

Plan for safer ways to protect children



Drawing on the direct experience of social workers in a survey, UNISON is calling for action on an 8-point plan for change aimed at delivering safer ways of protecting vulnerable children in Scotland.

- 1 Co-working on all child protection investigation visits:** child protection investigation visits to be done by two practitioners.
- 2 More social workers and support staff:** an urgent action plan to fill vacancies and to review staffing levels across all social work teams.
- 3 National caseload management standards:** enforced through the inspection process and regularly audited by the council leadership, with sanctions against employers who breach the Scottish Social Services Council's Code of Practice for Social Care Employers.
- 4 More resources:** a planned programme of investment in children and families' social work.
- 5 Cull of bureaucracy:** a root and branch zero-based review of all bureaucracy.
- 6 To increase the responsiveness of and resources to the widely respected Children's Panel system:** creating a system which ensures that social workers can service it properly and that the resources are in place to allow its decisions to be implemented.
- 7 Better support and more reflective practice:** Social workers should have at least two years post-qualifying experience before being allocated child protection cases. There should be consistent, high quality supervision that is both supportive and challenging.
- 8 Measures to rebuild morale, confidence and status of social workers:** redress the devastating impact on morale through re-instigating the campaign run by the previous Scottish Executive to promote positive public awareness about what social work achieves.

NOTE: A 10-point plan, reflecting the different legal context, has also been launched in England and Wales

see more at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/socialwork
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