

Services for children and young people in Clackmannanshire

30 May 2014

Report of a joint inspection

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1. Introduction

At the request of Scottish Ministers, the Care Inspectorate is leading joint inspections of services for children and young people across Scotland. When we say children and young people in this report we mean people under the age of 18 years or up to 21 years if they have been looked after.

These inspections look at the difference services are making to the lives of children, young people and families. They take account of the full range of work within a community planning partnership area including services provided by health visitors, school nurses, teachers, doctors, social workers, police officers, and the voluntary sector.

The inspection teams are made up of inspectors from the Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland.

A draft framework of quality indicators was published by the Care Inspectorate in October 2012. The indicators in 'How well are we improving the lives of children, young people and families? A guide to evaluating services for children and young people using quality indicators' were used by the team of inspectors in their independent evaluation of the quality of services. We have reached evaluations for nine of these quality indicators which are set out in the table in Appendix 1.

2. Background

The joint inspection of services for children and young people in the Clackmannanshire **Community Planning** Partnership area took place between January and February 2014. Clackmannanshire and Stirling Councils have shared management arrangements for education and social work services. Responsibilities for police and health services rest within the Forth Valley Division of Police Scotland and NHS Forth Valley. As services for children and young people are closely connected and in some instances managed jointly across Clackmannanshire and Stirling, both inspections took place at the same time. We have published separate reports as the community planning partnerships and councils are independent of each other. The reports also reflect the similarities and differences across each area.



Community Planning is a process which helps public agencies to work together with the community to plan and deliver better services which make a real difference to people's lives.

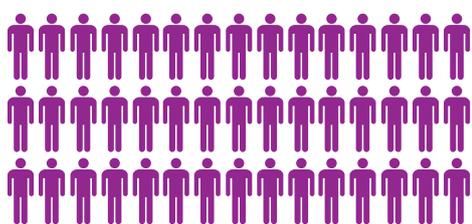
The inspection in Clackmannanshire covered the range of services in the area that had a role in providing services to benefit children, young people and families. We reviewed a wide range of documents and spoke to staff with leadership and management responsibilities. We also talked to large numbers of staff who work directly with children, young people and families and observed some meetings. We reviewed practice through reading records held by services for a sample of 87 children and young people. Some children, young people and families met with us and we are very grateful to everyone who talked to us as part of this inspection.

We also referred to a report of a joint inspection of services to protect children in the Clackmannanshire Council area published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in 2010 and considered progress in relation to the areas for improvement outlined in that report.

As the findings in this joint inspection are based on a sample of children and young people, we cannot assure the quality of service received by every single child in the area.

3. The Community Planning Partnership area

Clackmannanshire is situated south of the Ochil Hills, on the north side of the River Forth, bordered by Stirling, Perth & Kinross, Fife and Falkirk local authority areas. Clackmannanshire is the smallest mainland local authority in Scotland covering 159 square kilometres and with the smallest population at just over 50,000 people. Around half of the population live in the main town of Alloa which is also the administrative centre. The proportion of children aged 0-15 years is higher than the Scotland average. Clackmannanshire has a significantly higher than average percentage of people living in the 5% most deprived areas of Scotland. This is reflected in education, employment and prosperity indicators for which a number are considerably worse than the Scottish average.



Population of Clackmannanshire

50,000

The Clackmannanshire Alliance is responsible for community planning and has wide representation from the public, private and voluntary sector. Working Together for Clackmannanshire is the community plan. This sets out a comprehensive long term vision and is the basis of the **Single Outcome Agreement**. The Alliance has developed a timeline covering all life stages for its citizens and identifies short, medium and long term priorities for action. The community plan is underpinned by the **Getting it right for every child** approach and a strong focus on an early intervention and prevention approach throughout the life stages.

A Single Outcome Agreement is an agreement between the Scottish Government and community planning partnerships which sets out how they will work towards improving outcomes for Scotland's people in a way that reflects local circumstances and priorities.

Getting it right for every child is the Scottish Government's approach to making sure that all children and young people get the help they need when they need it. For more information, search "GIRFEC" online.

In December 2010, Clackmannanshire Council agreed to manage and deliver education and social services in partnership with its neighbouring council in Stirling. This arrangement was reaffirmed by both councils in June 2013. The shared service arrangements for education and social services are overseen by a programme board chaired alternately by the chief executives of each council. The programme board reports to a steering group of local elected members. Each council remains a politically independent statutory body. Clackmannanshire Council is the lead authority for social services and Stirling Council is the lead authority for education services. Senior managers have responsibility for the services across the two council areas and there is a clear intention to integrate the delivery of these services at all levels.

