

Services for children and young people in East Renfrewshire

1 September 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 from both health and social work backgrounds, along with inspectors from Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland. We also use associate assessors drawn from a pool of experienced professionals who have been nominated by Community Planning Partnerships and their employer to take part in strategic inspection teams and young inspectors aged 18 to 26 years who are supported by a voluntary organisation and have relevant experience of care services.

Our inspection framework

The Care Inspectorate has developed a framework of quality indicators to support partnerships in assessing the quality of their own work. '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' is based on a model developed by the European Foundation for Quality Management which is widely used by local authorities and other bodies across Scotland and other parts of the UK. It supports self-evaluation by helping partners focus on the outcomes of their work and assisting them to identify how key processes are either helping or acting as barriers to achieving positive outcomes. The Care Inspectorate is encouraging partnerships to use this framework as an aid to understanding more about how effectively their services are working and to plan and

monitor improvement activities. The joint inspection team uses the same framework in its independent evaluation of the quality of services.

This report aims to answer three key questions.

- How are the lives of children and young people in East Renfrewshire improving?
- How well are services in the East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership working together to improve the lives of children, young people and families?
- How well do partners lead and improve the quality of work to achieve better outcomes for children and families?

Inspectors have used a variety of quality indicators from the framework to reach their conclusions and to explain their findings. As in all of our inspections, we have evaluated nine of these indicators using a six-point scale. The evaluations and a description of the scale used are given at the end of the report.

2. Background

The joint inspection of services for children and young people in the East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership area took place between May and June 2014. It covered the range of services in the area that have 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 the practice of working with vulnerable children through reading records held by services for a sample of 87 children and young people. We met with 66 children and 20 parents and carers to speak about their experience of services and the difference that they had made. We are very grateful to everyone who talked to us as part of this inspection.

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.

The last inspection of children's services in the East Renfrewshire Council area was an inspection of services to protect children carried out in May 2010. Performance was found to be very strong, characterised by children and families benefiting from high quality relationships with staff and a shared responsibility amongst staff across services for keeping children safe and meeting their needs. In addition, partners were using self-evaluation effectively, achieving improved outcomes for children and the leadership and direction provided by chief officers and the Child Protection Committee was assessed as

outstanding. Overall, the report of that inspection published by HMIE in September 2010 was among the best in the country with no evaluation below 'very good'.

The Care Inspectorate's report published in March 2012 about scrutiny of the Council's social work services was also positive and followed an initial scrutiny level assessment of low risk with good performance and good improvement work.

Each local authority has an assurance and improvement plan (AIP) based on a shared risk assessment undertaken by a local area network (LAN) of scrutiny bodies. The past two AIPs for East Renfrewshire, 2013-2016 and 2014-2017, concluded that no risk based scrutiny work is currently required on the Council's services or outcome areas.

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

The East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership occupies an area of just under 70 square miles. The population of 91,000 is distributed across several towns, including Newton Mearns, Giffnock, Clarkston and Barrhead. It is one of the most ethnically diverse in Scotland, with significant Muslim and Jewish communities. The population of East Renfrewshire grew by 1.4% during the period 2001-2011, and is set to grow by a further 5.4% by 2025, up to around 95,000. Population growth has not been uniform across the area. For example, growth has been concentrated around the more affluent areas of Newton Mearns and Clarkston, but has declined in Barrhead – trends which reflect some of the inequalities that exist across the area. Whilst the population grew overall during 2001-2011, the number of children fell slightly during the same period. However, East Renfrewshire continues to retain the highest proportion of 10-14 year olds and the second highest proportion of birth to 15-year olds in Scotland.



Population of East Renfrewshire

91,000

Responsibility for community planning rests with the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), which draws representation from the public, private and voluntary sectors. The partnership has produced a **single outcome agreement**, which sets out five key outcomes for 2013-2016, reflecting the Scottish Government's national outcomes. The document identifies a number of immediate and long range goals intended to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for the people of East Renfrewshire. It contains targets that will allow the partnership to identify the progress being made.

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.

Over recent years, partner organisations have made significant progress in integrating health and social care, including the establishment of a community health and care partnership (CHCP) in 2006. As the development of a new CHCP progresses, local leaders are determined to ensure minimum disruption, and that the shared objectives, values and ways of working embedded in the CHCP continue into the new partnership.

