

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| COMMITTEE | Public Protection Committee |
| DATE | 28th April 2021 |
| EXEMPT | No |
| CONFIDENTIAL | No |
| REPORT TITLE | Inspection of Justice Social Work service |
| REPORT NUMBER | ACHSCP/21/088 |
| DIRECTOR | Sandra MacLeod, ACHSCP Chief Officer |
| CHIEF OFFICER | Claire Wilson, Social Work Lead |
| REPORT AUTHOR | Kevin Toshney, Planning & Development Manager |
| TERMS OF REFERENCE | 1.1.3 and 1.4 |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Public Protection Committee about the recent publication by the Care Inspectorate of its inspection report into the justice social work service.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 note and endorse the information contained within this report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Aberdeen City Council was advised in November 2019 that an inspection of its justice social work (JSW) service with a particular focus on Community Payback Orders (CPOs) was to be undertaken by the Care Inspectorate.
- 3.2 The inspection was to be conducted in line with the Inspection of Justice Social Work services in Scotland guidance and evaluate the service against quality indicators drawn from the Guide to Self-Evaluation for Community Justice in Scotland.
- 3.3 Notification of the commencement of the inspection triggered a 28-week inspection timeline which outlined the respective responsibilities of the Care Inspectorate and the justice service including:
- Submission of self-evaluation with supporting evidence
 - Case file reading of approximately 100 files
 - Meet with individuals who are (or have been) the subject of CPOs
 - Meet with staff and other stakeholders
- 3.4 Formal notification was received from the Care Inspectorate in mid-March 2020, just prior to the scheduled engagement with clients from the service, that the inspection was to be put on hold because of the impending Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

- 3.5 Subsequently, as the first lockdown eased, a dialogue in respect of next steps was initiated in September 2020 between Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership and the Care Inspectorate and it was jointly agreed that the inspection should be resumed in October. Given the ongoing restrictions it was agreed that the inspection methodology should adapt to current circumstances and so 1:1 conversations or group meetings were to be facilitated by either telephone or MS Teams.
- 3.6 As part of their engagement with service users, the Care Inspectorate spoke with 46 individuals and were complimentary about the logistical arrangements that had been put in place to facilitate these telephone conversations, the back-up support that was available for those few occasions when scheduled phone-calls with individuals went unanswered and the value of the discussions themselves about people's experiences of the justice social work service.
- 3.7 Conversations with 14 justice service stakeholders were facilitated including Police Scotland; Aberdeen Foyer; MAPPA Co-ordinator; Moving Forward Making Changes (MFMC) Team Leader; Housing; Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP); a number of Unpaid Work (UPW) providers and a local Sheriff.
- 3.8 The Care Inspectorate spoke with 48 members of staff from the JSW workforce. These conversations were arranged on a peer group basis, for example, Support Workers, Unpaid Work (UPW) staff, Social Workers and Senior Social Workers but also on a themed basis, for example, LSCMI/Best Practice Improvement groups, Women's service, Intervention Programmes ie Caledonian, Young People and general CPOs.
- 3.9 In addition, a number of conversations were also held with senior leaders from across Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership.
- 3.10 On Tuesday 23rd February 2021, the Care Inspectorate published its report of the inspection of the justice social work service. The evaluation against selected quality indicators was as follows:
- | | | |
|-----|--|------------------|
| 1.1 | Improving the life chances and outcomes for people subject to a community payback order: | Good |
| 2.1 | Impact on people who have committed offences: | Excellent |
| 5.2 | Assessing and responding to risk and need: | Good |
| 5.3 | Planning and providing effective intervention: | Very Good |
| 9.4 | Leadership of improvement and change: | Very Good |
- 3.11 Key messages from the report included the following:

- The support provided by justice staff in Aberdeen is having a transformative impact on individuals subject to CPOs. Individuals experience compassionate, consistent, focused and flexible support that frequently exceeds their expectations and is enabling positive change.
- The service is delivering highly person-centred interventions. Staff work proactively to identify and remove barriers to engagement and provide a wide range of practical assistance.
- The clear focus on supporting individuals to address offending behaviour is an important strength. The service is investing in a full range of structured interventions and delivery is tailored to individual needs and risks.
- Leaders demonstrate a strong vision for transformational change that is supported by well-developed plans and ambitious targets. Core principles of early intervention and prevention permeate planning and delivery at all levels of the service.
- A strong commitment to continuous improvement is underpinned by an embedded improvement methodology. This is contributing to improved performance in the delivery of CPOs.
- Performance trends across almost all CPO measures are improving and individuals are being supported to achieve positive outcomes. Embedding the performance management framework offers potential to better demonstrate the difference the service is making to the lives of those on CPOs.
- There is a need to strengthen compliance in meeting expected timescales for assessments and plans. Work is also required to increase staff confidence in the use of accredited assessment tools, including assessment and analysis of risk of serious harm.