4. Particular strengths that are making a difference to children, young people and families

- Staff across all services have a very strong and shared commitment to improving the safety and wellbeing of children. They have developed a positive culture of working together meaningfully to the benefit of children, young people and their families.
- The high quality of support to children, young people and families to improve mental wellbeing and to assist them to overcome trauma.
- The effective use made of community skills and resources to overcome health inequalities and strengthen families such as in Bowmar and Hawkhill in Alloa.

5. Areas where action is needed to improve the wellbeing of children, young people and families

- Ensuring that all children and young people are afforded the protection and support they need by improving, as a matter of priority, the processes for assessing risks.
- Improving plans for individual children and young people to manage risk and meet their needs.
- Providing all vulnerable children, young people and their families with the help and support they need at an early stage when they are experiencing difficulties.
- Introducing and implementing systematic and robust processes for the joint strategic planning of integrated children's services.
- Providing strong collaborative leadership to increase the pace of change and improvement across services for children and young people.

6. Examples of good practice

HealthSpot: a health information service in schools

HealthSpot provides quick and helpful health advice through informal, confidential and lunchtime sessions in secondary schools. Young people can speak confidentially to health staff and community workers to obtain information and guidance about their health and wellbeing. A multi-agency steering group of education, health and youth services staff oversees the service and involves young people meaningfully in the review and development of the service. This has helped to ensure that the themes and topics are highly relevant to young people.

PLUS: removing barriers to fun for children affected by disability

PLUS provides large numbers of children and young people with a disability and their parents a variety of enjoyable and positive social networking opportunities. A number of age appropriate projects provide activities for many children and young adults to have fun, away from home and with people of their own age. Children, young people and families benefit greatly from fun filled social interactions, respite and support to assist young people with disabilities into training and employment.

Collaborative working to meet the needs of children with complex care needs

The Children's Complex Care Service is a highly effective collaborative involving health, education, social work and **third sector** organisations. Nursing care and family support is provided at home and is enhanced at times of increased need. Children, young people and families experience less frequent hospital admissions and a reduction in the stress associated with this. When children are admitted to hospital they are discharged as soon as they are medically well. Jointly funded support assistants and a specialist school nurse ensure that the child's health and care needs are met in school. This has allowed children, even at the end of life, to continue to attend school for periods enhancing their quality of life.

The use of the term **third sector**, also known as the **voluntary or community sector**, is to differentiate it from the **public or private sector**. These services are **non-governmental and non-profit-making organizations or associations, including charities, voluntary and community groups**.

7. How well are the lives of children and young people improving?

Providing help and support at an early stage

This section considers how well staff recognise that something may be getting in the way of a child's or young person's wellbeing and provide support early to stop difficulties arising or increasing.

The help and support for children, young people and their families at an early stage is good.

Staff are committed to working together to recognise and provide support to children, young people and families who need it. They recognise the signs that a child, young person or family may be in need of additional help at an early stage. Staff in health and education offer effective support from a very early stage and identify those families where a more targeted approach is required. Staff put the needs of children and young people at the centre when they provide support. A multi-agency screening group helps to identify those families who need assistance and to ensure that the help they get is timely and appropriate to their needs. The 'Getting it right for every child' approach is helping staff to provide advice and guidance at an early stage before family difficulties get worse. Staff across services would benefit from a greater understanding of the roles of the **named person** and the **lead professional**. Although staff are very clear about the role of the social worker as lead professional when the child is looked after or their name is on the child protection register, they are less clear about the roles of others.

The **named person** is a member of staff who has responsibility for ensuring that the child's needs are addressed. For babies and very young children the named person is either a midwife or a health visitor. For children of school age the named person will be someone who works in the child's school.

Lead professional is where a practitioner from one of two or more agencies or services, that are working together to meet a child's needs, takes the lead to co-ordinate assessment, planning, and action to achieve the outcomes in the child's plan.

Overall, improvements in the sharing of information are helping staff to provide help and support at an earlier stage. The **Public Protection Service** is assisting the sharing of information across health, education, social work and the police when there are concerns about children and young people. Vulnerable, pregnant women are identified early and clear pathways ensure that they get co-ordinated intervention and support at an early stage in their pregnancy. Some practices in relation to the sharing of information are variable. For example, staff who work primarily with adults, such as addiction or mental health workers do not always share information which is pertinent to the promotion of the wellbeing of children and young people. Efforts made by lead professionals to gain information to inform assessments are often unsuccessful.

