

Integration Joint Board

Date of Meeting: 31 January 2024

Title of Report: Service Spotlight – Children, Families & Justice

Presented by: David Gibson, Head of Service

The IJB is asked to:

- Note content of report.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Children Family and Justice staff have continued to maintain and develop services throughout the last year. This report spotlights examples of these developments across the breadth of service provision.

2. INTRODUCTION

Children’s, Families and Justice staff cover a range of services and initiatives. Statutory duties have continued to be fulfilled throughout a period of unprecedented uncertainty, financial cuts and staff shortages. This spotlight report touches on a number of developments, a selection of feedback and particular projects which health, social work and administrative colleagues have been involved in.

3. DETAIL OF REPORT

Updated National Child Protection Guidance

The updated National Child Protection Guidance was introduced in 2021 with a two year implementation period, allowing local partnerships time to update local procedures, guidance and protocols to reflect the significant changes to practice outlined in the guidance and to complete training for all staff.

The Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee has revised and relaunched its website reflecting the changes, and in person training was rolled out across all areas throughout 2023. This saw very significant partnership engagement at each of ten events.

Work is continuing at both a local level and in partnership with West Dun and L Division of Police Scotland, to improve the functioning of the Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) process, again to reflect the widening definition of significant harm, and to facilitate the move to shared responsibility for chairing of IRDs across Social Work, Police and Health.

Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM)

Argyll and Bute Council continues to work in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council and Police Scotland L Division in implementing the Scottish Child Interview Model.

There are significant challenges in implementing this model in, particularly our remote and island geography, however we managed to start the evolution of our practice in 2023. A successful bid was made for a second social worker from Argyll to undertake the five-week training, which is now taking place and continues on a modular basis over the next four months. The current candidate is based in the Oban, Lorn and Isles team and will begin to undertake interviews after the third module is completed in March.

This will double the social work capacity and reduce challenges of geography, with one social worker now covering both in the East and West. From a social work perspective it should become possible for the majority of joint interviews to have a SCIM trained worker available.

All partners continue to jointly develop data recording and reporting methods and capacity, which will provide quality assurance and improvement data previously unavailable with the Stepwise (5 day) model.

SCIM involves us working in an integrated fashion with Police Scotland L Division and as a result working very closely with West Dunbartonshire colleagues.

Both areas of improvement work outlined above will see a greater number of children and young people receiving support through child protection processes; improved consistency in decision making at each stage of the child protection process; greater access for children to the SCIM joint interview with its improved response to trauma, and better outcomes in terms of both welfare and criminal convictions.

Family Placement

The Family Placement Team have continued to build on our commitment of becoming a Trauma Informed workforce. One of our Team identified and took part in training to deliver a Nurturing Attachment's course to our carers.

An 18 week intensive course available to Kinship, Foster and Adoptive carers, the first block is part way through and the feedback is unanimously positive. At the heart of the feedback is the sense of community which has developed among the participants, who report to feeling less isolated in their caring role.

This ethos of developing supportive communities has rolled into our wider support services and at our most recent Foster Carers Day a bi-annual event, we took the decision to bring Kinship carers and foster carers together, where they were able to access first aid training, promote self-care and get updates on National Support services. The feeling of coming together again central to the feedback.

Kinship care continues to grow in focus and our support services extend year on year. The Family Placement Team employed staff to focus on this new area of work and one of the team completed the Relative Matters Kinship post graduate qualification, disseminating the learning among the wider team, to better understand the complexities of this area of work.

As a service we are mindful that Fostering recruitment has been a national issue which in turn has made us look at innovative ways to bring this to the public eye. This has not always a success, such as when our Gazebo blew away at an event, however thus are the challenges of the west coast!

Key, however is recognising that in turn our existing foster carers continue to be the heart of our service, continually stretching themselves to ensure the best outcomes for our most vulnerable young people and at this time of year it is always heart-warming to hear the many stories of continued connections or a place at the Christmas table, for young people who once lived with our foster families, and still consider this home.

In 2023 we raised the raised the financial support for Foster Carers beyond the rate of inflation. Our rates of financial support are higher than the newly agreed national rates for foster carers.

CAMHS

Developing a process of integration and building a model of mental health and wellbeing for children and young people which builds on a collective responsibility has taken further steps forward despite a challenging year. Partners in education, health and social care have incrementally developed actions and goals which align, developing the foundations of single point of access for example, which will lead to project driven activity to test modelling e.g. neuro-diversity.

This year provides the opportunity to build, detail and influence with the aim of maximising current resource and be clear about investment which brings maximum return at a time of significant financial challenges.

