



**Angus Child Protection Committee**  
**Annual Report**  
April 2019- July 2020

Working together to protect children in Angus



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# Foreword by the Chair Of The Angus Child Protection Committee

I am presenting this Annual Report in what can only be described as unprecedented times. This extended annual report, covering the period April 2019 to July 2020, covers the first national COVID-19 lockdown period and is being written after almost a year of restrictions and significant stress on our public services. What is evident however is the skill, expertise and resilience that lies within our multi-agency workforce. They have risen to the challenges that they have faced and continued to keep the public and importantly children and families safe. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work and commitment.

This Report highlights some of the first signs of the impact the pandemic may have had on children and their families. However, it also demonstrates the commitment to continuous improvement and flexibility that our child protection workforce has and demonstrates daily.

The opportunities for using digital technology to deliver services and keep children safe is evident in the report. This includes the delivery of training and using social media to encourages the public to play their role in keeping children safe.

So once again, well done to all involved and let's remain committed to using every opportunity to learn and continue to improve the services that keep children safe.



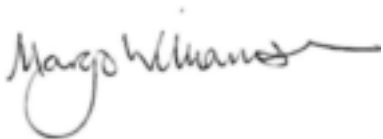
**Alison Todd**

Independent Chair

# Chief officers' response

We are very pleased to receive the Angus Child Protection Committee Annual Report for April 2019 - July 2020.

We are confident that the Child Protection Committee will continue to ensure the protection of our most vulnerable children is of the highest priority for services. This year more than ever, we have needed the public and services to be responsive to the needs of vulnerable children and families, to reach out with compassion and ensure that children, young people and their families are supported and where necessary, protected. We continue to be encouraged by the commitment, hard work and professionalism of staff across all agencies in Angus in delivering high quality services in what is often difficult, demanding and challenging circumstances. The Child Protection Committee members are motivated and committed to driving forward best practice at both a strategic and operational level and to the development of our wider Protecting People partnership approach.



**Margo Williamson**

Chief Executive

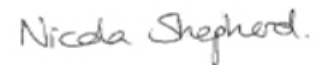
Angus Council



**Karen Anderson**

Director of  
Allied Health Professions

NHS Tayside



**Nicola Shepherd**

Detective  
Superintendent

Police Scotland



# Introduction

The Angus Child Protection Committee (ACPC) is the local strategic planning partnership responsible for developing and implementing child protection strategy, policy and guidance across and between agencies in Angus. The committee performs a number of crucial functions in Angus including the co-ordination and delivery of training and learning opportunities for professional and other staff, the development of policies, procedures and protocols, ensuring the effectiveness and quality of local child protection services through continuous improvement and the provision of public information to support public engagement and participation in keeping children safe.

ACPC, via the Independent Chair, reports to Angus Chief Officer Group (COG). COG has a rotational Chair and is currently held by Angus Council, rotating to Police Scotland in 2021. We have continued to report our work to the Angus Chief Officers' Group on a quarterly basis and have stepped this up during 2020 in response to the pandemic. Our Chief Officers have offered oversight and challenge to our work and continued to support our developments.

ACPC meet minimally four times per year, although there have been a number of additional meetings throughout the COVID - 19 period. Attendance of members or delegated members is recorded and reported to COG to ensure membership and participation remains fully supported.

ACPC produced an Annual Report for each financial year, with the last Annual report covering the period April 2018 - March 2019. ACPC have agreed that in order to ensure consistency with other reporting frameworks, the reporting period will move to the academic year, with the future reporting period being August to July. This will have an initial impact on the data comparison with previous years.

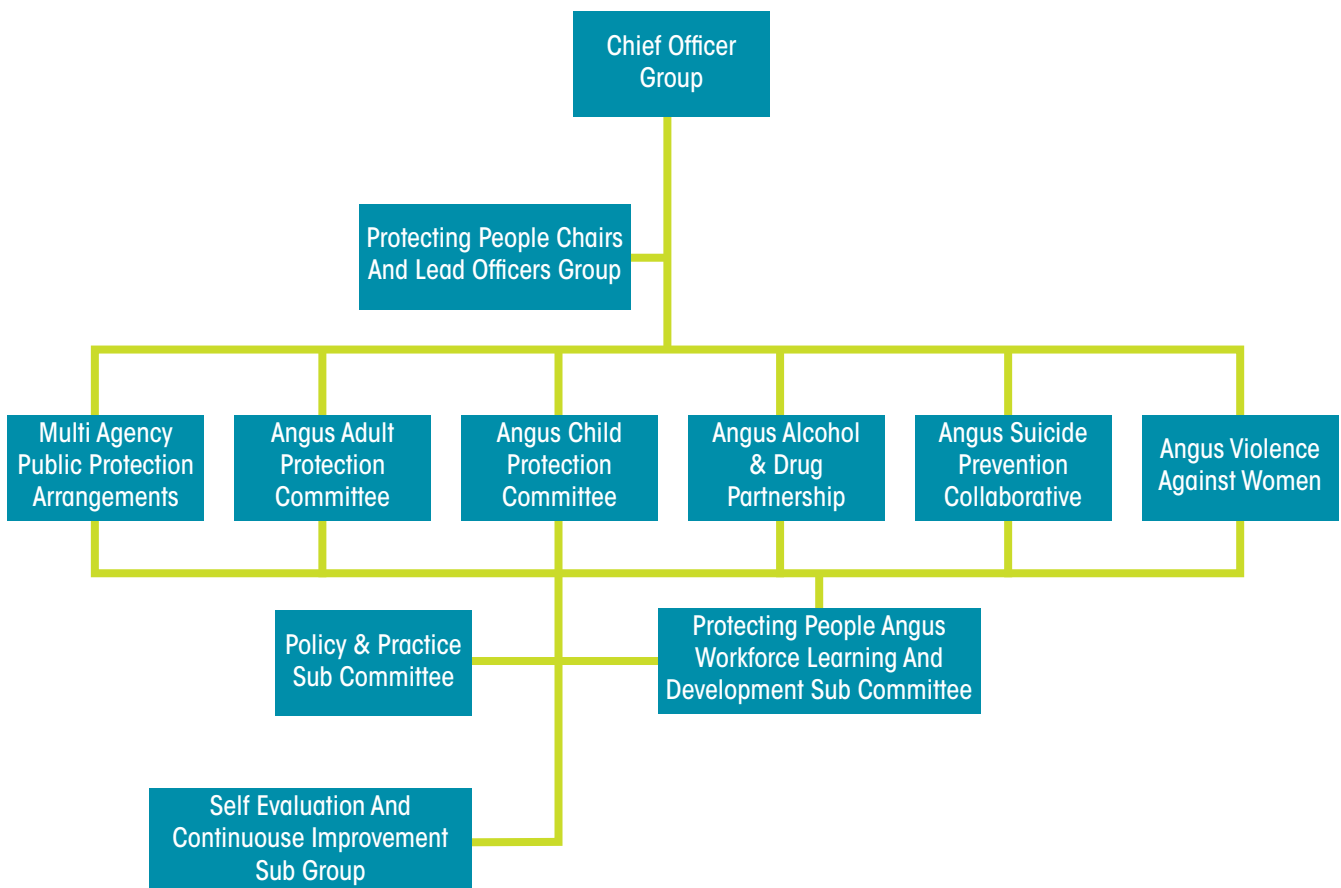
As such, this Annual Report will cover the period April 2019 - July 2020, incorporating the financial year April 2019 - March 2020 and also the remainder of the academic year April - July 2020.

# 1 Work of the Committee

ACPC have worked closely with the five other Protecting People partnerships (Angus Adult Protection Committee, Angus Violence Against Women Partnership, Angus Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, Angus Suicide Prevention Collaborative and Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) under the “Protecting People Angus” identity and structure to ensure collaboration and coordination, make best use of available resources and to consider a whole family approach to child protection.

The Chairs and Lead Officers of the partnerships have continued to work together to lead collaborative work on shared priorities and policies, learning and development opportunities and to plan cross cutting events.

**ACPC is represented in the governance structure below.**



## 2 COVID-19

The COVID -19 pandemic and periods of restrictions have had an impact on the work of the ACPC, particularly in terms of delivering learning and development opportunities and progressing our work on participation and engagement, however, there have also been some opportunities in this area and around recovery planning.

Additional ACPC meetings have been held and a COVID-19 specific Risk Register developed in order to manage and mitigate risks associated with the impact of the pandemic. The weekly Chief Officer data collection has allowed for comparison to the previous year in terms of child protection activity and in identifying additional local risks.