There is a range of effective services available to support children, young people and families at an early stage and which help to stop their difficulties increasing. Children and young people with complex healthcare needs have ready access to appropriate care and support at an early stage. Children and young people with additional support needs receive effective and timely support from a diverse range of health, local authority and voluntary services. The **Early and Effective Intervention** scheme works effectively with children and young people who are starting to become involved in offending. Helpful parenting programmes are available and the recent appointment of a co-ordinator for this work will help to ensure programmes are better connected and responsive to the needs of parents and carers. Some services are targeting support appropriately to families with the greatest need. However,

The Public Protection Service or Multi-Agency Assessment and Screening Hub is an initiative whereby a number of staff from police, health, education and social work are co-located in Larbert police station. Staff work in partnership on child protection, domestic abuse, young runaways, online offending, as well as adult support and protection, and the management of sex offenders.

The Early and Effective Intervention model (EEI) is based on the principles of early intervention, through appropriate, proportionate and timely intervention and provides a framework to ensure relevant support is available for all children and young people who have committed an offence. Across Forth Valley there is a single EEI multi-agency model.

as a consequence, some families are not getting the help they need at an early stage when difficulties arise. A number of services have long waiting times.

Impact on children and young people

This section is about the extent to which children and young people are able to get the best start in life and the impact of services on their wellbeing. It is about how well children and young people are assisted to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

Overall, the impact on the wellbeing of children and young people is good. When children are in need of extra support, services are provided for them and impact is positive.

Children and young people receive helpful information and guidance from schools and as a result know how to keep themselves safe online and when using social media. Young people are very positive about the advice and guidance they receive from Youth Services which helps them to deal with a range of risky situations. Children and young people whose behaviour places them at risk are benefitting from information, advice and guidance to help them make appropriate choices in their lives. Children and young people, who are no longer able to stay at home safely, benefit from stable and caring kinship and foster care placements. While the majority of vulnerable children and young people at risk of harm and neglect are kept safe, there are a few who remain at risk when staff do not consider fully patterns of abuse or neglect in their history or comprehensively assess all current risks they face.

Children and young people are assisted well to keep healthy. They are supported to keep up to date with immunisations and attend health appointments. Earlier antenatal support is resulting in fewer low birth weight babies. Children living away from home have their health needs met well. They are benefitting greatly from support from the specialist health team for looked after children. The Children's Complex Care service is having a major and positive impact on the lives of children with complex care needs allowing them to stay out of hospital and continue with their learning. The emotional health needs of children and young people are met well through a broad range of support from educational psychologists. Some children and young people with identified health problems are not able to see a school nurse. Lead professionals are not always alert to emerging health needs and as a result there can be a delay in children and young people receiving health care appropriate to their needs. Although the drop-in advice service provided by child and adolescent mental health services is providing positive benefits, a few children and young people with more acute mental health difficulties do not always get the help they need from this service quickly enough.

Children and young people are performing well in school. They are making positive academic, social and emotional progress. This is supported by outreach behaviour support, family therapy and pupil support services. Children with additional support needs are supported well to make progress in their learning. High numbers of school leavers are helped to find work, training or further study. Some young people with a disability are encouraged helpfully to become volunteers and take up employment. There are delays for young people with additional support or complex care needs in obtaining support from services for adults when they need to move on from children's services.

Children and young people are thriving as a result of consistent nurturing relationships. Often this is due to the additional support their parents get to help them bring up their children. Many children and young people are responding well to nurturing approaches in school. Teachers have been trained by educational psychologists in attachment theory, resilience and trauma and understand the importance of nurture in early development. Many primary school-aged children are starting the school day off well through healthy and nourishing meals at breakfast clubs. Baby massage is improving parent and baby relationships and both are benefitting from the support their carers have received from health nursery nurses.

Children and young people affected by disability and their parents are also benefitting from a range of services which are having a positive impact on the nurture these children receive. Children and young people looked after away from home experience warm, stable nurturing environments where they can grow and develop. The experiences of vulnerable children living at home are more variable. Some children and young people looked after at home are being helped to experience nurturing relationships, stability, boundaries and continuity. Others are not getting the individual help they need to overcome the long term impact of living with domestic abuse or chronic neglect.

