

Report To: Health & Social Care Committee **Date:** 6 January 2021

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Subject: Child Protection Committee Annual Report 2020-2021

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Health and Social Care Committee of the publication of a draft version of the Inverclyde Child Protection Committee's Annual Report 2020-21.
- 1.2 Consider the report's findings in relation to Inverclyde Child Protection Committee's duty to provide an annual update of child protection business.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Child Protection Committees (CPC's) are the key local bodies for developing, implementing and improving child protection work across and between agencies, bodies and the local community. A CPC is expected to perform a number of crucial functions in order to jointly identify and manage risk to children and young people, monitor and improve performance and promote the ethos that ***"It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright"***. CPCs must ensure all of these functions are carried out to a high standard and are aligned to the local Getting It Right For Every Child arrangements.
- 2.2 One of the key functions of a CPC is to provide a report of CPC business on an annual basis. The author is generally the Lead Officer for Child Protection. The last report published covered work across 2018-2020. This was a 2 year report due to there being no Lead Officer in post during the majority of 2019. The Committee will note that the report under consideration spans from March 2020 to March 2021. There is always debate as to where to begin and end a report with some CPC's using the calendar year, some using the academic year and others basing it around key events. We chose with the 2018-20 report to end on the cusp of the COVID-19 pandemic, thus it makes sense to begin this report from March 2020 when CPC had, like the rest of the world, to adjust to a new way of working under a global pandemic.
- 2.3 The attached report was presented to and accepted by Inverclyde Child Protection Committee on 18 October 2021. It was presented to and accepted by Inverclyde Chief Officer's Group on 16 November 2021.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Health & Social Care Committee is asked to note the content of this report.

Allen Stevenson
Interim Chief Officer Inverclyde HSCP

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 CPC's have 4 functions: Continuous improvement; Public information engagement and participation; Strategic planning and connections; Annual reporting on the work of the CPC.
- 4.2 Continuous improvement: This involves the collation of data which records outcomes for children and audit activity which identifies gaps in provision and determines improvement activity. CPC's are also responsible for delivering training and other learning activity to ensure that practitioners across all services are aware of the best and most up to date practice initiatives. CPC also has a duty to ensure that policies, procedures and guidance are kept up to date and that practitioners are aware of their content and availability. Finally CPC's take the lead in terms of any learning when a child is significantly harmed or dies.
- 4.3 Public information, engagement and participation: CPC's have a role in raising awareness so that members of the public, including children and young people, know what child protection means and what to do if they have a concern for a child or young person. They must engage with local communities to raise awareness of indicators of concern and increase understanding of the role that communities and all adults have in protecting children and young people. Finally they must involve children, young people and families in the design and delivery of child protection systems.
- 4.4 Strategic planning and connections: CPCs must ensure strong and robust strategic planning links to wider integrated children's services planning arrangements in their local area in order to ensure that the need for support and protection of children and young people can be comprehensively met in well designed, effective and sustainable local services, programmes and initiatives. CPCs must also link effectively with other multi-agency partnerships and structures locally, regionally and nationally, including Chair and Lead officer participation in Child Protection Committees Scotland.
- 4.5 Annual reporting on the work of the CPC: CPCs must produce and publish an annual report, endorsed by the Chief Officers, which sets out the work undertaken by the Committee, delivery against key performance measures in that year as well as identified priorities for the year ahead.
- 4.6 The Inverclyde Child Protection Committee Annual Report begins with an account of the role of remit of the Child Protection Committee within Inverclyde, set within the context of wider strategic planning groups. In the main body of the report it records the multiagency response to the COVID-19 pandemic and examines areas of best practice. The report then goes on to review the priority areas described in 4.2 to 4.4, detailing the work achieved in these areas via CPC's Performance Management, Training, Child Sexual Exploitation and Whole Family (previously CAPSM) sub-groups. This section also reflects on work being undertaken by the Violence Against Women forum of which the CPC Lead Officer is a member, and notes work being done in the areas of parent and children's mental health. The report concludes by charting areas of future work.
- 4.7 In terms of public information and advice, Inverclyde CPC participated in the national **Eyes and Ears** campaign over the summer of 2020. This was intended to encourage family members and communities to keep an eye out for children who might be struggling or experiencing harm and a listening ear to their needs. This campaign was reissued over Christmas. The campaign was succeeded in March 2021 by **KeepingKidsSafeOnline**, a virtual poster campaign with information links for parents and carers encouraging them to check in on what their children are up to online. This was on the back of Police Scotland noting that there had been a 13.4% increase in reports of online abuse and exploitation since lockdown commenced. Autumn 2020 was to see the launch of 'Helping Hands' an Inverclyde specific campaign to promote access to early support for children and families in need. It was decided to delay this, however, in order to focus on the national rollout of the **Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019**. This act, known colloquially as the 'smacking ban'

