

Services for children and young people in Stirling

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 Stirling Community Planning Partnership area took place between January and February 2014. Stirling and Clackmannanshire 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 Stirling and Clackmannanshire, 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.

The inspection in Stirling 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 97 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 reports of joint inspections of services to protect children. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education published a report of a joint inspection of services to protect children in 2010. The Care Inspectorate published a report of a joint follow-through inspection of services to protect children in 2011 which sets out the progress made in relation to the areas for improvement outlined in 2010.

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 and the context for services for children and young people

The **Stirling Community Planning Partnership** serves a population of just over 91,000 in Central Scotland. The city of Stirling is the administrative centre. The area is diverse with over a third of the population living in rural locations. Affluent communities with high incomes and good health are in close proximity with communities which experience high unemployment and poor health. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation in 2012 indicated that there has been a consolidation and deepening of deprivation across the communities in Stirling since 2009.

Community planning is the responsibility of Stirling Community Planning Partnership. The partnership has wide representation from the community, public, private and voluntary sectors. The Community Plan sets out the overarching strategy for realising the shared vision for the people of Stirling. The **Single Outcome Agreement** is the strategic framework for reforming public services and it prioritises the main changes that need to be made over the next ten years. This framework was prepared through a partnership initiative entitled 'Outcomes for Stirling' and identifies seven priority outcomes which take account of the views of local communities.

In December 2010, Stirling Council agreed to manage and deliver education and social services in partnership with its neighbouring council in Clackmannanshire. 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. Stirling Council is the lead authority for education services and Clackmannanshire Council is the lead authority for social 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.

Stirling Community Planning Partnership is the local Community Planning Partnership (CPP) for the Stirling Council area. It is formed from representatives from key agencies and organisations from the public, community, voluntary and private sector. The partnership work together to plan and deliver services in Stirling.

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.

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.

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 to assist them to overcome trauma.
- Improvements in the educational attainment for children and young people and improving trends in positive destinations for young people leaving school year on year. Gaps are closing between the lowest attainment levels and higher achievers and the educational attainment of looked after children is improving over time.

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 Balfron High School. 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

The Plus project 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**. Services here 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 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 support children 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. The implementation of the **Getting it right for every child** approach has enabled early identification to become more systematic and is helping families to get appropriate support quickly. Staff put the needs of children and young people at the centre when they provide support. Staff in education are confident in their role as **named person**. Staff, particularly those working in education, is becoming increasingly confident in their role as **lead professionals** to plan and coordinate support for children who need assistance from a number of different services. More needs to be done to assist health staff to reach a clear understanding of their role as named persons and to ensure that the needs of young children are met. The introduction of a multi-agency approach to screening requests for help is more likely to lead to timely and appropriate support for children, young people and families.

Overall, improved information sharing is helping staff across services to identify more families who need help and support at an earlier stage. The co-location of staff within the Public Protection Service has strengthened the sharing of information at the point of initial contact from staff or members of the public. 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.

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.

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.

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** model 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. The third sector plays a significant role in providing appropriate intervention for families at an early stage. Some services are targeting support appropriately to families with the greatest need. However, 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.

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.

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.

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 which helps them to know how to keep themselves safe online and when using social media. Young people are very positive about the assistance they receive from Youth Services and how this helps them to deal with a range of risky situations. Children and young people who are no longer able to stay at home benefit from safe, stable and caring kinship and foster care placements. Children looked after at home are safer as a result of the support provided to parents to improve their parenting skills. Staff work well with parents to make sure they understand how they can provide a safe environment for their children. Staff work alongside parents to bring about positive changes in circumstances to ensure children remain safe. 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. Pregnant mothers are accessing antenatal care earlier and a relatively high number of babies are benefitting from being breastfed. Children and young people living away from home have their health needs met well. They are benefitting greatly from input 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 healthcare 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 get the help they need from this service quickly enough.

Children and young people are performing very well in school. Children and young people are making very positive academic, social and emotional progress. Gaps are closing between the lowest attainment levels and higher achievers and educational attainment of looked after children is improving steadily. This is supported by outreach behaviour support, family therapy and pupil support services. High numbers of school leavers are helped to find work, training or further study. Overall, children with additional support needs are supported well to make progress in their learning. 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. 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. Baby massage is improving parent and baby relationships and both are benefiting from the support their carers have received from health nursery nurses. Children looked after away from home experience warm, stable and nurturing environments where they grow and develop. The experiences of vulnerable children living at home are more variable. A few children on the **Child Protection Register** are not getting the help they need to optimise their wellbeing and overcome the negative impact of abuse and neglect.