Children and young people have access to a range of leisure and recreational facilities to help keep them active. They also undertake a range of physical activity in schools and through a positive range of extra-curricular activities. Children and young people affected by disability are able to be involved in a variety of activities supported by, for example, the Plus Project, **Clackmannanshire Sports Development and Play Alloa**. Entry fees and transport costs can be a barrier to some children and young people fully participating in active sports and interests. Most children who are looked after are supported to develop

Clackmannanshire's Sports Development promotes sport, physical activity and physical education to children from 3 to 16 years. Teams deliver activities in primary, secondary and special schools and leisure facilities. There are close links with community clubs and teams in the local authority area.

their aptitudes and interests, however a few would benefit from more encouragement to take up new skills and develop their talents.

Staff treat children and young people with respect and have a genuine understanding of children's and young people's individuality. Children and young people have positive opportunities in school to take appropriate levels of responsibility. Some young people are taking more responsibility for their challenging behaviour as a result of individual support from staff or from specific projects.

Many children and young people overcome barriers that get in the way of their wellbeing. Children and young people looked after away from home are supported well to take part in their wider community. Children and young people with a disability do not experience insurmountable barriers to accessing services. Many children and young people are able to overcome barriers that may have a negative impact on their health, development and education. Children and young people looked after away from home take part in a variety of activities in their wider community.

Play Alloa provides play, social and life skills opportunities for children and adults with disabilities and complex support needs in Clackmannanshire. They support children and young people, through groups, sessions and workshops, to play, enjoy positive social experiences and make friends.

Impact on families

This section is about the extent to which family wellbeing is being strengthened and families supported to become resilient and meet their own needs. It also considers parental confidence and the extent to which early intervention has a positive effect on family life.

This section comments on the extent to which communities participate in the planning and delivery of local services for children, young people and their families.

The extent to which family wellbeing is strengthened is adequate.

Overall, families are strengthened and experience increased resilience. Staff work in partnership with parents to help them to adopt healthy and balanced lifestyles. Families are supported well through a range of helpful services. Family life is improved for many when services are able to offer support before their difficulties get worse. Some parents receive valuable individualised support and guidance from social workers and specialist advice from services such as mental health and addiction services. This is improving their confidence and life skills.

Overall, services are strengthening families and building their capacity to manage difficulties and to be confident and skilful parents. Some parents are benefiting from support to increase their parenting skills which is based on effective accredited programmes, such as the **Triple P and Incredible Years**. Parents of children with a disability and additional support needs value the support they receive from a range of multi-agency specialist services including respite care. Families with young children benefit from multi-agency support through local Family Centres and Community Houses. These centres are effective community resources providing high quality day care and early learning for young children and a wide variety of specialist support for parents. This includes support from community psychiatric nurses to help parents stay mentally healthy and early years workers to increase understanding of child development and how to manage family difficulties. Parents who take part in the valuable programmes from the **Phoenix Centre** develop a range of life skills which helps promote stability in the family. An **asset-based approach** to combining the skills of local people and community networks is helping to overcome health inequalities and strengthen families in Bowmar and Hawkhill in Alloa.

A significant number of families are missing out. These families are not getting the help they need when they need it. Not all families who need support for parenting get the assistance they need, for example, families with older children. Some families are unable to get the service they need when they need it due to a lack of places or long waiting times which leaves them

Triple P stands for Positive Parenting Programme. It offers a variety of practical parenting strategies and support to suit parents with children of all ages and needs. Many studies show Triple P benefits both parents and children.

Incredible Years is a series of interlocking, evidence-based programs for parents, children, and teachers. The aim is to prevent and treat young children's behaviour problems and promote their social, emotional, and academic competence. The programs are used worldwide in schools and research has shown they work.

The **Phoenix Centre** provides a variety of courses to develop skills, as well as individual support for people from Clackmannanshire who experience mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and self-esteem.

Taking an **asset-based approach** involves mobilising the skills and knowledge of individuals and the connections and resources within communities, rather than focusing on problems and deficits. The approach aims to empower individuals, enabling them to rely less on public services.

without sufficient support. A number of families find it difficult to maintain commitment and trust in staff due to frequent staff changes. They told us that changes in staff had a negative impact on how much they were able to benefit from support on offer.

8. How well are services working together to improve the lives of children, young people and families?

Planning services and involving children, young people, families and other stakeholders in service development

This section considers the extent to which integrated children's services planning and strategic planning to protect children is improving the wellbeing of children and young people. It also examines the extent to which children, young people, families and other stakeholders are involved in policy, planning and service development.

The arrangements for planning and improving services for children and young people are adequate.

