

Further developing the model for joint inspections of services for children and young people

Key issues arising from the evaluation of the pilot phase





Introduction

Scottish Ministers asked the Care Inspectorate to lead on a new programme of joint inspections in order to know more about how well services are working together to improve outcomes for children and young people in each part of Scotland.

Working closely with colleagues from Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Scotland, we designed an inspection model and conducted four pilot inspections in Orkney, Edinburgh, North Ayrshire and Argyll and Bute between October 2012 and September 2013.

I would like to thank all those children, young people, inspectors, and staff in community planning partnerships who took part in the pilot inspections. Their generosity with time and willingness to engage fully in the pilots has been extremely useful in developing the methodology for these inspections. These inspections reported on the performance of community planning partnerships in improving outcomes for children, young people and families. At the same time they facilitated and supported continuous improvement.

Inspectors involved in the pilots have reflected carefully on the process and in October 2013 we commissioned research to review the effectiveness of the pilot phase and identify areas for improvement. The evaluation focused on how effective the inspections were in achieving improved services and outcomes for children and young people. It examined the extent to which the process was guided by agreed underpinning principles and was proportionate, effective and efficient. I am very grateful to those who took part in and contributed to this evaluation.

We consider the views of stakeholders as extremely important in defining the future shape and conduct of these joint inspections. The scrutiny partners are committed to ongoing review and improvement in the inspection methodology. Between the pilot phase and the first full year of inspections, the partners had already identified and acted on a number of the recommendations arising from the evaluation.

We established a Joint Management Group for these inspections in April 2013 with representation from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland, Education Scotland and Healthcare Improvement Scotland. This group is responsible for jointly overseeing the successful delivery of the joint inspections in line with agreed plans and for ensuring they use resources efficiently and effectively. It also makes decisions about any change in scope, focus or emphasis for this programme of inspections and acts as necessary to improve the inspection model.

This document shows the key areas for improvement arising from the evaluation and the actions we have taken, or are already taking, to progress them.

Annette Bruton
Chief Executive

1. The extent to which the inspections had an impact on service improvement and added value to the work of Community Planning Partnerships

The independent evaluation carried out a survey of frontline staff in education, health and social services who had taken part in the pilot joint inspections.

This showed that:


- 79% (138 out of 173 respondents) of staff found the pilot inspection and the report either very worthwhile and would make a difference, or worthwhile with the potential to make a difference.
- 62% (101 out of 162 respondents) of staff could either already see some improvement as a result of the inspection or were clear how improvements were going to be made.

What people told us

Staff told us they found multi-agency group discussions with inspectors about their work with individual children, young people and families very helpful. These discussions promoted beneficial reflection on their practice and constructive opportunities to consider how they can improve their work.


Middle and senior managers were more mixed in their views about the added value of the discussions they had with inspectors than frontline staff. The purpose and predictability of these discussions were not always clear and they sought more challenge.

What's now happening



We have continued to include this as a core element within our inspection methodology. We will include discussions with “teams around the child” in every inspection.

We now select focus groups of staff in “teams around the child” at an earlier stage, making logistical arrangements easier.



We are committed to speaking with the full range of relevant partners throughout the process of the inspection and for this to add value to the improvement agenda.

We have prepared new guidance on professional discussions to ensure these are scheduled at agreed points during each inspection with a clear purpose and agenda. This is intended to bring transparency to the inspection process and provide opportunities to discuss emerging findings while the inspection is underway. Inspectors will use these discussions as a platform to challenge and affirm the continuous improvement agenda across the full range of services for children and young people

We have launched and implemented a new scheme of Associate Assessors who will take part in each inspection from April 2014. This will bring the perspective of current practice and the challenges of partnership/integrated working into the inspection team. We now have a pool of over 60 with a range of professional backgrounds and experiences to complement the expertise of each inspection team.

2. The extent to which inspections were guided by underpinning principles

We asked for views about the extent to which the pilot inspections were guided by the underpinning principles of the inspection methodology. These included being outcome-focused, partnership-orientated, transparent, intelligence-led and risk-based, integrated and co-ordinated, and improvement-led.

What people told us

Outcome-focused:

There was broad consensus that the inspections succeeded in being outcome-focused.

Some people thought that inspectors spent too much time gathering information on processes, rather than on assessing what they achieved for children, young people and families and that there was not enough focus on wellbeing indicators.