removes the defence of ‘reasonable chastisement’, which a parent or carer could previously use to justify the use of physical force to discipline a child. The change in law necessitated a robust publicity campaign to ensure parents and carers were aware and our local early years services were particularly adept at communicating the change via parent packs despite the limitations imposed by ongoing social distancing. New guidance was developed for practitioners and a series of online information events were offered to multiagency staff teams. Inverclyde’s Lead Officer for Child Protection joined the communications sub group of CPC Scotland in May 2021 and was party to the development of a more asset focused campaign over the summer of 2021 called **For Kid’s Sake...** which encouraged extended family and local communities to keep a benign eye on children over the summer holidays and offer a helping hand to parents. A new and exciting development within CPC Scotland’s sub-group will encourage children and young people to become directly involved in the theming and co-production of future campaigns. Inverclyde’s Lead Officer for Child Protection is encouraging Inverclyde’s extremely active Champs and Little Champs, members of the Proud2Care network, to get involved and help shape the future of child protection communication.

4.8 With regard to Learning and Development, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on delivery of training to staff. Indeed, in the first few months of the pandemic CPC were unable to deliver any training. (fortunately, February and early March 2020 had seen delivery of both the 5 day Child Protection Course for enhanced practitioners and Children Affected by Parental Substance Misuse training to multiagency teams). Within months, however, our training sub-group was up and running virtually and we spent the following months converting in-person training to a virtual format. In early 2021 we commenced training in The Assessment of Care: Formerly known as the Neglect Toolkit, we have so far delivered 5 sessions to 41 members of staff from social work, health and community learning and development. A twilight session has taken place for education staff. A recent evaluation session noted that the training has increased awareness of the impact of neglect though practitioners have struggled to use the toolkit with families given lockdown restrictions. Neglect training for the general workforce: A virtual programme is complete and ready to deliver to relevant agencies. Child Protection Awareness for the general workforce: This has been adapted to a virtual format and is now being delivered to a range of services. Scottish Drugs Forum: Everyone has a story, an account of the impact of problematic substance use on children and young people was delivered virtually to a multiagency staff team. All training is conducted with reference to the **assess-plan- do-review** cycle which means we revisit it with participants at regular intervals in order to assess how well learning is embedded in practice.

4.9 The draft Annual Report concludes with a plan of business. This includes plans to progress work already begun via CPC sub groups and deliver multiagency training in relation to neglect, child protection awareness and Whole Family Support for addiction. All of the objectives noted are underway and an update report will be offered within the next annual report. The Annual Report for 2020-2021 is attached below.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

5.1 Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

LEGAL

5.2 There are no specific legal implications in respect of this report.

HUMAN RESOURCES

5.3 There are no specific human resources implications in respect of this report.

EQUALITIES

5.4 Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

YES

NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.

NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

NO

Repopulation

5.5 n/a

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The report has been prepared after due consideration with relevant senior officers in the HSCP.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS



Annual report
2020-21.docx