

Services for Children and Young People in Aberdeen City
Report of a Joint Inspection, March 2015
Action Plan, June 2015

Introduction

Aberdeen City's Community Planning Partnership is required to respond to the findings of the Care Inspectorate led Joint Inspection of Children's Services with a robust Improvement Action Plan. The Improvement Action Plan will link with the delivery of integrated children's services generally.

The Integrated Children's Services Plan 2011-15 for Aberdeen ended on 31 March 2015. Under Part 3 of the new Children and Young People (Scotland) Act, the next generation of Children's Services Plans will go live on 1 April 2017. Statutory guidance is expected to be published in April 2016 to assist Community Planning Partners develop the new plans.

On 9 February 2015, the ICS Board agreed to focus on the immediate improvement themes from the Joint Inspection Report for the year 2015-16, while the new Integrated Children's Services Plan is developed with the priorities of:

- Keeping Children Safe
- Ensuring children and young people have the best start in life
- GIRFEC
- Raising Achievement
- Corporate Parenting

The Action Plan predominantly focuses on how the partnership will continue to keep children safe and work towards improved outcomes for all of Aberdeen's children. The Action Plan responds to the specific areas of improvement identified in the Care Inspectorate's findings.

The findings from the Joint Report identified a number of strengths across the partnership as well as areas of improvement.

<i>How well are the lives of children and young people improving?</i>	
Improving the well-being of children and young people	Adequate
Impact on children and young people	Good
Impact on families	Good
<i>How well are partners working together to improve the lives of children, young people and families?</i>	
Providing help and support at an early stage	Good
Assessing and responding to risks and needs	Good
Planning for individual children	Good
Planning and improving services	Adequate
Participation of children, young people and families and other stakeholders	Good
<i>How good is the leadership and direction of services for children and young people?</i>	
Leadership of improvement and change	Adequate

These evaluations evidence that the partnership has a positive platform to build on. However, we recognise the need to improve our performance in respect of all Quality Indicators. The Improvement Plan, therefore, while ultimately focussed on outcomes for children and young people has to address issues such as leadership, governance, performance management, education (staff training) and the quality assurance of operational professional practice on the ground across all agencies.

What will this deliver?

- Address inequalities and outcome gap, including raising the educational attainment for children and young people.
- Effective risk assessments.
- Informed and robust decision making.
- Delivery of effective plans and interventions for children and families.
- Child centred services.
- Effective self evaluation through robust data analysis leading to continuous improvement.

The findings of the inspection are already being actively taken forward across all agencies. A key challenge identified by the Inspection was a recognition that while on a multi-agency basis agencies across Aberdeen City were data rich much more needed to be done to improve how we analyse and utilise this data to evidence improved outcomes (ie. how do we know we are making a positive difference?). Consequently a major element of the Improvement Action Plan is to develop a robust quality assurance framework which will draw upon best practice and deliver:

- Clarity of roles and responsibilities.
- Accurate management information.
- Regular performance reporting and analysis.
- Embedded audit and improvement cycles.
- Engagement and feedback from children and families.
- A positive and energised workforce.

This will enable leaders at all levels to effectively scrutinise and hold to account all staff and services for children across Aberdeen City so that we can be confident that we are keeping children safe and improving their well-being.

Action Plan

It is recognised that culture and leadership are critical to the change process. These elements are addressed within the Action Plan. However, it is acknowledged that these will require to be built upon and are part of a longer term process to ensure the sustainability of change.

The overall approach to the improvement programme and the development of the Action Plan has been for each Outcome Group (Safe; Healthy & Active; Nurtured; Achieving; Responsible; and Respected & Included), based on the findings of the Inspection Report, to develop a specific Plan particular to their thematic responsibility. These plans will form part of their wider improvement planning. Additionally, it was recognised that there are areas of improvement which cut across the work of the Outcome Groups and/or are the responsibility of specific services. Accordingly the GIRFEC Group, Children's Social Work, and Education Services have developed their own Action Plans which feed into the over-arching Action Plan.