The **integrated children's services plan** – 'Getting it right for East Renfrewshire's Children and Young People' - has a clear focus on outcomes and sets out priorities to improve services and outcomes for children, young people and families. The plan includes measures to provide children with the best possible start in life and the necessary support to enable them to achieve their potential. It reflects fully the approach contained in Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC).

The Integrated Children's Services Plan is for services which work with children and young people in East Renfrewshire. Entitled 'Getting it Right for East Renfrewshire's Children', 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.

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

- There is exceptionally effective parenting support available to all families in the area which is successfully targeting more vulnerable families. This helps parents meet their children's needs and promote wellbeing.
- East Renfrewshire's Integrated Children's Services Planning which involves all partners is highly effective and clearly pivotal in supporting successful joint service delivery.
- Partners within the Community Planning Partnership display outstanding joint leadership, vision and direction in setting and achieving highly ambitious and aspirational targets for their children and young people.

5. Areas where action is needed to improve the wellbeing of children, young people and families

- Services now need to work jointly to improve aspects of their processes of assessment and care planning and jointly record all initial referral discussions held between staff in social work, health and police when sharing concerns about a child or young person's safety or wellbeing.
- There should be further exploration of the educational outcomes for the 25% of looked after young people who attend schools outwith the East Renfrewshire area with a view to ensuring that these children are provided with similar opportunities to those educated within the authority.

Initial referral discussions are multi agency discussions that take place between social work, health and police to plan how investigations into children who are referred as at risk are to be conducted.

6. Examples of good practice

Parent Led Committee

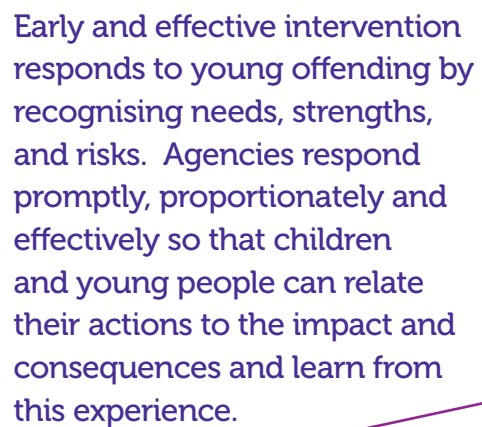
The well-established Parent Led Committee was formed as a constituted club in 2012 to further develop services for children with complex additional support needs. Working in partnership with the Inclusive Support Service and Sports Development, the Parent Led Committee has extended and created new opportunities for greater inclusion of young people with additional support needs in community based activities. It has made a number of successful funding applications which have resulted in several additional sporting, leisure and respite opportunities for 83 families. As a result of the work of the Parent Led Committee, children, young people and families are benefiting greatly. They are meeting others and forming friendships, having fun and being active while achieving and developing new skills and interests with their family's participation.

The Big ShoutER

The Big ShoutER is a successful health focused peer education project led by young people who each year plan and deliver work alongside services addressing health improvement. Innovative approaches are used to engage and consult with a wide range of young people. A notable achievement has been the development of suitable health education programmes for young people, including those with additional support needs. Young people involved are supported to develop peer education packs about health issues affecting young people. The Big ShoutER has won a number of awards including the Crofton Award from ASH Scotland and The Royal Environmental Health Institute for Scotland, 'The Young STAND (Scots Tackling Alcohol and Drugs) Community Award' given for its work in delivering peer education and COSLA bronze award in the category of Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health.

Role of campus police officers in whole systems approach to early and effective intervention

Campus police officers based within schools effectively support early identification of children and young people requiring help or support. They are one of a range of multi-agency partners that include school based social workers, youth workers and youth counsellors who have developed relationship based interventions with young people. They are the link at critical times when risks for young people may be more heightened, for example in the evening and during weekends. Their role in capturing and sharing information about young people early is allowing pastoral staff within schools and other professionals to address problems, helping to prevent any escalation in offending and associated behaviours. This approach is leading to a more targeted approach for young people who are referred to **early and effective intervention**.



