

To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 17 March 2022

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Joint Inspection of Children and Young People at Risk of Harm

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Care Inspectorate was asked by Scottish Ministers to undertake joint inspections in local areas on the services to protect children and young people at risk of harm. The original programme of these joint inspections was launched in 2018 however as a consequence of COVID-19 these were paused until June 2021. The programme of activity for inspection recommenced in July 2021.
 - 1.2. The Care Inspectorate announced the methodology for these inspections in 2019. The Care Inspectorate completed inspections in 8 local authority areas before the pause of the programme as a consequence of COVID-19. The focus of these inspections was on the difference community planning partnerships were making to the lives of children and young people in need of care and protection and the lives of the children and young people for whom community planning partnerships have corporate parenting responsibilities.
 - 1.3. The approach to inspection has been updated in the most recent focused inspection. The next phase of inspection will focus on the difference community planning partnerships are making to the lives of children and young people at risk of harm and their families. Renfrewshire was not one of the local authorities inspected in the period 2018 to the point the inspections were paused. The last inspection in Renfrewshire was in 2015 and it is therefore possible that we will be subject to inspection in the next round of inspections commencing in April 2022. The Care Inspectorate has announced the authority where inspection will take place in April 2022. Renfrewshire has not been notified and therefore, it is likely that we will be subject to inspection in the next 12 months.
 - 1.4. This report provided the Education and Children's Services Policy Board with information on the new focus of the inspection and the preparation in Renfrewshire to ensure we are ready for inspection when it is announced.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Education and Children’s Services Policy Board is asked to note:
- i. the information on the inspection approach being adopted by the Care Inspectorate in relation to children and young people at risk of harm; and
 - ii. that self-evaluation work is being progressed to prepare for the involvement of Renfrewshire in future inspection programme.
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3. Background

- 3.1. The Scottish Government set out an improvement programme in respect of the child protection system in Scotland. The improvement placed the wellbeing of children at the heart of all work and recommitted to ensuring that child protection remained everyone’s responsibility. As part of the improvement programme the Scottish Government asked the Care Inspectorate to lead a model of inspection with other scrutiny agencies including Health Improvement Scotland, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland and Education Scotland. These inspections focused on the experiences and outcomes for children and young people in need of protection and those who were receiving support from agencies under corporate parenting approaches.
- 3.2. The Care Inspectorate announced the methodology for the inspection approach in 2018. To support local areas to evaluate their services in 2018, the Care Inspectorate published a quality improvement framework guidance “A quality framework for children and young people in need of care and protection”. This guidance was updated in 2019 ([accessed via this link](#)) and remains in place for the inspections. Services in Renfrewshire will use this document to assess the impact on those children and young people requiring support and protection.
- 3.3. The programme of inspections commenced in April 2018 and continued until March 2020 when the decision was made to pause inspections due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Care Inspectorate completed inspections and published reports in respect of 8 local authority areas prior to the decision to pause the inspection programme.
- 3.4. In July 2021 the Care Inspectorate announced that it would recommence and complete the inspection programme. The Care Inspectorate also announced a refresh of the focus of inspections from July 2021. The focus of inspection is looking at the differences community planning partnerships are making to the lives of children and young people at risk of harm and their families.
- 3.5. The joint inspection of children and young people at risk of harm will seek assurance on the extent to which services working together can show:
- Children and young people are safer because risks have been identified early and responded to effectively.
 - Children and young people’s lives improve with high quality planning and support, ensuring they experienced sustained loving and nurturing relationships to keep them safe from further harm.
 - Children and young people and families are meaningfully and appropriately involved in decisions about their lives. They influence service planning, delivery and improvement.

- Collaborative strategic leadership, planning and operational management ensure high standards of service delivery.
- 3.6. The Care Inspectorate have indicated they will also consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on how services practised and ensured that children and young people were safe. The inspection will be conducted by the Care Inspectorate, Health Improvement Scotland, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland and Education Scotland and include the participation of young inspection volunteers who have direct experience of care or the protection services.
- 3.7. The inspection will consider and review evidence in relation to all 22 quality indicators contained detailed in appendix 1. The evidence will be used to examine how local areas are delivering in the inspection statements detailed in paragraph 3.5. The final report on the inspection will provide an evaluative grade for quality indicator 2.1: impact on children and young people. Appendix 2 provides information on the evaluation grades used by the Care Inspectorate.
- 3.8. The Care Inspectorate will advise local areas of their intention to conduct an inspection 4 weeks prior to it commencing. The inspection activity will include:
- Face to face meetings with children and young people, their parents and carers.
 - A survey of children and young people and their parents or carers.
 - A review of a sample of children and young people's files.
 - Documentation and position statements provided by services.
 - Staff survey and focus groups with staff.
 - Meetings with senior leadership team and decision makers.
- 3.9. The inspection will have two phases. The first phase will involve professional discussions between the Chief Officers, Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee and the Care Inspectorate, a staff survey and a review of 60 children's files by the Care Inspectorate. A survey for children and young people will be put in place and the information from that survey alongside the results from the staff survey and the file reading will inform phase two of the inspection. Phase two will include focus groups for staff, meetings with a range of stakeholders and meetings with children and their parents.
- 3.10. The Continuous Improvement Sub-Group of Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee will lead the self-evaluation and preparation for inspection locally. The preparation will include conducting a multi-agency file audit, review of current practice and address any areas for development.

