

Services for children and
young people in
Orkney

20 May 2013



Report of a
pilot 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 will 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 covered all of the quality indicators in this report and reached evaluations for eight of them which are set out in the table in Appendix 1.

This report is published following a pilot joint inspection. This means that future inspections may be carried out differently and the reports we will publish at a later date may take a different format.

2. Background

The pilot joint inspection of services for children and young people in the Orkney Community Planning Partnership area took place between November 2012 and January 2013. It covered the range of services in the area that had a role in providing services to benefit children, young people and families.

Inspectors reviewed documents and spoke to staff with leadership and management responsibilities. They talked to staff who work directly with children, young people and families and observed some meetings. Inspectors reviewed practice through reading a sample of records held by services who work with children and young people. Some of these children, young people and families met with and talked to inspectors. Inspectors are very grateful to all of the people who talked to us as part of this pilot inspection.

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

3. The Community Planning Partnership area and the context for services for children and young people

Orkney has a population of 21,400 which is the lowest local authority population in Scotland. 16.8% of the population are under 16 compared to 17.4% for Scotland as a whole. The number of children under the age of 16 is projected to rise by 6% by 2020. The equivalent figure for Scotland is 5%.




The Orkney Community Planning Partnership provides the key framework for joint working in Orkney. Within the Orkney Community Planning Partnership there are a number of groups who champion key priorities for Orkney and report to the Orkney Community Planning Partnership Steering Group. Community planning is facilitated and maintained by the local authority and core partners. The partners are the health board, enterprise agencies, housing, police, fire and rescue, and the voluntary sector, who all come together to deliver better services for the people of Orkney.

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

- Staff building trusting, empowering and respectful relationships with children and families.
- The range of different support services readily available for children and families.

5. How well are the lives of children, young people and families improving?

The extent to which children and young people in Orkney get the best start in life and their life chances are improved is very good. Staff across services recognise circumstances that make children and families vulnerable. There are many examples of services providing helpful support to children, young people and families at an early stage, to promote positive parenting and build resilience. Staff know and express commitment to the **Getting it right for every child** principles of prevention, early intervention and better joint working. However, systems and processes to support inter-agency working at an early stage should be developed further to ensure children's needs are identified early enough and they get all the help they need. In particular, there is a need for greater clarity about when and how information about children and families should be shared at an early stage.



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.

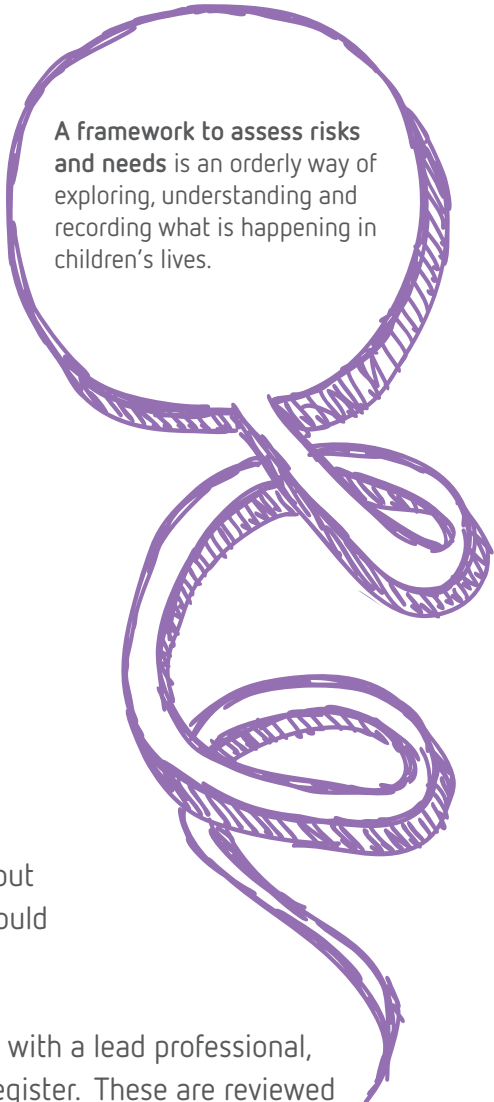
Very many children and young people of all ages in Orkney are receiving appropriate practical and emotional support. The help they receive is improving their day-to-day experiences and helping to give them better life chances. Children and young people benefit from positive, rewarding experiences in school and in their communities. This includes vulnerable children whose families are not always able to give them the best start in life. Staff across services know the children and young people they work with very well. They spend enough time with children and young people to build meaningful relationships with them. As a result, children and young people trust the adults who are trying to help them.