Early and effective intervention responds to young offending by recognising needs, strengths, and risks. Agencies respond promptly, proportionately and effectively so that children and young people can relate their actions to the impact and consequences and learn from this experience.

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 provision of help and support at an early stage is very good. Staff are recognising successfully when children, young people and their families need help. Information is being shared quickly and very effectively between staff working with children and young people and this is leading to very helpful support generally being put in place very promptly to avoid children's wellbeing deteriorating. Vulnerable pregnant women are being identified at an early stage which is allowing support to be offered and put in place

early in the pregnancy well before the birth of the baby. Robust assessments are helping identify potential risks and needs of unborn babies and plans are jointly agreed to ensure babies are kept safe and healthy.

GIRFEC principles are concerned with building solutions with and around children, young people and families and enabling them to get the help they need when they need it. Clear local protocols relating to these are helping staff share information very effectively across all services, including staff working with adults. This leads to staff providing a very flexible and highly effective range of support at an early stage to prevent situations escalating for almost all families. However, for a very few children help could have been offered more quickly if staff had recognised they needed help at an earlier stage.

Early and effective intervention meetings identify young people at risk of, or involved in, offending behaviour. In reviewing police child concern forms, which are submitted after police are involved in an incident that may have an impact on a child or young person, the Domestic Abuse Referral Group ensures that young people identified as affected by domestic abuse are appropriately assessed for early support.

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 that services are having on children and young people is very good. We are confident that children and young people are being kept safe; they are protected very well from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community. There is evidence that children are safer at home as a result of the effectiveness of a number of initiatives. This includes the Blind Cord initiative and provision of safety equipment free of charge to low income families with children under five. Children and young people report that they feel safe, cared for and free from bullying at school and vulnerable children and young people say that they know how to keep themselves free from harm and abuse. Children and young people are safer as a result of careful daily observation and monitoring of their wellbeing by schools and nurseries. Staff are helping parents to understand the potential negative effects of harsh or neglectful parenting and parents have been helped to make important changes to their behaviour which is making their children safer.

Children and young people are being helped to become and remain physically and mentally healthy. Staff pay close attention to children and young people's health and development, making sure that they identify health needs and put in place measures

to meet these needs. The Looked After Children's Nurse monitors the health of looked after children ensuring any emerging needs are dealt with promptly and, overall, a range of different approaches across services is successfully supporting the positive emotional and mental health of children and young people. Children and young people with medical conditions or affected by disability are benefiting from the regular review of specialist input and services which ensures that their treatment remains appropriate to their needs. However, there is scope for staff to develop more creative solutions to circumstances when children and young people are missing out on health care as a result of their own or their parents' failure to co-operate. Further improvements could also be made to address the emotional wellbeing of some young people who are looked after at home.

Vulnerable children and young people, including children and young people with complex or additional support needs, benefit greatly from a wide range of specialist services and intensive support. These help build individual capacity, self-esteem and confidence. Staff consistently support and encourage children and young people to be very successful learners and high achievers. School exclusion levels are very low; attainment levels are consistently high; personal achievements are widely celebrated; and almost all school leavers end up in very positive destinations. Sporting and volunteering opportunities are widely available and are allowing many children and young people to grow, thrive, achieve and realise their potential. Children and young people in the area benefit from a continuum of individualised support programmes which ensure that they receive effective help and support at times of difficulty and transition, particularly when leaving care, entering further education and/or employment. Young people leaving care are learning new skills through the **Family Firm** initiative which provides a range of work experiences and opportunities. This growing scheme is having a positive impact on young people's achievement and life chances.



Family Firm initiative is a partnership involving the CHCP, Economic Development and the Chief Executive's Department. It oversees and provides training and work experience opportunities from within Council departments to looked after young people and care leavers.

Children and young people are thriving as a result of nurturing relationships and stable living environments. Staff are successfully supporting parents and carers to create more nurturing environments and build stronger attachments with their children. Pastoral support

at school is helping children and young people cope better with difficult or changing circumstances at home. Different approaches, focussed on helping vulnerable children and young people include buddying, befriending, counselling and the use of nurture rooms. Young people who were previously looked after and are now receiving aftercare are benefiting greatly from practical, financial and emotional support which is helping them to make a successful transition to adulthood. Staff are committed to help care leavers remain in contact with significant adults in their lives which helps to build young people's sense of identity and belonging.