Key services have been represented at a Tayside group considering potential trends, risks and mitigation, and recovery planning has been progressed by the ACPC Policy and Practice Subgroup.

There is no doubt that the pandemic has had a significant effect on children and families and our focus has been on understanding this from a local perspective and working together to target support to those in greatest need. From March to July 2020 (through the lockdown period) we saw a significant reduction in referrals to social work, significant levels of reduced contact with professionals and an increase in family stress such as unemployment, shielding and poverty. ACPC have ensured key child protection messages and the publicising of services continue to be shared regularly via social media platforms as a means of raising awareness and that professionals and members of the public know where to seek support and how to raise concerns for children and young people. Information has also been provided to children in schools as to how to seek support for themselves. The additional meetings of strategic leads as reported above has provided us with opportunities to share approaches to working, feedback from families about what is working well and understand the demands placed on families in our area.





## 3 Strategic goals

During 2017-18, ACPC developed and began operating a 3-year Strategic Plan. This plan was developed around the following four overarching strategic goals.

### **STRATEGIC GOAL 1**

We will have a confident, competent and supported workforce; skilled and equipped to identify, support and protect children and young people from harm.

### **STRATEGIC GOAL 2**

We will have strong approaches to tackling and mitigating the effects of childhood neglect.

### **STRATEGIC GOAL 3**

We will work in partnership with children, young people, parents and wider families in the choices, decision making and planning processes in order to keep children and young people safe.

### **STRATEGIC GOAL 4**

We will ensure strong leadership and accountability through ACPC and COG, by improving the use of data, performance reporting, self-evaluation and planning.

These strategic goals were identified as areas requiring improvement through our self-evaluation activity and from the outcome of the 2016 Inspection findings.



## 4 Progress Towards Strategic Goals for April 2019 to July 2020

### **STRATEGIC GOAL 1**

**We will have a confident, competent and supported workforce; skilled and equipped to identify, support and protect children and young people from harm.**

#### **Learning and Workforce Development**

During 2018 -19 there was an appreciation that the landscape for learning and development was changing and consideration needed to be given to how the learning and development programme provided by the Child Protection Committee reflected that. A review of the learning and development programme and a training needs analysis was undertaken in 2019 to ensure that the right learning was provided in the right way and at the right time to those who required it.

One of the outcomes of this review was the creation of a joint Protecting People Angus Workforce L&D Sub - Committee which provides a forum to bring together the learning and development work for all of the protecting people partnerships and committees. This will help ensure a coherent and collaborative approach to upskilling the workforce going forward. This work is still at an early stage, but consideration is being given to how learning can be more integrated; focussing on the people we work with rather than on specific topics.

The development of a multi-agency Protecting People Training Framework has also begun. This will signpost the workforce to all available training for all partners and maximise our resources.

2019 also saw the launch of our multiagency learning platform, which is hosted on TURAS Learn. This allows us to make e-learning and other learning resources available to anyone across Angus. Utilising this platform has also meant we can more easily share content on a Tayside basis, reducing duplication and increasing consistency for those in the workforce who work across Tayside.

#### **Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative (TRIC) Priority Group 5 (Child Protection)**

ACPC are part of a Tayside wide group focussed on meeting the priority in the [Tayside Plan for Children, Young People and Families 2017-2020](#) that “all children will be safe at home, school and in the community”.

Priority Group 5 are working towards a shared approach to workforce development for staff working in services to protect children across Tayside. The Tayside Child Protection Workforce Development Programme is for first line managers and frontline practitioners, aimed at enhancing leadership, changing

culture, ethos and day to day working practices. The programme will incorporate the findings from the research undertaken by Dr Sharon Vincent, on behalf of the Collaborative into ICRs and SCRs across Tayside.

TRIC Priority Group 5 are also undertaking work in relation to protecting children from online abuse. A tiered learning programme delivered by the Marie Collins Foundation will be undertaken across Tayside in 2021.

## **Safe and Together**

The Safe and Together model was introduced to Angus in June 2017, by means of training 20 Champions. There are currently 14 active Safe and Together “Champions” in Angus, who have continued as a network of Champions to work with others to improve practice and develop resources to support practice change.

The Champions have developed a prompt card resource to support practitioners working with families to ask appropriate questions to ensure the application of the Safe and Together principles. Using the prompt card allows for appropriate questions to be asked using non blaming language and places responsibility with the perpetrator.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of Safe and Together was undertaken, to measure any improvement on the outcomes for women and children in Angus who are victims of Domestic Abuse and to recommend future development. The evaluation noted, that for Champions, the training has taught them the Principles and Core Components of Safe and Together, and that this has improved their understanding of domestic abuse; their practice when working with victims of domestic abuse and most importantly, improved outcomes for the children and families they are working with. In consideration of a wider, system change of culture or practice, there is yet to be evidence of a paradigm shift in the understanding of best practice in Domestic Abuse and a wholesale improvement of outcomes for our children. However, we understand that such a shift in practice and culture will grow with continued focus on improvement and are confident that continuing a domestic abuse informed approach that builds on safety with the non-abusing parent, holds perpetrators to account and offers support for behaviour change and helps families to recover is the only way to tackle domestic abuse. As such, Safe and Together will be considered as part of a wider approach to improving outcomes for victims of Domestic Abuse, with the learning and available practice tools continuing to be utilised as the foundation for continued development. The Champions within Children, Families and Justice continue to meet to develop practice for children and families accessing social work services and ACPC together with Angus Violence Against Women Partnership (AVAWP) will develop the framework to accelerate the learning more widely.

## **Lunchtime Learning Sessions**

ACPC have continued to build on our Lunchtime Learning sessions with multi-agency partners, with the ongoing aim to promote collaborative working. Sessions during 2019/20 have included; addressing neglect using Graded Care Profile, Child Protection for children with disabilities, Mental Health and Wellbeing, ADP Recovery Opportunities in Angus, Angus Independent Advocacy and using the Missing, Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy in Practice and the Protecting People Angus Partnerships will continue to support this approach going forward. These sessions are well attended and well received by the workforce. They focus on current and emerging specific areas of interest and feedback indicates that people value the bite-sized and less formal opportunity to learn. The Protecting People Angus Partnerships will continue to support this approach going forward and will be seeking to use evaluations from these sessions to inform decisions about the provision of more in-depth learning.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has had an impact on the delivery of face to face learning opportunities, with a pause on this format of learning being delivered. Work is ongoing with Tayside colleagues to develop and embed an alternative delivery system for learning.

## **STRATEGIC GOAL 2**

**We will have strong approaches to tackling and mitigating the effects of childhood neglect.**

Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) continues to be offered to all staff working with families where children may be experiencing neglect. In May 2019, a Lunchtime Learning session was held for Managers, Senior Practitioners and Leaders across children's services in Angus to embed the Graded Care Profile into our local practice. Analysis of use has found that the use of this tool is helpful to assess situations where there are long standing neglect issues and, where an assessment is completed, it informs a more targeted child's plan. Feedback from staff was gathered in 2019 highlighting the tool being used on a limited number of occasions due to the intensity and length of the assessment, but the learning being applied in broader assessments to good effect. The GCP2 is one tool to assist us to develop a comprehensive assessment of neglect but also needs to be applied within a wider context of practice frameworks.

At the end of July 2020, neglect was noted as the primary concern for 41% of children whose names were placed on the Angus Child Protection Register. As highlighted above, the GCP2 tool has been used on a limited number of occasions with barriers to wider application being reported as the intensity and length of the assessment and the need for full cooperation and partnership with the families involved. The benefits of continuing the training are clear and we continue to use the GCP2 approach to improve knowledge to enable early

identification, help and support to children affected by neglect. We expect that this protection concern will be impacted by the additional stresses and strains placed on families by the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to use this learning tool alongside our wider programme to support better outcomes for children.

During 2021, ACPC will focus on delivering GCP2 training using an online platform to frontline staff, further appraising the use of the GCP2 tool and aligning our approach with national work taking place.

### **Early Screening Assurance Group**

We have focused on ensuring that children and families can access early help and support and through the Early Screening Assurance Group we have tracked the outcomes for children referred to services via Police Scotland Vulnerable Person Database (VPD) reports. We initiated this approach in February 2018 and reported to ACPC in 2019. The findings were positive in the approaches being taken by named persons with good communication with social work colleagues for advice and guidance. Social work was actively intervening in those that required social work enquiry with good partnership working observed. Where there were issues with the outcomes for the child, these are being proactively addressed by the group by means of exploring improvements with the named person or developing more wide scale improvements. For example, the group completed the 'Responding to Child Concern Reports – Good Practice Guide' to advise and support Named Persons and Lead Professionals in Angus and to encourage best practice in this area.