Partnership-orientated:

The pilot areas found the pilot joint inspections succeeded in focusing on partnerships and joint working. They commented on the need for more challenge at a strategic level and a greater focus on the role of the voluntary sector.


Transparent:

Not all people who took part in the pilot inspections found the processes open and transparent. There was a recognition that this was because inspectors were testing out and designing new processes and approaches.

Intelligence-led and risk-based:

The pilot areas found the focus on self-evaluation and reporting on progress through position statements helpful. Overall, they found that the inspection model accessed good intelligence from a range of sources, and local areas submitted substantial evaluative information in their position statements.


What's now happening



Inspection teams will place a stronger emphasis on early intervention and preventative measures. They will agree at the planning stage for each inspection the best way to capture the full range of work carried out within the Community Planning Partnership.

We have improved our recording tools in order to gather evidence on impact and outcomes using the wellbeing indicators throughout each inspection.

We are giving more prominence to outcomes and the wellbeing indicators in our published reports and supporting improvement documents.




We have prepared new guidance on professional discussions to ensure that these are scheduled routinely at agreed points during each inspection. These include a number of multi-agency discussions with representatives of the community planning partnerships, chief officers and senior officers. The guidance asks for representation of all relevant partners, including representatives of the child protection committee, and encourages active participation of the voluntary sector in all aspects of the inspection.



We will aim to improve understanding and reduce confusion by improving our briefing arrangements before each inspection and publishing more detailed guidance for external stakeholders.

We have improved the arrangements for the professional dialogue on inspection findings through training for inspectors, clearer guidance and assigning more time for preparation. We have introduced an additional professional discussion in each inspection for more detailed consideration of the findings.



We have strengthened the approach to proportionality by introducing a scoping tool. This is shared throughout the inspection to ensure that the focus or scope of the inspection is clear to everyone.

We have reduced the number of inspection activities carried out during the pilots to be more proportionate.

What people told us

Integrated and coordinated:

Some people in the pilot areas, while welcoming the focus on partnership working, found the pilot inspections placed too heavy a focus on social work services.

Improvement-led:

Many people in the pilot areas told us that inspectors used their considerable experience to speak with a range of professionals and that this was an important factor in supporting improvement. They sought more challenge and signposting to best practice during the inspection and greater clarity about the ongoing support for improvement post inspection.

3. The extent to which the inspection was proportionate, effective and efficient

We want to provide inspection which is proportionate, effective and efficient. We understand the pressures placed on community planning partners and will strive to ensure that our inspection work meets these principles.

What people told us

All of the pilot areas commented very positively about the way in which inspectors carried out their role. They were commended for being polite, helpful and professional throughout.

Overall arrangements went smoothly, with an acknowledgement that the processes were new and still under development. However, some people in the pilot areas commented that the need for inspection teams to comment on all the quality indicators increased the workload as the inspection progressed. The level of work needed to prepare for the inspection was described by some people as onerous.

What's now happening



The membership of each inspection team has become more balanced, with representation from Education Scotland, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland and Healthcare Improvement Scotland in every inspection.



The experience gained from 11 inspections over 2012/14 has provided inspectors with a large body of evidence about what is working well for children, young people and families across Scotland. We aim to publish a report in the Autumn of 2014 to support all areas in Scotland.

Ongoing support for improvement will now be taken forward formally through the link inspector. From January 2014, all local authorities and community planning partnerships now have an allocated link inspector who will initiate support post inspection.

Better balance in the teams and the involvement of associate assessors will augment the capacity to signpost to best practice across Scotland.

The Care Inspectorate will use its online knowledge hub (hub.careinspectorate.com) to signpost and promote best practice in services for children and young people.

What's now happening



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We have reduced the number of inspection activities carried out during the pilots to be more proportionate.

We routinely evaluate 9 of the 22 quality indicators and no longer gather evidence about quality indicators outside of the scope of the inspection.

We acknowledge the need for more guidance to help the engagement process and to help reduce the amount of preparation needed. This will help us to be more explicit about the purpose and aims of each phase of the inspection and what needs to be done.