The integration opportunity has been evidenced in particular through cross agency activity associated with trauma informed practice and CAMHS Care Experienced Team activity, linking with Through Care Team, joint training, and building capacity across system.

In addition, the Care Experienced Team recent engagement with parenting support and targeted education has been successful with excellent feedback from families. These are examples when we align, we can build confidence and positive outcomes.

Child Health

Child Health are celebrating Health Visiting Careers by inputting to Careers week; by creating a short video with NHS Scotland Academy, showcasing one of our Health Visitor's career journey we endeavour to promote roles within NHSH and Argyll and Bute HSCP.

It has also been a great time for furthering our partnership with Greater Glasgow and Clyde with the development of our Family Nurse Partnership Implementation. The Family Nurse Partnership is a person-centred, preventative intervention programme offered to young first time parents.

It is an evidence based change programme that is delivered in the parents' own homes. It is designed to cover the first 1001 days of life, from early pregnancy until the child reaches the age of 2 years old. Louise Bussell will be our Project Sponsor, Beth Wiseman as FNP Lead and our FNP preferred candidate Kirsty Beattie due to start Mid February.

School nursing has seen success in the self-referral vaccine implementation project from our young people across A+B from the age of 12yrs. We will continue to monitor and evaluate this over the coming immunisation period.

With the poverty agenda on the forefront of our minds, the health visitors on the Helensburgh and Lochside have commenced a weekly drop in session for parents that will focus on feeding, weaning and providing support, advice and signposting to relevant organisations.

Maternity

Across Argyll & Bute maternity worked with GGC to implement routine oxygen saturation testing for babies to screen for cardiac defects. We have more midwives visiting GGC to consolidate their 'examination of the newborn' qualification which again allows for babies born here to have the same screening as those in big units.

The mid-Argyll team is being supported by other areas while they do not have a team lead in place, including midwives covering on-call commitments for them.

There was a flurry of local births over the holiday period, with Campbeltown, Mid Argyll and Oban having two births each around Christmas and New Year.

Tackling Child Poverty

The Argyll and Bute Child Poverty Action Group has continued to meet throughout 2023 to look at ways of tackling child poverty, as has the Financial Advice and Inclusion Group. Both groups have been instrumental in tackling the impacts and causes of child and family poverty at a time of cost of living crisis and the ongoing effects of Covid19 recovery, Brexit and the war in Ukraine.

Actions and successes are numerous and have involved staff across many departments and agencies. Successes conclude:

- Housing Team – who have continued to support people at a time of Housing Crisis, including young people leaving care, women and children fleeing domestic violence and refugees.
- Benefits Team – worked tirelessly to deliver benefits and ensure the best possible take up, delivering the Flexible Food and Fuel Fund.
- This year's Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-2023 was produced and reflects a broad range of effective work taking place.
- The third sector have been instrumental in supporting and helping families in many ways (Allenergy, TSI, Bute Advice Centre, The Food Forum and its members etc).
- Work is being carried out to ensure infant food security.
- Challenge Poverty Week was promoted and media posts put out to show people what is being done and where they can get help and advice.
- Training has been ongoing throughout 2023 for staff on "Money Counts" and how they can advise and support people. The Argyll and Bute "Money Worries" leaflet was updated and distributed widely.
- Over £16,000 was obtained from the Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund to further data analysis work which will lead to the better identification of people requiring support and advice.

United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Implementation Group

On 7 December MSPs voted unanimously to pass the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill. Scotland has become the first nation of the UK to vote to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into domestic law, with implications for all public bodies. Information on those duties and obligations for public bodies can be found here:

Getting Ready for UNCRC Incorporation Framework: A Practical Resource for Public Bodies in Scotland to prepare for UNCRC Incorporation

https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/43382/Getting-Ready-for-UNCRC-Incorporation-Framework.pdf

An Argyll and Bute UNCRC Implementation Group was formed to look at these requirements and what actions were required to:

- Allow our organisations and partners to be compliant with the new legislation and duties.
- Increase the awareness of staff and help them to understand what changes they and their departments needed to achieve.
- Work with children, young people and their parents to improve their understanding of children's rights and ensure that they are involved in the work and decision making.

To this end, progress has been made in a number of areas including:

- Work with Youth Voice and other groups with regards to future coproduction and involving them in decision making.
- Obtaining £53,000 from the UNCRC Innovations Fund for a series of face to face and other engagements with children and young people across Argyll and Bute in the coming year. This will also include promoting children's rights and understanding across a wide range of hard to reach groups. As well it will involve children and young people in creating and delivering an awards scheme for staff and departments as they work towards being UNCRC compliant.
- Setting up information and training pages for children, young people and parents on Children's Rights. Also a Training and Information Page for staff as well as an e-learning module to be available on LEON and TURAS.
- Updating the Argyll and Bute Children's Rights Report 2020-2023.