### **Pre-birth Referral Allocation Meeting (PRAM) Review**

In May 2019, we revised our approach to identifying and planning support to pregnant women where an additional need was identified. The previous model was based on a monthly review of referrals involving an extended group of professionals. A review reported issues with data protection and information sharing and delays in pregnant woman receiving support. The revised PRAM now meets minimally fortnightly and is a more focused group involving only key agencies. Referrals are reviewed immediately and directed to social work if there is a clear need for a social work service or passed to other early intervention supports such as the Glen Clova Service. A six monthly review is now in place and reporting to the Practice and Policy Sub Committee.

### STRATEGIC GOAL 3

**We will work in partnership with children, young people, parents and wider families in the choices, decision making and planning processes in order to keep children and young people safe.**

Participation and co-production in Child Protection continue to be an area of focus in Angus and there have been a number of developments relating to this.

#### Digital Participation



My Views is a weblink for children and young people aged from eight years who have a child's plan and are on the child protection register or are looked after. It was developed by Angus Council's Digital Enablement Team in partnership with young people and will support them to share their thoughts and feelings and contribute to their child's plan at a time that suits them. The app has been made available and initial feedback from the staff and young people who have used this has been positive. During 2021, we will work towards raising awareness of the tool with both young people and practitioners via a programme of information sessions and demonstration videos.

#### PREpare



During the year, partners worked to trial a different approach to engaging families in child protection case conferences. Based on years of research and consistent feedback on how emotionally challenging participation in these meetings can be for families, and that often child protection plans are not made in partnership with children and families, the Practice and Policy Sub Committee applied for some funding from Corra to trial a strength based approach.

In partnership with Barnardo's, we designed and delivered PREpare – Partnerships, Relationships, Equality – a model of independent advocacy for the child together with a facilitated (by an independent third sector practitioner) pre-conference meeting with the family, social worker and Review Officer.

The PREpare approach was trialed with ten families including 15 children. Nine

of the children were supported through advocacy. Families each had parental substance use identified as a child protection issue. A full evaluation has been undertaken and concluded the following:

Identifying and exploring the risks in a supported conversation enabled parents to feel more equal partners in the process and talk openly about the risks that were identified:

Children, parents and carers felt partners to the child protection plan; relationships and communication with workers was improved significantly and the conference was more focused on the most significant issues or risk and protective action:

Parents highlighted that the strengths-based approach was empowering and made them partners in their child's protection plan.



*it's usually all that we do wrong that is talked about. Maybe I'm not such a bad mum after all.* (Parent)

This approach supported open and honest identification of risks and strengths pre-conference, supported the family to identify what strengths they wanted to build on and gave more choice and control of how the child protection case conference would be managed to ensure full participation. Advocacy ensured the views and experiences of the child were held central to the discussion in the Conference, with a powerful impact on those in attendance. A significant impact from the pilot was that families who services found 'hard to reach' felt able to participate and partner through the process to go on and feel part of the solution to reduce risk to their children.

The pilot concluded in March 2020. Continuation of the approach has been hampered by COVID-19 however, we used the principles and learning as we introduced digital meetings. One key development was the use of 'mixed model' meetings where families and the Social Workers and Review Officer were in the room together whilst others dialed in. Where we could safely use this approach, families welcomed this, and we are currently building on this as an option and approach for the future. Further consideration is being given as to how to embed the PREpare approach in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

A series of eight short clips have been developed to promote good practice in engaging with and gathering the views of children, young people and families and consideration is being given as to how these can be incorporated as a core part of the piloted Newly Qualified Social Worker program; a series of core learning modules delivered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).



## **Thematic Practice Review: Domestic Abuse**

In 2019, a multi-agency child protection practice review was undertaken. The cases of 18 children who were currently or had been on the child protection register within the past two years were selected. Consent was given by families for the cases of 11 children to be reviewed, interviews with parents were undertaken and the revised Care Inspectorate audit template was used for consistency. The practice review had a specific focus on domestic abuse practice and therefore, questions from the Domestic Abuse Audit Tool were included in the template. The methodology involved case file reading, staff focus groups, telephone discussions and a practice development session for case file readers was held, led by the Care Inspectorate.

A summary of findings is available at Appendix 2 which have enabled us to tailor a plan of action to continually improve the work we undertake in this area.

This was an in-depth piece of practice evaluation, bringing together case file reading measured using a verified audit tool, together with lived experience gathered from semi - structured interviews with parents and carers and focus groups with professionals.

## **Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative**

Tayside Regional Collaborative Priority Group 5 (TRIC) have undertaken work to improve participation in key child protection meetings across Tayside. This has included the development of a Good Practice in Participation Guides for professionals and information/Good Practice Guide for Children, Young People And Families in key Child Protection Meetings. These detail expected standards of professionals involved in such meetings to ensure children, young people and families are able to actively participate and have their views heard and considered.

TRIC have also developed a number of policy and practice guidance documents for use across Tayside. These include Multi-agency Practitioner's Guidance relating to: Professional Curiosity; Concern for Unborn Babies; Inter-Agency Referral Discussions (IRDs); the Tayside Code of Practice: Information Sharing, Confidentiality and Consent; and the Tayside Joint Protocol for the Medical Examinations of Children and Young People.

## **Transitions**

In 2019 Angus Child and Adult Protection Committees considered the area of transition from Child Protection to Adult Protection, identifying that there is not a clear enough transition pathway. Rather, it was identified that the area of transition from children to adult services for the group of young people with complex needs was where the focus needed to be.

As such, a Transitions Group, with representatives from both children and adult services has been established to consider and progress work in this area. Part of the work has seen the introduction of a Complex and Co-existing Needs Panel

within Angus Health and Social Care Partnership, the purpose of which is to provide a strong, effective, integrated and collaborative partnership forum that will improve provision, opportunity and health and wellbeing outcomes for adults with complex and co-existing conditions in Angus and to promote effective multi-agency collaborative working to ensure that collectively, the care team possess the required expertise, skills, knowledge and resources to effectively support these individuals and minimize risk. The Panel also exists to identify and progress systems development and improvement in relation to meeting the needs of people with complex and co-existing conditions.

## **STRATEGIC GOAL 4**

**We will ensure strong leadership and accountability through ACPC and COG, by improving the use of data, performance reporting, self-evaluation and planning.**

ACPC has worked in partnership with our Tayside colleagues via the Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative to prepare for the implementation of the National Minimum Dataset for Child Protection. Additional Tayside indicators have been agreed and included within the dataset, with a plan for this to be functional in Angus by January 2021.

An additional sub committee for ACPC has been agreed, focusing on Self-Evaluation and Continuous Improvement. A short-life working group previously existed to progress developments and priorities following the 2016 Children's Services Inspection. Committee members agreed to re-establishing this as a formal subgroup of the ACPC will be in place from early 2021, with a remit to consider data and undertake analysis, identify priorities and deliver a cyclical and robust self-evaluation programme for the ACPC.

A risk register has been developed by ACPC to ensure early identification of risks and associated mitigating action. Any risks that ACPC cannot mitigate against are escalated to the Chief Officers Group for support. To date, no risks have required escalation.

A leadership event was held across Tayside to share findings of the Dr Vincent evaluative work noted above, with our Tayside Chief Officers. Work is ongoing to ensure broad dissemination of the findings and the incorporation of key themes into relevant work streams.

