

ANGUS COUNCIL

**SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 7 MARCH 2024
FAMILY, EDUCATION & JUSTICE – 26 MARCH 2024**

**ANGUS CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE (ACPC) ANNUAL REPORT
AUGUST 2022 – JULY 2023**

REPORT BY KATHRYN LINDSAY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE ANGUS COUNCIL AND MEMBERS OF

ANGUS CHIEF OFFICERS' GROUP

1. ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report presents the Angus Child Protection Committee Annual Report for August 2022 to July 2023. 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. This report is submitted to provide assurance to elected members on multi-agency child protection work in Angus and seeks approval for the annual report.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

- 2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within:

The **Angus Community Plan 2022-30**:

- Provide the best start in life for children.
- Improve physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Create more opportunities for people to live well and achieve their personal goals.

The **Council Plan 2023-2028**:

- Support children, young people and adults to access appropriate opportunities which allow them to progress in their learning.
- Deliver the Angus "Our Bright Futures Plan."
- When children cannot safely live at home, keep our children local in Angus, providing for their education and family needs.

The **Tayside Plan** for Children, Young People and Families 2021-23

- Our children having the best start in life in a nurturing environment.
- Our children growing up healthy, confident and resilient with improving physical and mental health and strengthened emotional wellbeing.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny and Audit Committee:

- (i) Considers and notes the Angus Child Protection Committee (ACPC) Annual Report 2022 to 2023 (appended to this report); and
- (ii) Considers and notes the key trends and areas for development emerging from the report.

- 3.2 It is recommended that the Family, Education & Justice Committee:

- (i) Reviews the content of the Angus Child Protection Committee (ACPC) Annual Report 2022 to 2023 (appended to this report); and
- (ii) Notes the Council's cross departmental responsibilities in relation to Child Protection.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The previous ACPC Annual Report 2021 to 2022 covered the period August 2021 to July 2022. This is in line with national reporting requirements (the academic year reporting period rather than financial year reporting period).
- 4.2 This Annual Report of ACPC for the period August 2022 to July 2023 presents the work undertaken across Angus by individual agencies and in partnership to deliver national, Tayside-wide, and local child protection outcomes to improve the lives of children at risk of harm.
- 4.3 The Annual Report was approved by ACPC on 26 January 2024 and the Angus Chief Officer Group on 22nd January 2024.
- 4.4 The ACPC is chaired by an Independent Chair who offers leadership, direction, scrutiny and challenge to all members of the ACPC. The ACPC meets minimally 4 times per year with an expectation that ACPC members ensure a high level of attendance either in person or by an appropriate delegate. Attendance at ACPC is reported to Angus Chief Officers Group (COG) as part of routine reporting of the ACPC Risk Register. There are no exceptional or unmanaged risks highlighted in the annual report.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 ACPC have continued to work together to improve child protection practice in Angus throughout the reporting period.
- 5.2 Of note during the reporting period are:
- The ongoing work of multi-agency partners to ensure that children and their families continue to be well supported as we continue to be living through the cost of living crisis and further austerity cuts.
 - The Involving Dads multi-agency steering group was formed in April 2022, to support the recognition of the role of Dads and father figures in families and increase professional engagement with them both in terms of engagement and support and identifying and managing risk to children.
 - The Safe and Together Champions model was further rolled out in partnership with the Angus Violence Against Women Partnership. By the end of the reporting period, 81 trained Champions were working across multi-agency services.
 - A multi-agency Child Protection Practice Review was undertaken which consisted of a four-tiered approach to quality assure multi-agency child protection practice. This model was a test of change from earlier practice review models. The scale of evaluation activity at stages 1, 3 and 4 has provided valid and reliable data. An evaluation of the process is not yet complete however this will be evaluated in due course and will inform future audits. A full report analysing the findings will be available in the next reporting period. This will highlight good practice as well as areas for development across the multi-agency workforce.
- 5.3 The Pre-birth Resource Allocation Meeting (PRAM) statistics within this report cover a six-month period rather than the full reporting year. This is due to the way that data was previously collected prior to moving to an academic reporting period. Going forward this will be changed to align with the annual report and from 2023-24 a full year of PRAM data will be available.
- PRAM is chaired by Social Work with representatives from health and police in attendance. Attendance from key stakeholders continues to be excellent with 100% attendance being noted and contributes to robust decision making.
- 5.4 Key trends from the child protection statistics within the Annual Report demonstrate a continued increase in demand across frontline child protection services, including:
- A steadily increasing number of referrals requiring follow up action by services.