Every local authority area in Scotland has a **Child Protection Register**, 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.

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. There is a variety of opportunities available through various initiatives such as **Active Stirling** and the development of the **PEAK centre**. Children and young people affected by disability are able to be involved in a variety of activities supported by, for example, the Plus Project. 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 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. Young people value their involvement in a range of initiatives designed to help them move into the world of work such as the **Getting into Motor Vehicles** group or the confidence building and information sessions of the **PAL's** group.

Active Stirling is a leading provider in the delivery and management of sport, physical activities and facilities in the Stirling area.

The PEAK is the indoor complex at the heart of the Stirling Sports Village at Forthside, which offers a wide range of sporting activities including third generation (3G) outdoor football, rugby and hockey pitches. The PEAK is managed and programmed by Active Stirling.

The Getting into Motor Vehicles group is supported by Raploch Community Services. The service provides support and training to assist young people aged 16-17 years to improve their employment prospects. The group are placed for part of the week at college and part of the week on placement at a motor garage.

PAL's is Peer Assisted Learner's group, supported by Stirling Youth Services workers. Young people aged 16-17 support younger children with their learning and achievements. Members undergo training and appropriate checks for their role.

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. Family support workers are making a positive difference in the lives of some families but this is limited due to high workloads.

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. There are notable benefits to some parents arising from effective communication and trusting relationships with staff. This has strengthened some families and helped to build capacity and confidence in parenting. Some parents benefit from strong support from third sector services such as Plus, Barnardo's Matrix, Action for Children and Women's Aid. These services target families experiencing domestic abuse, problematic substance misuse or parental mental ill-health.

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

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 mental health centres, and supported by research have been shown to work.

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 without sufficient support. For some, advice and guidance is withdrawn too quickly. Some families are offered help and support but do not engage. In these circumstances staff need to be more persistent and assertive in their approach to gaining the cooperation of parents and carers.

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 and young people 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 Stirling demonstrates a clear commitment to integrating services and 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 Stirling and Clackmannanshire. Changes in senior managers 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.

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'.

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 **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 sub-committees, 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 and young people; 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, staff act promptly and appropriately when there are 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 for those children and young people who may be at risk of abuse and neglect. Staff work well together to keep children and young people safe in the short term. Suitable alternative accommodation is provided when children and young people are unable to remain at home and emergency legal measures are used effectively to keep them safe. There are, however, a small but significant number of children and young people where the initial response to concerns about their safety or wellbeing is not robust. In these cases, concerns are not always thoroughly investigated. Decisions about the actions needed to keep them safe are sometimes taken without involving all relevant professionals. Child protection investigations are not always followed through sufficiently to ensure the child is safe. 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. 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.

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.

The 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**, 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 Stirling 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, young people 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 Stirling. 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 Stirling and Clackmannanshire 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's 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 benefiting 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. 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

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.


to identify where improvements need to be made. However, there is insufficient focus on joint action to lead to improvement. Shared services have increased the opportunity to share and promote best practice. Partners in Stirling and Clackmannanshire are committed to learning from each other and explore and adopt learning from research and other sources.

Our report of a joint interim follow-through inspection of services to protect children published in 2011 noted that positive progress had been made in the immediate actions taken by staff to keep children and young people safe. Self-evaluation activity carried out in 2013 helpfully identified areas where improvements had been made and areas requiring further development. Overall, there has been positive 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 good.

Community planning partners are committed to improving children and young people's wellbeing over time. They have developed a set of indicators set out in the Single Outcome Agreement and report annually on the progress they are making.

The work of the Early Years Collaborative has improved maternity bookings meeting the **HEAT Target** and the uptake of vitamins had also increased for children. The numbers of babies being breastfed across Stirling are significantly better than the Scottish average. Midwives and health visitors are providing support to improve rates in deprived areas. This effective joint working between NHS Forth Valley and Stirling Council complements ongoing work to support the Curriculum for Excellence, Health and Wellbeing experiences and outcomes. Tackling childhood obesity, smoking in young people, alcohol use and improving sexual health in areas of deprivation remain key challenges for services in Stirling.



HEAT Targets are NHS Scotland targets for performance in the areas of: Health Improvement; Efficiency; Access to service; Treatment. These targets help NHS Health Boards set priorities for their work.

