

Fife Child Protection Committee Annual Report 2017-2018



getting
it right
for every child

Foreword

This report sets out the context in which child protection work is carried out in Fife, outlining the Child Protection Committee (CPC) priorities for improvement; how we assess our continuous improvement journey and the activities and processes we have in place to ensure progress is made. Crucial to the success of the CPC is the collaborative and partnership approach taken to protect children and young people and keep them safe from harm. Our aim is simply “for all children and young people in Fife to be safe and protected from harm” as outlined in the Committee’s vision.

We have just completed our first year evaluation of our CPC improvement plan targets. The evaluation has been informed by the findings from the multi-agency case file audit, performance scrutiny and consultation with frontline staff delivering children and young people’s support and services. Our findings demonstrate our targets are sufficiently ambitious and on the right trajectory. The six key themes identified through analysis of Significant Case Reviews, branded ‘the Six for Safety’ have influenced our activities. I make no apologies for referencing these themes repeatedly throughout this report to underline their importance to our improvement journey.

In April 2018 we consulted with children and young people who are members of Fife’s 2Bheard group and they chose a new logo to represent the Child Protection Committee and the ‘Six for Safety’. The logo fronting this report was their choice. Each symbol within the logo denotes one of the ‘Six for Safety’ themes. A short animation describing the ‘Six for Safety’ can be viewed by following the [‘Six for Safety’](#)



CPC Independent Chair

The needs of children are at the centre of all practice.



Ensuring that all relationships with children, parents/carers are effective, constructive and are central to improving wellbeing and minimise risk of harm.



All assessments and plans are effective in achieving outcomes in meeting needs and minimising risk of harm. All available resources, techniques and tools are used to best effect.



Relevant information is shared appropriately, clear lines of responsibility for action are understood across partners and communication is effective in minimising potential risks.



Early and effective intervention is achieved where possible, minimising the risk of harm to children and young people.



A culture of effective management support and/or supervision is embedded which embodies the values and principles of Fife Child Protection Committee.



Introduction

The vision of the Child Protection Committee is for all children and young people in Fife to be safe and protected from harm. We aspire to this vision through working closely with the wider Fife Community Planning Partnership and as part of the Children's Services Partnership Plan. Fife Child Protection Committee brings together all the organisations involved in protecting children in Fife. The Committee purpose is to provide direction and leadership to those who work with children, young people and families in Fife so that their right to being safe is respected and championed by all.

Child protection is part of a wider continuum of support and protection to children, young people and families and used only when other supports cannot ensure safety. It is part of Getting It Right for Every Child approach in recognition that improving outcomes for children and young people is at the heart of what we do.

The Care Inspectorate carried out a Children's Services Inspection in Fife in 2015 publishing their findings in 2016. While the findings were positive and encouraging there is no room for complacency.

As a committee we foster a culture of learning and improvement. This is particularly relevant in our approach to learning from past events through the findings from Fife Significant Case Reviews (SCRs). Findings from a number of SCRs have formed the basis of our priorities under the 'Six for Safety'. We are intentionally concentrating on practice issues highlighted by these SCRs and believe we can drive improvement and change our culture, systems and practice to enhance the safety of Fife's children and young people. Whilst the 'Six for Safety' are our priorities for practice improvement these will be taken forward within the context of the wider societal issues impacting the communities of Fife such as increased poverty, neglect and inequality.

As part of our assessment of improvement we requested that the Care Inspectorate make Fife Children's Services Partnership one of the first areas they consider for inspection under their revised programme commencing in September 2018. That inspection started on 1st October 2018 and continues as this report is published. We anticipate a final report on the inspection findings by late winter/early spring 2019. The revised inspection regime has greater focus on child protection and children and young people who are care experienced than previously and will provide an independent evaluation of our achievements and identify any further improvements we may require. We welcome the Care Inspectorate's independent evaluation of our systems, structures and aims and we will absorb their suggestions for improvement to enhance our ability to support and protect Fife children and young people effectively.

