary sector

- 5.5 Where appropriate members will be those who also represent their service on other strategic children's services groups.
- 5.6 RCPC members will be responsible for ensuring that their own agencies' proper processes are followed for confirming their contribution to the RCPC's Plans and commitments.
- 5.7 Members must attend meetings of RCPC regularly and lead/serve on any working groups for which they are nominated. They must have sufficient time to prepare for meetings, to take advice from their organisations where decisions are required, and brief back afterwards.
- 5.8 Members must identify a nominated substitute if they cannot attend. It is the responsibility of each member to ensure that their substitute has the papers for the meeting they are to attend, and is properly briefed.

6 Chair

- 6.1 The Chair will be a suitably qualified and experienced person, with the capacity required to lead the work of RCPC.
- 6.2 Chief Officers may agree to appoint an independent Chair. They will be appointed following national advertisement and Renfrewshire Council will act as employing authority. An Independent Chair will be accountable to the Chief Officers' group through the Council's Chief Executive.
- 6.3 The Chair of the RCPC is responsible for:
- q chairing meetings of the RCPC, and ensuring that they are conducted in a manner that reflects the contribution that all agencies have to make to child protection;
 - q ensuring that the RCPC effectively fulfils its functions;
 - q working with the Lead Officer/Child Protection Co-ordinator (see section 7). Management of the Lead Officer/Child Protection Co-ordinator will be undertaken by Renfrewshire Social Work on behalf of the Committee, but the Lead Officer/Child Protection Co-ordinator's accountability will be to the RCPC;
 - q ensuring the development of the annual plan and report;
 - q agreeing the resource requirement for the work of the RCPC, including that required to chair the RCPC effectively;
 - q ensuring that the RCPC collaborates with other CPCs; and
 - q Reporting to Chief Officers.

7 **Role of Inter-Agency Lead Officer/Child Protection Co-ordinator**

- 7.1 Each CPC is required to have as a minimum, a Lead Officer to implement its core functions and an inter-agency training co-ordinator, or specific training capacity, to ensure the delivery of inter-agency training and staff development. Lead Officers shall be of sufficient seniority to carry authority with partner agencies.
- 7.2 The post of Lead Officer/Child Protection Co-ordinator for Renfrewshire shall be funded jointly by the 3 lead agencies and hosted by Renfrewshire Council on behalf of all member agencies.
- 7.3 The Lead Officer/Child Protection Co-ordinator will support the RCPC in its role of promoting high standards on inter-agency child protection practice in Renfrewshire, monitoring practice and providing support to operational staff.
- 7.4 In pursuance of this function, the Lead Officer/Co-ordinator will:-
 - q provide support to the RCPC through the provision of reports on child protection activity and performance in Renfrewshire as well as advising the committee on the findings and implications of reports and research on child protection matters
 - q monitor child protection practice in each agency, through the sampling of child protection paperwork, and practice and analysis of management information
 - q produce practice guidance on child protection matters and provide advice, guidance and information on child protection procedures and practice
 - q work with key stakeholders in other organisations to promote effective inter-agency practice
 - q work with training staff within the council and its partner agencies to develop and deliver inter-agency child protection training
 - q develop information for young people and families and agencies involved in the child protection process in a range of formats
 - q take the lead role in investigations of historical abuse and be directly involved in supporting staff involved in complex child protection cases
 - q promote safe care practices across all services.

8 **Administrative Support to the RCPC**

8.1 Financial

8.1.1 The financial year will run from 1st April to 31st March.

8.1.2 Expenditure may be incurred by the RCPC for the purpose of discharging the responsibilities detailed in this constitution and for other such purposes relating to the achievement of its objectives, as set out in the approved Plan and agreed by the Committee.

8.2 Legal

8.2.1 Any legal advice required by the Committee will be provided by the legal services section, Renfrewshire Council. Individual Committee members requiring legal advice should seek such advice through their own agency.

8.3 Secretariat

8.3.1 A secretariat service will be provided, through the clerk to the RCPC, by the Director of Corporate Services, Renfrewshire Council. This service will include the arranging and co-ordinating of meetings, the issue of agendas and any other supporting documents, the taking of minutes at meetings and the distribution of these minutes following each meeting. The role and responsibility of the clerk is more fully detailed in Section 9 – secretariat services, agendas and minutes.