There is a clear focus on working alongside parents to promote positive parenting from an early age. Many families are receiving helpful support from a range of services to strengthen their parenting skills and increase their confidence, many of which are provided by the third sector. The health visiting service plays a critical role in supporting the most vulnerable families, particularly those with very young children. In most cases, families get help as soon as needs are identified. Support is tailored to meet individual needs and generally lasts as long as is required. Staff show commendable levels of persistence in engaging families who are resisting help.

There is close involvement of the community in delivering local services for children and young people of all ages. The encouragement and support given to young people to help them volunteer in a wide range of activities in their communities is a key strength. Most children have a strong sense of pride in, and belonging to, their community. However a few children and young people experience stigma because they are, or feel, different. This includes children and young people whose family experiences make them more vulnerable to being excluded. Partners are committed to promoting equality and challenging discrimination. They should now strengthen their work with the wider community to ensure all children, young people and their families feel fully included.

Staff show appropriate awareness of risks to children and respond promptly and effectively to investigate concerns. Including health staff in planning investigations has strengthened the way different partners work together. Lead professionals use clear and agreed **frameworks to assess risks and needs** which have been helpful in improving their quality and consistency. On the other hand, some staff are not clear about the particular responsibilities of being a named person and how this should benefit children and families.

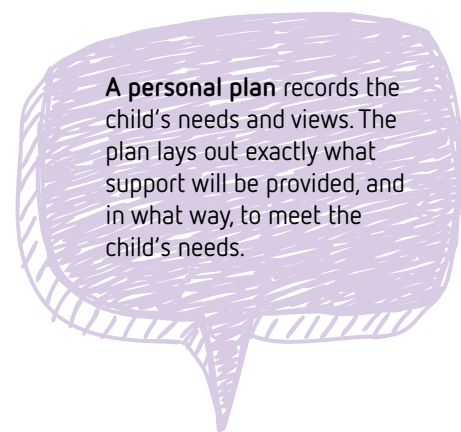
A multi-agency plan is in place for almost all children and young people with a lead professional, including all looked after children and children on the child protection register. These are reviewed regularly. **Personal care plans** for some young people with additional needs should improve. Use



A framework to assess risks and needs is an orderly way of exploring, understanding and recording what is happening in children's lives.

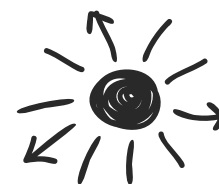
of the well-being indicators is improving the quality of plans and planning overall. It helps staff focus on all areas of children's short and long-term well-being but there is more work to be done to achieve consistently high quality plans focused on outcomes. There is a helpful focus on achieving continuity for children and young people and managing transitions. Where there is no lead professional involved, but children are receiving extra help through a named person, processes for ensuring support is well planned and reviewed are less developed.

Staff make great efforts to ensure children, young people and their families understand decisions that affect them and that they are fully involved in meetings and other key processes. There is a strong culture of seeking the views of children and families and of taking seriously what they say. Children and young people feel involved, listened to and respected as a result. Performance would be strengthened still further by taking a consistent approach to gaining consent from young people and families to sharing information, and to helping them understand when information could be shared without their consent.