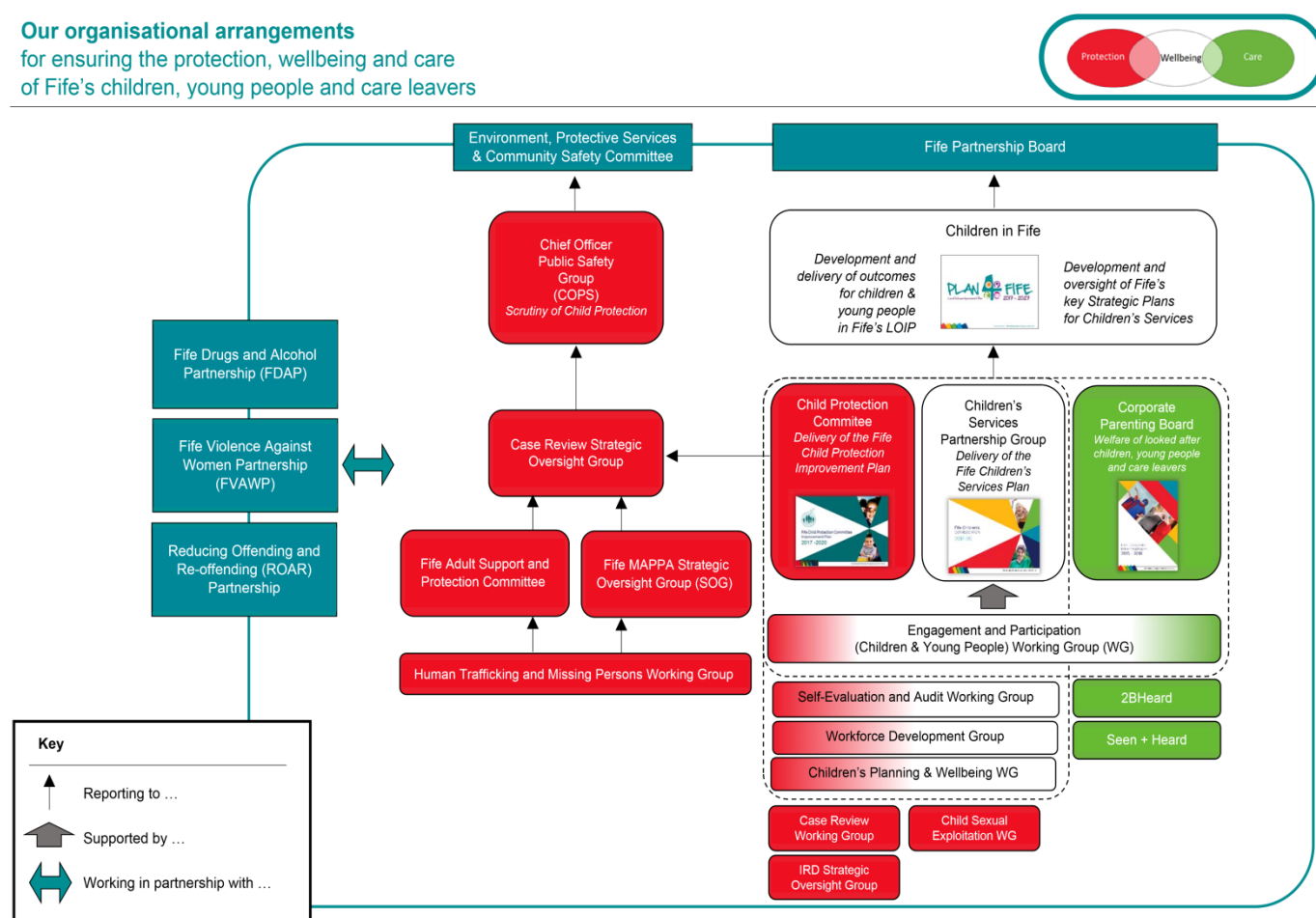
How we work together

The Child Protection Committee is a key component of the Fife Children's Services Planning structure. It links with other public protection fora, engaging with national initiatives and programmes. In particular it engages with the [Scottish Government Child Protection Improvement Programme \(CPIP\)](#). The Programme's core objective is to identify recommendations for sustainable improvement, building upon observable improvements in practice already established and in further pursuit of embedding Scotland's unique approach to child wellbeing: *Getting it Right for Every Child* (GIRFEC).