Implications of this report

1. **Financial**
None.
2. **HR and Organisational Development**
None.
3. **Community/Council Planning**

Our Renfrewshire is safe

- The inspection approach seeks to demonstrate that services in Renfrewshire are working together to protect children and young people at risk of harm.

Building strong, safe and resilient communities

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4. Legal
None.

5. Property/Assets
None.

6. Information Technology
None.

7. Equality and Human Rights
A requirement of the Council's Conditions of the Grant is that services comply with the Equality Act 2010.

8. Health and Safety
None.

9. Procurement
None.

10. Risk
None.

11. Privacy Impact
None.

12. Cosla Policy Position
None.

13. Climate Risk
None.

List of Background Papers
None.

Children's Services
JT/LG/KO
15/02/2022

Author: John Trainer, Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice
john.trainer@renfrewshire.gov.uk
 0141 618 6860

Appendix 1

2. The quality indicators

What key outcomes have we achieved?	How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?	How good is our delivery of services for children, young people and families?	How good is our operational management?	How good is our leadership?	
1. Key performance outcomes	2. Impact on children, young people and families	5. Delivery of key processes	6. Policy, service development and legal measures	9. Leadership and direction	
1.1 Improvements in the safety, wellbeing and life chances of vulnerable children and young people.	2.1 Impact on children and young people. 2.2 Impact on families.	5.1 Recognition and response to initial concerns. 5.2 Assessing risk and need. 5.3 Care planning, managing risk and effective intervention. 5.4 Involving individual children, young people and families.	6.1 Policies, procedures and legal measures. 6.2 Planning and improving services. 6.3 Participation of children, young people, families and other stakeholders. 6.4 Performance management and quality assurance. 6.5 Securing improvement through self-evaluation	9.1 Vision, values and aims. 9.2 Leadership of strategy and direction. 9.3 Leadership of people and partnerships. 9.4 Leadership of improvement and change.	
	3. Impact on staff				7. Management and support to staff
	3.1 Impact on staff				7.1 Recruitment, deployment and joint working. 7.2 Workforce development and support.

4. Impact on the community	8. Resources and capacity building
4.1 Impact on the community	8.1 Management of resources. 8.2 Commissioning arrangements.
10: What is our capacity for improvement? Global judgement based on an evaluation of the framework of quality indicators	

Appendix 2

Care Inspectorate Six-point Evaluation Scale

The Care Inspectorate use the following six point evaluation scale.

- 6 Excellent - Outstanding or sector leading
- 5 Very Good - Major strengths
- 4 Good - Important strengths, with some areas for improvement
- 3 Adequate - Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
- 2 Weak - Important weaknesses – priority action required
- 1 Unsatisfactory - Major weaknesses – urgent remedial action required

An evaluation of **excellent** describes performance which is sector leading and supports experiences and outcomes for people which are of outstandingly high quality. There is a demonstrable track record of innovative, effective practice and/or very high-quality performance across a wide range of its activities and from which others could learn. The Care Inspectorate can be confident that excellent performance is sustainable and that it will be maintained.

An evaluation of **very good** will apply to performance that demonstrates major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for people. There are very few areas for improvement. Those that do exist will have minimal adverse impact on people’s experiences and outcomes. While opportunities are taken to strive for excellence within a culture of continuous improvement, performance evaluated as very good does not require significant adjustment.

An evaluation of **good** applies to performance where there is a number of important strengths that, taken together, clearly outweigh areas for improvement. The strengths will have a significant positive impact on people’s experiences and outcomes. However, improvements are required to maximise wellbeing and ensure that people consistently have experiences and outcomes which are as positive as possible.

An evaluation of **adequate** applies where there are some strengths, but these just outweigh weaknesses. Strengths may still have a positive impact but the likelihood of achieving positive experiences and outcomes for people is reduced significantly because key areas of performance need to improve. Performance that is evaluated as adequate may be tolerable in particular circumstances, such as where a service or partnership is not yet fully established, or in the midst of major transition. However, continued performance at adequate level is not acceptable. Improvements must be made by building on strengths while addressing those elements that are not contributing to positive experiences and outcomes for people.

An evaluation of **weak** will apply to performance in which strengths can be identified but these are outweighed or compromised by significant weaknesses. The weaknesses, either individually or

when added together, substantially affect peoples' experiences or outcomes. Without improvement as a matter of priority, the welfare or safety of people may be compromised, or their critical needs not met. Weak performance requires action in the form of structured and planned improvement by the provider or partnership with a mechanism to demonstrate clearly that sustainable improvements have been made.

An evaluation of **unsatisfactory** will apply when there are major weaknesses in critical aspects of performance which require immediate remedial action to improve experiences and outcomes for people. It is likely that people's welfare or safety will be compromised by risks which cannot be tolerated. Those accountable for carrying out the necessary actions for improvement must do so as a matter of urgency, to ensure that people are protected, and their wellbeing improves without delay