# 5 Key priorities and developments

## **Self-Evaluation and Continuous Improvement**

- ICR and SCR undertaken
- Development of Risk Register
- Agreement to progress Self Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Sub Committee
- Work to progress implementation of the National CPC Minimum Dataset
- Review of Early Screening Group
- Move of the AAPC/ACPC Sub Committee to Integrated Children's Services.
- ACPC membership now includes a legal services representative

## **Practice and Policy Development**

- Update of local Multi-agency Child Protection Guidance
- Development and implementation of Tayside Practitioner Guidance Engagement and participation activity
- Children at risk of harm will be identified early Children, young people and families will have access to information on their rights, what to expect and how to make a complaint

## **Workforce Development**

- Development of Protecting People Workforce Learning and Development Sub Committee
- Development of good quality learning and development opportunities in partnership with Tayside colleagues
- Continue to explore opportunities to deliver learning via digital and blended learning models
- Lunchtime learning sessions

## **Work Streams**

- Transitions
- Developing areas of work with Tayside colleagues
- Integration of the work of ACPC into the wider Protecting People Partnerships

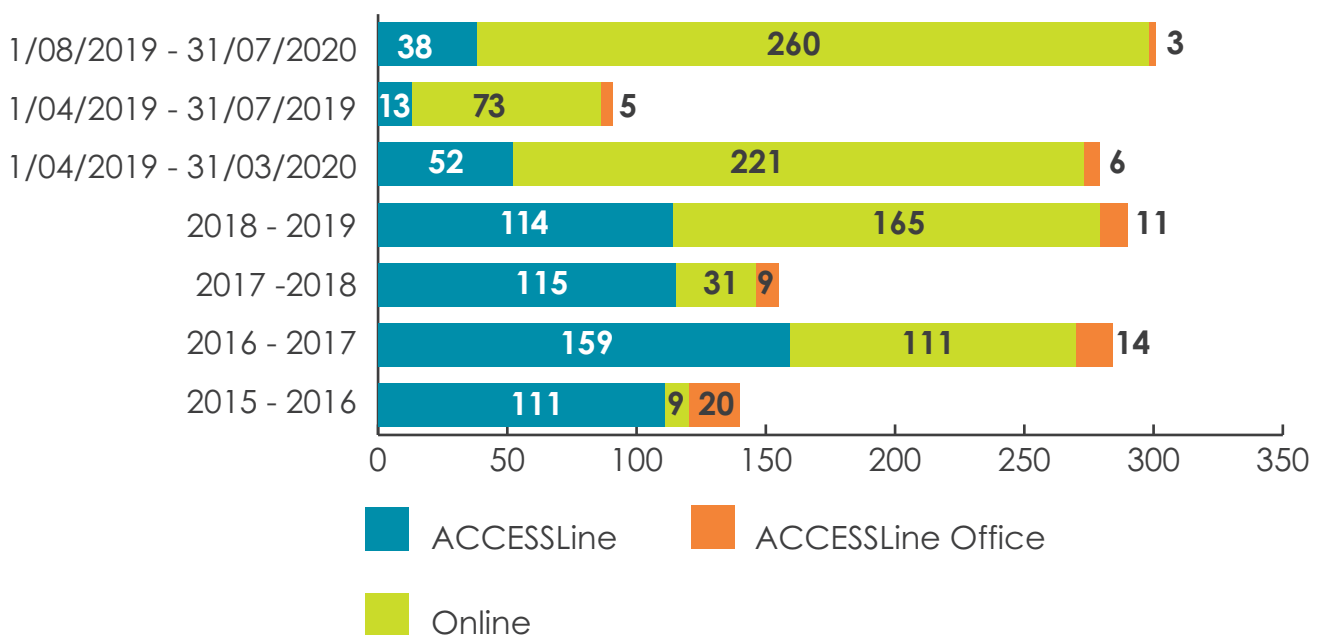
## 6 Child Protection Statistics

ACPC has previously reported annually using a financial year data set, however, from 2019/20 will begin to report on an academic year calendar. In future years, this change will bring us in line with other national reporting mechanisms for children and young people.

This annual report therefore reflects the change period between these two reporting models showing both April 2019 to July 2019 plus the academic calendar from August 2019 to July 2020. Going forward, future annual reports will show August to July statistics. Where possible, direct comparison to the same reporting period of the previous year will be referred to.

### 4.1 Engagement with the Public – Initial Contacts

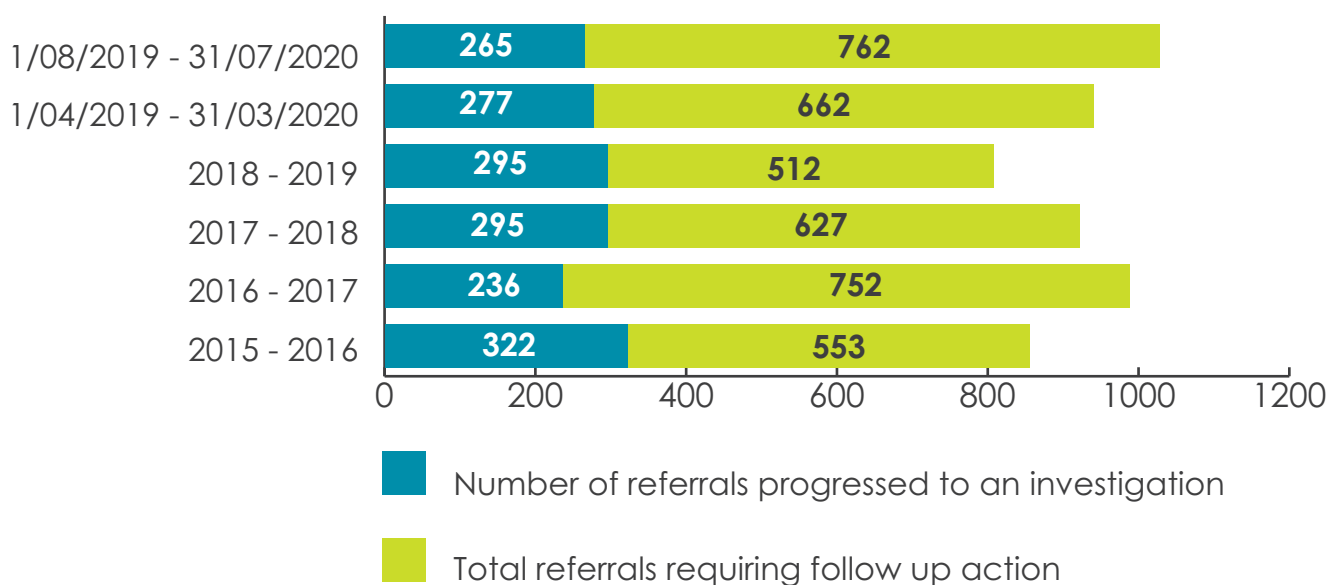
Using financial year data for comparison, a total of 221 contacts were made in 2019/20 compared to 290 the previous year. Academic year data notes the number of initial contacts as 260.



A total of 301 (academic year) contacts were made to ACCESSLine regarding concerns for children and young people. For the same period in 2019/20 (April to March) as per previous reporting periods there was a total of 279, a decrease of 11 from the previous year. ACPC continue to promote one point of contact for members of the public and other concerned parties to report concerns for children and young people.

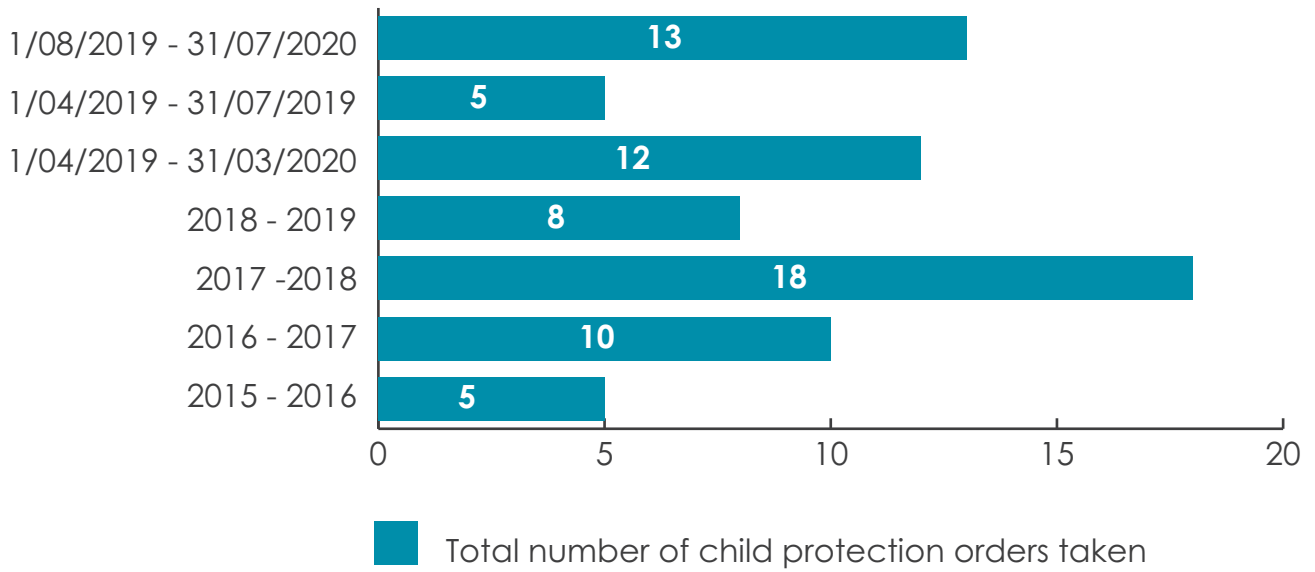
Since 2018/19, there has been a significant increase in the use of online reporting, albeit with a reduction in 2017/18 noted. There does not appear to be any particular reason for this increase, however it may be that there is greater awareness of the option to report concerns for children online, with growing use of digital technology within the general population. This may have also been influenced in 2019/20 by the COVID-19 period during which the ACCESSLine telephone line was dedicated to COVID specific information and limited services, highlighting the online reporting option. This will continue to be monitored.