Key to this wider planning structure is Fife's Children's Services Plan 2017 -2020. Due to the size and ambition of Fife Children's services partnership the structure can seem confusing. The diagram below succinctly illustrates our structure:

Our organisational arrangements

for ensuring the protection, wellbeing and care of Fife's children, young people and care leavers



Fife Partnership Creating a Fairer Fife

We ensure that **every child and young person matters** through the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) framework. Child Protection in Fife is rooted in GIRFEC which means every child and young person in Fife has the right to be safe, have their needs met and their rights respected. This means that we must work not only with others involved in child service provision but also with services supporting

adults. We take a rights based approach to child protection, respecting the rights of children, young people, parents and carers where we can, unless that compromises safety.

Children's Rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

provides a comprehensive statement of the rights of children. The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life. It explains how public services must work together to ensure that the rights of all children are recognised and given effect. UNCRC Articles 19 and 33 to 36 are particularly relevant to Child Protection.

Article 19:
"The right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated"

Article 33 – 36:
"The right to be protected from dangerous drugs, sexual abuse, abduction and other forms of exploitation"

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

GIRFEC is Scotland's approach to supporting children and young people.

It is designed to ensure that all practitioners working with and for children and young people have the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of the work they do.

GIRFEC recognises the importance of taking a rounded view of wellbeing, with the aim of ensuring that all children and young people are: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

Fife has a dedicated
[GIRFEC Practice Website](#)

The Fife Child Wellbeing Pathway

The overarching focus for the CPC multi-agency case file audit in January 2018 was an exploration of the use of the Child Wellbeing Pathway. Information sharing, chronologies, planning, and the 'Six for Safety' key themes were included.

The Child Wellbeing Pathway was introduced as a tool for including, in a structured way, children, young people and their families in the decision-making process. The Child Wellbeing Pathway outlines a Getting It Right, early intervention approach to addressing emerging needs or risks. Children's Services use the Child Wellbeing Pathway as a means to begin multi-agency conversations and planning for individual children at the earliest stage. The Pathway supports effective information exchange between agencies and collective assessment of needs, risks and strengths pertaining to the child or young person, together with collaborative decision-making and planning. The Pathway specifically supports professionals to take account of the views of the child or young person and family and may, as one potential outcome, lead to child protection processes being implemented. The approach is complemented by agreed single agency Risk Assessment Tools which are available to nominated Education and all Health staff.

The Wellbeing Pathway is a practical tool which is used to assess and plan in line with the Getting It Right for every child framework, which explains how universal, additional and intensive services can work effectively either as a single agency resource, jointly or within an integrated approach to help develop and promote children and young people's wellbeing, including safety.

For more information on the [Child Wellbeing Pathway follow this link.](#)

Universal services – for all children and young people

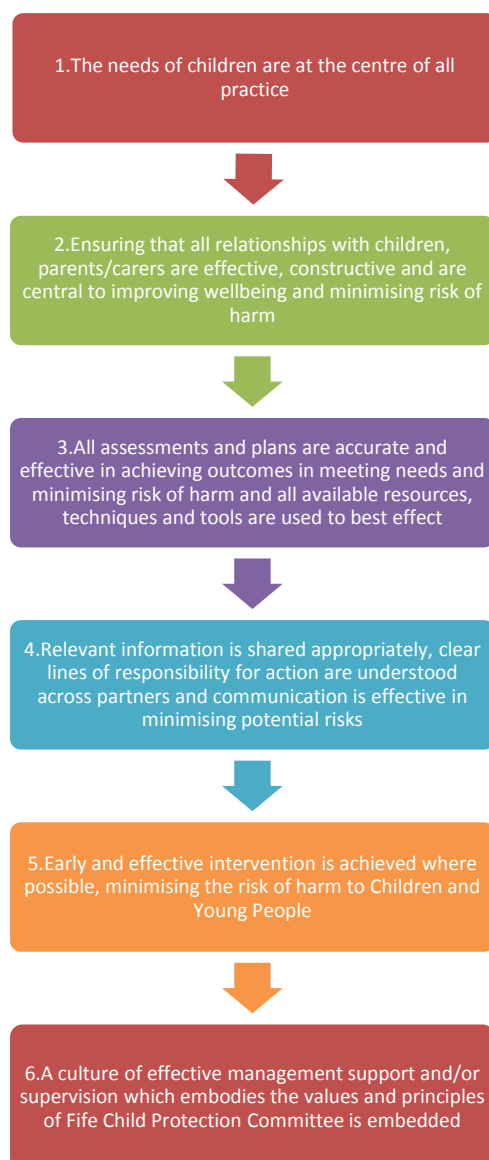
Additional support – for key disadvantaged groups, or those who would benefit from focused working (e.g. those living in socially disadvantaged communities)