Most children and young people are experiencing a greatly enhanced quality of life through involvement in cultural, sport and leisure opportunities. A wide range of sport and leisure activities within schools and the wider community, and the assistance provided to children and young people in accessing these, is having a positive impact on children and young people's wellbeing and self-confidence. Vulnerable children and their families benefit from the provision of free All Access Cards to East Renfrewshire leisure, recreation and sporting facilities. This is enabling children and their parents or carers to be both more active and improve their relationships as a result of spending more time together in shared activity. The activity and leisure needs of children with additional support needs are being proactively addressed through effective partnership with parents and this is resulting in growing self-esteem and healthier lifestyles. In terms of further improvement, some parents would welcome more consultation in relation to activities taking place during school holidays to meet the needs of working parents. This would help to address the needs of all families across communities in East Renfrewshire.

Across services in East Renfrewshire, staff have a positive attitude to ensuring that the voices of children and young people are respected and heard. They are well informed and have developed a good understanding about their rights and responsibilities through a number of initiatives, including the **Rights Respecting School Award** initiative. Children and young people are benefiting from trusting relationships with staff in social work, health and education services; staff take time to get to know them and their parents well. Looked after children and young people are listened to and their views are taken seriously and this is supported through the regular and effective use of



The Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) is an initiative run by UNICEF UK, which encourages schools to place the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) at the heart of its ethos and curriculum.

Viewpoint questionnaires and high quality advocacy and support from **'Who Cares?'** staff.

Children and young people are encouraged to play an important part in their communities and become responsible citizens; they are benefiting from widespread opportunities to volunteer which increase their skills and confidence in taking responsibility for themselves and others. Children and young people are learning to view the role of police in their community positively through contact with community police officers and through the Campus Police initiative. Campus Police also plays a significant role in working alongside social work, education and health staff to support young people in making safe decisions and lifestyle choices.

There is a strong commitment across East Renfrewshire to inclusion and to providing encouragement and assistance to those who might otherwise not participate fully in community activities. Staff across services are helping children and young people with disabilities to be active and to achieve. They are included positively within their communities. Parents greatly value the services they receive. Children and young people who are looked after and accommodated away from home are generally encouraged by carers and residential staff to develop their interests, hobbies and talents. A number of learning opportunities and initiatives are leading to children and young people being better able to understand the perspectives of other members of the community. For example, an initiative to reduce the social isolation of older people through tackling any negative perceptions that exist between children and older people has resulted in children feeling more confident about talking to older people in their local area.

Viewpoint is a software system that provides the opportunity for children and young people to give their views online.

Who cares? staff work directly with children and young people with experience of care, listening to what they say in order to support them and speak out on behalf of them.

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 had a positive effect on family life.

The impact of services on families is excellent. Many parents access an extensive range of very high quality services which are available locally. These services are highly valued and are clearly helping parents, enabling them to meet their children's everyday needs and promote their wellbeing very effectively. Although a significant number of community resources are easily accessible to families, including vulnerable families, a few are not using them well. Staff should continue in their efforts to find creative and effective ways of engaging with parents who are reluctant to accept help so that their children can get the support that they need.

Many parents are very successfully increasing their parenting confidence and as a result they understand their children's needs better. They are helped to promote their children's wellbeing either through attending parenting groups or by staff providing very helpful one to one parenting advice and guidance. Programmes such as The Book Bug and Assertive Book Bug which is delivered in the home, have helped identify speech and language delays. These are also promoting healthy relationships.

When families need help they are supported very quickly by a wide range of highly effective services which are flexible and tailored to meet their individual need. This is reducing risks and meeting needs of both children and their families very positively. Midwives and Young Persons Services support pregnant women very effectively. Individualised programmes are delivered effectively and as a result women and their partners have reduced or stopped smoking, accessed financial or housing assistance and breastfed their babies. This has also helped parents feel more confident about their parenting role and in meeting their babies' needs. Vulnerable pregnant women are also supported at an early stage by the Special Needs in Pregnancy Services (SNIPS); a multi-agency team working together to provide bespoke support and ensure the safety of children.

