

Scrutiny and Improvement of Services for Children

Background

In September 2011, Scottish Ministers asked the Care Inspectorate to take the lead in developing a new model for the scrutiny and improvement of children's services based on a set of requirements which included:

- a design based on *Getting it right for every child*
- a strong user focus
- a coordinated /joint approach which demonstrates duty of cooperation within the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

The Care Inspectorate has developed a coordinated approach to scrutiny which aims to:

- improve outcomes for all children and young people
- provide independent assurance about the quality of services for children (particularly vulnerable children and young people)
- help to build capacity for improvement.

Building a model for future scrutiny

A development site was arranged to test out key aspects of a proposed methodology. The main purpose for the development site was to define how the proposed methodology for future inspection should be refined and amended. This was conducted in partnership with the Angus Community Partnership between April and June 2012. The extremely valuable contribution of managers and staff, as well as the views of children and families, across the Angus community planning partnership area has allowed us to achieve this aim. As a result of the development site and associated activity, a model for scrutiny and improvement of children's services is now ready for further testing within a pilot phase of inspections.

Proposed model for scrutiny and improvement

A draft framework of quality indicators based on the European Framework for Quality Management will be launched in October 2012. This is intended to provide a complimentary approach to robust self-evaluation and independent scrutiny. This means that the same quality framework for self-evaluation will be used to underpin the joint inspections of services for children. The

framework '***How well are we improving the lives of children, young people and families?***' also aims to support the implementation of *Getting it right for every child*. It is intended to complement rather than replace specific approaches to self-evaluation and quality improvement already embedded within certain sectors for example, *How good is our school?* or *How well do we protect children and meet their needs?*

The Care Inspectorate will lead a series of pilot inspections in 5 community planning partnership areas. These will be termed ***Pilot Joint Inspections of Services for Children*** and the first two pilots will be announced in September 2012 giving 12 weeks notification. There will be representation from Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland.

The model will encompass a wide range of services working directly with children and young people including universal provision as well as more targeted and specialist services. It will take a multi-agency and strategic approach and hold community planning partnerships accountable for the effectiveness of children's services and for improving the lives of children residing within the local authority area. These pilot inspections will not evaluate the quality of individual services but focus on the effectiveness of integrated working to improve outcomes for all children and how well services are making a difference to the lives of the most vulnerable children and young people. The Care Inspectorate is required to provide independent assurance by reporting publicly on the findings to Scottish Ministers.

Key features of the model:-

- ∨ the inspection focus will be on how well services are working together to improve the lives of vulnerable children and will include a continued focus on children in need of protection
- ∨ a complementary approach to robust self-evaluation and independent scrutiny
- ∨ 22 week footprint with 12 weeks notice of the date of the inspection and 13 days on-site inspection activity
- ∨ a multi-agency & multi-disciplinary inspection team with representation from the Care Inspectorate, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Education Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland
- ∨ intelligence and risk-based approach bringing together evidence across the scrutiny bodies
- ∨ a strong proportionate approach supported by joint "scoping" activity
- ∨ inclusion of young inspectors in the team
- ∨ opportunities for regular professional discussion between community planning partners & inspectors
- ∨ a coordinated approach to continued support for improvement.