Intensive support – for the vulnerable, those with significant needs, and those at risk



CPC Multi-Agency File Audit January 2018

Multi-agency audits are undertaken as one of many strands of self-evaluation activity within children's services and support learning about what works well and areas for improvement. A focus on a particular theme, measured against specific quality indicators, is identified for each inter-agency audit. Care Inspectorate Quality Indicators (QI: 1.1, 2.1; 2.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 7.2¹) were considered in this audit. The theme is generated from Improvement Plans, Children's Services 6 monthly performance reports, Development Days, and findings from earlier self-evaluation activities. The overarching focus for the January 2018 audit was an exploration of the use of the Child Wellbeing Pathway, Information sharing, chronologies and planning, and the 'Six for Safety' key themes.



¹ The Care Inspectorate Quality Indicator Framework can be accessed at:

<http://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/2600/Care%20Inspectorate%20Joint%20Inspect%20Quality%20Indicators%20Children%20&%20Young%20People.pdf>

This was the first multi-agency audit which focused on the use of the Child Wellbeing Pathway; previous audits have focused on cases which met the Child Protection threshold. As with all audits there are limitations and the findings need to be viewed together with other sources of quantitative and qualitative evidence. In particular the change in focus means that making comparisons with findings from previous audits is a challenge. The audit is the first which:

- focused primarily on early intervention and the named person's involvement;
- has an audit theme, designed to reflect on practice, understanding and use of the Getting it right for every child framework across all services;
- was designed to consider the level of understanding of Fife's processes (Child Wellbeing Pathway) which support a proportionate response to wellbeing needs;
- focused on wellbeing rather than risk.

Key Strengths Identified Overall

- ✓ There is evidence that the Child Wellbeing Pathway (CWP) is becoming embedded in practice in Health, Education and Social Work services in Fife (Six for Safety 4 and 5).
- ✓ The use of chronologies as a tool for assessment is becoming more embedded and the quality of these is improving (Six for Safety 3).
- ✓ When there is a need for a Child Wellbeing Meeting (CWM) these are used to good effect for children and their families to support collaborative practice, shared assessment and multi-agency planning (Six for Safety 5 and 6).
- ✓ Children and young people are at the centre of the process with their voices heard (Six for Safety 1).
- ✓ There is strong evidence of management oversight within social work files (Six for Safety 6).
- ✓ The CWP is strongly embedded within the specialist (VIP) midwifery service where all file evaluations were rated as either very good or excellent. (Six for Safety 3, 4, 5 and 6).
- ✓ There is clear evidence that information sharing and the creation of a child's

plan, either single or inter-agency, is enhanced through having a child wellbeing meeting and that the meeting promotes and supports the meaningful participation of both parents, children and young people (Six for Safety 2, 3, 4 and 5).

Key Areas for Improvement Overall

The audit identified some areas for improvement

- Whilst the CWP is becoming embedded there is still a need to raise awareness and understanding of how it can best be used to help children and families within an early intervention framework (Six for Safety 5).
- Case recording remains an area for improvement across all agencies (Six for Safety 3).
- There is a need for all agencies to become consistent in naming meetings to reduce confusion and clarify purpose.

The CPC has considered this report and areas for improvement are being addressed either through the CPC Improvement Plan 2017 -2020 or by single agencies. These improvement activities will be monitored by the CPC to ensure they are progressed. This audit confirms that in general the Child Wellbeing Pathway is being used and a Child Wellbeing Meeting is being called when it is appropriate and proportionate to do so.

Embedding of the Child Wellbeing Pathway is being supported through the Getting It Right Multi-Agency Practice Development sessions. These are planned over a 2 year period with the third cycle now completed. The development sessions are provided across 7 locality areas (7 sessions per cycle) to promote networking and learning across all agencies with a particular focus on the Child Wellbeing Pathway and early intervention. Throughout the two years, key aspects of the 6 priorities will be covered. For example, session 2 of the GIR Practice Development Sessions focused specifically on effective information sharing within the context of CWP and GIRFEC/Child Protection. Evaluation feedback from participants demonstrated a significant increase in knowledge and confidence in relation to information sharing.

