

Report

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	12 August 2020
Report by:	Director, Health and Social Care

Subject:	Children in Need of Care and Protection - Inspection Outcome - Evaluation
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide the Committee with an update on the Joint Inspection of Services for Children in Need of Care and Protection in South Lanarkshire

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the content of the report be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. With the introduction of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the Scottish Government has furthered its ambition for “Scotland to be the best place to grow up in by putting children and young people at the heart of the planning and services and ensuring their rights are respected across the public sector”.
- 3.2. It is within this context of significant legislative changes and the subsequent Child Protection Improvement Programme and National Care Review that the Care Inspectorate reviewed and updated its methodology to enable self-evaluation and inspection actively to focus on Children in Need of Care and Protection.
- 3.3. In the revised model for the Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Young People in Need of Care and Protection, the Care Inspectorate pose five inspection specific 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?
- 3.4. At the point of Inspection, Partnership areas are requested to provide position statements against each of the inspection questions noted above and how self-

evaluation is carried out and key performance indicators evaluated however, these are not formally evaluated by the Inspection Team.

- 3.5. Quality Indicators, 1.1 (key performance indicators), 2.1 (impact on children and young people), 2.2 (impact on families) and all the 9's (leadership) in the Quality Improvement Framework for Children in Need of Care and Protection (2019) are evaluated as part of the Inspection process only.
- 3.6. Inspection - South Lanarkshire Partnership
 - 3.6.1. The Partnership was formally notified by the Care Inspectorate of their plans for inspection on 06 August 2019, this included 10 days on site (over two periods) the weeks beginning 28 October and 02 December 2019.
- 3.7. An inspection preparation/steering group was established with representation from across the Children's Services Partnership. Reports outlining the inspection were presented to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) (Council and Health Board), Council Executive Committee, Community Planning Partnership Board, Getting it Right for South Lanarkshire's Children's Board and the Integrated Joint Board (IJB).
- 3.8. A series of staff briefings were delivered to appraise the Children's Services workforce of the inspection. Sessions were held in all four localities, with over 500 staff attending.
- 3.9. As part of the focus on engagement there were a series of surveys put in place by the Care Inspectorate to scope stakeholder's experiences. These included:
 - ◆ a staff survey which was distributed to staff working with Children and Young People in Need of Care and Protection
 - ◆ a children and young people's survey
 - ◆ a parents survey
- 3.10. The Care Inspectorate requested a Joint Self Evaluation (JSE) to be prepared based on the five inspection specific questions (as noted in 3.3 above) which was submitted on 27 September 2019 along with the associated evidence.
- 3.11. In total, 91% of our staff in Children Services responded to the staff survey, of which 89% fully completed the survey, evidencing not only a very positive response rate but also an engaged workforce.
- 3.12. Based on the survey findings, the Inspectors wanted to explore a few areas further during their week one and week two on-site activity.
- 3.13. The first on-site week commenced on 27 October, with Inspectors undertaking case file reading of 109 cases from Monday - Wednesday. The core records of Police Scotland, Health, Education and Social Work were read in respect of 45 Child Protection cases, with the Lead Professional - Social Work records read for the remainder 64 Corporate Parenting cases.
- 3.14. On Wednesday evening, Thursday and Friday the Inspection Team undertook Participation and Engagement Activity. As a Children Services Partnership, we offered the Inspection Team 52 different opportunities to engage with children, young people and parents/carers. This allowed the Inspection Team to directly engage with children, young people and parents/carers to understand the impact of our services/intervention on their lives.

- 3.15. Based on the Inspection Team's initial reflections of week one, when they met with Senior Officers from across the Partnership on 13 November 2019, they were able to identify specific focus group activity and requested additional opportunities to engage with children and young people for their week two on-site activity.
- 3.16. In total, 46 individual sessions were arranged for the Inspection Team in week two which commenced on 02 December 2019. This consisted of 31 focus group sessions with front line workers, front line Managers and Senior Officers across the Children's Services Partnership (including Elected Members) - entailing over 350 staff engaging directly with the Inspection Team. The remaining 15 sessions were a combination of attending staff engagement events and meeting with children, young people and families. Where additional sources of evidence were discussed within focus groups, these were subsequently provided to the Inspection Team.

4. Inspection Evaluation

- 4.1. Whilst it was anticipated the Inspection Report would be published on 28 April 2020, on 23 March 2020 the Care Inspectorate took the decision to suspend all publications of inspection reports in light of the demands on public services due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Inspection Report was subsequently published on 16 June 2020. The report can be accessed [here](#).