8. How well are services in the East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership 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 is improving the wellbeing of children and young people and comments on how the issue of child sexual exploitation is being addressed. It also examines the extent to which children, young people, families and other stakeholders are involved in policy, planning and service development.


Integrated children's services planning in East Renfrewshire sits within a coherent structure for planning services for children and young people and involves all relevant partners. There is a set of core themes running through the Single Outcome Agreement and the integrated children's services plan, each based upon the intended outcomes contained in the **National Performance Framework**. The integrated children's services plan - Getting it right for East Renfrewshire's Children and Young People - has a clear focus on outcomes and sets out improvement priorities with clear targets and performance measures.

An overarching Core Group and five planning groups have been established with representation across the children's services partnership. Planning groups cover: looked after children; additional support needs; keeping children and young people safe, youth justice and early years. The Core Group provides a clear overview and very effective leadership and this is complemented by the planning groups taking work forward efficiently and reporting back to the Core Group regularly regarding progress. Throughout this process, the focus on outcomes is maintained; an outcomes framework is applied and is based on the **wellbeing indicators**.

The National Performance Framework underpins delivery of the Scottish Government's agenda which supports the outcomes-based approach to performance.

There are eight wellbeing indicators which are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. These provide an agreed way of measuring what a child needs to reach their potential. For more information, search "GIRFEC" online.

East Renfrewshire's **Child Protection Committee** (CPC) has a responsibility to ensure that children in its area are protected. It makes a highly important contribution to keeping children safe in East Renfrewshire and displays absolute clarity about its role and responsibility as an inter-agency strategic partnership. There is clear commitment to continuously improve performance. Clear lines of accountability and well-established governance arrangements between the CPC Lead Officer, Committee Chair and Chief Officers ensure that the appropriately ambitious targets that are set are achieved. The Committee is well established and widely respected as a significant contributor to child protection practice nationally.



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.

Risk management is embedded in the Council's culture. Work is now underway to further enhance joint approaches to strategic risk, across both the CHCP and the Community Planning Partnership.

At both the operational and strategic levels, partners in East Renfrewshire have shown themselves to be at the forefront of developments in the challenging area of child protection practice – child sexual exploitation, working collaboratively with a number of partners. Full day training on child sexual exploitation aimed at raising awareness and ensuring appropriate responses has been available to multi-agency child protection partners since 2012. This has provided opportunities to develop and improve practice in this challenging area of child protection practice.

East Renfrewshire staff have made an important contribution to the development of policy and practice at both a regional and national level as members of the West of Scotland child protection network and as a lead contributor on joint work with Barnardo's. Operationally, East Renfrewshire staff are working with other partners as part of Police Scotland Operation Dash to identify and respond quickly if child sexual exploitation is identified.

There is a strong ethos of involving children and young people meaningfully in policy, planning and service development. There are many examples of children and young people being consulted and involved in service developments through initiatives such as the Big ShoutER. The Community Planning Partnership put in place effective mechanisms to consult widely in the development of the Single Outcome Agreement

and there is a commitment to make it as easy as possible for young people to contribute. East Renfrewshire Council Youth, which is the Council's youth forum, has planned and delivered a range of consultation sessions in schools, with young mums' groups and open events in youth facilities. These have made contributions to the development of the Single Outcome Agreement's priority areas including transport, early years and health and wellbeing services.

Children and young people, including children who are looked after, have been actively involved in reviewing the effectiveness of the corporate parenting strategy. Young people were involved in a 'Pledge signing' event in relation to corporate parenting responsibilities. They had the opportunity to speak about their experiences with senior staff and elected members, an approach that helped all partners to get a better understanding of issues for looked after children.