CPC Inter-Agency Training

Fife Child Protection Committee (CPC) has overall responsibility for the planning, development, provision and delivery of all inter-agency child protection training across Fife. It is also responsible for monitoring, reviewing, evaluating and quality assuring this training to ensure it is relevant and effective.

The Inter Agency Child Protection Training Programme for 2015 – 2016 was developed in line with the [Scottish Government's Common Core of Skills, Knowledge & Understanding and Values for the "Children's Workforce" in Scotland](#) and the [National Framework for Child Protection learning & development in Scotland](#) which outline the competencies/knowledge/skills required in three workforce categories:

- General Contact Workforce
- Specific Contact Workforce
- Intensive Contact Workforce

Training is provided for practitioners, managers, non-statutory agencies and for CPC members themselves. Between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018, 51 instances of training were provided, consisting of 10 courses. The total % update attendance of multi-agency training courses throughout 2017 – 2018 has increased from 82% (2016/17) to 86%, and exceeds the local target for attendance of 80%.

Exit evaluation questionnaires are completed on the day and these are input in the Corporate Learning Management System (CLMS) system which has the functionality to produce a number of management reports to allow for monitoring and course review.

Reviews of Child Protection training currently on offer are undertaken in response to other learning as well as training evaluations and changes are made to ensure training remains up-to-date and relevant.

The existing training programme continues to evaluate very positively with an 'increase in confidence' rate of:



With the development of a local Trainers Forum as well as involvement with the National Child Protection Learning and Development Group, training will have a platform for wider professional feedback. Non-attendance, particularly in respect of participants from the private and voluntary sector, remains an area of focus.

CPC Multi-Agency Staff Survey and Focus Group Event May/June 2018

A multi-agency staff survey was conducted between 8th May to 1st June 2018 and a Focus Group event was held on the 25th June 2018. The findings provide positive evidence of good practice in both single agencies and partnership working across a range of areas along with some direction for targeted training or improvement activity.

This is the first survey and focus group event of this type undertaken within these partnership groups therefore comparison is not possible. However the survey will be used as a baseline to allow for future comparisons.

This survey was designed for practitioners and managers from across children's services on behalf of the Child Protection Committee (CPC) and the Children's Services Partnership Group. It invited views on a range of areas related to the work of these groups and was designed to both complement and follow up a previous survey relating to the role and function of the named person and lead professional in May 2016 which identified growing confidence in understanding of the principles of GIRFEC and the role of the named person and lead professional.

Each section of the survey can be related to one of the Six for Safety themes that inform the priority outcomes in the Fife Child Protection Committee Improvement Plan 2017 – 2020. Key agencies were invited to participate which enabled comparison of results across services.

The survey was designed as a method of evaluating staff views and their confidence with, and understanding of, policy and guidance. The responses are very positive and give a high level of confidence in relation to the work of both CPC and the Children's Services Partnership Group.

A number of key points were identified from the survey responses, which informed the focus groups discussion thus providing qualitative information and richer learning through discussion.

The focus group event combined both single and multi-agency focus group activity. The Multi-Agency Focus Groups considered the 'Six for Safety themes:

- Children's rights- Six for Safety theme 1
- Disguised compliance- Six for Safety themes 1 & 2
- Domestic abuse- Six for Safety theme 3
- Assessment of needs, risks, and effective use of chronologies- Six for Safety theme 3
- Early intervention - accessing the right service at the right time- Six for Safety theme 5

And Single Agency Focus Groups considered:

- Chronologies- Six for Safety theme 3
- Support & Supervision- Six for Safety theme 6
- Information Sharing- Six for Safety theme 4
- Challenges

The event was very well attended with all agencies encouraging and supporting 72 staff to participate.

LEARNING FROM STAFF SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUPS

There is a continuing focus required for developing understanding across all agencies of:

- Chronologies
- The importance of early and effective intervention from both local authority services and the third sector
- The use of child wellbeing pathway
- Information sharing
- Roles and responsibility across all services

There is a need for focused multi-agency training or briefings relating to what is meant by:

- Disguised compliance
- Over optimism
- Assessment (what information particular assessments should contain)

ACTIONS

The key findings are being used inform our improvement progress and shape training events and briefings over the next year both on a multi-agency and single agency basis.