The Community Planning Partnership in Clackmannanshire demonstrates a clear commitment to strengthening partnership working. The Integrated Children's Services Plan is now out of date. Partners now intend to produce a Single Integrated Children's Services Plan for children and young people living in Clackmannanshire and Stirling.

Changes in senior management have delayed its preparation, however it is now underway.

The strategic focus on 'Getting it right for every child' and the work driven by the **Early Years Collaborative** is beginning to increase partnership working at all levels. There are positive examples of how this is beginning to ensure that all children and young people get the best start in life.

Frontline staff are still uncertain about how the integrated children's services plan will underpin further improvements and support their work. At the moment it is difficult for stakeholders to see how targets for integrated services are set or measured and to know if best value is being achieved. Partners now need to increase momentum and implement the changes needed in working practices.



The Early Years Collaborative is supported by NHS Scotland, COSLA and Police Scotland. It is a multi-agency, local, quality improvement programme focusing on the national outcome 'Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed'.

The **Child Protection Committee** benefits from effective leadership by the independent Chair. Annual reports outline what has been achieved in services to protect children and young people. However, the complex management structure, involving a number of subcommittees, can often slow down communication and lead to gaps in identifying what work needs to be done. The Multi-Agency Continuous Improvement Group has yet to be fully embedded but is beginning to provide an opportunity to align the work of the Child Protection Committee more closely with other services and reduce the possibility of the needs of children and young people at risk being overlooked. The co-location of services in the Public Protection Service has strengths in relation to the sharing of information and bringing together expertise. However, as supported by a recent review, the potential benefits are not yet being achieved fully. Staff should begin to address this through improved joint self-evaluation and more rigorous analysis of statistical data.



The Child Protection Committee brings together all the organisations involved in protecting children in the area. Their purpose is to make sure local services work together to protect children from abuse and keep them safe.

The participation of children, young people, families and other stakeholders in policy, planning and service development is good.

Services demonstrate a strong commitment to the meaningful involvement of children and young people in policy, planning and service development. They have taken a robust approach to evaluating the participation of children, young people and families in service development and recognise where improvements can be made. There are several examples of effective communication and consultation with children, young people and families. Children and young people feel that they are listened to and that their views are taken into account. Vulnerable young people are encouraged and supported to participate in the development of services. The community planning partnership is committed to including stakeholders in the planning process which is demonstrated through collaboration with the third sector forum. Some parents and families have benefitted from consultation and effective opportunities to participate in service planning. Services are engaging effectively with harder to reach young people through a range of creative approaches. Partners recognise the need to increase service user involvement and influence at a strategic planning level. They are aware that a fully integrated approach to multi-agency communication and implementation of the participation strategy will improve outcomes for service users.

Assessing and responding to risks and needs and planning for individual children and young people

This section examines the quality of assessment of risks and needs in relation to three themes. These are: the initial response when there are concerns about the safety or wellbeing of children; the effectiveness of chronologies to identify significant events in a child's life; and the quality of assessments. It also considers the quality of children's plans and the effectiveness of arrangements to review them.

Assessing and responding to risks and needs is weak.

Overall, services act promptly and appropriately when there are immediate concerns that a child may be at immediate risk of abuse or significant harm. The Forth Valley Public Protection Service supports a co-ordinated multi-agency response through the Multi-Agency Screening Hub for those children and young people who may be at risk of abuse and neglect. Staff work together well to keep children and young people safe in the short term. Suitable alternative accommodation is generally provided when children are unable to remain at home and emergency legal measures are often used effectively to keep them safe. There are, however, a small but significant number of children where the initial response to concerns about their safety or wellbeing is not robust. In these cases, concerns are not always thoroughly investigated or there is a delay in following up on concerns. Staff do not always appreciate fully the degree of risk presented to the child or young person. Some children and young people who have experienced abuse do not have a risk assessment carried out and there can be significant delays in completing this. The response to emerging or accumulating concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing over a longer period of time is not sufficiently robust. For example, staff across services do not always understand or appreciate the impact of chronic neglect or living with domestic abuse.

Staff are maintaining chronologies of significant events in children and young people's lives within their own service. Many chronologies are not of an acceptable standard and are therefore not as helpful as they could be in identifying recurring situations or identifying patterns of risk. Assessments of the risks to and the needs of children and young people are highly variable. Some children and young people have assessments of risk which are appropriately incorporated into comprehensive reports. Some risk assessments are of limited use as they contain minimal information or are incomplete. A few staff use a helpful

Domestic Abuse Toolkit which positively enhances their assessments. Most children and young people have an assessment of needs. However, a few children and young people did not have an assessment of needs carried out and some assessments have gaps or are incomplete. Increasingly, the use of a **shared/integrated assessment framework** is beginning to improve the quality of assessments of risks and needs by considering better all factors affecting the child or young person.