Assessing and responding to risks and needs and planning for individual children and young people

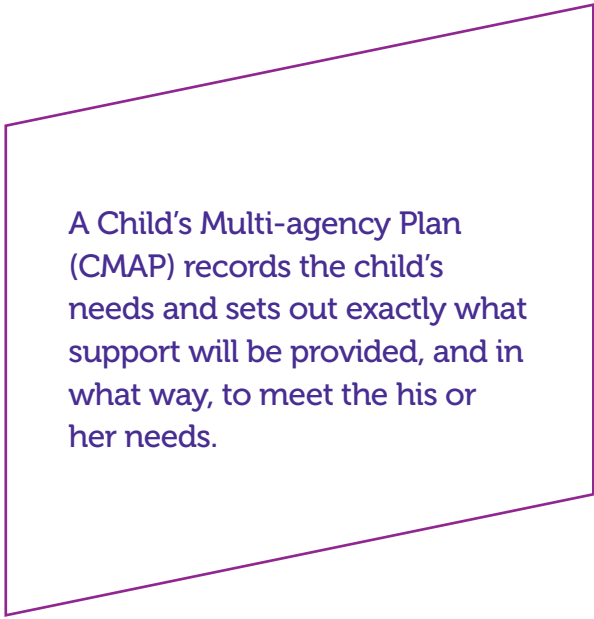
This section examines the quality of assessment of risks and needs in relation to three themes. These are the initial response when there are concerns about the safety or wellbeing of children; the effectiveness of chronologies to identify significant events in a child's life and the quality of assessments. It also considers the quality of children's plans and the effectiveness of arrangements to review them.

Assessing and responding to the risks and needs of children and young people is good. Staff are alert to and recognise the signs when a child may be at immediate risk of harm and in need of protection. Action is taken in a timely and appropriate manner to ensure the child's safety and, when necessary, suitable accommodation will be found with friends, relatives or foster carers to help keep them safe. Across all services there is a growing and developing understanding of wellbeing which is helping staff cultivate a common language when discussing or sharing child concerns with one another.

Newly introduced multi-agency practices, processes and systems will further enhance the current arrangements for considering the impact for some children living with domestic or substance misusing parents, or for those who regularly run away from home or go missing. As Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and supporting pathways become embedded, the need to strengthen the recording of multi-agency initial referral discussions and decision making will be essential to ensure a unified approach to assessing needs, agreeing actions and recording outcomes against the wellbeing indicators. A joint record will provide the platform to establish systems for rigorous quality assurance of this key process, support high standards of service delivery and ensure that staff know what is expected of them. Importantly, it will contribute to

ensuring that all children and young people receive a consistently high quality of service from the outset.

Planning for individual children is good. Staff who have undergone GIRFEC training and who are familiar with and using well the recently introduced **Child's Multi-Agency Plan (CMAP)** are preparing and submitting higher quality assessments of risks and needs for most children. A solid foundation has now been established to build on. Across services, staff and managers recognise the need to ensure staff have a greater awareness and understanding of how a good quality, integrated chronology of significant events in a child or young person's life can be an invaluable tool to help identify patterns of risk or behaviour.



A Child's Multi-agency Plan (CMAP) records the child's needs and sets out exactly what support will be provided, and in what way, to meet the his or her needs.

Children who require one have an up to date multi-agency child's plan that is structured helpfully around the wellbeing indicators. Regular and timely reviews of children's multi-agency plans are held at intervals appropriate to the child's needs. Multi-agency meetings are used very effectively to assist and support staff in making timely decisions to reduce risks and improve outcomes for children. Further improvement towards more integrated, streamlined planning is progressing as the newly implemented Child Multi-agency Plan (CMAP) framework beds in and staff become more familiar with its use.

While we found that the overall quality of child's plans is of a high standard, a fifth of plans fell below this. A third of plans for children would benefit from being more specific, measurable, time bound and realistic. More than a quarter of plans would be strengthened by recording clearly the contingency plan to outline what alternative action will be taken if sufficient progress, or changes in circumstances, are not made within acceptable timescales. Some children would benefit from being supported and helped to participate more fully in reviewing their plan.

There are good examples of concurrent planning arrangements with the aim of securing timely permanent placements for children who may be unable to return home. Robust permanency plans are in place for children who are unable to return home and these progress well without significant delay. This is contributing towards securing positive outcomes for those children. Early and effective pathway planning for young people moving on from care is ensuring they are very well supported. Overall, planning tends to be stronger and more effective for children with the greatest identified needs. Planning

could be strengthened for young people who are looked after at home or who are referred by the Children's Reporter for voluntary advice guidance or assistance.

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

Community Planning Partners share a very strong vision, values and aims for children's services. These lead to an exceptionally high degree of motivation and drive across staff in the partnership agencies to deliver the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families.

