

**Action Plan**  
**following**  
**Report of a joint inspection of services for children and young people in need of care and protection in Aberdeen City**  
**October 2019**

**Methodology and Gradings**

The direct inspection activity of the Care Inspectorate took place between January and May 2019 with the report being published on 3 September 2019. The Inspection Report demonstrates ongoing improvement across the range of services in Aberdeen city since the previous joint inspection in 2014-15. The Care Inspectorate sought to determine the effectiveness of the partnership against five questions:

1. How good is the partnership at recognising and responding when children and young people need protection?
2. How good is the partnership at helping children and young people who have experienced abuse and neglect stay safe, healthy and well and recover from their experiences?
3. How good is the partnership at maximising the wellbeing of children and young people who are looked after?
4. How good is the partnership at enabling care experienced young people to succeed in their transition to adulthood?
5. How good is collaborative leadership?

The Care Inspectorate evaluated the partnership against four established quality indicators and found the partnership to be “good” in every category:

QI 1.1 Improvements in the safety, wellbeing and life chances of vulnerable children and young people.

QI 2.1 Impact on children and young people

QI 2.2 Impact on families

QI 9.1 – 9.4 Leadership and direction

**Key Strengths**

The Report recognises that, throughout the inspection, the partnership demonstrated a clear and thorough evaluation of itself. In particular, the following key strengths were identified within the Report:

1. The quality and stability of the care provided by staff working with children and young people with an emphasis on building on strengths in families.
2. The robustness of multi-agency pre-birth assessment and planning processes and the early stage help these provide to vulnerable women and their unborn babies.
3. Staff recognition of signs of risk, effective information-sharing processes and responses to threats of significant harm.
4. The wide range of universal and targeted support services helping children, young people and their families to recover from cases of abuse and neglect.
5. The effectiveness of joint working and the collaborative approach, vision, values and aims promoted by leaders.

**Priority Areas for Improvement**

The Report notes the following priority areas for improvement:

1. Strategic oversight of corporate parenting was not as robust as that for child protection.
2. There were limitations in outcomes data with which the partners were able to demonstrate improving trends for looked after children and young people, particularly those looked after at home and care leavers.
3. Children and young people in need of care and protection were not benefitting from timeous assessments of their health needs while there were also gaps in some services in terms of addressing emotional health and well-being.

This action plan seeks to respond to these identified areas for improvement. All improvement priorities are a multi-agency responsibility and sit collectively with the agencies and members of the partnership. However, each area of priority will be led by one agency as indicated below. Where the identified areas for improvement are already included in strategic plans, signposts and links to those plans are provided.

### **Monitoring of this Action Plan**

The project team and the chief officer group will receive quarterly progress updates from those with lead responsibility as identified in the action plan below.

# PROSPEROUS PEOPLE: CHILDREN

Joint Inspection of services for children and young people in need of care and protection in Aberdeen City

Action Plan

October 2019 – October 2020

Stretch Outcome Aim	Key Drivers	Improvement project aim	Key Improvement Measures	Lead Responsibility	Progress update
At all times to recognise and respond when Children and Young People need protection from significant harm or abuse	There were no direct areas for improvement identified in the Joint Inspection report here. It recognised that continuous improvement is delivered through the Child Protection Improvement Programme.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
At all times to help children and young people stay safe, healthy and, for those who have experienced abuse and neglect, to recover from their experiences	The mental health and emotional wellbeing concerns of children and young people will be better addressed.	LOIP – Outcome 4	See LOIP – Outcome 4   LOIP Outcome 4.pdf	ICS Board Chair and CPC Chair	The Child Protection Committee hosted Emotional Abuse events 18 11 19 (part1) and 29 01 20 (part2), the evaluation being available after the January event.  Emotional Abuse course in L&D Programme commenced February 2020  MA staff workshops held Oct 19 and Jan 20 to explore redesign options for early support for C&YP with MH needs. This is drawing on support to HIS and CYPIC.  Impact of coronavirus crisis throughout 2020 on mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and young people is recognised. Various forms of direct and indirect contact maintained and well received. For example, 95% of Children on the CPR have continued to receive face to face contact with professionals on a weekly basis. General advice and support offered through social media and support helplines.