Summary of Evaluations:

How good is our Leadership	Good
How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders	Good
Impact on children and young people	Adequate
Improvements in the safety, wellbeing and life chances of vulnerable children and young people	Adequate

- 4.2. The Care Inspectorate recognised a lot of good work that is being done in South Lanarkshire. The adequate evaluations predominately relate to our Corporate Parenting agenda. This includes actively engaging with care experienced children and young people via the establishment of a Champions Board and the testimony of care leavers of services and supports available to them when they leave care.
- 4.3. Whilst the Care Inspectorate could see that there were active steps being undertaken to address these areas, for example the development of a dedicated Throughcare and Aftercare Team for care leavers, it was too early to see the impact of this. In addition, they were also aware that the launch of the Champions Board had taken place on 10 December 2019 but again felt it was too early to evidence the impact of engagement with care experienced young people.
- 4.4. The Care Inspectorate in its conclusion reported that: The Care Inspectorate and its scrutiny partners are confident that South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership has the capacity to continue to improve and to address the points for action highlighted in this report. This is based on:
- ◆ a strong commitment to collaborative working and improvement
 - ◆ improvements already demonstrated in the wellbeing of many children, young people and their families supported by a wide range of effective services
 - ◆ the potential for continuing improvements through developments which had already begun
 - ◆ the support and confidence demonstrated in senior leaders by staff across all sectors
 - ◆ the partnership's own joint self-evaluation which identified many of the strengths and areas for development highlighted in this report

- ♦ positive discussions in partnership meetings held during the course of this inspection which demonstrated a clear commitment to improvement and learning

5. Good Practice Examples

- 5.1. In the Inspection Report, Aspire and Structured Deferred Sentencing were identified as two good practice examples in South Lanarkshire.
- 5.2. Aspire is the Youth Employability Service coordinated by Education Resources. Youth Employability and partners promote and share a consistent vision that all our young people have a positive initial and sustained destination as they enter further and higher education, training and employment.
- 5.3. Closing the attainment gap and improving employability outcomes for children and young people who live in our rural areas, who are care experienced, have additional support needs, are involved with the youth justice system and/or subject to other adverse childhood experiences remain key priorities.
- 5.4. Effective leadership and synergy across council and partner priorities has enabled strong connections between strategic groups of CPP, Opportunities for All and Children's Services to develop our young workforce.
- 5.5. Analysis of the Skills Development Scotland co-ordinated Data Hub supports the tracking of young people age 16 - 19 to ensure positive destinations are achieved and sustained. Despite having one of the largest numbers of young people aged 16-19 in Scotland; we now have one of the highest positive initial destination results comparable with other Councils.
- 5.6. The Inspection Team recognised that the Structured Deferred Sentencing (SDS) Court in Hamilton has led to significant improvement in wellbeing for young people.
- 5.7. SDS is a community based intervention given after conviction, but prior to sentencing.
- 5.8. SDS aims to divert people from the criminal justice system and reduce short term prison sentences. A person convicted of an offence is provided with a period of time between conviction and sentencing in which they receive structured support to address criminogenic needs and stop offending prior to being sentenced. If during the deferral they do not commit any further offences, any subsequent sentence will be lower or they may be admonished.
- 5.9. Young people who engaged had better outcomes in terms of mental health and housing, with positive destinations in terms of employability and inclusion within their community.
- 5.10. The evaluation of outcomes was supported by the University of the West of Scotland evaluation report which Inspectors recognised this was a successful project due to a "welfare-led" approach underpinning the project.
- 5.11. To evidence the success of the project, 90% of those who engaged did not re-offend.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. The Partnership will be actively engaging with our Care Inspectorate Link Inspector on the improvement plan which will be overseen by the Children's Services Strategy Group and reported to the Getting it Right for South Lanarkshire's Children's Partnership Board.
- 6.2. The Children's Services Strategy Group will develop a communication strategy to ensure partners, stakeholder and wider workforce are informed of the outcome from the inspection and improvement plan going forward.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. There are no employee implications associated with this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 9.1. There are no implications for climate change, sustainability or the environment in terms of the information contained in this report.

10. Other Implications

- 10.1. Whilst there are risks associated with any external scrutiny process, particularly one of this scale across Council Resources and including other partner agencies of NHS Lanarkshire, Police Scotland and Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA); it is important that we maintain our good working relationship with the Care Inspectorate based on transparency and improvement.
- 10.2. There are no other issues associated with this report.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 11.1. There is no requirement to undertake an equality impact assessment regarding the content of this report.
- 11.2. As identified above, there has been extensive engagement with staff, children and young people their families and carers as part of this inspection process.

Val de Souza

Director, Health and Social Care

Date: 21 July 2020

Link(s) to Council Values/Objectives

- ◆ Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults
- ◆ Deliver better health and social care outcomes for all
- ◆ Get it right for children and young people

Previous References

- ◆ none

List of Background Papers

◆ none

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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