#### 4.2 Referrals and Investigations



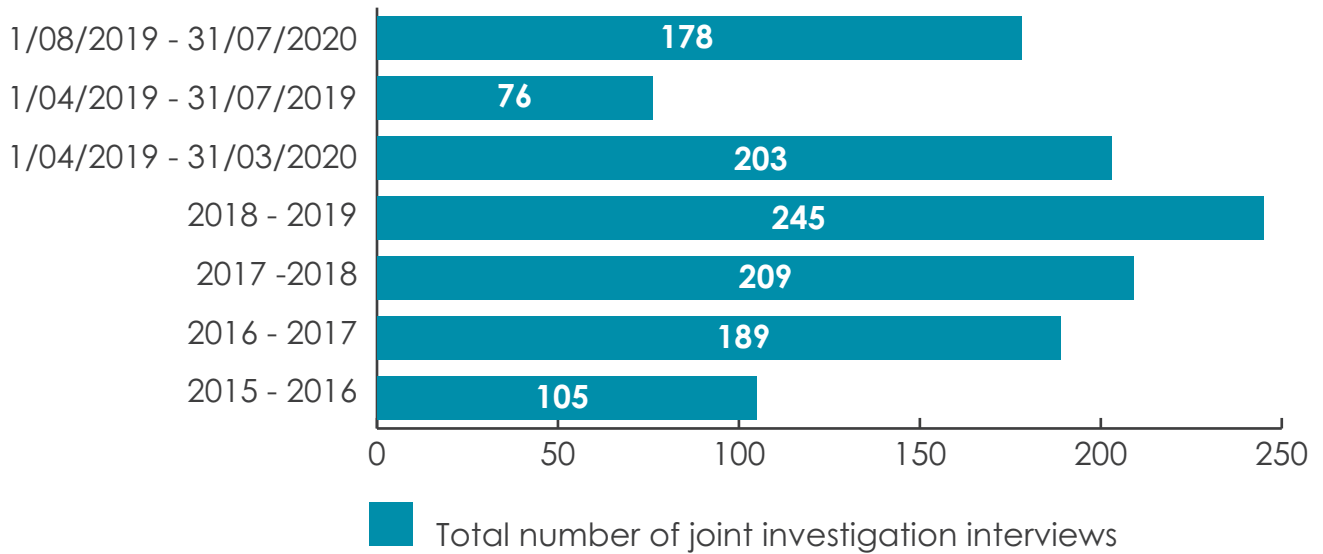
There were 1228 Child Protection referrals in 2019/20 (April to March) and 1422 in the new reporting period of August to July. Of these 1422 referrals 762 progressed to a referral requiring follow up action. This is the highest number of referrals requiring follow up action in the reporting periods above. There is a significant increase in demand on frontline social work services with similar numbers proceeding to investigation. Of 762 referrals, 35% of these progressed to investigation. This is a decrease from 58% in the previous year and whilst causality is difficult to determine, likely indicates a growing need for early help and support for families. This will continue to be monitored to ensure consistency of response. The Early Screening Assurance Group continues to ensure appropriate early help and support is available to children and families.

### 4.3 Child Protection Orders



The number of Child Protection Orders granted has increased for the 2019/20 reporting period: from eight in 2018/19 to 12 in the financial reporting period for 2019/20 and 13 in the new academic reporting period. These numbers are small and can be easily impacted by sibling groups, therefore the numbers must be treated with caution. ACPC continue to monitor any significant trends in CPOs to allow for additional analysis of other related processes. This data has also been reported weekly during the COVID-19 period allowing further opportunity for any significant change to be easily identified.

#### 4.4 Number of joint investigation interviews

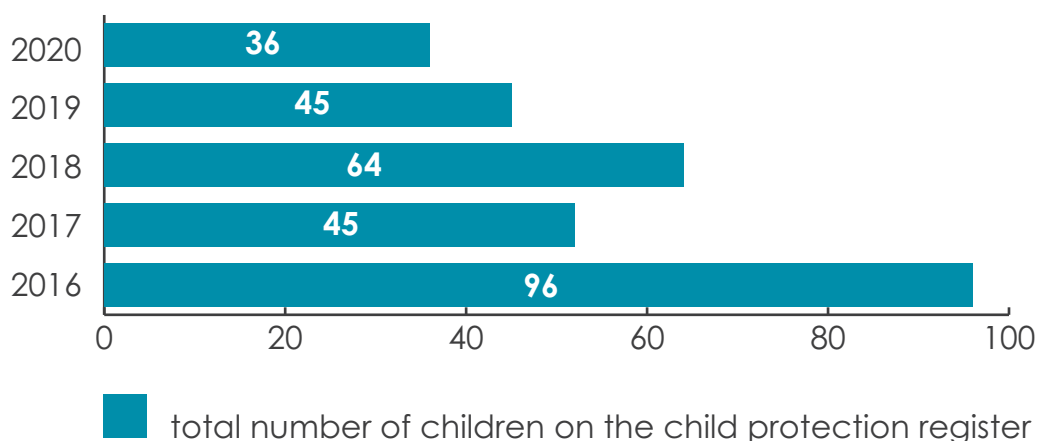


The number of Joint Investigative Interviews has increased year on year since 2015 until this current reporting period. It was reported in the ACPC Annual Report 2018-19 that it would be expected that the increasing trend would continue once new legislation and practice became embedded. Child Protection referrals and investigations have decreased during the COVID-19 period and it would be expected that the number of Joint Investigative Interviews has also decreased in this period.

## 4.5 The child protection register

The following charts and commentary offer some insight into the extent and profile of children on the Angus Child Protection Register. The child protection register is supported by the multi-agency child protection referral, assessment and decision-making process under which professionals and families come together and determine a plan to keep the child safe.

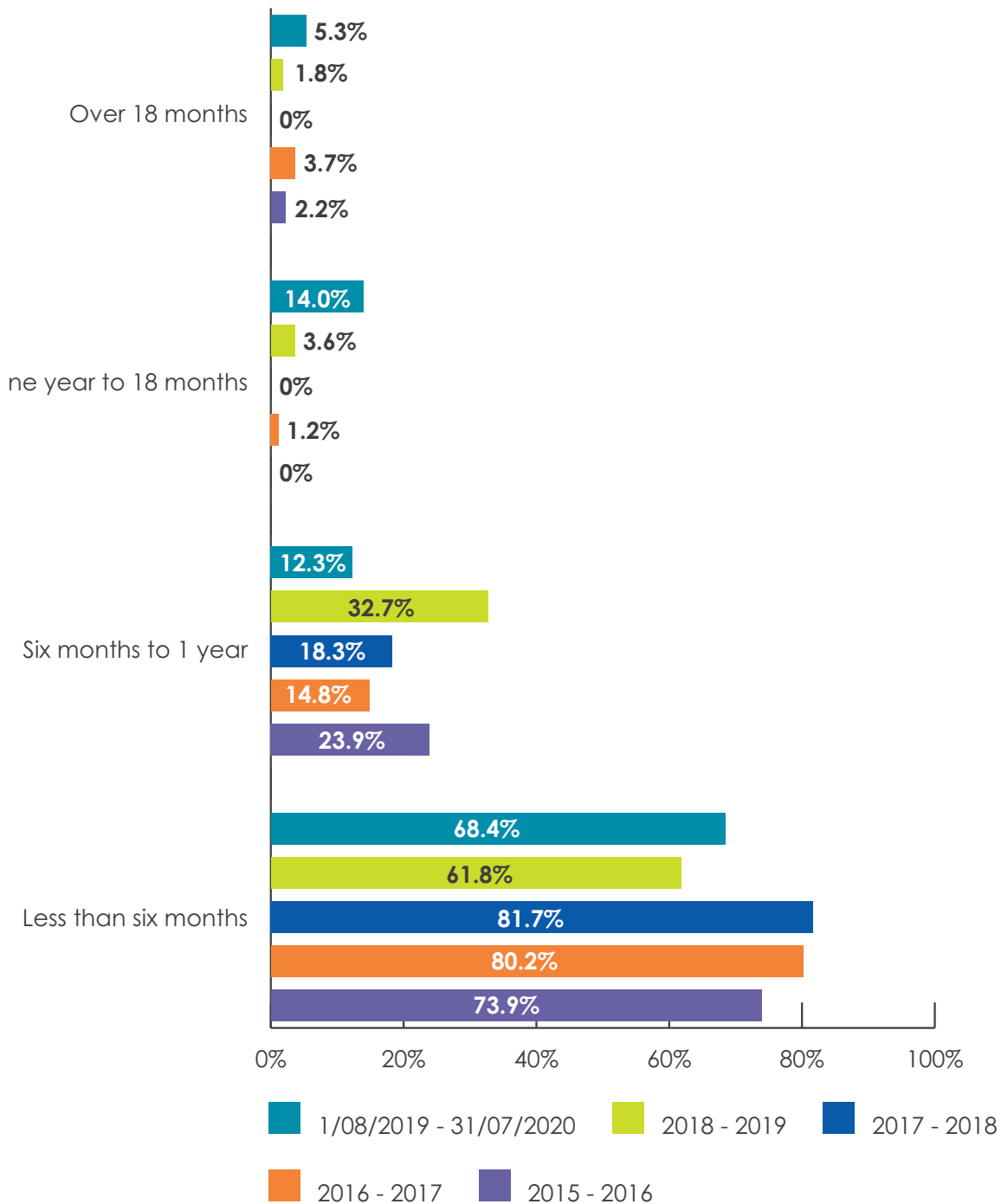
**Total children on child protection register  
as at 31 July (statutory return)**