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					<p>Psychological Wellbeing Hub established at the start of the pandemic provide easy access to young people and parents to seek mental wellbeing support. Learning from this model is influencing future delivery of CAMHS services.</p> <p>Three hubs set up for Valuable (vulnerable) children and families offering emotional and practical support during coronavirus. Such positive feedback from families has led to new Family Wellbeing Hubs continuing as an ongoing support delivered by the partnership under the family wellbeing model.</p> <p>To complement and enhance multi-agency strategies and governance of mental health and emotional wellbeing concerns, Police Scotland North East Division have commenced a Mental Health Governance Group, where all matters relating to mental health will be considered and where necessary escalated and shared with multi-agency partners with the aim of improving outcomes for all citizens, including children and young people.</p>
	<p><b>Approaches to seeking and recording the views of children and young people who had been involved in child protection processes will be extended.</b></p>	<p>Child Protection Improvement Programme</p>	<p>See Child Protection Improvement Programme</p>  <p>CP Views of Childrens+YP.pdf</p> <p>*Please note that this is an iterative document which is being refreshed following the CPC Development Session on 1 October 2019.</p>	<p><b>CPC Chair</b></p>	<p>CPC - Children's Rights Service Functional Review extends service to include child protection processes.</p> <p>CPC - Use of Mind of My Own App to be used by young people involved in child protection system</p> <p>CPC - amended IRD and case conference documentation to prompt referral to Children's Rights Service and Advocacy Services.</p> <p>Impact of coronavirus crisis has seen rapid extension across all partners of use of digital technology for individual contact, participation in case conferences, children's hearings. This has been well received by many children, young people and families and will be monitored for extension into future practice. It will sit alongside traditional face to face methods where these are preferred and appropriate.</p>

Stretch Outcome Aim	Key Drivers	Improvement project aim	Key Improvement Measures	Lead Responsibility	Progress update
At all times to maximise the wellbeing of children and young people who are looked after	The impact of strategies to shift the balance of care and reduce the high number of out-of-area placements will be closely monitored to demonstrate improvement.	LOIP – Outcome 5	See LOIP – Outcome 5   LOIP Outcome 5.pdf	ICS Board Chair	Continued participation from Police Scotland in ICS Board and CPC, and commitment to associated sub committees and work / action plans.  CSW - Realignment of resources to establish more flexible and responsive support to families to enable LAC @ home and kinship options to be fully explored and supported.  Work across p/ship to ensure early planning to support YP return to city. Learning from examples (LG+IM) of examples when this has not gone as intended. Learning collated and shared.  Coronavirus virus restrictions have impacted on our capacity to return some young people to, or retain them within, the City.  The above has begun to contribute to changes to the balance of care. LAC @ Home (+ 3%) - 21% LAC with Kin (-/+ ) - 18% LAC with Foster Care (- 4%) - 47% LAC in residential (-/+ ) – 10.5%  While there is still more to do the Corporate Parenting Performance and Improvement Group have will have an unrelenting focus on the delivery of the 'The Promise' to support further and lasting change.
	Services will 'close the gap' between the outcomes for children and young people looked after at home compared to other care settings	LOIP – Outcome 5	See LOIP 5.1   LOIP Outcome 5.pdf	ICS Board Chair & Corp Parenting Improvement Group Chair	<a href="#">October 2020</a> <a href="#">Project Charter approved by ICS Board.</a>  <a href="#">Corporate Parenting Improvement Group</a> All 6 MCR Pathways Project Co-ordinators have now been recruited, trained and are in the schools. The project has young people identified and engaged in the project. Updates on measures are provided at 5 identified points throughout the year to the ICS Board.