Planning for individual children and young people is adequate.

A shared assessment framework is beginning to improve the quality of the **child's plan**. However, the quality of plans for individual children and young people is mixed, with strengths just outweighing weaknesses. Almost all children and young people who need a multi-agency plan to meet their needs have one. Children and young people on the **Child Protection Register** have individual plans to reduce and remove risks. Staff and families meet regularly to review progress in relation to these plans. Pre-birth planning for vulnerable pregnant women is very effective. Arrangements to review progress of the child's plan are variable and staff are not clear enough about when they should meet to make and review plans. Not all young people leaving care have a **pathway plan**.

The **shared/integrated assessment framework** is used where there is multi-agency involvement with a child. Individual agency assessments are shared to inform an integrated assessment and child's plan.

A **child's plan** records the child's needs and views. The plan lays out exactly what support will be provided, and in what way, to meet the child's needs.

Every local authority area in Scotland has a **Child Protection Register (CPR)**, which is a list, kept by the social work department, of children who may be at risk of future harm. The register is highly confidential and only staff from social work, the police, education and health can get information from it.

Local authorities must assess and determine what advice, help and support they should provide each young person who ceases to be looked after beyond school age. The **pathway plan** lays out exactly what support will be provided, and how.

Impact on staff

This section considers the extent to which staff are motivated, valued and involved in service development. This was an additional area considered by the inspection team because of the changes in services over the last few years.

Staff across all services are strongly committed and professionally motivated to achieving positive outcomes for children, young people and their families. They enjoy their work and feel valued by other practitioners when working as part of a multi-disciplinary team. Every service working with children, young people and families in Clackmannanshire has experienced major change over the past two years such as structural change, recruitment difficulties, or resource reduction. There is a strong sense of collective responsibility amongst senior and middle managers to lead the strategic and operational changes arising from these challenges. Most staff report that they are valued by their managers and when changes to services are being made their views are taken into account. Although staff are positive about actions managers have already taken, the benefits of this have yet to impact on staff morale or practice. Staff would benefit from more information about the vision and strategy for services for children and planned changes in structures and procedures.

9. How good is the leadership and direction to improve services and achieve better outcomes for children and families?

This section is about the extent to which collaborative leadership is improving outcomes for children, young people and families. It comments on the effectiveness of the shared vision, values and aims, leadership and direction and leadership of people. It also examines how well leaders are driving forward improvement and change.

Partners are committed to working together to improve the lives of children and young people, particularly vulnerable children and young people. They have a clear vision for improving long-term outcomes for all people living in Clackmannanshire. Community planning partners realise that they need to clearly articulate the vision for children and young people. This is now needed to underpin and drive service delivery to improve outcomes for children and young people. Community planning partners have clear expectations for equality and inclusion and promote this across all services as new plans and strategies are developed.

The development of a single **Integrated Children's Services Plan** for

Clackmannanshire and Stirling is in its early stages. The integration of local authority services for children and young people is being taken forward through new management and planning structures. Plans are being developed to integrate frontline services. Partners are committed to prioritising prevention and early intervention and are beginning to shift resources towards this. The early and effective intervention initiative is a positive example of successful collaborative approaches to pooling resources to improve outcomes for children and young people at risk of offending. However, current financial pressures are making this more difficult to achieve in new areas of work.

An Integrated Children' Services Plan is for services that work with children and young people. It sets out the priorities for achieving the vision for all children and young people and what services need to do together to achieve them.

Promising approaches to training and development are building leadership capacity. Staff are benefitting from regular and constructive practitioner forums. Not all staff feel included and informed enough about shared service developments and this has a negative impact. Leaders should consider better ways to communicate the rationale behind the shared service agenda to staff to improve engagement and increased ownership in service developments. There is the potential for the challenges and governance around the development of the shared services to seriously undermine the ability to progress and sustain improvements in services. The community planning partners now need to work with staff to overcome these challenges.

Leadership of improvement and change is adequate.