There has been a year on year decrease in the number of children whose names are on the child protection register since 2018 and an overall reduction since 2016. ACPC have continued to explore what this data means and consider it in the context of the numbers of children who are looked after. Data shows that the reducing numbers of children on the child protection register is in line with more children becoming looked after, particularly at home with support to remain at home. There is also evidence of increased referrals to social work teams with a number of families receiving voluntary supports. ACPC have monitored and considered this data closely and alongside other evaluative activity including case file reviews and are of the view that the right children are being identified and that other supports such as those through the Children's Hearing or voluntary support plans are used where appropriate. There has been more activity to gather and analyse data during the pandemic which is contributing to a greater understanding of the interface between the different systems.

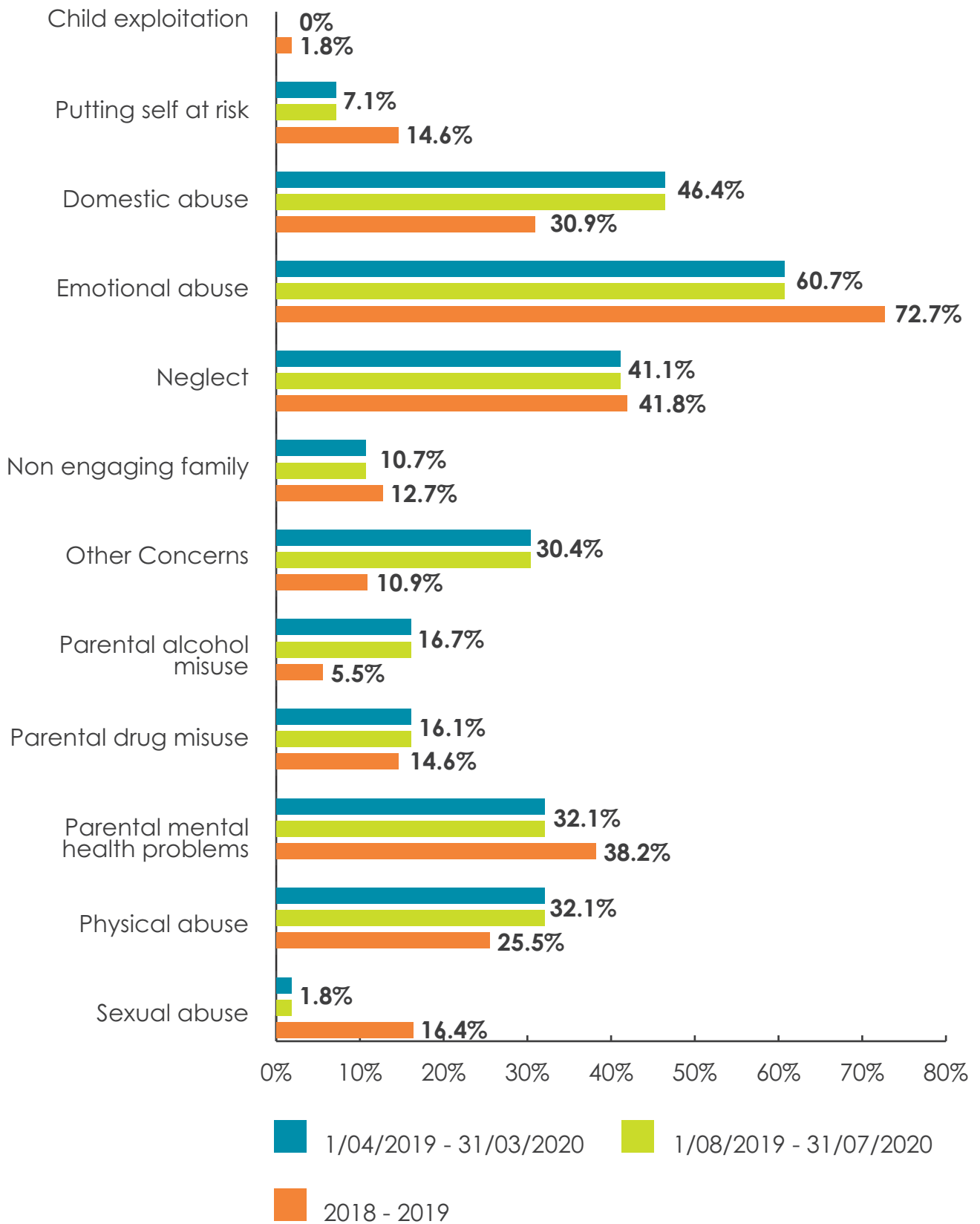


**Length of time children are on the child protection register as a percentage of the total children**



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 year we have seen an increase in the number of children on the register for more than one year and a small number of children for more than 18 months. In some cases, registration has been continued as an additional safety factor whilst a children's hearing is sought. Hearings for urgent accommodations and moves have been prioritised and therefore we are seeing some children held on the register longer. This is an area that will be closely monitored to ensure appropriate supports are available for all families.

**Category of abuse as a percentage of total children**



Multiple categories of risk can be recorded when considering Child Protection Registration and due to the small numbers, any percentage increase or decrease may not be of significance and caution needs to be exercised when considering the information below.

Emotional abuse remains the highest category of registration in 2019/20. There has been a significant increase in domestic abuse as a risk and suggests that the implementation of Safe and Together and a focus on improving domestic abuse practice has supported identification and 'naming' of the issue. The category of physical abuse has also increased. There has been a significant increase, more than double, within the parental alcohol misuse category. This correlates with information from substance services of an increase in problematic alcohol use during the pandemic.

#### 4.6 Scottish Children's Report Administration (SCRA)

SCRA continues to identify Angus as a stable local authority partner, reflecting a consistency and continuity in referral and quality of practice.

The period from August 2019 to July 2020 saw 105 non-offence (Care and Protection) referrals.

There was a significant drop in referrals between February and April 2020 as we entered national COVID-19 restrictions. A further reduction was noted between May and July. Although there is no direct evidence for this, it is possible that this significant anomaly in referral patterns was linked to the national pandemic and lack of face to face contact of professionals and wider community members with children and young people.

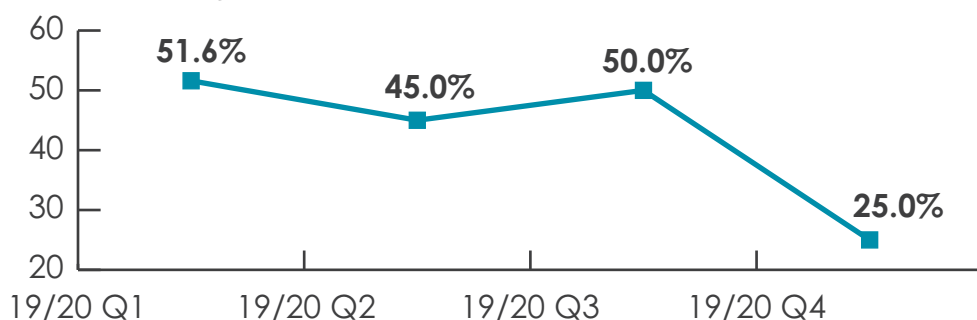
Source of children and young people referred on non-offence grounds					
	19/20 Q Aug - Oct	19/20 Q2 Nov - Jan	19/20 Q3 Feb - April	19/20 Q4 May - July	Total by source referrer
Court	3		1	1	5
Education	4	15	5		24
Other	2	2	1		5
Police	1				1
Social Work	21	22	18	11	72
<b>Total non-offence children</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>105</b>

The most common grounds were as follows:

- Lack of parental care: 57
- Failure to attend school without reasonable excuse: 32
- Close connection with a person who has carried out domestic abuse: 17
- Child's conduct harmful to self or others: 11

These were the same top four grounds as the previous year within Angus.

