

Children's Services Performance Report 2019/20

01. Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes

Overall 2019-20 has been a successful year for children's services. In March 2020 the Care Inspectorate completed their Joint Inspection of Children's Services the findings of which shall become available in September 2020.

Foster Carers and Adopters: We currently have 54 foster carers who are all at capacity and working hard to support vulnerable children and families. Though a number of foster carers retired during 2019/20 we have been fortunate to replace our fostering population. The recent increase to our fees and allowances coupled with streamlining of some of our fostering processes will hopefully have a greater impact in 20/21.

Adoption and Permanence Planning: Midlothian Council obtained 6 Adoption Orders which were granted between April 2019 and April 2020. Midlothian Council also moved 2 children to their adoptive families. The Care Inspectorate did an unannounced visit in February 2020 and the service received a very positive report where the evaluative Grades awarded were all 'Good'. The Care Inspectorate commented on the quality of our own internal mechanism for recruiting adopters (and foster Carers) and asked that this be continued.

Continuing Care: Many of our foster carers are moving on to become Continuing Care Carers and in most cases are dual registered. We have worked hard to strengthen our systems and processes for continuing Care which has resulted in the Care Inspectorate agreeing to regulate Midlothian Council as an Adult-Continuing Care service.

Residential Care Homes: Our care homes continue to provide residential care for up to 9 young people with one emergency bed. Learning and development sessions for the staff have included a focus on adapting a Continuing Care approach for young people aged 16+, and in developing a robust trauma approach base when working with traumatised young people whose behaviours manifest through challenging and risky actions. This has resulted in a more confident staff team as well as more settled young people.

Kinship Care: Midlothian's Kinship Carers continue to be a key resource for children and young people who can no longer remain with their parents. Children's services remain committed to supporting kinship carers both financially and emotionally to ensure that all placements are offered the right support when needed. This was borne out in the recent increase in allowances which was also awarded to Kinship Carers. The PACE statistics for 2018/19 illustrate that the majority of children (70%) who are unable to live with their birth parents, were provided with a secure and stable setting through a kinship arrangement. This is in line with our policy direction to secure children within an extended family arrangement wherever possible.

Youth Justice Strategy: The Midlothian Youth Justice Strategy, 2020-022 was developed during 2019/2020 to provide a robust approach to tackling youth offending and using diversion through intervening at an earlier stage. The draft will be finalised in 2020 and will highlight a wide partnership approach involving Police Scotland colleagues and the Early Intervention and Prevention Development Officer to examine and review process for managing youth offending in Midlothian. We have developed positive links and networking with the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice (CYCJ) and the Scottish Government to focus on priority themes;

- . Advancing the whole system approach
- . Improving life chances
- . Developing Capacity and Improvement

Hawthorn Family Learning Centre –This continues to be an invaluable resource that supports those from 0-8 years of age as well as pregnant young mums and support for dads. As a result of COVID-19 a review of the services was postponed, however the learning and changes in practice during lock down will prove invaluable once we begin to emerge from the lockdown phase and begin a full review of the service.

Mental Health: The Midlothian Early Action Partnership (MEAP) project started in January 2019, to effect system change so that children, young people and young adults get timely and appropriate mental health support. The first year of the project has provided a learning journey, with opportunities to review and refine our approach to the project delivery. In January 2020, the first annual MEAP report was approved by the National Lottery.

They observed that the report evidenced a 'strong sense of genuine partnership working within this project'. The funders are pleased with progress made to date and are supportive of the plans for 2020.

Between January and March our priorities were:

- 1.To commission a mapping a mapping process to understand the mental health supports available to children, young people and young adults in Midlothian. In February 2020, MEAP commissioned Dartington to undertake this work. Initially due to start in March 2020, this was put on hold due to the pandemic.
- 2.To establish a comprehensive evaluation framework to include the Tests of Change and overall project performance; this is underway.
- 3.Explore new Tests of Change ideas, using geographic, education and health data currently available.

As part of the wider project, Midlothian Sure Start continued to undertake the Test of Change around embedding trauma-informed practice within primary schools. This will continue in earnest during 2020. On 24th March a decision was made by the Steering Group to put the project on hold for some months, to allow staff involved to respond to immediate COVID-19 priorities focused on preventing loss of life and protecting the most at risk in society.