Consideration is being given to publicising the [Fife GIRFEC website](#) more widely. This will ensure widened access and increase its effectiveness for learning and development. Guidance in relation to the Child Wellbeing Pathway, Child's Plans, information sharing and chronologies are being re-circulated.

CPC Improvement Plan 2017 -2020

The Improvement Plan can be accessed at: [Child Protection Improvement Plan 2017 -2020](#)

Progress towards the aims of the 2017-20 CPC Improvement Plan has been assessed and the CPC are confident that the aims are being progressed accordingly. Importantly, analysis of the staff survey, multi-agency audit, self-evaluation activity, data and focus group feedback evidence that the 'Six for Safety' themes remain priority areas for improvement.



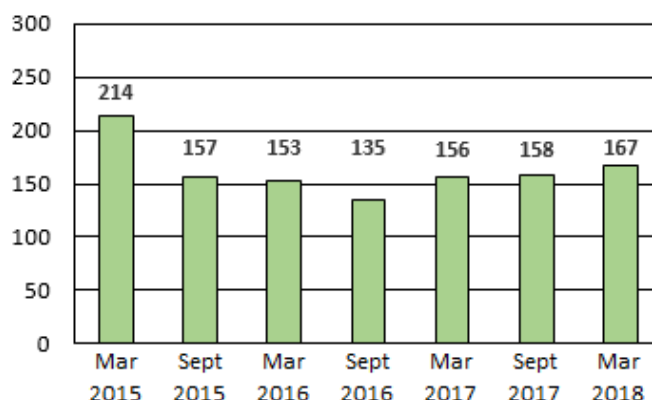
Key Statistics

It is important that we present some 'hard' statistical data to evidence the identified trends in the area of Child Protection in Fife. Using this data and comparing it to the findings from other forms of assessment, leads to a better and more evidenced analysis of improvement. While statistical data provides a degree of understanding of trends it only becomes meaningful when linked to analysis.. Analysis can suggest that a particular upwards or downwards trend is a positive or negative and provides a degree of reassurance that qualitative analysis, such as self-evaluation exercises, are credible.

Child Protection Registrations (CPR)

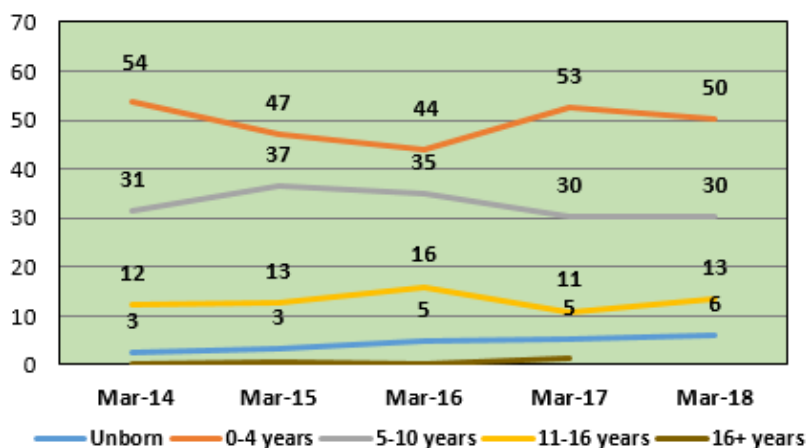
Children and young people deemed to be at significant risk are placed on the Child Protection Register. During the 12 month period from 31st March 2017 to 31st March 2018 the number of children on the CPR increased from 156 to 167, an increase of 7.1%.

The decreasing trend in registrations is due to a number of factors: growing multi agency understanding of the critical nature of the Child Protection Register; an increase in the number of social workers within area teams enabling earlier intervention with families in crisis; the Child Wellbeing Pathway is more embedded across the Partnership and the use of Child Wellbeing meetings are a means of ensuring effective inter-agency planning and practice; the benefits of referring, where appropriate, to the Reporter when there are ongoing concerns and considering the use of compulsory measures; the impact of early years collaborative work within the wider Children's Services.