### Percentage of non-offence referrals taken to hearing by reporter



From the 105 non-offence referrals, 52 proceeded to a Children's Hearing and 54 were referred to the Local Authority for voluntary guidance and assistance. From May to July 2020, the conversion of referral to hearing dropped to 25%. This is much lower than is usually seen in Angus (43% in previous year), however coincided with the national lockdown. Throughout the previous three quarters of the academic year the conversion rate remained between 45% and 51.6%, this is slightly higher than the previous reporting year and indicates the continued good pre-referral screening by agencies.

The academic year from August 2019 to July 2020 also saw 58 young people referred on offence ground.

SCRA noted some initial capacity issues during the first national lockdown. These were linked to a high number of volunteer panel members being in the shielding category and the process of moving hearings onto an online format, including sourcing equipment for panel members, families, and professionals. Children's Hearing Scotland paused recruitment of panel members during 2020 meaning capacity could not increase this way. Recruitment will commence in 2021 and should address this issue.

In order to ensure that children's needs were being met, SCRA introduced a national team (in addition to local teams) who could support in areas where there was an identified backlog. Although this has not been required in Angus, it shows future contingency is in place.

## 7 Conclusion and next steps

Members of ACPC have continued to progress activity to address the strategic priorities, despite the impact of COVID-19. A number of work streams have continued to progress, all with the aim of improving outcomes for, and the safety of, children and young people in Angus.

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.



# Appendix 1

## Angus Child Protection Committee Strategic Plan 2020-2023

ACPC reports to Angus Chief Officers Group, who are committed to working together and holding each other to account to ensure this is achieved.

### **Chief Officers promise to:**

- Act together to collectively improve the outcome and experience of people in Angus who need protection.
- Be known to our teams for our visible, supportive and proactive approach.
- Reduce the negative impact of poor life experiences.
- Hold each other, services and Protecting People Committees\* accountable for keeping people in Angus safe.

*\*Protecting People Committees in Angus includes Angus Adult Protection, Child Protection, MAPPA, Violence Against Women, Drug and Alcohol and Suicide Prevention*

**The core business functions of a Child Protection Committee, as set out in the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014, as applied to local needs and practice, provide a working framework for the CPC Improvement Plan:**

### **Continuous Improvement**

- Policies, procedures and protocols
- Self-evaluation, performance management and quality assurance
- Promoting good practice
- Training and staff development

### **Strategic Planning**

- Communication, collaboration and co-operation
- Making and maintaining links with other planning fora

### **Public Information and Communication**

- Raising public awareness
- Involving children and young people and their families

### **Leadership & Governance**

The National Child Protection Improvement Programme emphasises leadership and governance as a key function of the CPC.

### **The Values of Angus Child Protection Committee**

The work of the committee will be underpinned by:

*The courage to speak up and challenge even when confronted by resistance and unfamiliarity*

*Respect for everyone in every action we take*

*The rights of Children and the UNCRC will be at the heart of all decisions and actions*

*All our work will be trauma informed*

*We will work together to ensure the most effective use is made of our joint resources and expertise*

*The priorities of the Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative*

*All our work will take a strength-based approach*

## Continuous improvement

What we want to achieve	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Measurement	Brief annual update
<p><b>1: We will support and promote a culture of learning and continuous improvement that embraces appropriate professional challenge</b></p>	<p>Child Protection learning and development opportunities are detailed within a PPA Learning and Training Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A L&amp;D framework to be developed which signposts the workforce to high quality national, regional and local learning &amp; development resources across the full range of CP related learning topics</li> <li>- A blended core programme of CP learning and development opportunities are made available to the workforce on a Tayside or Angus basis. This will evolve to reflect the workforce needs.</li> </ul>	<p>PPA Workforce Learning and Development (WLD)Subgroup</p>	<p>Feb 2021, with bi-monthly reviews</p> <p>Refreshed programme available from Apr 2021</p>	<p>12 &amp; 24 - month evaluation of framework undertaken</p> <p>Learning provided on a Tayside and Angus basis evaluated post course to measure knowledge increase.</p> <p>Longitudinal evaluations to be undertaken to measure changes in practice and identify learning gaps.</p>	



## Continuous improvement (continued)

What we want to achieve	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Measurement	Brief annual update
<b>1: We will support and promote a culture of learning and continuous improvement that embraces appropriate professional challenge</b>	Policies, procedures and protocols will regularly be reviewed and updated as required  Implementation of Nation CP Guidance including support materials, learning sessions and changes to key processes and systems (action plan to be determined following final version of guidance)	CPC Policy and Practice Subgroup	As required with annual review	Findings from national and local ICRs and SCRS are implemented in updated policies  Professionals are aware of and actively fulfil their duties in relation to child protection matters	
	PPA Policy and Guidance are consistent with local Child Protection good practice principles	CPC members	Ongoing as required	CPC members are represented within the PPA Workforce Learning and Development Subgroup	
	Protocols, procedures and timescales are adhered to by professionals	CPC Self Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Subgroup	Annually	Case file audits/practice reviews	

## Continuous improvement (continued)

What we want to achieve	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Measurement	Brief annual update
<b>2: Prevention and early intervention is prioritised to prevent lifelong disadvantage</b>	We will ensure staff are aware of the impact of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences and have the knowledge to respond appropriately	PPA WLD Subgroup	Aug 21, then ongoing	Case studies involving trauma and ACE's are incorporated into core L&D opportunities.	
	- A range of nationally developed resources to be signposted to in the L&D framework		Feb 21	LNA shows a good base level of knowledge of both TIP and ACEs.	
	- Resources provided to support team leaders/managers develop their teams understanding of trauma and ACE's.		Aug 21	Staff team across all organisations reporting more opportunity for peer learning / group supervision opportunities	

## Continuous improvement (continued)

What we want to achieve	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Measurement	Brief annual update
<b>2: Prevention and early intervention is prioritised to prevent lifelong disadvantage</b>	We will ensure that our key processes to support identification and early help and support to children, young people and families are clear, understood and regularly reviewed and promoted	Policy and Practice Subgroup	From April 2021 and 6 monthly thereafter (reporting periods are April – September)	Early Screening Assurance Group will carry out quarterly case sampling or Police Child Concern Reports, impact and outcomes and report six monthly to the P&P Sub Committee on findings, good practice and areas for improvement	
			July 2021	Understand the increase in referrals to social work over previous 12 months; ensure early intervention/GIRFEC Pathways are being used by analysis of data and exploration of key issues including impact of Covid on referral pathways.	
			June 2021	Map work on referrals for support for expectant mothers (Glen Clova) and learn from the findings	

## Continuous improvement (continued)

What we want to achieve	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Measurement	Brief annual update
<b>3: All children will have a voice in decisions that are made about them</b>	We will provide various methods and mediums for children and families to engage with our services	CPC Policy and Practice Subgroup		Online surveys and interviews of children and young people	
	Embed learning from the PREpare pilot to include opportunities for parent to have a PREpare meeting before a conference to inform a strength-based protection plan.		June 2021	Audit surveys Stakeholder interviews Feedback from those with lived experience of the child protection systems within Angus	
	Implement the TRIC Good Practice Standards into Child Protection Work		October 2021		
	Extend advocacy provision to children in the child protection system to ensure their views are represented at the Case Conference and through the child protection process		May 2021		
	Improve strength-based child protection planning by training Chairs in this approach, reviewing our local approach and tools to support this.		December 2021		

## Continuous improvement (continued)

What we want to achieve	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Measurement	Brief annual update
<b>3: All children will have a voice in decisions that are made about them</b>	We will embed the learning from the Isabelle SCR into practice	CPC	Quarterly	Regular review and update of the SCR Assessment plan	

## Leadership and governance

What we want to achieve	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Measurement	Brief annual update
<b>4: We will ensure strong leadership and accountability through Angus CPC and COG, by improving the use of data, performance reporting, self-evaluation and planning</b>	COG to be made aware of the findings, recommendations and actions from Initial and Significant Case Reviews	Independent Chair	As required		
	Self-evaluation and performance data is used to identify improvements, risks and trends and reported to CPC and COG	Self-Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Subgroup	Quarterly	Dataset is in place Performance framework is in place that all partners contribute to Data is regularly analysed and used to inform CPC priorities, actions and workforce development Data is used to benchmark with comparator Authorities	
	Risk Register is updated regularly including with mitigating activity and reported to COG	CPC members and Lead Officer	Monthly		