Significant improvements have been achieved in the educational attainment of children and young people and this continues as an upward trend. Gaps are closing between the lowest attainment levels and higher achievers, and the educational attainment of looked after children and young people is improving over time. Special schools continue to report a reduction in exclusions. Primary schools continue to have low numbers of

exclusions, and incidences of exclusion remain consistent over the past three years. There are improving trends year on year in positive destinations for young people leaving school.

Partners could usefully spend time exploring trend data and qualitative information to enhance their understanding of the outcomes being achieved for children who are looked after. Community planning partners are aware of their areas of poorer performance and negative trends. They are attempting to understand the underlying reasons and they are putting in place measures to overturn them.

10. Conclusion and areas for improvement

Staff across services are highly committed to improving the lives of children, young people and families and this is making a positive impact on children and young people in Stirling. 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 and available to families promptly and at an earlier stage. An encouraging start has been made to implementing a Getting it right for every child approach to working with children, young people and their families. 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. Most notably there are still important weaknesses in 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 Stirling 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 Stirling 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 | Good |

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

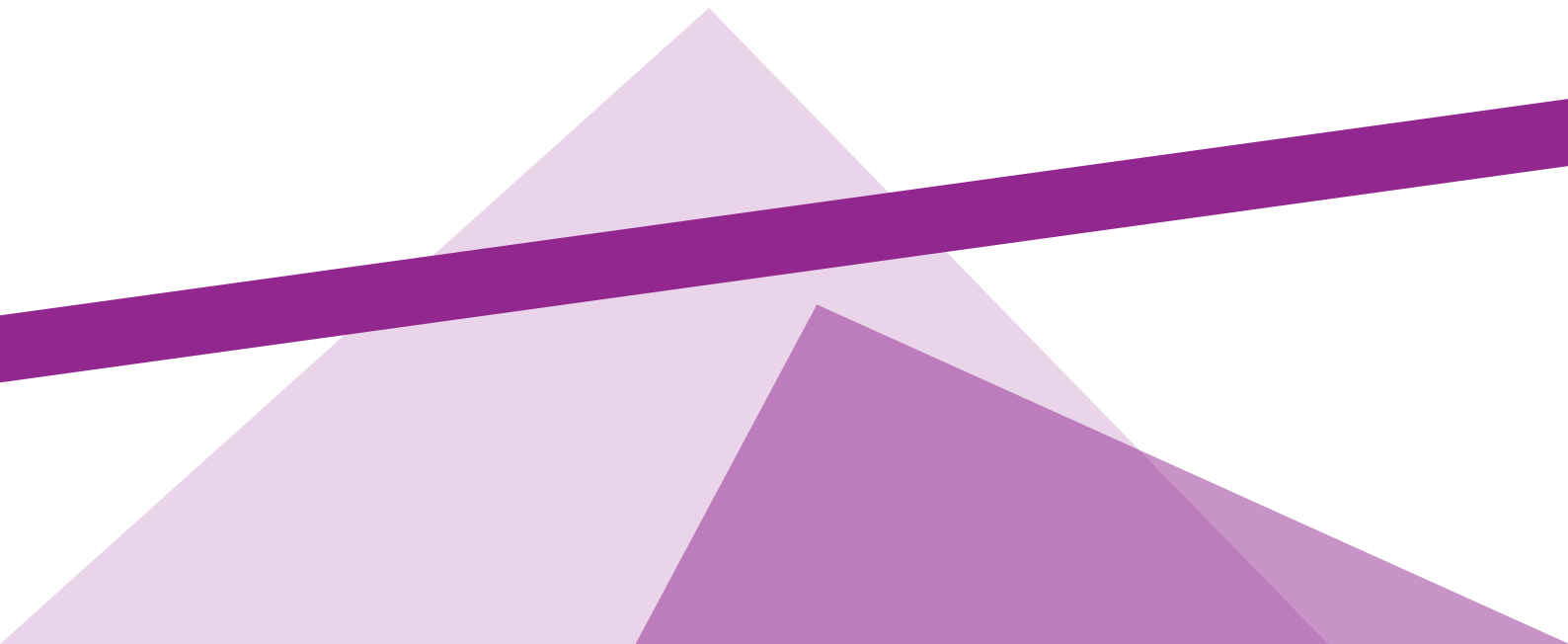
| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Excellent | outstanding, sector leading |
| Very good | major strengths |
| Good | important strengths with some areas for improvement |
| Adequate | strengths just outweigh weaknesses |
| Weak | important weaknesses |
| Unsatisfactory | major weaknesses |

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