



## **The Munro Review**

In June 2010, the government announced a national review of child protection, to be led by Eileen Munro, Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics and a prominent academic in the field of safeguarding and child protection.

She produced two reports which focussed on a different aspect of child protection and then the final report: **The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report - A child-centred system.**

The third and final report from the Munro Review of Child Protection was presented to Ministers on 11 May 2011, delivering a range of recommendations that are likely to have significant implications for the way that child protection services are run at a local level. Serious case reviews, early intervention, the role of Ofsted and reforms to the health economy all feature strongly, alongside a more general shift away from central prescription and towards individual discretion in local decision making – with quality assurance measures strongly focussed on providing the very best outcomes for children.

Professor Munro's final report has been broadly welcomed by the children's sector. There has been general acceptance that Professor Munro has produced a detailed and well evidenced set of recommendations which have the potential to make a significant improvement to child protection arrangements in England.

### **The First Report**

This report was produced from evidence gathered from Munro and described a defensive system focussed on procedures rather than practitioner expertise and said we had become too prescriptive in our practice.

### **The Second Report**

This second report produced in February 2011 considered the child's journey through the child protection system and instead of "doing things right" (i.e. following procedures) the system needed to be focussed on doing the right thing (i.e. checking whether children and young people are being helped)

### **The Final Report**

This final report sets out a call for major culture change right across children's services and child protection, **including 15 key recommendations** aimed at ensuring that the system develops professional expertise and empowers practitioners to make best judgements about the welfare of children and young people.

To see a full briefing paper that analyses key recommendations visit:

[http://www.macc.org.uk/macc/child\\_families\\_notices.php](http://www.macc.org.uk/macc/child_families_notices.php)

The Government published its response to the Munro Review of Child Protection on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2011. Informed by an Implementation Working Group drawing on expertise from local authority children's services, the social work profession, education, police and health services, the Government accept the principles proposed in Munro's review for an effective child protection system, seeing it as an opportunity to build a child-centred system that: values professional expertise; shares responsibility for the provision of early help; develops social work expertise and supports effective social work practice; and strengthens accountabilities and promotes learning.

Professor Munro's thorough analysis is commended and her fundamental argument accepted that the child protection system has lost its focus on the thing that matters most: the views and experience of children themselves. A move towards a child protection system with less central prescription and interference, greater trust and responsibility is placed on skilled professionals at the front line is paramount the child protection system is to be turned around.

The response is set out under the four theme's of Munro's review and key responses are summarised below. For a full copy of the governments response visit:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/munroreview/downloads/GovernmentResponseToMunro.pdf>

#### **Valuing professional expertise**

- Radical reduction in regulation through the revision of statutory framework placing greater emphasis on direct work with children, young people and families. An interim amendment will be made to Working Together in relation to timescales, removing the distinction between initial and core assessments, and articulating parameters for good assessment will be made by December 2011;
- The role and impact of LSCBs should be strengthened and the Government will work with local partners to ensure performance information is used more effectively and interrogated locally;
- Local authorities encouraged to review 24 hour access services, to maximise efficiency and allow professionals with concerns for a child's safety to obtain relevant information.

#### **Sharing the responsibility for the provision of early help**

- The Department of Health and Department for Education will work with NHS bodies, LAs, professional bodies and practitioners to publish a joint programme of work by September 2011;
- Transparent local arrangements will lead to the identification of early help and to the provision of an 'early help offer' in cases where needs do not meet the criteria for receiving social care services;

#### **Developing social work expertise and supporting effective social work practice**

- Work will be undertaken with the Social Work Reform Board to improve the professional capabilities framework. Ownership of both the Professional Capabilities Framework and the associated CPD framework

will transfer to the College of Social Work with implementation in autumn 2012;

**Strengthening accountabilities and creating a learning system**

- The Government will retain the existing statutory status of the Director of Children's Services (DCS) and the Lead Member for children's services. Work is underway with local government, SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) and ADCS to revise the statutory guidance on the role of the DCS and Lead Member;
- An amendment to the role of LSCBs in monitoring the effectiveness of early help and protective services will be made to Working Together to ensure LSCBs include an assessment of the effectiveness of help provided when monitoring and evaluating local arrangements;

To find out more about the work of MACC in relation to safeguarding children and young people please contact Nicola Shanahan on [nicola@macc.org.uk](mailto:nicola@macc.org.uk)