The shared vision clearly and effectively underpins integrated children's service planning. Staff across services show a high level of commitment to the vision, values and aims of the Integrated Children's Services Plan and this is reflected well in their day to day activities as they work effectively together to improve children and young people's wellbeing.

Collectively, strategic leaders work very well together to jointly agree approaches and respond very effectively to meeting identified needs through shared commitment and investment of resources. New initiatives and services are informed by comprehensive joint needs assessments.

Effective joint leadership is successfully prioritising early intervention and prevention which is achieving very good outcomes for children and young people. Elected members and chief officers show their commitment to early intervention by jointly funding posts and projects. There is a very strong multi-agency approach to planning and delivering services and an emphasis on joint and flexible working practices to meet the needs of children, young people and families.

There is a joint approach to achieving the best children's services and elected members and senior managers have high aspirations and set ambitious targets for improving services and outcomes for children and families. There is a determined commitment to improving and developing children's services across all Community planning partners who want East Renfrewshire to be the 'best place to grow up'.

Strategic leaders are successful in creating and sustaining a very strong culture of engaging, supporting and motivating staff across agencies and services to deliver high quality services. Staff at all levels are encouraged to contribute and to participate in service developments. A very well established track record of effective joint and collaborative working exists and leaders work well to continue to encourage productive staff and good team relationships. Staff are appropriately confident and recognise their own and others' contributions. They strive for excellence and are working exceptionally well together to the benefit of children, young people and families.

Corporate parenting has well-established foundations. Following East Renfrewshire's Pledge event when leaders made a commitment to improve the lives of the children and young people who are looked after, leaders have had discussions with young people about the development of a service user group similar to the Champions Board model that is successfully operated elsewhere. This development will provide further partnership focus to corporate parenting.

Leadership of improvement and change is excellent. There is a very strong drive and ambition demonstrated across the Community Planning Partnership to continually improve performance, standards and outcomes for children. For example, a model of 'Family Friendly Accreditation' using a range of quality indicators has been developed locally and is being rolled out across all pre-five family centres and partnership nurseries. This process, supported by a development manager is providing a consistent approach to continuous improvement in centre based early years services. Strategic leaders continue to strive to maintain excellence and undertake rigorous joint self-evaluation and scrutinise processes, performance and outcomes in an effort to achieve this. These approaches are very well embedded, demonstrate positive results and are also subject to review and continuous improvement. Very effective use is made of learning from case reviews and best practice nationally and internationally to drive a culture of on-going improvement and positive change that staff clearly embrace.

Leaders recognise the need to further strengthen the joint approach and processes in providing a consistent, high quality response when sharing concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.

The extent to which the wellbeing of children and young people is improving is very good. The wellbeing of children and young people in East Renfrewshire is strong and continuing to improve, with upward trends in outcomes for all children and young people. Despite East Renfrewshire's standing as one of the more affluent areas in Scotland, the fact that there are real and significant pockets of deprivation in the area is reflected in the way the Community Planning Partnership analyses need across the area, and underpins the determination of community leaders to address current gaps and inequalities.

Children and young people who are in need of support or at risk are being identified at an earlier stage. Outcomes in relation to health, educational attainment and realising positive destinations for young people leaving school are improving steadily – all from a high baseline.

Early intervention and prevention programmes introduced over recent years have contributed to an improving picture in terms of teenage pregnancy, smoking in pregnancy, and breastfeeding. These all contribute in turn to better outcomes for children.

Partners are successfully tackling inequalities and improving the life chances of vulnerable children and young people. Outcome gaps for children and young people whose life chances are at risk are closing. The gap in attainment that exists between looked after young people, in which East Renfrewshire ranked second in 2012/13 nationally and the rest of the school population for which the authority is ranked first, has improved further since 2009/11. As the partnership recognise through their self evaluation activities, the educational outcomes for the 25% of looked after young people who attend schools outwith the East Renfrewshire area should be explored further with a view to ensuring that these children are provided with similar opportunities to those educated within the authority.