The Improvement and Performance Group (IPG), under the chair of the Chief Social Work Officer, will monitor the progress of implementing the Action Plan. Individual Outcome Groups and departments will produce their own targets and provide updates to the IPG. This will ensure that the Action Plan is a living iterative document that is regularly monitored and reviewed as we implement the proposed actions. In turn the IPG will be responsible for reporting progress to the Integrated Children's Services Board and for ensuring that relevant data is available to inform our future self-evaluation to evidence ***How well are the lives of children and young people (in Aberdeen) improving?***

The progress on delivering the Action Plan will ultimately be reported to the Integrated Children's Services Chief Officers Group (COG) on a regular basis. In addition, we will agree a reporting programme with our link Inspector to demonstrate progress against the actions contained in this Plan.

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Action Plan, June 2015

Key issue	Objective	Actions	Measures / Success criteria	Responsibility	Timescale
Theme: How well are the lives of children and young people improving?					
QI 1.1 Improving the wellbeing of children & young people					
QI 2.1 Impact on children & young people					
School performance / educational attainment	Our objective is to ensure that children and young people have the skills, confidence and self-esteem to progress successfully in their learning and development.	We will achieve this by:			
		<p>To identify early young people at risk of placement in residential school care placements and consider strategies and services to reduce risks to enable them to remain in their families or local care provision.</p> <p>To continue to develop responsive and supportive alternative to care services for children at risk placement residential school care placements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% reduction in out of authority school placements over 4 years. 	H of S Service Managers Team Managers IRO's	By end March 2016
Child Protection	Our objective is to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded and protected from abuse, neglect or harm and have the knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe.	We will achieve this by:			
		<p>Planning for children to ensure positive changes are maintained after they cease to be on the CPR</p> <p>Undertake a review of cases where early re-registration has occurred to identify common themes and/or practice issues.</p> <p>Ensure that regular post registration Core Group Meetings occur for all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support continues to be provided and monitored for up to 3 months after children cease to be on the CPR in order to reduce the incidence of re-registration towards the national rate (eg. 25% as at 31.03.14 in Aberdeen City compared to 17% nationally). 	CPC ECS (Social Work)	By end September 2015

Key issue	Objective	Actions	Measures / Success criteria	Responsibility	Timescale
		<p>children who come off the CPR.</p> <p>Ensure that the Named Person is clear as to their responsibilities post involvement of Social Work.</p>			
		<p>• significantly improving the overall wellbeing of very young vulnerable children who are looked after at home and already subject to child protection measures.</p> <p>Support Team Managers to undertake LAC Reviews for children looked after at home in accordance with statutory duties.</p> <p>Review the LAC recording systems to identify children where drift in the planning processes arises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity to review children looked after at home by implementation of RSW. • Earlier identification of risks to reduce likelihood of subsequent child protection registration. • Overall wellbeing of children looked after at home improved. 	Service Managers	By end December 2015
		<p>• identifying children and young people living with the longstanding effects of abuse and neglect.</p> <p>The Unit meeting will support and critically examine intervention strategies to ensure persistence and effective challenge with families</p> <p>Independent Supervision of the Clinical Practitioner will offer reflective opportunities to review intervention effectiveness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active case and risk management reinforced by implementation of RSW model. • Children's workforce recognises and has the confidence to act when they identify longstanding abuse and neglect. 	ECS (Social Work)	By end December 2015

Key issue	Objective	Actions	Measures / Success criteria	Responsibility	Timescale
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuing to raise awareness of staff across all services in relation to child sexual exploitation (CSE). <p>Develop CSE Practice Guidance for social work staff.</p> <p>Provide training for social work staff on the indicators of risk of CSE.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Guidance issued to all staff to understand indicators of CSE and action to take to protect vulnerable young people. • Training provided across the ICS partnership to understand and recognise CSE. 	ECS (Social Work)	By end December 2015
QI 2.2 Impact on families					
Access to services	Our objective is to enable families to benefit from effective support to promote the wellbeing of their children.	<p>We will achieve this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementing Reclaiming Social Work across Children's Social Work to ensure all cases are subject to reflective discussion and, where appropriate, on a multi-agency basis. <p>Complete Unit Handbook providing clarity on roles and responsibilities within the new structure</p> <p>Agree supervision arrangements for Clinical Practitioners</p> <p>Agree staff mentoring arrangements with other local authorities who have successfully implemented RSW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of Social Work Unit based staff provided with systemic practice training to ensure they apply the model effectively. • Staff supported by Unit Handbook to deliver on their responsibilities within the RSW model of working. • Clinical practitioners receive supervision appropriate to the role. • On-going support programme provided to Social Work staff, including mentoring from experienced practitioners. 	H of S Service Managers	By end March 2016
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting staff within Children's Social Work to provide services which offer persistence and challenge appropriate to risk and need. <p>The Unit Handbook will provide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff within Children's Social Work will continue to have appropriate systemic practice training to pro-actively manage and reduce risk. 	ECS (Social Work)	By end March 2016