In order to ensure that the work MEAP is doing is not duplicated we are setting up a strategic planning group for children and young people's mental health, to ensure that all the work undertaken across the community planning partnership is set out in a plan with identified actions to take forward. The strategic planning group shall have the responsibility of ensuring the plan is taken forward and to bring a progress report to the GIRFEC Board on a 6 monthly basis

02. Challenges and Risks

Young People with complex Needs: Children's Services budget continues to remain a significant and ongoing challenge. Some of this is in part as a result of several factors:

Secure care is a very expensive resource and often children's services have limited input as to whether or not a young person is secured. Therefore the importance of having a multi-agency approach to young people who are at risk of secure is promoted via the Vulnerable Young Person's Protocol.

Young people who require a high level of specialised care and have severe and complex needs. Whilst there is a lack of specialised resources for those young people who require this high level of support across Scotland, within Midlothian we have opened two additional houses to accommodate 5 young people. We have commissioned two different agencies to provide their packages of care and support. This good practice model allows the young people to remain within their communities, close to their families and attending Saltersgate School. Ongoing work around the transition from school into adult services continues.

Mental Health: CAMHS waiting list continues to be a challenge however within Midlothian we are keen to work together to identify other alternatives which could support the child/young person. A strategic mental health group is being established which shall report into the GIRFEC Board. We are keen to ensure that we have a good oversight of all the resources available and to capture the scale of need for wellbeing and specialised mental health services. We liaise regularly with our colleagues from CAHMS in order to address any immediate concerns.

Continuing Care: Following the launch of the guidance to support children's services staff meet the Continuing Care requirements, the Care Inspectorate have recently registered Children's Services to provide care to adults. This means that the Family Placement Team will now be registered as a service provider for three service areas, adults, fostering and adoption. In effect, some carers will be dual registered as both adult carers and foster carers and governed by the associated legislation and regulation.

After Care: Similarly to Continuing Care, the challenges of delivering services to those leaving the care system is significant. We continue to liaise with our own housing department, other local authorities and Scottish Government to identify a model that supports young people who are 16+. Whilst legislation through the 2014 Act promotes continuing care the reality of 'after care' is very different. We have however been successful in securing funding for the next 3 years with the National Housing Project to look at how we can better plan and support those young people who wish to leave our residential houses or foster care and work towards having their own tenancy with extensive support.

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry: The Section 21 request has been extended to September 2020 and work is ongoing around identifying all foster carers back to 1930 and analysing the data to identify if there were any allegations made around abuse and other areas of practice.

Integrated Children's Services Plan: A new 3 year plan was to be completed by March 2020, however because of COVID-19 this was not possible. The plan is almost completed and should be signed off by NHS Lothian in October 2020. The Joint Children's Services Inspection was completed in Mid-March 2020 a week before lock down. The final report shall be available on the 1st September 2020.

Children Services

Midlothian



Successes and Challenges

Corporate Performance Indicators (latest)

● 5 ● 8 ? 0 ? 6

Service Plan Actions (latest)

● 0 ● 7 ? 0

Service Plan PIs (latest)

● 0 ● 4 ? 0 ? 2

Service Risks (latest)

▲ 3

Corporate PIs Off Target as at 31st March 2020

PIs ● 5

Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence (cumulative)

Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days

Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working days

Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 1

Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 2

Service Plan Actions Off Target as at 31st March 2020

Actions ● 0

No Off Target Actions

Service Plan PIs Off Target as at 31st March 2020

PIs ● 0

No Off Target PIs

High Risks as at 31st March 2020

Risks ▲ 0

3 Risks at Medium and 0 Risks are high

Key
PIs
● Off Target
● On Target
? Data Only Indicator
? Data is not yet available

Key
Actions
▲ Off Target
● On Target/Complete
? Data is not yet available

Key
PIs
● Off Target
● On Target
? Data Only Indicator
? Data is not yet available

Key
Risks
▲ High Risk / Medium Risk
? Data is not yet available