

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY & AUDIT COMMITTEE – 24 AUGUST 2021**

**ANGUS CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2019 - JULY 2020**

**REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ANGUS COUNCIL AND MEMBER OF  
ANGUS CHIEF OFFICERS' GROUP**

**ABSTRACT**

This report presents the Angus Child Protection Committee Annual Report for April 2019 to July 2020. Chief Officers across Scotland are individually and collectively responsible for the leadership, direction and scrutiny of their respective child protection services and their Child Protection Committees. In Angus, the Child Protection Committee reports directly to the Chief Officers' Group. A number of Angus Council services are members of the Child Protection Committee reflecting both the multi-faceted nature of risk and the whole system responsibility to support its mitigation.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Scrutinise and comment on the contents of the Angus Child Protection Committee (ACPC) Annual Report April 2019 to July 2020 (appended to this report)
- (ii) Consider the key trends and areas for development emerging from the report.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN**

This report aligns to the following strategic proprieties identified in the Council Plan:

- 2. To maximise inclusion and reduce inequalities
- 3. Our communities to be strong, resilient and led by citizens

The purpose of the Council Plan has similar aspirations to that of the ACPC in terms of eliminating child poverty and barriers to access; reducing bureaucracy; raising opportunities for lifelong learning; customer service and wellbeing and creating equity; stronger partnerships and inclusive culture.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The previous ACPC [Annual Report 2018 - 2019](#) covered the period from April 2018 to March 2019.
- 3.2 The Annual Report of ACPC for the period April 2019 to July 2020 presents the work we have undertaken in Angus individually and in partnership to deliver national, Tayside and local child protection outcomes to improve the lives of children at risk of harm.
- 3.3 The reporting period for ACPC annual report has been extended to cover 16 months to bring us in line with national reporting requirements which is the academic year reporting period as opposed to the financial year reporting period as ACPC previously reported.
- 3.4 The Annual Report has been approved by ACPC on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and the Angus Chief Officers' Group on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the multi-agency governance group with operational accountability for protecting people arrangements in Angus.
- 3.5 ACPC hold a risk register that is reviewed minimally quarterly and reported to Angus Chief Officers' Group. There are no exceptional risks noted within this report.

## 4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 ACPC have continued to work together to improve child protection practice in Angus.

4.2 Of note this period is:

- The change in reporting period from financial to academic year to become more aligned to national reporting timeframes
- The review of learning and development and the move to a Protecting People Workforce Learning and Development Subgroup with a view to giving staff access to a more comprehensive and coordinated learning and development programme, make best use of resources and further develop a range of more specialist training.
- The completion of the “Isabelle” Significant Case Review, which was published in August 2020. Improvement actions in respect of the findings are ongoing.
- Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative commissioning of Dr Sharon Vincent to undertake analysis of Initial and Significant Case Reviews across Tayside.
- The review of the Early Screening Group and the establishment of the Early Screening Assurance group, ensuring clear pathways for children and families to receive early help and support and provide quality assurance of key Getting It Right pathways and processes in Angus.
- The review of the Pre-birth Resource Allocation Meeting resulting in a revised approach to identifying and planning support to pregnant women where an additional need is identified.
- The ongoing focus on participation and co-production.
  - Ensuring the voice of the child is central to the work we do across all agencies and is reflected in assessment and plans for children and young people.
  - The development of the My Views app to support children and young people aged eight upwards who have a child’s plan and are on the child protection register or are looked after to share their thoughts and feelings, and contribute to their child’s plan at a time that suits them.
  - The development of the PREpare model of independent advocacy with a facilitated pre child protection case conference meeting, which supports open and honest identification of risks and strengths and gives the family more choice and control over how the case conference would be managed to ensure full participation.

4.3 Key trends identified from the statistical part of this Annual Report are:

- Significant increase since 2018/19 in the use of online reporting of child protection concerns.
- Significant increase in demand on frontline social work services with the increase in the number of child protection referrals requiring follow up action. There is an associated suggestion that there is a growing need for early help and support for families.
- Decrease in all child protection activity during the COVID period in 2020.
- Decrease in the numbers of children whose names are on the Child Protection Register since 2018.
- Increase in the average length of time that children’s names are on the Child Protection Register for over one year has increased year on year since 2015/16. This is an area that will continue to be closely monitored.
- There has been a significant increase in domestic abuse as a risk. This suggests that the implementation of Safe and Together and a focus on improving domestic abuse practice has supported identification and ‘naming’ of the issue.

4.4 The new ACPC Strategic Plan 2020-2023 is based around the core business functions of a Child Protection Committee as set out in the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014 (Continuous Improvement, Strategic Planning, Public Information and Communication and Leadership and Governance) and has identified areas for future development as well as monitoring and oversight of ongoing work. ACPC will report under these headings in the next Annual Report. This plan will also be regularly updated to include any emerging national or

local priorities. The new plan remains flexible to take into account any future impact arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.5 Areas for development and progression:

- Implementation of the new National Child Protection Guidance, once this is published.
- The regular review and promotion of key processes to support identification and early help and support to children, young people and families to ensure these are clear and understood.
- The embedding of the national minimum dataset as a key tool to identify trends and areas of priority.
- Work to ensure the ACPC priorities, business and practice is informed by those who use services.
- The development of one point of access to children's rights information, local services, online safety and what to expect in child protection in order that children and young people understand their rights and know where to go to seek advice, support, help and protection.

**5. PROPOSALS**

The Committee scrutinises and comments on the content of the ACPC Annual Report April 2019 to July 2020 and considers the key trends and areas for improvement arising from the report. The Independent Chair of the ACPC will be in attendance at Committee.

**6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

**8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this is an annual report summarising multi-agency work over the year.

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List of Appendices: Angus Child Protection Committee Annual report April 2019-July 2020



## Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Form

(To be completed with reference to Guidance Notes)

### Step 1

**Name of Proposal** (includes e. g. budget savings, committee reports, strategies, policies, procedures, service reviews, functions):

### Step 2

Is this only a **screening** Equality Impact Assessment Yes

**(A)** If Yes, please choose from the following options **all** reasons why a full EIA/FSD is not required:

(i) It does not impact on people No

(ii) It is a percentage increase in fees which has no differential impact on protected characteristics No

(iii) It is for information only No

(iv) It is reflective e.g. of budget spend over a financial year providing summary of multi-agency work. Yes Annual report

(v) It is technical No

If you have answered yes to any of points above, please go to **Step 16**, and sign off the Assessment.

**Step 16: Sign off and Authorisation.** Please state name, post, and date for each:

Prepared by: Niki McNamee, team leader, 30.7.21

Reviewed by: Kirsty Lee, service leader, 30.7.21

Approved by: Kathryn Lindsay, Director of Children Families and Justice, 30.7.21