Key issue	Objective	Actions	Measures / Success criteria	Responsibility	Timescale
		<p>guidance on the functions of the Unit meeting.</p> <p>The Unit meeting will support and critically examine intervention strategies to ensure persistence and effective challenge with families</p> <p>Independent Supervision of the Clinical Practitioner will offer reflective opportunities to review intervention effectiveness.</p>			
Theme: How well are partners working together to improve the lives of children, young people and families?					
QI 5.1 Providing help and support at an early stage					
QI 5.2 Assessing & responding to risks and needs					
Chronologies	Our objective is to ensure that chronologies of significant events in a child or young person's life are compiled and effectively used to identify factors which may affect their wellbeing.	<p>We will achieve this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring that all children have a chronology and that the quality of the chronologies is consistently high with information from all services. <p>We will review the Guidance issued to staff on the function and purpose of Chronology's</p> <p>Multi Agency Training will be provided to staff on completing chronologies.</p> <p>Team Managers/Service Managers will quality assure chronologies via regular case file auditing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-agency casefile audit completed to assess inclusion of information from all agencies reflects improved quality of integrated chronologies. 	Service Managers Team Managers	By end March 2016

Key issue	Objective	Actions	Measures / Success criteria	Responsibility	Timescale
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving the quality and accuracy of single agency chronologies of significant events. <p>(As above)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers briefed to ensure that attendance at training is prioritised to give urgency and importance to this subject. 	All agencies.	By end September 2015
Assessments	Our objective is that our assessments are of a sufficient standard that enables the development of a child's plan that in turn reduces risks to a child or young person, meets their needs and allows timely decisions about their lives.	We will achieve this by:			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivering training for staff on completing or contributing to an assessment that will enhance early and effective intervention. <p>Provide training on completing assessments that clearly in an evidenced based manner focus on the current risks and needs for the child.</p> <p>Training will incorporate use of and application of National Practice Model.</p> <p>Team Managers/Service Managers will quality assure assessments via regular case file auditing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency training programme expanded to raise the profile of the national practice model and child's plan data set to ensure that all planning considers risk when compiling a plan for a child. • Assessments address risks and needs and facilitate timely planning for children and young people. 	Service Managers Team Managers	By end March 2016
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review all risk assessment tools and identify which specialist models are to be adopted across Children's Social Work. <p>(As above)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National best practice identified and shared across Children's Social Work. 	CPC ECS (Social Work)	By end December 2015
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • utilising good quality assessments as benchmarks for standards of practice. <p>(As above)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across Children's Social Work utilisation of National Risk Assessment Framework. 	ECS (Social Work)	By end December 2015

Key issue	Objective	Actions	Measures / Success criteria	Responsibility	Timescale
QI 5.3 Planning for individual children & young people					
Looked after children / care leavers	Our objective is to ensure that our looked after children have nurturing and stable environments wherever they may live or go to school and support and accommodation when they move on from our care.	<p>We will achieve this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being more effective across all agencies, as corporate parents, at planning for looked after and accommodated children. <p>Agree strategy to develop the role and remit of the Champion's Board with increase participation of children and young people.</p> <p>Ensure the new legislative requirements of Corporate Parents are understood across the Partnership.</p> <p>Develop supports for young care leavers entering work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of the Champions Board developed within an engagement and participation strategy across all agencies to promote new corporate parenting responsibilities. Increase in the number of opportunities under the Family Firm Policy for work experience, apprenticeships and internships. 	Service Manager with Lead Responsibility for Corporate Parenting.	By end December 2015
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completing the review and re-design of residential care for children and young people ensuring staff are skilled to meet the needs of vulnerable young people. <p>Following further engagement with staff and young people present a report to Committee on the redesign of Residential Services in Aberdeen.</p> <p>Establish a workforce development plan to support staff to have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of young people who cannot live in a family setting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion & implementation of residential review, including a workforce development plan. Increase in number of young people cared for within Children's Homes with positive outcomes. 		By end September 2015