Partners are strongly committed to improving the quality of services for children, young people and families. Chief officers supported the joint **self-evaluation** of services to protect children and young people and as a result are driving forward some key improvements. Individually, services are making constructive use of self-evaluation. Services are, individually, making effective use of information to understand how they are performing and are beginning to identify where improvements need to be made. However, there is insufficient focus

Self-evaluation means taking a close look at what services have done and how well they have done it. It is important because it helps people to see clearly where they need to make improvements.

on joint action to lead to improvement. Shared services have increased the opportunity to share and promote best practice. Partners in Clackmannanshire and Stirling are committed to learning from each other and explore and adopt learning from research another sources.

The joint inspection of services to protect children in 2010 highlighted the immediate actions taken by staff to keep children and young people safe as an area of strength. This report also set out agreed areas for improvement which included the need to strengthen assessments of risks and needs and improve planning for individual children and young people. There has been significant investment across Clackmannanshire to increase the skills and competence of staff in these areas. The local authority also commissioned an independent review of social work services and improvement actions identified. Senior managers are working together with external organisations such as **CELSIS** and **WithScotland** to improve working practices. Overall, there has been some progress in planning for individual children and young people but there is significant room for improvements in the assessment of risks and this continues to be a high priority for partners.

Improving the wellbeing of children and young people is adequate.

Partners are committed to improving children and young people's wellbeing over time and are making adequate progress. They have developed a set of indicators to measure how well they are doing. These are set out in the Single Outcome Agreement and progress is reported annually.

Performance to improve the overall wellbeing of children and young people is variable. Educational attainment is improving steadily. New-born babies are assisted to get a better start in life through earlier antenatal booking and highly effective support for vulnerable pregnant women. Increasing numbers of children and young people are being diverted

CELCIS is the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland. The service works in partnership with a range of professional disciplines to support change and development across the care sector at strategic, operational and practice levels to meet the needs of looked after children.

WithScotland is a national resource supporting professionals working with children and adults at risk of harm and abuse. They connect research with practice, exchange knowledge and ideas and coordinate activities across child and adult protection communities to improve outcomes for children and adults.

from crime through the Early and Effective Intervention initiative. The number of children and young people referred to the Children's Reporter for offending is reducing year on year.

Some key outcome indicators are not improving. A number of health indicators are particularly poor in communities which are most susceptible to the effects of poverty and inequalities. There are still high numbers of teenage pregnancies, low birth weight babies and smoking during pregnancy. However, these are showing promising downward trends. Breastfeeding rates are going down and performance is poorer in more disadvantaged communities. Recent improvements in the attainment of looked after children are not yet a positive trend. Partners face a steadily worsening economic picture compared to other areas in Scotland.

Partners are attempting to understand the underlying reasons and putting in place measures to overturn poorer performance and negative trends. For example, close attention is being paid to reducing school exclusions and increasing positive destinations for school leavers.

10. Conclusion and areas for improvement

Staff across all services are highly committed to improving the lives of children, young people and families and overall this is making a positive impact on children and young people in Clackmannanshire. Many families are receiving helpful support from a range of services to strengthen their parenting skills and increase their confidence. This could be more successful if support was better co-ordinated, available to families promptly and at an earlier stage. A promising start has been made to implementing a 'Getting it right for every child' approach to working with children, young people and their families, and staff understanding of their role is improving but they still need further guidance. Significant changes have taken place over the last few years in the key services that support children, young people and their families. There has not been sufficient improvement in some areas set out in previous inspection reports. There are still important weaknesses in the initial response to children and young people in need of protection and processes to assess risks and needs. As a result some children and young people may be left in situations which place them at risk or without sufficient support to improve their wellbeing.

Leaders now need to articulate a shared, coherent vision and accelerate strategic planning for the integration of services for children and young people. Stronger, collaborative leadership is needed to increase the capacity for improvement and to deliver planned changes at the pace needed to improve outcomes for children, young people and

families. In taking forward improvement, the Clackmannanshire Community Planning Partnership should take account of the need to:

- improve, as a matter of priority, the processes for assessing risks to ensure that all children and young people are afforded the protection and support they need
- improve plans for individual children and young people to manage risk and meet their needs
- ensure that all vulnerable children, young people and their families get the help and support they need at an early stage when they are experiencing difficulties
- implement systematic and robust processes for the joint strategic planning of integrated children's services
- provide the strong collaborative leadership needed to increase the pace of change and improvement across services for children and young people.

11. What happens next?

The Care Inspectorate will ask the Clackmannanshire Community Planning Partnership to publish a joint action plan detailing how it intends to make any improvements identified as a result of the inspection.