9 **Secretariat Services, Agendas and Minutes**

- 9.1 Renfrewshire Council will be responsible for providing secretariat services to RCPC through the clerk to the Committee.
- 9.2 The clerk shall be responsible for arranging meetings, including accommodation and refreshments, issuing agendas and circulating minutes.
- 9.3 Meetings will be held on an 8 weekly cycle where possible. Changes to meeting dates will be agreed by the clerk, in consultation with the Chair, when the need arises.
- 9.4 As far as possible, agendas will be issued to Committee members electronically and in a suitable format. Hard copies of the agenda will be issued to those members who do not have access to e-mail. Papers will be issued to members at least 5 working days prior to the date of the meeting.
- 9.5 The provision of good quality accommodation for meetings will be shared amongst partner agencies. The clerk will make the necessary arrangements to supply special equipment for use at meetings provided that sufficient notice is given for the need for the equipment.
- 9.6 The clerk will be responsible for circulating the minutes of meetings of the RCPC not later than 10 days following the date of the meeting. The minutes will clearly allocate actions to different members of the Committee, and it is the responsibility of members to ensure that any actions allocated to them are progressed.
- 9.7 Extraordinary or special meetings of the Committee can be requested at any time in consultation with the Chair. Such meetings will be held within 14 days of such a request being received.
- 9.8 Decisions will be achieved at meetings of the RCPC through consensus.
- 9.9 No business shall be transacted at a meeting unless at least 6 members are present, representing at least three different agencies.

10 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- 10.1 Various provisions govern the flow of information, and there is increasing emphasis on the right of the public to access to information about the work of public bodies. Electronic recording and information systems are making it increasingly possible for information to be exchanged where appropriate in a sophisticated way.
- 10.2 Information about individual children shall remain confidential unless there is a need to share this in order to ensure that children are protected.
[Standard 4 - Agencies and professionals share information about children where this is necessary to protect them.]
- 10.3 The RCPC will ensure that all child care practitioners are aware of the best practice for sharing information about children at risk of abuse or neglect. For this purpose, the RCPC should oversee the development of an inter-agency information sharing protocol.
- 10.4 RCPC shall also develop a Communications Strategy which will improve public access to information about child protection, and ensure people know what to do if they have concerns about the safety of a child.

11 Working Groups

- 11.1 RCPC will create standing or ad hoc groups to progress particular strategic or operational issues and appoint representatives to these groups.
- 11.2 These groups will have clear terms of reference and time scales to work to, and will report to the RCPC on a regular basis. They will usually be set up by the Committee itself.
- 11.3 Each group will be chaired by a member of RCPC to ensure effective accountability and communication, but membership will be open to a wide range of people with appropriate skills and experience to the issue concerned. All agencies will be expected to contribute to this style of working by making appropriate staff available.
- 11.4 Where a matter of urgency arises, such as the need to respond to a consultation document or a specific operational issue, the Chair shall have the authority to establish an ad hoc group as appropriate. The outputs from the group must be reported to the next ordinary meeting of the RCPC.
- 11.5 There will be a standing Inter-Agency Child Protection Training Group. Membership of this group shall consist of at least one representative each from Renfrewshire Council, NHS and Strathclyde Police.
- 11.6 Other working groups may be set up to address:
 - q Practice improvement
 - q Planning
 - q Evaluation [and Inspection]
 - q Media and Communications.

12 Annual Report and Plan

12.1 As detailed elsewhere in this constitution, RCPC will prepare an annual report and plan. These will be:

- q integrated into the cycle for children's services planning which is a rolling 3-year plan
- q completed annually and cover the financial year
- q submitted to the Chief Officers group for approval at the annual Renfrewshire Child Protection Conference, and then to the Scottish Executive as part of the integrated children's service planning requirements, and published no later than the end of June following the end of the financial year.

12.2 The annual report will:

- q provide an account of the year's work against the previous year's Plan
- q provide information on the level and quality of inter-agency work
- q outline a Plan, including a budget, for the coming year, in order to allow analysis and comparison both within the RCPC and between child protection committees; provide public information, both to staff in partner agencies and the wider public about the activity of the RCPC; and inform policy development at local and national level.

12 Amending the Constitution

12.1 This constitution will be reviewed annually by the Committee, and/or when changes are required in response to legislative or other direction. Amendments proposed by the Committee shall be submitted to the Chief Officers Group for approval as part of the annual reporting process.

RCPC - Original Terms of Reference

The original aims and objectives of the RCPC, in accordance with the then national guidelines set out in the Social Work Services Group circular 4/96, were to:

1. Ensure inter-agency guidelines on procedures to be followed on individual cases are produced, maintained and regularly reviewed;
2. Promote good inter-disciplinary practice in preventing and dealing with the immediate causes and effects of child abuse;
3. Assess significant issues of collaborative working which arise from the handling of cases and from reports on enquiries;
4. Review arrangements for providing expert advice and inter-agency liaison;
5. Monitor and review information about the operation of the child protection register;
6. Identify inter-agency training needs and take a leading role in developing and promoting inter-disciplinary training programmes;
7. Publish an annual report.

Proposed Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee Structure