Key issue	Objective	Actions	Measures / Success criteria	Responsibility	Timescale
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completing a review of Throughcare and After Care services to provide co-ordinated service provision on a multi-agency basis. <p>Support staff across the RSW structure to fully understand the new duties to care leavers under the 2014 Act.</p> <p>Complete the Review of the services provided to young care leavers which provide them with a multi-agency and co-ordinated approach to meet their needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion & implementation of resulting review. 	Service Manager with Lead Responsibility for Throughcare.	By end March 2016
Plans & Reviews	Our objective is that our plans are effective in identifying all aspects of a child or young person's wellbeing and that they identify all those who may contribute to meeting the child or young person's needs.	We will achieve this by:			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bringing together under a single Service Manager responsibility for co-ordinating and quality assuring reviews of LAAC children <p>Develop training for social workers to achieve a more consistent quality of Child's Plans and evidence of contingency planning.</p> <p>Ensure that all Plans are SMART</p> <p>Ensure that all children who are part of a sibling group have individual plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAAC reviews undertaken by confident small staff group. • Consistent reviewing processes in place regularly quality assured. 	ECS (Social Work)	By end December 2015

Key issue	Objective	Actions	Measures / Success criteria	Responsibility	Timescale
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting Consultant Social Workers/Team Managers ensure the reviews of LAC children at home are held within statutory timescales. <p>(As above)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children looked after at home subject to reviews as per statutory requirements. • Quality assured through sample audit of minutes. Targets to be developed with implementation of RSW. 	ECS (Social Work)	By end March 2016
High risk cases	Our objective is to ensure that risk assessments are undertaken timeously for the small number of young people who present a very high risk to themselves or others.	We will achieve this by:			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying and assessing the small number of young people who pose a high risk to themselves or others whilst in residential units and do not have access to alternative or more suitable placements. <p>Undertake a case audit of children/young people who posed a high risk to themselves or others who have moved to other placements. Identify what worked and what did not.</p> <p>Review the effectiveness of in-house and commissioned services being able to respond and support young people who pose a high risk to themselves or others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people in residential care who are a high risk to themselves or others are identified and the suitability of their placement kept under review. • Robust risk assessments and safety plans in place for all young people who present high risk. 	ECS (Social Work)	By end September 2015
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assisting young people to manage their behaviour by improving challenge from staff working with them, improving support to their families, and developing direct work to help link actions with consequences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of young people being effectively supported and safeguarded through local provision. • 5% increase in numbers of children with ASN being educated in their local community. • 30% reduction in out of authority school placements over 4 years. 	ECS (Social Work)	By end December 2015

Key issue	Objective	Actions	Measures / Success criteria	Responsibility	Timescale
		<p>To identify early young people at risk of placement in residential school care placements and consider strategies and services to reduce risks to enable them to remain in their families or local care provision.</p> <p>To continue to develop responsive and supportive alternative to care services for children at risk placement residential school care placements.</p> <p>Establish a workforce development plan to support residential staff to have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of young people who cannot live in a family setting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in cases coming to CSSF. • Implementation of Residential Review Workforce Development Plan. 		
		<p>• implementing a robust process to identifying, assessing and manage high risk young people.</p> <p>Provide training to staff on use of the aim2 assessment tool.</p> <p>Develop a local multi agency Risk Assessment protocol.</p> <p>To continue to develop flexible and effective community based services for young people who present high risk behaviours to support them to reduce the level of risk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer violent incident reports. • Staff trained to use 'aim2' assessment tool. • Risk assessment protocol developed, shared and implemented. • Increased awareness amongst service providers of the Corporate Parent legislative framework. • Continuing reduction in numbers of young offenders (ie. 15% in 2014/15). 	ECS (Social Work)	By end December 2015
QI 6.2 Planning & improving services					
QI 6.3 Participation of children, young people, families and other stakeholders					
Theme: How good is the leadership and direction of services for children and young people?					

Key issue	Objective	Actions	Measures / Success criteria	Responsibility	Timescale
QI 9.4 Leadership of improvement and change					

Key	
COG	Chief Officers Group of Integrated Children's Services Board
ICSB	Integrated Children's Services Board
CPC	Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee (* for the purposes of the ICS Partnership the CPC undertakes the function of the Safe Outcome Group)
ECS	Education and Children's Services Directorate

NHS G	NHS Grampian
IPG	Information & Performance Group
Timeframe	
By end June 2015	Immediate
By end September 2015	Short
By end December 2015	Intermediate
By end March 2016	Long