Conclusions

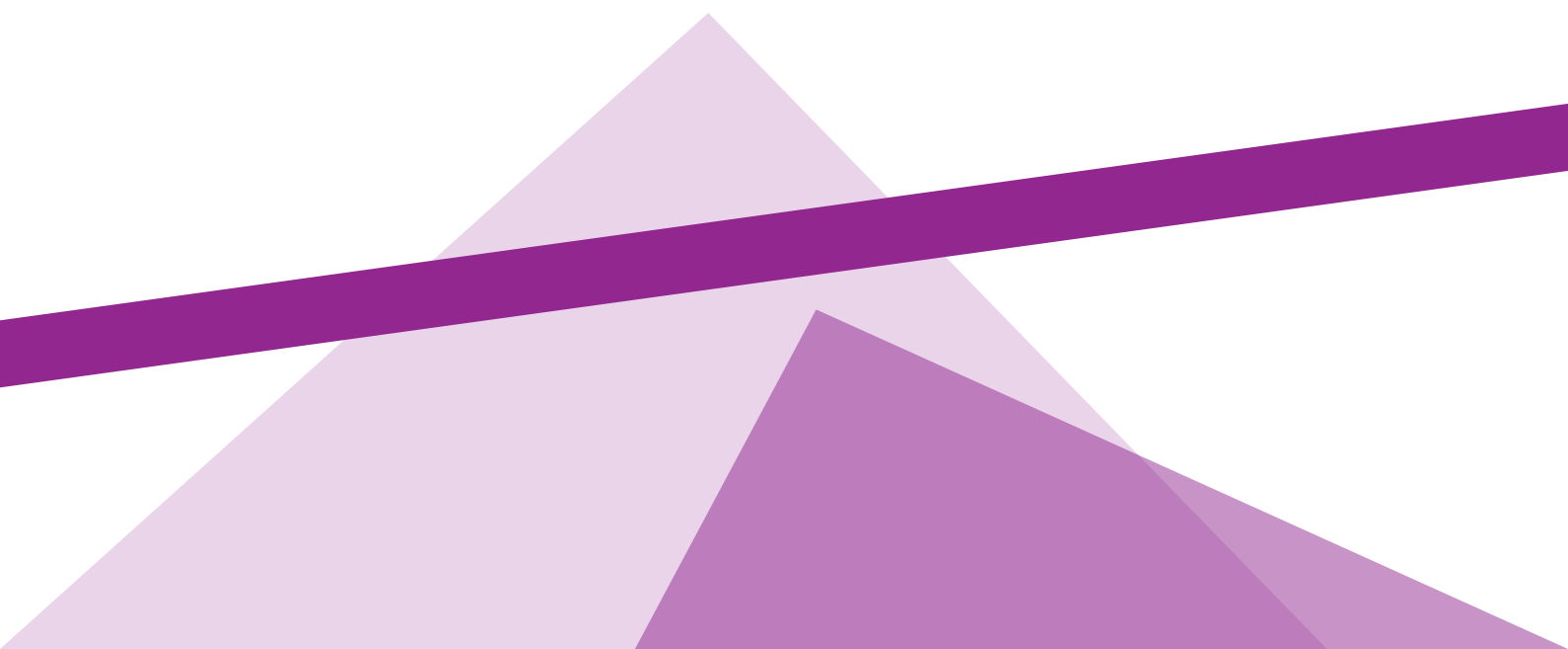
The Care Inspectorate developed this model of inspecting services for children in a very short timescale. The model has much to commend it. Inspection teams have worked hard to make this new model successful and those being inspected have responded with professionalism and a shared desire to improve the quality of services for children and young people.

Many of the issues raised by both inspection teams and managers in the pilot inspection areas have been overtaken or are now being progressed. The Joint Management Group, which has replaced the earlier Programme Board, can now review and strengthen the model to ensure a more joint and proportionate approach.

Management group members will ensure that all inspectors and team members from all the scrutiny bodies taking part understand the methodology of the inspection model and how it fits with the wider scrutiny landscape.

Within the Care Inspectorate, clarification of key issues, the development of further briefing notes and guidance and the increasing experience of inspection teams as the programme rolls out will result in an even more robust model of scrutiny. A key strength which will support the improvements needed is the commitment of managers and inspectors to developing an approach which is manageable and makes a significant difference to services and outcomes for children.

We strongly encourage people with current or recent experience within the sector to apply to become an associate assessor. Details are available from the Care Inspectorate by calling our national enquiries line on 0845 600 9527.



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Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànanan eile ma nithear iarrrtas.

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ਬੈਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

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