- From 2021-22 to 2022-23 there was an increase of 212 (24%) in referrals. This is a steadier increase than previous years.
 - There was an increase of 38 (32%) in referrals to PRAM from 2021-2022 to 2022-2023.
 - The number of Child Concern Reports received from Police Scotland have remained reasonably stable, however, the number of children being included in each report has increased year on year. In the last reporting year there was a rise of 440 (10%).
 - The number of children on the Angus Child Protection Register decreased from 61 to 40 in the year. This is a return to similar numbers as in 2020-21. Domestic abuse and parental mental health continue to be the most commonly recorded factors indicating risk of significant harm.
- 5.5 The ACPC have continued to use the national dataset at a local level to identify any themes and trends within the child protection multi-agency work. The Self Evaluation and Continuous Improvement (SECI) Subgroup scrutinise the data on a quarterly basis and report back to the ACPC.
- 5.6 The 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 2021. The plan will also be flexible and regularly updated to include any emerging national or local priorities.
- 5.7 Areas for development and progression:
- Continue to analyse data through use of the local dataset and the roll out of the national dataset. The SECI subgroup will provide the ACPC with trends and themes from the data and this will inform priority areas going forward. In particular, the development of robust data gathering systems will inform the writing of the strategic plan from 2024-2027.
 - Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) to be introduced within Angus for children requiring joint investigative interviewing in response to child protection concerns. This will contribute to the range of improvements being made to remove the need for children to give evidence in court and so reduce the potential of further trauma for child victims and witnesses.
 - Make progress towards the implementation of the Bairns Hoose Principles. Scottish Government set out in 2023 that “The overall vision of the Bairns Hoose in Scotland is that all children in Scotland who have been victims of or witness to abuse or violence, as well as children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused significant harm or abuse, will have access to trauma informed recovery, support, and justice.
 - Continue to progress implementation of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021.
 - Ensure that the CPC continue to play an active role in the identification of risk in a landscape where there is increasing demands across all services.
 - Further align with other Protecting People Committees to ensure that there is a whole family approach and less duplication of work.
 - We will continue to strive for all Angus children to have a voice in decisions that are made about them. Angus Leading the Promise work will continue, ensuring that children and young people understand their rights and know where to go to seek advice, support, help and protection.
 - The third sector representative vacancy has not to date to been filled. This is a priority going forward.
- 5.8 Members are also advised this is Ms Todd’s last presentation of the CPC Annual Report and she will move on from the post of independent chair in March 2024. Ms Todd is thanked on behalf of the Angus Child Protection Committee for her commitment and service as the Independent Chair over the last 5 years.

6. PROPOSALS

- 6.1 The Scrutiny and Audit Committee scrutinises and comments on the content of the ACPC Annual Report August 2022 to July 2023 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.
- 6.2 The Angus Council meeting is assured by the content of the report and recognises the ongoing multi-agency endeavours to keep children and young people within Angus safe.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 There are no risks arising directly from this report.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

- 10.1 A screening assessment has been undertaken and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required for the following reason(s): - no full EIA is required as this is a report for information and scrutiny.

11. CONSULTATION

Director of Finance

Director of Legal, Governance and Change

Chief Social Work Officer

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices: CPC Annual Report 2022-23