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

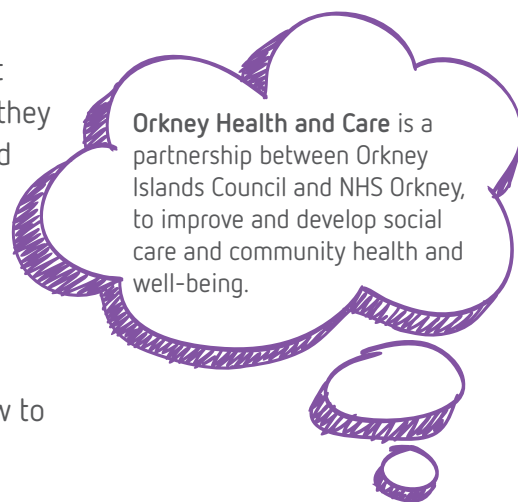
The integrated children's services plan is out of date and no longer reflects children's services currently in place. While partners have focussed on making sure that children and families are able to benefit from a range of established local services they have not yet developed a shared plan for the future. Partners individually have a picture of the needs of the children and families and they now need to join up this information and integrate planning for services for children, young people and families. A helpful start, including seeking the views of parents, has been made by partners working across the early years. This now needs to be extended to ensure services make the biggest difference to the wellbeing of all children and young people. Partners are continuing to develop solutions and respond to the difficulties created by a small workforce, covering a challenging geographical area. They are together considering carefully the skills required for vacant posts across services. Their aim is to increase the



range of skills offered by individual staff, allowing them to take on a number of different roles and tasks, to better meet the needs of children and families. However there is no joint plan in place for the workforce in children's services. This makes it difficult for partners to know whether or not they have the right staff in the right place to provide enough help to children and families.

Frontline staff are generally well supported by their managers to be competent and confident in their work. Systems to support staff, like supervision and peer support, are in place in many services and there is a commitment to introduce this in others. A range of useful learning and development opportunities are in place which are highly valued by staff. However, there is no joint learning and development plan across children's services. As a result partners are not clear about the impact learning and development has on staff skills and the experience of children and families.

Staff across services are committed and motivated to achieve the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families. Generally, they are clear about lines of accountability and feel appropriately supported by their managers and colleagues. Staff have appropriate guidance to direct and support them in most key areas of their work. They have a good awareness of Getting it right for every child, using the values and principles of this approach to working with children. However, services are at different stages in using this approach. As a result, there is some variation in understanding key processes and how to use shared paperwork.

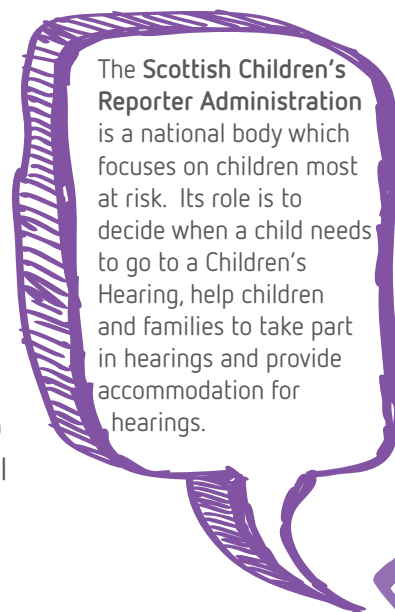


Partnership working has been affected by the organisational change associated with **Orkney Health and Care** and the restructuring of the **Scottish Children's Reporter Administration**. The process in appointing to key posts created uncertainty for staff and partners and this has impacted adversely on planning activities. The **Child Protection Committee**, a key strategic partnership with an impact on services for vulnerable children, has continued to operate effectively.

Partnership working with the voluntary sector remains strong and plays a big part in making a difference for children and families. Although the education service has also had management changes, some of the key people are still there and this stability has helped keep services working together.