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					<p>Recruiting for mentors has commenced with an external launch through the media and internal launch through Chief Executive blog and Corporate Parenting webinar.</p> <p>Virtual School Standards and Quality report for 2019/20 finalised with evaluation of impact of funding from SG Attainment Challenge Funding and impact of Virtual School Improvement plan. Where Covid-19 has impacted on completion of identified developments, this has been outlined and taken forward into the 2020/21 improvement plan.</p> <p>Virtual School improvement plan for 2020/21 in line with LOIP outcome 5 with consideration of impact on families of COVID-19</p>
	<p><b>The health needs of looked after children and young people will be fully met and comprehensive assessments will be undertaken timeously.</b></p>	<p>By 30 September 2020 50% of LAC will have an initial health assessment undertaken within 4 weeks of their accommodation.</p> <p>By 30 September 2021 75% of LAC will have an initial health assessment undertaken within 4 weeks of their accommodation.</p> <p>By 30 September 2022 90% of LAC will have an initial health assessment undertaken within 4 weeks of their accommodation.</p>	<p>By 30 Nov 2019 a multi-agency workshop to address the lack of timeously completed health assessments will be held.</p> <p>An improvement charter will be developed on the output of the workshop and presented to the Corporate Parenting Improvement Group in December 2019.</p>	<p><b>ICS Board Chair &amp; Corp Parenting Improvement Group Chair</b></p>	<p>Children's Social work in conjunction with Health have progressed the project charter.</p> <p>Systems in place to ensure notification is received promptly to ensure assessment is progressed.</p> <p>CSW - MA workshop (Jan 20) to explore challenges of current process to deliver timescale. Changes identified to deliver improvement.</p> <p>Improvement charter to come to Feb Corp Parent IG.</p> <p><b>Data from NHSG showing positive change in delivery of</b></p>
	<p><b>Regular short breaks received by children with disabilities will meet the children's needs</b></p>	<p>By 30 September 2020, plans for 100% of children in receipt of regular short breaks will be reviewed</p>	<p>Data will evidence the necessary assessment, planning and review arrangements of regular short breaks received by children with disabilities</p>	<p><b>ICS Board Chair &amp; Corp Parenting Improvement Group Chair</b></p>	<p>SW staff are all aware that the impact and continuing need on the child of short breaks and other support and intervention must be examined within MA Reviews. All review meetings held for children now include the views of children, their parent, providers, lead professional and other agencies where appropriate.</p>

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					Work to ensure that all children in receipt of short breaks are reviewed at least annually has taken place over 2019/20. This has been impacted by COVID but will be concluded prior to end of 2020.
<b>At all times to enable care experienced young people to succeed in their transition to adulthood</b>	<b>The partnership will do more to maintain contact with young people after they leave care to improve their outcomes.</b>	The partnership will further develop flexible and responsive support to care leavers that takes account of their individual needs.	Data will evidence improved outcomes and increased levels of engagement in services by care leavers.  Feedback from care leavers will evidence the relevancy of service provision to meet their needs.	<b>ICS Board Chair &amp; Corp Parenting Improvement Group Chair</b>	Worker appointed to review and develop engagement with care experienced yp. This is being done in full participation with yp and will identify and drive fwd change proposals.  Further development of facebook as means of maintaining contact.  The impact of COVID resulted in the expansion in the use of digital means of engaging. This has not replaced face to face support but has significantly complemented. Feedback from yp is very positive and this will remain part of our support offer to care experienced yp.
	<b>Young people with a disability will experience consistently positive transitions between children's and adults' services.</b>	Integrated services will consistently evaluate the transitions between adult and children's services for young people with a disability	Data and feedback from children and families will evidence a positive transition between children and adult services	<b>IJB Chief Officer and CSWO</b>	A cross service working group has reviewed process of supporting transition of cases informed by feedback from families.  Close links between Children's SW and Transitions Team share data on children prior to school leaving date to coordinate transitioning between services appropriately.  A workshop on Developing Transitions in the city was held in Feb 2020, attended by professionals from across the partnership to build on what is working well and to identify further improvements. Currently work on the electronic processes to support referrals to Adult Social Work is taking place to pick up on identified gaps in a learning manner. Adult and Children's Services are liaising with ARC to consider our further embedding of the 7 principles of good Transitions.