## Leadership and governance (continued)

What we want to achieve	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Measurement	Brief annual update
<b>4: We will ensure strong leadership and accountability through Angus CPC and COG, by improving the use of data, performance reporting, self-evaluation and planning</b>	A Self Evaluation Framework will be developed and implemented	Self-Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Subgroup	May 2021	Members are aware of and actively endorse their role as CPC member	
	CPC Induction process is in place and adopted by all CPC members	Lead Officer	On appointment		

## Strategic planning

What we want to achieve	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Measurement	Brief annual update
<b>5: CPC priorities, business and practice is informed by those who use services</b>	Review language used in child protection and ensure it is non-judgemental, remove acronyms in public facing information and encourage plain English in all interactions including assessments, meetings, communications (actions to be determined)	CPC Policy and Practice Subgroup	To be established from September 2021 onwards	Feedback from key stakeholders specifically young people  Consultation with young people through the Corporate Parenting Board	
<b>6. CPC are engaged with wide forums across Angus and Tayside</b>	CPC contributes to Protecting People Angus Policies, Guidance and joint initiatives	Independent Chair and Lead Officer	Ongoing as required	PPA Policy and Guidance are consistent with local Child Protection legislation and good practice principles  Number of other plans child protection is recognised within	
	CPC contribute to work with Tayside Partners where this brings added value	Independent Chair and Lead Officer	Monthly meetings of Lead Officers, Regular TRIC meetings and action plan	Number of joint Tayside policies and initiatives	
	PPA Learning and Development Sub-group contribute to the development and implementation of the Tayside L&D plan	PPA L&D Sub	Ongoing	The PPA L&D Subgroup is represented on the TRIC PG5 L&D group	

## Public information and communication

What we want to achieve	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Measurement	Brief annual update
<p><b>Children and young people understand their rights and know where to go to seek advice, support, help and protection</b></p>	<p>Ensure one point of access to children's rights information, local services, online safety and what to expect in child protection is available online and promoted in Angus</p> <p>Information is readily available and accessible to children and families</p> <p>There is a plan with clear messages and communications using different mediums linked to key themes</p> <p>We will make use of technology to ensure equal access, inclusion, engagement</p>	<p>CPC Policy and Practice Subgroup</p>	<p>May 2021</p>	<p>A Protecting People Angus website in place and stats showing how often it is accessed</p> <p>Feedback from parents, carers, young people</p> <p>Strategy is in place and actions undertaken</p> <p>Schools programme audit and feedback</p>	



## Public information and communication (continued)

What we want to achieve	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Measurement	Brief annual update
<p><b>Parents and carers and the public know what to do when they have concerns about a child risk</b></p>	<p>Individuals across Angus are supported to identify and report child protection concerns</p> <p>Ensure one point of access to children's rights information, local services, online safety and what to expect in child protection is available online and promoted in Angus</p>	CPC Policy and Practice Subgroup	May 2021	<p>A Protecting People Angus website in place and stats showing how often it is accessed</p> <p>Regular analysis of dataset</p>	

**This plan is directly linked to other partnership plans for children, young people and families, specifically:**

- Getting it Right Monitoring and Evaluation Group
- Corporate Parenting Lead Officers Group
- AVAWP Practice Development Subgroup
- Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative Priority Group 5 Action Plan

## Appendix 2

# Thematic practice review: Domestic abuse - Findings

Area of Work	Key Strengths	Key Areas for Development
<p><b>Responding to CP &amp; Wellbeing concerns.</b></p>	<p>Identifying risk, initial assessment (including analysis) and initial safety planning.</p> <p>Prompt responses.</p> <p>Multi-agency working and use of services e.g. Domestic Abuse Officer.</p> <p>Engagement with the family.</p>	<p>Some delays in the CP process.</p> <p>Gaps in the Risk assessment and planning process, including missed risks; tasks not completed.</p> <p>Procedure not being followed i.e. IRD held with all necessary services in attendance.</p> <p>Delays in accessing specialist support for the family.</p> <p>Need for more engagement with families and support provided at the Early Help stage.</p> <p>Some inconsistency in response to concerns, leading to parental confusion around decision making.</p>
<p><b>Risk/Need Assessments</b></p>	<p>Comprehensive assessments which include family histories and where risk/needs are clearly identified.</p> <p>Use of assessment tools.</p> <p>Some assessments include an analysis of impact on the child and conclude with a clear recommendation.</p> <p>Report formats and content that are clear and easy to read.</p> <p>Interagency support/advice given e.g. Children with Disabilities / Domestic Abuse.</p>	<p>Missing relevant information and not identifying all risks/needs for the child.</p> <p>Lack of analysis of impact on the child leading to recommendations that appear to have no rationale or reasoning behind them.</p> <p>Narrow focus of assessment.</p>
<p><b>Child's Planning</b></p>	<p>Plans that includes all relevant individuals/services with clear professional roles/tasks.</p> <p>Clear link between the child's needs and tasks.</p> <p>Some SMART plans.</p>	<p>Majority of plans were not SMART.</p> <p>Many plans were static with no changes or updates e.g. Core Group plans.</p> <p>Tasks were too generic and not always linked to an identified need.</p>

## Thematic practice review: Domestic abuse - Findings (continued)

Area of Work	Key Strengths	Key Areas for Development
<b>Chronologies</b>	<p>Consisted of appropriate Significant Events and included positive ones.</p> <p>Included information that originated from other sources / services.</p> <p>Historical information was included that gave a good overview of the child's experiences.</p>	<p>Significant events not included, and some were focussed on single agency information only.</p> <p>Missing information i.e. source, impact.</p> <p>Level of detail not appropriate – examples of too much and too little information.</p> <p>The format was hard to read and understand.</p>
<b>Seeking and recording family views.</b>	<p>Views clearly represented in reports and behavioural representations of the child if they were pre/non-verbal.</p> <p>Parents attended and contributed to meetings.</p> <p>Regular and flexible contact with families.</p> <p>Recognition of communication needs and support provided when necessary.</p>	<p>Difficulties around engaging with parents who were reluctant to engage or did not accept the concerns – mainly male parents.</p> <p>Non-resident parent not included in decision making for child.</p> <p>Lack of access to advocacy for children and parents.</p> <p>Some missing views of child and family in reports.</p>
<b>Domestic Abuse (DA) Practice</b>	<p>In some cases, DA was recognised, assessed and addressed by workers.</p> <p>Evidence of sharing professional knowledge leading to DA sensitive practice.</p> <p>Some positive outcomes identified for families.</p>	<p>Coercive Control not recognised or understood by workers.</p> <p>DA concerns identified but the impact on children and family not fully explored, considered, assessed or acted on by workers.</p> <p>Children and family not receiving specialist support for DA.</p> <p>Discredited approaches still in evidence i.e. focus on mothering as opposed to parenting; anger management and alcohol use seen as the cause for DA; focus on 'failure to protect' by mother.</p> <p>Low level of worker knowledge and confidence around Safe and Together Approaches.</p>

# Appendix 3

## Glossary of acronyms

ACE's	Adverse Childhood Experiences
ACPC	Angus Child Protection Committee
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ADP	Alcohol and Drug Partnership
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
AVAWP	Angus Violence Against Women Partnership
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CHS	Children's Hearing Scotland
CLOG	Chairs and Lead Officers
COG	Angus Chief Officer Group
CP	Child Protection
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CPO	Child Protection Order
DA	Domestic Abuse
ESAG	Early Screening Assurance Group
GCP2	Graded Care Profile 2 (Neglect assessment tool)
GIRFEC	Getting It Right For Every Child
ICR	Initial Case Review
IRD	Inter-Agency Referral Discussions
L&D	Learning and Development
LNA	Local Needs Analysis
LO	Lead Officers
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
NQSW	Newly Qualified Social Worker
PPA	Protecting People Angus
P&P Subgroup	Practice and Policy Subgroup
PRAM	Pre-birth Referral Allocation Meeting
SCR	Significant Case Review

SCRA	Scottish Children's Report Administration
SECI	Self-Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Subgroup
SMART	Specific – Measurable – Attainable – Relevant – Time Bound
SSSC	Scottish Social Service Council
TIP	Trauma Informed Practice
TRIC	Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative
TRIC PG5	Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative Priority Group 5
VPD	Vulnerable Person Database
WLD	Workforce Learning and Development Subgroup