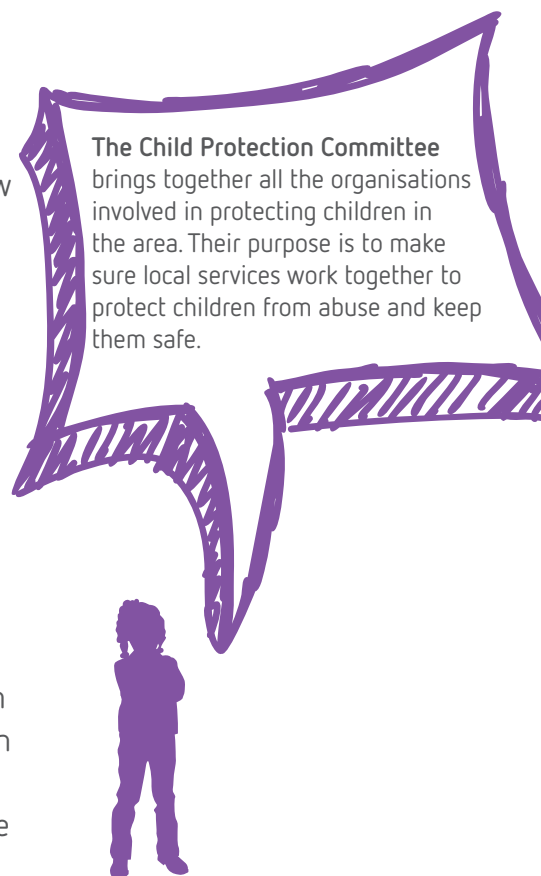
The lack of current integrated children's services planning means partners do not yet have a robust joint approach to managing resources. There is limited joint financial planning and joint commissioning of children's services. As a result it is not clear whether partners are making the most efficient use of their collective resources.

Positive relationships between staff and children and young people help support the engagement of children and young people in individual local services. Staff value the views of children and families and create



opportunities for them to contribute ideas and suggestions for improvement. There are a few examples of individual services being influenced as a result of such consultation. For example, children were closely involved in a number of aspects relating to the design of the new Stromness Primary and policy and practice within it. The school rules had been developed exclusively from children's ideas. Unfortunately, limited planning at a strategic level has made it difficult for children and families to contribute in any meaningful way to the design and development of children's services across the islands.

Although some partners are carrying out specific **self-evaluation** activities within their own organisations there is not yet any overall approach. More needs to be done to establish an over-arching framework to plan and co-ordinate self-evaluation within and across services. Within the education service there is clearer understanding of the principles of self-evaluation and more regular use of self-evaluation tools. Education services undertake a structured cycle of self-evaluation activity. The education service regularly seeks the views of children and parents and uses them to inform improvements. This approach could be adapted and used to look into the impact services together are making on children's and families' lives.



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.

7. How well do services lead and improve the quality of work to achieve better outcomes for children and families?

Frontline staff are committed to working together to improve the lives of children, particularly vulnerable children. They are keen to support children and families at an early stage to prevent difficulties emerging. However, there is no coherent, articulated vision shared by staff across children's services.

Staff across services at all levels are committed to the Getting it right for every child principles, giving priority to prevention and early intervention, providing enough support at the right time for as long as is needed. Education and social work services are further ahead with putting Getting it right for every child into practice than health services. Health staff understand Getting it right for every child in terms of social



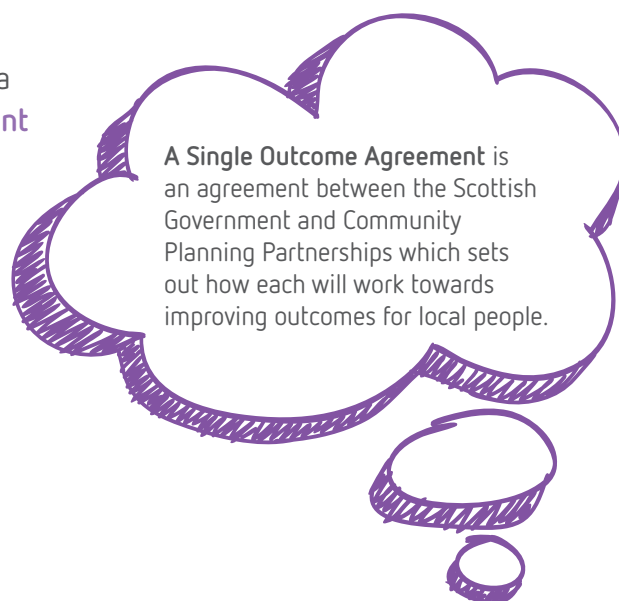
Self-evaluation means taking a close look at what services have done and how well they have done it. It is important because it helps people to see clearly where they need to make improvements.