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<p><b>At all times to provide strong and effective collaborative leadership</b></p>	<p><b>Effective challenge by leaders to the variance in outcomes for particular groups of looked after children and young people, including those looked after at home will be demonstrated.</b></p>	<p>The partnership will on multi-agency basis consistently evaluate the outcomes for looked after children and young people</p>	<p>By 31 October 2019 a Quality Assurance Framework will be implemented</p>	<p><b>ICS Board Chair; CPC Chair &amp; COG</b></p>	<p>Established case review process in place enhances multi-agency professional challenge. In disseminating the practice learning, a change in culture enabling multi-agency challenge has continued to evolve.</p> <p>Quality Assurance Framework implemented. Audits for CPC and ICSB for 2020 identified. Process adjusted due to COVID to enable these to proceed via digital means. First audit underway September 2020.</p>
			<p>Learning from QA activity will inform our continuous self-evaluation and L&amp;D programme.</p>		<p>CPC – Multi-agency L&amp;D programme commences Feb 2020 with in-built QA and reporting to CPC quarterly and annually. QAF mentioned above. QA groups established for IRDs and JIIs CPC – always do an Annual Report</p>
		<p>The BIU will provide leaders with regular data reports on the outcomes for all groups of LAC.</p>	<p>The BIU will develop the Data Summary report to provide consistent updates on the outcomes for children and young people.</p>	<p><b>Chief Officer – BIU</b></p>	<p>This data has been made available for COG and will continue be refined in alignment with the priorities identified in the C&amp;YP Data Forum.</p> <p>The ‘Data Summary’ report is being produced annually drawing together all data into one report for analysis and to inform continuous improvement planning and reporting to COG.</p> <p>Corp Parent IG have developed a suite of scrutiny questions and the data which can evidence impact of services/outcomes.</p> <p>C&amp;YP Data Forum meeting on a monthly basis to further develop the collation and analysis of MA data to provide leaders with the necessary assurance on the outcomes for all groups.</p>

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		Leaders will ensure they are visible; communicate regularly and engage with and hear from staff across the partnership.	<p>A Communication Strategy will be agreed by leaders by 31-10-19</p> <p>Leaders will provide staff across the partnership with regular multi-agency staff briefings.</p> <p>Leaders will attend multi-agency engagement events with staff across the partnership.</p>	<b>ICS Board Chair; CPC Chair &amp; COG</b>	<p>Impact of coronavirus crisis has escalated frequency of reporting and analysis of data by SG, COG and CPC</p> <p>CPC- briefings following each case review, practitioners events, development of L&amp;D courses and dissemination of guidance.</p> <p>COG led event Feb 2020 on best practice in child and adult protection.</p> <p>CPC – huge extension to public and staff messaging throughout coronavirus relating to child protection and priorities of the CP Programme.</p> <p>CPC annual Development sessions include all CPC members, all sub committee members and COG.</p> <p>Key messages from CSB &amp; COG meetings shared with the workforce.</p> <p>The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has seen increased communication using social media platforms by all partners. Regular briefings from Chief Officers are made in all agencies. Adjustments to processes and procedures during crisis are widely circulated.</p> <p><u>Police Scotland October 2020</u> Innovative methods of on-line visibility and communication have been developed as a result of restrictions in place due to Covid-19. Leaders have continued to engage with practitioners with formal and informal feedback processes in place to gain insight and views on adapted practices to ensure continued excellent services can be provided despite challenges, an example being the CPC Development Day on 27 October 2020.</p>
	<b>Strategic and routine data analysis was more sophisticated for children in need of protection than looked after children and young people.</b>	The BIU will provide leaders with regular data reports on the outcomes for all groups of children including those who are LAC.	<p>Updates to the Data Summary Report will be provided on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>The BIU will support the collection, analysis and</p>	<b>Chief Officer – BIU</b>	CPC has established data reporting framework on a quarterly and annual basis. It has a subcommittee dedicated to collation and analysis of data.

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			reporting of data that demonstrates outcomes for children and young people.		<p>The corporate parenting group also continues to develop the data set and scrutiny questions based on the 2014 Act. Potential data sources have been identified by the group. BIU are supporting the production of a quarterly report on corporate parenting data.</p> <p>Impact of coronavirus crisis has escalated reporting on looked after children data across the partnership, through the 'Aberdeen Together' group.</p>

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