

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education & Children Services
DATE	24 March 2016
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Joint Inspection of Children's Services - Update
REPORT NUMBER	ECS/16/011
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

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 update on the progress of implementing the Action Plan to future Committees.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that:

- (i) Committee notes the update on the multi-agency Action Plan
- (ii) Committee requests a final report back on progress against actions in the Action Plan in June 2016.

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 report on the Joint Inspection of Services for children and young people in the Aberdeen City Community Planning Partnership area 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. An Action Plan was submitted to the Care Inspectorate in June 2015 outlining how the partnership planned to address the inspections findings.
- 5.3 Responsibility for delivering on the Action Plan is the responsibility of all agencies. The majority of actions require agencies to work in partnership to achieve successful outcomes. While ultimately focussed on outcomes for children and young people the Action Plan has to address issues such as leadership, governance, performance management, education (staff training) and the quality assurance of practice across all agencies.
- 5.4 A key challenge identified by the Inspection was the need for agencies across Aberdeen City to improve how individually and collectively analyse and utilise data to evidence improved outcomes (i.e. how we know we are making a positive difference?). Consequently a major element of the Improvement Action Plan has been to develop a robust quality assurance framework which draws upon best practice and delivers:
- 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.
- 5.5 Using the Councils Covalent system an evidenced gathering data framework has been developed across the Partnership. This will also allow for more effective comparisons to be made with our comparative authorities in addition to being the principle reporting mechanism to the Integrated Children's Services Board (ICSB), Council and future inspections.
- 5.6 Each Outcome Group (Safe; Healthy & Active; Nurtured; Achieving; Responsible; and Respected & Included), has developed specific Action Plans particular to their thematic responsibility. These 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 plans which feed into the over-arching Action Plan.
- 5.7 The Improvement and Performance Group (IPG), under the chair of the Chief Social Work Officer, monitors the progress of delivering the Action Plan. In turn the IPG is responsible for reporting progress to the (ICSB) ensuring that relevant data is available to inform future self-evaluation to

evidence ***How well are the lives of children and young people (in Aberdeen) improving?***

- 5.8 The progress on delivering the Action Plan is ultimately reported to the Integrated Children's Services Chief Officers Group (COG) on a regular basis.

Progress and Next Steps

- 5.9 Appendix 1 is an updated high level summary of the Action Plan as of 15 February 2016.

The full Action Plan contains 64 individual actions. These focus on the three inspection themes of:

1. How well are the lives of children and young people improving?
2. How well are partners working together to improve the lives of children, young people and families?
3. How good is the leadership and direction of services for children and young people?

These actions are being taken forward by the appropriate Outcome Group or Services. Some of the actions are the responsibility of more than one Group or Service; consequently there are a number of sub actions. Progress on delivering the Action Plan is reported to the Improvement and Performance Group. In the six months since agreeing the Action Plan progress records:

- 14% are completed
- 47% are noted as "Green" - on track to deliver within the agreed timescale
- 39% are noted as "Amber" – mostly on track to deliver within timescale; ongoing monitoring will ensure no slippage.
- 0% graded as "Red".

- 5.10 Since the inspection there have been new legislative and policy developments which have a bearing on some of the agreed Actions within the plan. i.e. the significant additional duties of the Children's & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Consequently some of the identified actions have been consumed by other work streams to take forward these new developments.
- 5.11 In part as a response to the inspection, the ICSB has agreed to focus on the outcomes for Looked After Children. Actions, across the partnership to progress this, will build on the related work detailed within the Joint Inspection Action Plan. As a consequence some of the agreed actions will be consumed in longer term pieces of work such as delivering on our new duties to deliver "Continuing Care".

- 5.12 Updates on delivery of the Action Plan will continue to be shared with our Link Inspector. A quarterly reporting programme has been agreed. 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 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.

The use of Covalent as a coherent management system will support an effective management oversight of the Action Plan.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Appendix 1 - The Joint Action Plan updated as of 19 February 2016
- 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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	Total high level actions	Completed		On Track (Green)		Mostly on track (Amber)		Not on track (Red)	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Theme: How well are the lives of children and young people improving?									
QI 1.1 Improving the wellbeing of children and young people	4			2	50.00	2	50.00		
QI 2.1 Impact on children and young people	20	6	30.00	8	40.00	6	30.00		
QI 2.2 Impact on families	4	1	25.00	2	50.00	1	25.00		
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	7	1	14.29	2	28.57	4	57.14		
QI 5.2 Assessing & responding to risks and needs	7	1	14.29	5	71.43				
QI 5.3 Planning for individual children & young people	12			4	33.33	8	66.67		
QI 6.2 Planning & improving services	2			1	50.00	1	50.00		
QI 6.3 Participation of children, young people, families and other stakeholders	5			3	60.00	2	40.00		
Theme: How good is the leadership and direction of services for children and young people?									
QI 9.4 Leadership of improvement and change	3			3	100.00				
TOTALS	64	9	14.06	30	46.88	25	39.06	0	0