work involvement with children, but have less understanding of their own role in prevention and early intervention.

Children's services' planning has been delayed as a result of management restructuring in key partner organisations. Partners have successfully prioritised the continued delivery of frontline services but acknowledge they now need to set a clear strategic direction for their staff.

Senior managers across services are visible leaders who regularly engage with staff. However the structural changes, with people leaving, have caused significant uncertainty amongst staff. Although there are shared values and positive intentions, some staff still feel anxious and uninformed. Efforts to involve staff in the structural changes and redesign have gone some way to inform staff as they build the new teams but this is at a very early stage.

Community planning partners are committed to improving children's and young people's well-being over time against a set of indicators outlined in their **Single Outcome Agreement** and reporting annually on progress. The small number of children and young people in Orkney can make some comparisons with national figures problematic and trends difficult to establish. However, progress reports against the indicators, together with other nationally reported statistics, demonstrate the actions of community planning partners are having a largely positive impact on ensuring children have the best start in life and improving the life chances of vulnerable children and young people.



8. Conclusion and areas for improvement

Services are making a very positive impact on children and young people in Orkney, including children and young people at risk, who are looked after and those whose family circumstances mean they need the help of a number of services to meet their needs. Many families are receiving helpful support from a range of services to strengthen their parenting skills and increase their confidence.

Staff work together to improve the lives of children, particularly vulnerable children. They support children and families at an early stage to prevent difficulties emerging. However, leaders have not yet provided a joint coherent, articulated vision shared across children's services. Management restructuring in key partner organisations has delayed children's services' planning. Although leaders have successfully prioritised the continued delivery of frontline services they have yet to set a clear strategic direction for their staff.

Despite commitment to improving the quality of service there is no systematic programme of joint



self-evaluation. As a result it is not evident that leaders know enough about their strengths and where they need to improve. Over the last two years, leaders have concentrated their efforts on delivering new management structures. Leaders now need to articulate a joint coherent vision and a clear strategic direction across children's services to deliver improvement.

Whilst services are achieving positive outcomes for children and young people overall, we consider that leaders may need support to make the necessary improvements in setting a strategic direction. The Care Inspectorate will agree with community planning partners in Orkney how best to build capacity and assist improvement. In taking forward improvement, the Orkney Community Planning Partnership should take account of the need to:

- **develop and implement clear procedures for assessment and planning for children requiring extra help**
- **ensure Getting it Right for Every Child assessments are used by health staff**
- **accelerate integrated children's services planning and establish a joint strategic direction**
- **develop a programme of joint self-evaluation which identifies how well children's services are performing and what needs to improve.**

9. What happens next?

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

The Care Inspectorate and other bodies taking part in this inspection will continue to offer support for improvement through their linking arrangements.

Katie Lamb

Inspection Lead

April 2013

Appendix 1: Indicators of quality

Quality indicators help services and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved. In this pilot inspection we used a draft framework of quality indicators that was published by the Care Inspectorate in October 2012 called '[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 eight 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	Very good
Assessing and responding to risks and needs	Adequate
Planning for individual children	Adequate
How well are services working together to improve the lives of children, young people and families?	
Planning and improving services	Weak
Participation of children, young people, families and other stakeholders	Adequate
How good is the leadership and direction of services for children and young people?	
Leadership of improvement and change	Adequate
Improving the well-being of children and young people	Good



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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