Justice Services

We do not celebrate the work of Justice Social Work and the positive impact on individuals and our communities enough. As such we give some space to that in this report.

Despite some severe staffing challenges over the past nine months Justice social work has continued to provide a high quality service to the communities of Argyll & Bute. Our Unpaid Work scheme has undertaken a diverse range of projects in all localities of Argyll and Bute and include gardening, path and cycle path maintenance, painting, litter picking and fly tipping, building maintenance and clearing, repair and replace community benches, upkeep of war memorials. Some examples of this are:

Cowal Hub – unpaid work squads assisted in helping this community asset be set up by painting the venue. The Hub offers invaluable help to the area by signposting people to the help, guidance and advice that they may need

Arrochar Community Development Trust – there are three core paths in this area that are used for cycling and walking and enjoying the surroundings. Unpaid work maintain the paths by keeping them clear of litter and cutting back if necessary

Arrochar Primary School – tidied infant garden area by removing broken apparatus, furniture and repairing child's pirate ship.

Ardentiny walled garden - a community garden where the community learn to grow their own vegetables which we attend every week and help to upkeep the garden.

As well as community based projects, unpaid work can include individualised placements. One service user attended three recovery groups per week and they then supported the setting up of group work and the smooth running of these groups. Due to their continued enthusiasm and good recovery practice we have offered them a place on a volunteer training programme. Taking part in this programme will continue to support the client to grow and develop in their recovery and day to day life with the option at the end to go into employment in the field of recovery if they choose too.

Feedback on the service received from the recipients of Unpaid Work continues to be positive:

“Just wanted to drop you a short email to say thank you for all your help in painting the Cowal Hub. Can you extend our thanks to everyone involved - they did an excellent job and couldn't have been more helpful. The Cowal Hub now looks great and hopefully we will open at the end of March”

“As the Friends of Duchess Wood Helensburgh, we are very pleased to work with this scheme and most grateful for the work they do which benefits the Helensburgh & Lomond community”

“The team perform a tremendously useful service helping our conservation charity, the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, keep on top of the litter situation along the A82 corridor between Arden and Tarbet. I know they also work further afield up the A82 and throughout this area. Their work is so successful that I recently heard the A82 was being held up as one of the cleanest trunk roads in the country!”

Service users have fed back:

“I never expected to receive this kind of service. Everyone treated me with such respect”

“it's been really helpful getting me back on my feet”

“I found it really helpful talking to 'my worker' it's helped me cope with things better.”

“the changes I have made to my alcohol use is down the support JSW offered. It's helped my mental health in dealing with the separation from my wife and kids. My worker has always been there whenever I asked for help”

Argyll & Bute Community Justice Partnership

The Community Justice Partnership is a multi-agency strategic group chaired by Argyll and Bute Chief Executive with representation from all named Statutory Partners within the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016).

The refreshed [national strategy for Community Justice](#) provides the following definition:

“Community justice is principally about organisations working together to ensure that people who have offended address the underlying causes of their behaviour, and pay back to the community where appropriate. It aims

to encourage rehabilitation, reduce reoffending, and protect the public, leading to fewer victims and safer communities.

This requires a strong partnership-working approach at each point of the justice system, from the point of arrest, through to integration into the community.

Public protection remains our first priority, with robust risk management systems in place to ensure that, where appropriate, those who have committed offences can be managed safely and effectively in the community. In the long term, our ambition is to use prison only for those who pose a risk of serious harm.”

The national strategy has 4 Aims and 13 Priority Actions, Argyll & Bute CJP is in the final stages of developing our local Community Justice Plan 2024-2027 and has ongoing improvement activity across all Aims and Actions. The key highlights being:

Aim 1: Optimise the use of diversion and intervention at the earliest opportunity

- Ongoing local review (2023-2025) of the delivery of Diversion, to be aligned to the Scottish Government national improvement group, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Regional Forum and Social Work Scotland
- Creating an improved understanding of the delivery of multi-agency services at Police Scotland Custody Suites, aligned to the national Police Scotland improvement group

Aim 2: Ensure that robust and high quality community interventions and public protection arrangements are consistently available across Scotland

- Further develop and improve Justice Social Work Bail Supervision & Support provision through commitment to increasing multi-agency referral pathways and support

Aim 3: Ensure that services are accessible and available to address the needs of individuals accused or convicted of an offence (upon prison release and employability access on community sentences)

- The commissioning and implementation of a Justice Advocacy Service with Lomond and Argyll Advocacy Service that will be supported by a multi-agency steering group including housing, addictions and Justice Social Work and others as required. This third sector 1 year pilot will proactively offer engagement and support those who are released from prison having served a sentence of below 4 years. The intended outcomes are all connected to reducing the risks of reoffending.

