

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Scrutiny Committee – 9 December 2020

Council – 16 December 2020

PERTH AND KINROSS CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2019/2020

Report by Chief Social Work Officer

(Report No. 20/241)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

Perth and Kinross Child Protection Committee (CPC), in compliance with Protecting Children and Young People: Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer Responsibilities (Scottish Government: February 2019), publishes an annual Standards and Quality (S&Q) Report. This S&Q report, for the academic year 2019/2020 provides an overview of the key activities and work of the CPC to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation. This report identifies achievements, key strengths, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and areas for further improvement. It also sets out the CPC's programme of improvement work for 2020 and beyond.

1. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 All Child Protection Committees in Scotland are encouraged to publish an Annual Report in compliance with the requirements described in [Protecting Children and Young People: Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer Responsibilities](#) (Scottish Government: February 2019). This S&Q report covers the work of the CPC for the academic year from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.
- 1.2 The S&Q report reflects the Care Inspectorate's Quality Indicator Framework: [A quality framework for children and young people in need of care and protection](#) (Care Inspectorate: Revised 2019).
- 1.3 The S&Q report presents an overview of performance in services to protect children and young people and is based on sound evidence, obtained through a wide range of single and multi-agency quality assurance and self-evaluation activities. It describes achievements, key strengths, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and areas for further improvement. It also describes the capacity for continuing improvement and the CPC's improvement programme for 2020 and beyond.

- 1.4 The pictorial summary on page 5 of the S&Q report provides a graphic synopsis of the entire S&Q report and identifies increasing demands on key child protection processes; significantly improved provision and use of data; a much improved and blended approach to seeking and representing the views of children and young people, in particular the provisions of independent advocacy and improving frontline practice, all enabled by new technologies and practice guidance.
- 1.5 The headline statistical data presented on pages 9 to 14 of the S&Q report show that the number of Child Concern Reports (CCR's) has risen for a third successive year; by far the majority continuing to come from Police Scotland. The number of children and young people who have been the subject of an inter-agency referral discussion (IRDs), leading to a child protection investigation, has also continued to grow over the last three years.
- 1.6 The number of children and young people, being considered at initial child protection case conferences and subsequently being placed (registered) on the Child Protection Register (CPR), has fallen slightly this year, however, the conversion rate between conference and registration remains high at 91%; confirming that the children and young people, most at risk of significant harm, abuse and exploitation are being correctly identified, managed, supported and protected.
- 1.7 For those children and young people whose names have been placed on the CPR (registration), we continue to closely monitor both short term and longer term periods of registration. The data also shows that 138 new CPR registration took place during the year, representing a reduction from the previous year. However, the number of children and young people whose names were still on the CPR at 31 July 2020 is significantly greater than in previous years. Without doubt, this is a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent containment measures, which temporarily interrupted well-established multi-agency review arrangements, resulting in a 20% increase being realised between March and July 2020. New and creative ways of working are now allowing multi-agency staff an opportunity to review these registration periods, for example with key multi-agency child protection meetings taking place virtually.
- 1.8 The areas for concern being recorded most frequently continue to be domestic abuse, parental mental ill-health and parental drug and/or alcohol use; sometimes referred to as the "*trio of risk*". Neglect and non-engagement also continue to feature highly. It is also recognised that in the majority, if not all of these cases, there will be an element of emotional abuse.
- 1.9 The data (financial year) also shows that referrals to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) have risen this year, in cases where children and young people are in need of compulsory measures of care. The CPC continues to monitor the use of legal measures, particularly Compulsory Supervision Orders (CSOs), which have fallen this year and Child Protection Orders (CPOs), which have been generally increasing over the last five years. This year, the number of unborn baby referrals has fallen again, with the majority continuing to come from Health Services.