3.12 The Care Inspectorate have identified the following areas of improvement for the service to progress and complete:

- To enable robust oversight and increased ability to demonstrate outcomes and impact, senior officers should ensure that the justice service delivery plan and performance management framework are agreed and implemented and associated reporting cycles established.
- To ensure the effective delivery of key processes, senior managers should further strengthen quality assurance mechanisms to support the consistent, confident and timely application of risk assessment and case planning processes, particularly those relating to risk of serious harm.

These comments tally with the service's own informed insights about its operation and performance that were fed into the self-evaluation. A draft delivery plan and a draft performance management framework were submitted as part of the self-evaluation and so the requirement to complete and implement

these is understandable. In addition, the service already had an LS/CMI – a risk assessment and case management tool - action plan in place which was improving our risk assessment and case planning processes but recognised that our quality assurance of these matters was not as robust as it could be.

An action plan showing how we would meet these requirements was submitted to the IJB for approval on 23rd March and then submitted to the Care Inspectorate on 6th April.

- 3.13 The Care Inspectorate has praised the service's capacity for improvement with its confidence in that assertion being grounded in 'the ambitious leadership and strong management capability' evident.
- 3.14 This very positive inspection report follows on from equally positive feedback that had been previously received from the Care Inspectorate in relation to the submitted self-evaluation and the case file reading. Key points from that earlier feedback included:
- Well written, well structured, good flow and content and good picture of what CJSW does.
 - Honest and thorough
 - Clear thread about improvement methodology
 - Evidential and taking ownership of improvement
 - Rational approach to practice and good understanding of services.
 - Range of evidence across Quality Indicators.
 - Some evidence lacks contextual details; some minutes of meetings not supplied
- 3.15 The evaluation of 111 case-files was jointly undertaken by CI inspectors and four Senior Social Workers from the JSW service in early March. Initial feedback was that there were no unsatisfactory case files and that most of our case files are good, or very good and some are excellent. It was also reported that the service knows the client group with whom it works and that there is a good, professional relationship between individuals and practitioners.
- 3.16 Following publication of the inspection report, the service is now required to submit an action plan by Tuesday 6th April showing how it will address the highlighted areas for improvement.
- 3.17 The service has already made significant progress in respect of its delivery plan, performance management framework, governance reporting and quality assurance framework and will provide the Care Inspectorate with assurance in respect of these.
- 3.18 The Care Inspectorate has subsequently provided the service with another report in relation to the case file reading that was undertaken as part of the inspection methodology. This technical report complements the main inspection report and will be used by the service to support its continuous improvement activities.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

| Category | Risk | Low (L) Medium (M) High (H) | Mitigation |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Strategic Risk | None for this report. | | |
| Compliance | Care Inspectorate inspections offer assurance on how well relevant policies, procedures and risk management arrangements are working. | L | Notwithstanding the positive impact of a LS/CMI action plan, the service has strengthened its QA plan so that there is a more robust quality assurance of its case planning activities. |
| Operational | None for this report | | |
| Financial | None for this report | | |
| Reputational | The publication of regulatory inspection reports can have a reputational management impact. | L | Given the very positive inspection report there is no risk of reputational damage to the service or to the IJB/HSCP/ACC. |
| Environment / Climate | None for this report | | |

7. OUTCOMES

| <u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u> | |
|---|---|
| | Impact of Report |
| Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement | N/A |
| Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan | |
| Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes | N/A |
| Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes | The positive outcomes from this inspection demonstrate the person-centred relationships that are being developed between clients and practitioners and the effective interventions that are |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>arising from this. The service is making significant contributions to individual and wider community outcomes.</p> <p>Stretch Outcome 9, Key Drivers 9.1, 9.3 and 9.4 and Stretch Outcome 10 Key Drivers 10.1, 10.2, 10.3 and 10.5 are all relevant to this report's findings.</p> |
| Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes | N/A |
| Regional and City Strategies | N/A |
| UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes | N/A |

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

| Assessment | Outcome |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Impact Assessment | Full impact assessment not required |
| Data Protection Impact Assessment | Not required |

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10. APPENDICES

10.1 Inspection of justice social work services in Aberdeen, Care Inspectorate, February 2021.

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Name | Kevin Toshney |
| Title | Planning and Development Manager |
| Email Address | KToshney@aberdeencity.gov.uk |