

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	<b>Education &amp; Children Services</b>
DATE	<b>28 January 2016</b>
DIRECTOR	<b>Gayle Gorman</b>
TITLE OF REPORT	<b>Joint Inspection of Children's Services - Update</b>
REPORT NUMBER	<b>ECS/16/003</b>
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	<b>Yes</b>

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

A report on the Joint Inspection of Services for children and young people in the Aberdeen City Community Planning Partnership area was presented to Committee in September 2015. Committee members asked for a further update on the progress made of implementing the Action Plan in January.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that:

- (i) Committee notes the update on the multi-agency Action Plan (appendix 1) in response to the areas of improvement identified within the Inspection Report.
- (ii) Committee requests a report back on progress against actions in the Action Plan as appropriate.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications.

### **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no other implications.

### **5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

- 5.1 The Care Inspectorate's inspection on the Joint Inspection of Services for children and young people in the Aberdeen City Community

Planning Partnership area commenced in June 2014 and concluded in December 2014. Their report was published on 6 March 2015.

- 5.2 The Inspection evaluated services positively and identified that the partnership had a positive platform to build on. It also recognised the need to improve our performance in respect of all Quality Indicators. The Action 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 across all agencies.
- 5.3 The findings of the inspection are being actively taken forward across the partnership. A key challenge identified by the Inspection was recognition that while agencies across Aberdeen City were data rich more needed to be done to improve how we analyse and utilise this data to evidence improved outcomes (i.e. 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.

To assist it is proposed that a evidenced gathering data framework is developed across the Partnership to assist in our planning. The initial focus will be Looked After Children who generally experience poorer outcomes. This framework will also allow us to more effectively compare outcomes with comparative authorities.

- 5.4 This will enable leaders at all levels to effectively scrutinise and hold to account staff and services for children across the Aberdeen City Partnership so that we can be confident that we are keeping children safe and improving their well-being.
- 5.5 Each Outcome Group (Safe; Healthy & Active; Nurtured; Achieving; Responsible; and Respected & Included), based on the findings of the inspection report, has developed a specific Action Plan particular to their thematic responsibility. These plans form part of their wider improvement planning. Additionally, the Inspection Report identified 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 their own Action Plans which feed into the over-arching Action Plan.
- 5.6 The Improvement and Performance Group (IPG), under the chair of the Chief Social Work Officer, monitors the progress of implementing the Action Plan. Individual Outcome Groups and departments produce

their own targets and provide updates to the IPG. This ensures the Action Plan is a living iterative document that is regularly monitored and reviewed as we implement the proposed actions. In turn the IPG is responsible for reporting progress to the Integrated Children's Services Board and 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?***

- 5.7 The progress on delivering the Action Plan is ultimately reported to the Integrated Children's Services Chief Officers Group (COG) on a regular basis.
- 5.8 Following a recent meeting with our Link Inspector we have agreed a quarterly reporting programme. This also allows us to draw upon best practice from other areas of Scotland, contributing to our continuous improvement journey.

## **6. IMPACT**

The Joint Inspection report reinforces the Council's duty (in partnership with other agencies) to provide effective services to children and young people that safeguard and protect their safety and wellbeing as well as ensuring all services are targeted towards reducing inequalities and improving outcomes. These expectations are consistent and fully aligned to the Council's Single Outcome Agreement.

## **7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

The Inspection Report is a public document. The report was essentially positive in terms of how the Council and other agencies deliver services to children and young people. However the report also identifies areas for improvement. It will therefore be important for the Partnership to effectively evidence progress in improving outcomes for children and young people. A failure to do so could adversely impact on the reputation of the Council and other services.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Appendix 1 - The Joint Action Plan June 2015
- Education & Children's Services Committee Report March 2015
- Joint Inspection Report on Children's Services in Aberdeen City – March 2015

## **9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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