10. Conclusion and areas for improvement

Inspectors are very confident that services will be able to continue to make improvements in light in the inspection findings. In doing so the East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership and strategic Children's Services Core Group should:

- take account of the need to work jointly to improve aspects of their processes of assessment and care planning and jointly record all initial referral discussions held between staff in social work, health and police when sharing concerns about a child or young person's safety or wellbeing; and
- further explore the educational outcomes for the 25% of looked after young people who attend schools outwith the East Renfrewshire area with a view to ensuring that these children are provided with similar opportunities to those educated within the authority.

11. What happens next?

We will request that a joint action plan is published, detailing how the East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership intends to make any improvements 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.

September 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.

Providing help and support at an early stage	Very good
Impact on children and young people	Very good
Impact on families	Excellent
Assessing and responding to risks and needs	Good
Planning for individual children	Good
Planning and improving services	Excellent
Participation of children, young people, families and other stakeholders	Very good
Leadership of improvement and change	Excellent
Improving the wellbeing of children and young people	Very good

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

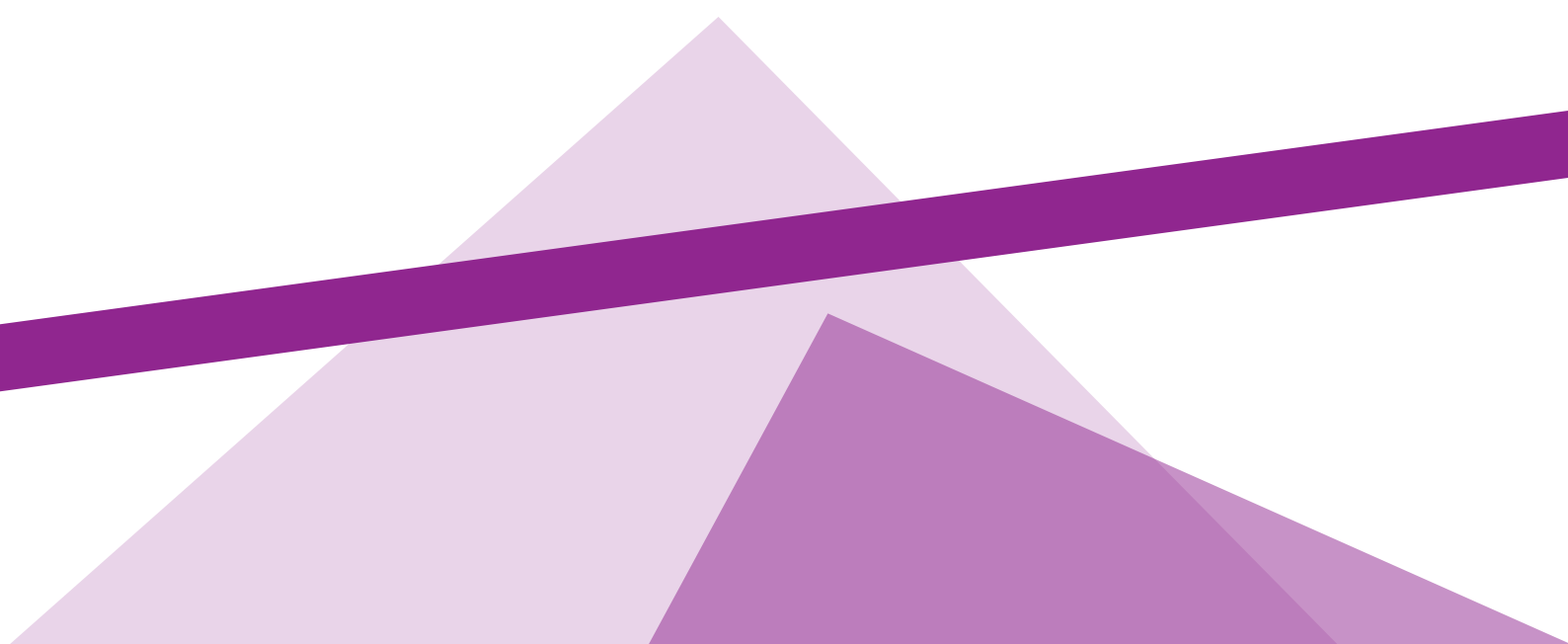
Excellent	outstanding, sector leading
Very good	major strengths
Good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
Adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Weak	important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

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