Aim 4: Strengthen the leadership, engagement, and partnership working of local and national community justice partners

- Commitment to reviewing the domestic abuse research in partnership with the VAWGP and developing the Argyll & Bute responses.
- Strengthening strategic planning links across a range of policy areas including alcohol and drugs, violence against women and girls, public protection and community planning

Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership

The Argyll and Bute Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership is a multi-agency organisation. It reports to the COGPP (Chief Officers Group for Public Protection) and comes under the umbrella of the CPP (Community Planning Partnership).

It is part of a network of partnerships throughout Scotland who work to tackle and prevent domestic abuse and other forms of gender based violence against women and girls. There is a National VAWG Network which brings local partnerships together and acts as a focus for decision making.

Some of the work it has engaged in this year has included:

- Delivering 13 training events including; Domestic Abuse Awareness Raising, Dealing with Disclosure of Sexual Assault, How the Police Work with Domestic Abuse, Routine Enquiry, Domestic Abuse and Trauma.
- Working to forward the roll out of Safe and Together across Argyll and Bute by getting staff to undertake the Core and Management training.
- Promoting the 16 Days of Action against Gender Based Violence (number of events).
- Reviewing the Argyll & Bute access to a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (S.A.R.C.)

Work for the Coming Year Includes:

- Making more progress on the roll out of the Safe and Together Model across Argyll and Bute;
- Youth Work;
- Updating the Equally Safe Strategy and Plan;
- Improving engagement with lived experienced women and making communities more aware of the work of the VAWGP;
- Exploring more effective ways of using local data;
- Ensuring that more local authority staff have at least basic domestic abuse awareness training;
- Look at the issue of a Routine Enquiry Policy for the Argyll and Bute HSCP.

Children, Families and Justice Services also includes all administrative support of Council Services within the HSCP. Of particular note within this area of practice:

Managing Service User's Money

After significant work across many services we now have a Policy for Managing Service User's Money which brings together our obligations under new rules for Corporate Appointeeship and Access to Funds. We have clear guidance and processes in place for locality teams to request either corporate appointeeship or access to funds to allow Social Workers to manage the money of those service users who lack capacity to do this themselves.

A small team of two has been appointed within the Social Work Admin Service to manage the bank accounts associated with these two processes and support teams with applications.

This will enable the HSCP to support many more individuals within our communities who struggle to manage their own finances. It is notable that as new rules and regulations evolve it often requires increased administrative commitments.

Eclipse

Following the implementation of Eclipse we set up an Eclipse Working Group for Children & Families to manage requests for changes to the system. This group is a mixture of Team Managers, Social Workers and Admin staff who use the system day to day. Issues have already been identified and changes are underway to ensure that

The system supports practice. Some areas we are looking at are for example: IRD, child's plan and child protection.

The Justice Module of eclipse is the first such one in Scotland. As with any pilot this has meant a significant investment of staff time.

It is clear that the administrative support for Eclipse is significant and will be ongoing for some time to come.

4. RELEVANT DATA AND INDICATORS

Contained, where relevant, within the body of the report.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Contained, where relevant, within the body of the report.

6. GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Impact

Each development could have an impact, however further more in depth reporting will be offered in such cases. This report is to provide exemplars of practice and to assure the Board developmental work is taking place.

6.2 Staff Governance

Each development could have an impact, however further more in depth reporting will be offered in such cases. This report is to provide exemplars of practice and to assure the Board developmental work is taking place.

6.3 Clinical and Care Governance

Each development could have an impact, however further more in depth reporting will be offered in such cases. This report is to provide exemplars of practice and to assure the Board developmental work is taking place.

7. PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY

None

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None

9. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION PRINCIPLES COMPLIANCE

None

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

None

11. PUBLIC & USER INVOLVEMENT & ENGAGEMENT

None

12. CONCLUSIONS

We ask the Board to recognise the range and depth of work going on within Children, Families and Justice Services. The Board is asked to note this 'spotlight' report.

13. DIRECTIONS

Directions required to Council, NHS Board or both.	Directions to:	tick
	No Directions required	x
	Argyll & Bute Council	
	NHS Highland Health Board	
	Argyll & Bute Council and NHS Highland Health Board	

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