Based on the findings of this inspection we are not confident in the quality and effectiveness of services to protect children. Within one year of the publication of the report the Care Inspectorate and other bodies taking part in this inspection will revisit the community planning partnership area to assess and report on progress made in meeting the areas for improvement set out in this report.

Joan Lafferty
Inspection Lead
May 2014

Appendix 1: Indicators of quality

Quality indicators help services and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved. In this inspection we used a draft framework of quality indicators that was published by the Care Inspectorate in October 2012: 'How well are we improving the lives of children, young people and families? A guide to evaluating services for children and young people using quality indicators'. This document is available on the Care Inspectorate website.

Here are the evaluations for nine of the quality indicators.

How well are the lives of children and young people improving?	
Providing help and support at an early stage	Good
Impact on children and young people	Good
Impact on families	Adequate
How well are services working together to improve the lives of children, young people and families?	
Planning and improving services	Adequate
Participation of children, young people, families and other stakeholders	Good
Assessing and responding to risks and needs	Weak
Planning for individual children	Adequate
How good is the leadership and direction of services for children and young people?	
Leadership of improvement and change	Adequate
Improving the wellbeing of children and young people	Adequate

This report uses the following word scale to make clear the judgements made by inspectors.

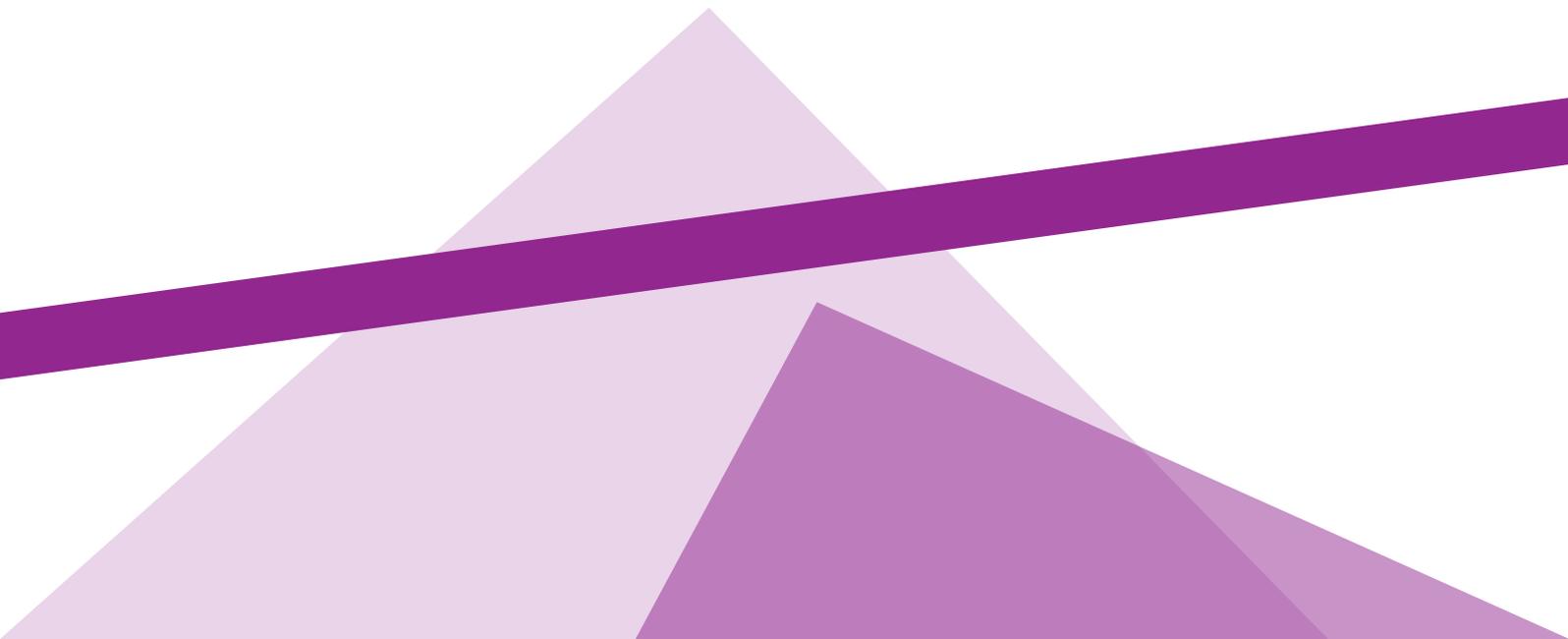
Excellent	outstanding, sector leading
Very good	major strengths
Good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
Adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Weak	important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

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