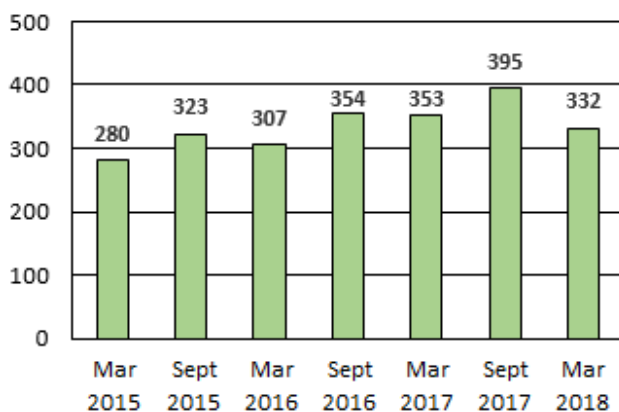
Percentage Age Groups of children and young people on the Child Protection Register

0-4 year olds continue to be the highest age group category identified on the Child Protection Register



Children and young people in Temporary Accommodation

Number of children and young people residing in temporary accommodation other than bed and breakfast



At the end of the 2017/18 reporting year there were 332 children and young people residing in temporary

The use of B&B for Homeless clients stopped with effect from 31/03/16. Families are now initially accommodated in family rooms in hostels and then moved to temporary flattened accommodation.

Interagency Referral Discussions

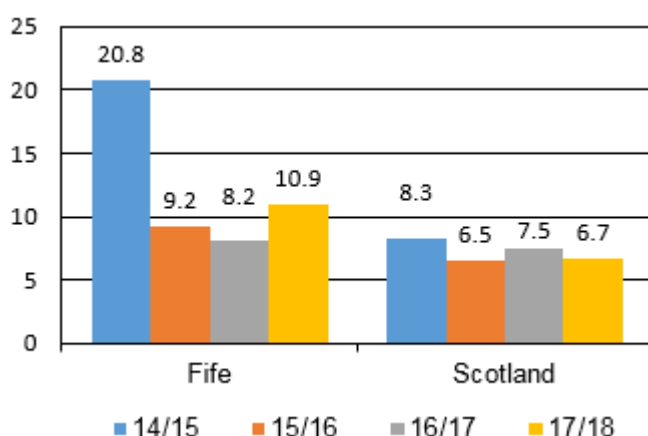
During the 12 month period from April 2017 to March 2018 there were 967 Interagency Referral Discussions (IRD), an increase of 6% over the previous year. This is the actual number of discussions and not the total number of children and young people subject to an IRD.

Self-evaluation work continues to be undertaken in order to support ongoing improvements, this includes the development of an IRD-specific performance framework.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking information is available from the Scottish Government and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA).

Number of children and young people receiving a Child Protection Order (per 10,000 of the population of under 16s)



In 2014/15 Fife exceeded the national average of children receiving a CPO (per 10,000) by 12.5. However due to a significant fall of 47.6% by 2017/18, Fife was only 4.2 above the national average.

Challenges for the Future

Strong partnership working, shared policy, procedures and practice are essential elements of keeping children and young people safe. As a progressive committee the CPC uses future horizon scanning, benchmarking and critical self-evaluation to ensure that our partnership approach to child safety continually evolves and matures. As part of this approach we have identified that we need to strengthen our approach to engaging with children and young people who are or have experienced the child protection system. While we engage in a number of structured activities to capture children and young people's views we appreciate the need to coordinate this activity, analyse the information we gather and use it to inform our improvement journey. One example was work undertaken to capture the views of 170 young people on Child Sexual Exploitation. This work has directly influenced our work in this key area. The Engagement and Participation Working Group formed in the

spring of 2018, which will be directed by and report to the Child Protection Committee and the Children's Services Partnership Group, has been charged with addressing this aim, within the group's wider remit.

Fife CPC will continue to work towards all children and young people in Fife being safe and protected from harm through the implementation of the 2017-2020 Improvement Plan.

Child Protection has always been and remains everyone's responsibility. If you are worried about a child or young person speak to someone as soon as possible and tell them about your concerns.

If you consider a child or young person to be in IMMEDIATE danger then call Police Scotland on 999.

For non-emergency calls you can call Police Scotland on 101 or the Social Work Contact Centre on 03451 551503