- 1.10 Since March 2020, as a managed response to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent containment measures, the CPC has been receiving more frequent data, in a more integrated way. The CPC quickly developed a dataset, which included all the data being collected nationally via the Scottish Government and through CoSLA and SOLACE, as well as some local key performance indicators.
- 1.11 For example, on a weekly basis, the CPC has been monitoring the number of CCRs received weekly with a domestic abuse marker. It has also been monitoring how many times children and young people, with a child protection plan, have been physically seen, face-to-face, by their social worker (lead professional), on at least a fortnightly basis, and how many children and young people, with a multi-agency plan, have been contacted (including visits, seen face-to-face, online and telephone) by a key worker, primarily a social worker and/or other key professionals, on at least a weekly basis, both of which has remained very high.
- 1.12 Pages 16 to 24 of the S&Q report also evidences a significantly improved picture in the provision of, and access to, advocacy support, particularly independent advocacy support, for children and young people involved in key meetings. It also evidences the impact the COVID-19 pandemic and containment measures have had on face-to-face work with children and young people and how a creative and blended approach to contact, visits, engagement, seeking and representing the views of children and young people has been continued, and in many ways enhanced, through innovative working and the use of existing and new technologies. It also shows increasing awareness of and support to young people's mental health and wellbeing.
- 1.13 The S&Q report also acknowledges that whilst there has been an expected reduction in the take-up rate of multi-agency face-to-face training, particularly since March 2020, this has been pro-actively compensated by a significant increase in the use of the Online Modules and the CPC has also introduced new Digital Learning Opportunities on key practice issues. Additionally, the CPC's social media footprint and reach has also increased significantly over the last year.
- 1.14 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) continues to be a priority area of work for the CPC and partner agencies. Throughout the year, work has been undertaken to consolidate the partnership's approach of zero-tolerance to abuse and exploitation across Perth and Kinross. Of particular note is the work of the Young People's Advisory Group and their Young People's Online CSE Survey 2019, which received 1,748 responses (574 in 2017) from across all Secondary Schools in Perth and Kinross. Reassuringly, whilst we remain vigilant to such abuse and exploitation, local data shows that there has actually been a reduction in this type of crime recorded by the police (page 30 of the S&Q report).

- 1.15 Much of the CPC's improvement work continues to be taken forward via the CPC Practice Improvement Working Group, chaired by Perth and Kinross Council's Head of Services for Children, Young People and Families, and the CPC continues to support the work of the Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative (TRIC) Priority Group 5 (PG5): Safeguarding and Child Protection, which is chaired by the Chief Social Work Officer. The improvement work of this TRIC PG5 has been significantly progressed and is currently focussed on relationship building with families, working together, and workforce development, to change and improve the culture, ethos and day-to-day frontline multi-agency child protection practice. The work of TRIC PG5 continues to provide added value to the improvement work of the CPC. A concise summary of this work can be found at page 35 of the S&Q report.
- 1.16 In conclusion, the S&Q report evidences our continued capacity for further improvement and our next steps; which are described on page 36 of the S&Q report. This is supported by the evidence contained within the Perth and Kinross CPC Improvement Plan 2018 – 2020 (Final Update) at 31 July 2020 which accompanies this report (Appendix 2). This shows the significant progress we have made in implementing the improvement actions to support frontline practice since 2018.
- 1.17 Through the work of the CPC, there is a commitment to remain alert; to continually identify areas of risk; to ensure continuous improvement and to maintain excellence in the work of the CPC.

2. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:

- (i) Scrutinises and comments as appropriate on the Perth and Kinross Child Protection Committee Standards and Quality Report 2019/2020 (Appendix 1) and the contents of the Perth and Kinross CPC Improvement Plan 2018 – 2020 (Final Update) at 31 July 2020 (Appendix 2).

2.2 It is recommended that the Council:

- (i) Notes the wide range of work being carried out by Perth and Kinross Council and partners through the Child Protection Committee, to provide high quality services to protect children and young people, in particular the high level commitment to continuous improvement through self-evaluation; and
- (ii) Endorses the contents of this report and the Perth and Kinross Child Protection Committee Standards and Quality Report 2019/2020 (Appendix 1) and the contents of the Perth and Kinross CPC Improvement Plan 2018 – 2020 (Final Update) at 31 July 2020 (Appendix 2).

Author

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Approved

Name	Designation	Date
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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	n/a
Workforce	n/a
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	n/a
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	n/a
Strategic Environmental Assessment	n/a
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	n/a
Legal and Governance	n/a
Risk	n/a
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	n/a

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objective No (i).

Corporate Plan

1.2 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Objectives.

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objective No (i).

1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Policy Framework in respect of the following key policy area:

- Integrated Working.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

2.1 There are no known resource implications at this time.

Workforce

2.2 There are no known workforce implications at this time.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 There are no asset management implications at this time.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- (i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 the Council also has a duty relating to climate change and, in exercising its functions must act:

- In the way best calculated to delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets.
- In the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaption programmes.
- In a way that it considers most sustainable.

The proposals against the Council's Principles for Sustainable Development has been considered as not applicable.

Legal and Governance

3.4 There are no legal implications at this time.

Risk

3.5 There are no associated risks at this time.

3.6 N/A

4. Consultation

Internal

4.1 The Head of Democratic Services, Head of Finance, Head of Legal Services, Head of Human Resources, the Children, Young People and Families Partnership, Education and Children's Services SMT and the Child Protection Committee and partners have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

External

4.2 The Child Protection Committee and partners have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

5. Communication

5.1 There are no Communication issues at this time.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

3. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Perth and Kinross Child Protection Committee Standards and Quality Report 2019/2020

Appendix 2: Perth and Kinross CPC Improvement Plan 2018 – 2020 (Final Update) at 31 July 2020