

## Children's Services, Partnership and Communities Performance Report 2021/22



### 01. Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes

#### Q1 21/22:

**Our Vision: All children, young people, adults and families in Midlothian are supported to be the best they can be. This is achieved through a nurturing, respectful and collaborative approach that promotes wellbeing, equity and inclusion.**

Within children's services Q1 has continued to be impacted by Covid and some restrictions, including the increase in number of staff who have had to self-isolate. Staff continue to work on a rota basis within Eskdaill Court until such times that Scottish Government guidance allows for a return of all staff. This is very important in relation to ensuring safe practice where there are sufficient checks and balances in place for workers to liaise with peers and seniors around decision-making. In addition we have newly qualified social workers returning to the service who can only learn the trade when sitting in an office listening and being mentored by more experienced staff.

There has been a 45% increase in the number of referrals from Q1 20/21 (1309) to 21/22 (1893). Police referrals into the service accounted for 38% of all referrals which is a 7% reduction from last year at this time. 18% of the referrals were for financial assistance and 6% increase from last year and 14% of referrals related to domestic violence and 2% increase on last year's stats at this time.

#### CLL

Highlights : There has been a good start made in Q1 in re-engaging learners within CLLE with a significant number from areas of deprivation with 51% of those engaging with us from the 40% SIMD areas. There has been a high number of young people and adults receiving 1:1 employability support with 407 within the first quarter of this year. 32 community groups have engaged with the team to seek support and advice relating to community issues. Early indications show that a higher number of young people are interested in starting foundation apprenticeship courses offered by CLLE.

The People and Partnerships directorate held another Directorate Conference in May, which focused on Nurture and attendance to ensure we have a shared endeavour across the directorate to work collaboratively and have a consistent approach.

#### The Promise

There has been one meeting with the team from Promise about our vision in Midlothian. Whilst we are committed to the foundations, there needs to be awareness that there has been no funding attached to this transformational approach to 'fixing a broken system'. Staff with the champions group continue to meet to discuss changes to practice which shall improve the experience of children and young people who are in care.

#### UNCRC

In March 2021 the MSPs voted unanimously for the UNCRC Bill to become enshrined in domestic law in Scotland. This has been challenged by UK ministers, therefore royal assent will not be granted until judges have considered the challenge. This should hopefully happen towards the latter part of this year.

#### National Child Protection Guidance

The new National Child Protection Guidance shall hopefully be published soon, despite reports suggesting that this would happen in July, to date we are still waiting. The guidance brings significant changes to practice which are welcome but again there is no funding to sustain the changes being mandated.

#### Equity and Inclusion

The new Equity and Inclusion GIRFEC subgroup is well established and a plan has been approved with key areas of work identified: ASN review, attendance and engagement in education; nurture; poverty and attainment and family learning.

### **Reducing Poverty**

The income maximisation project has demonstrated that this was a successful pilot which shall continue to be a part of children's services work going forward. This early intervention approach of supporting families to ensure they access the benefits they are entitled to, is a key support in helping families get out of the poverty trap.

### **Mental Health**

There are a range of strategic groups in place to review and develop the local supports for mental Health. The Mental Health strategic group is now established and developing a plan for 2021/2022. MEAP planning is progressing to explore new tests of change to address early action and the Community Mental Health Fund has now reviewed further applications to support new initiatives for this financial year. There has been acknowledgement that CAMHS are struggling with waiting lists and NHS Lothian is an area of concern. However we are liaising with CAMHS on a regular basis to ensure those most in need are seen immediately and signposting others onto earlier or more appropriate services to offer mental health support. We are aware of additional funding from SG which has become available and liaising with them to agree a plan going forward.

### **Kinship Care**

Children in kinship placements represent the highest percentage of the looked after population at 34.7%. The increase of kinship care has been a national trend particularly during the Covid pandemic. This trend is a positive one however we need to ensure investment in supporting our kinship carers as we increase the numbers. The Family Group Decision Making Team will lead on this work.

### **National Housing Project**

The National Housing Project has successfully recruited 9 young people into their own homes over the past year despite the pandemic. The next cohort of young people are being identified and work will commence soon to ensure they are ready for the next transition.

### **5-12 Residential provision**

Following February Council where the council report to purchase a residential house for a maximum of 3 children was approved. We can now report we have purchased a house in Bilston and are now starting to plan the next phase which will include meeting the neighbours, sourcing furniture and making changes to the internal home environment and the recruitment of a staffing team.

### **CLL**

The Communities, Lifelong learning and Employability Service (CLLE) have been supporting communities in partnership with the Red Cross to provide support with prescription delivery and shopping. The team have been a key partner in the delivery of the vouchers for the Midlothian Food and Key Essential Fund delivering 4613 vouchers and fuel support. The team have continued to deliver on their responsibility to support all age groups to build skills for learning life and work. The learning offer has been blended online and face to face in small groups or gate visit when permitted. We have supported vulnerable individuals throughout the last three months specifically young people, families seeking employment.

## **02. Challenges and Risks**

### **Q1 21/22:**

#### **Impact of Covid-19**

Additional issues around children and young people having access to early mental health support is an area of work being prioritised.

### **CLL**

Challenges : The team have been balancing the changing guidance to be able to offer flexible learning for all ages through face to face, blended and fully online learning in order to achieve this the number of opportunities offered sit at 182 with a target of 500 for the year which may prove challenging. This is due to a variety of reason including sessional tutors confidence to re-engage face to face, changing guidance and the public's view of re- engaging face to face. Our recent consultations indicate a wide preference for learning including face to face, blended and solely on line which we will building into our planning for future terms. Demand for our services are high and we have to

balance this with staff capacity and the programmes we must deliver to meet the expectation of our external funding partners.

#### Instrumental Music Service

Staff have worked creatively to adapt the service to offer remote learning. Whilst SG have made a pledge to ensure that all instrumental music is delivered free and funding has been offered for the first year, a service review is required to ensure that we can provide a modern and sustainable service post next year.

There are quite a few national drivers which require resources and reconfiguring of services that are on the horizon which shall require extensive consultation and resource such as the National Care Service Consultation.

# Childrens Services, Partnerships and Communities



## Successes and Challenges

### Corporate Performance Indicators (latest)

Pls 0 10 2 8

### Corporate Pls Off Target

Pls 0

### Service Plan Pls (latest)

Pls 3 0 9 11 12

### Service Plan Pls Off Target

Pls 3

Qualifications achieved through CLL

Amount of funding gained to meet income/external funding target of £650,000

Number of CHs deferred

### Service High Risks (latest)

3

### Service High Risks

Risks 3

Workforce capacity

Software to deliver Named Person Service age 5-18

Gorebridge early learning and childcare

Key  
Pls Off Target  
 On Target  
 Data Only  
 Data Not Yet Available

Key  
Pls Off Target  
 On Target  
 Data Only  
 Data Not Yet Available

Key  
Risks High Risk/Medium Risk  
 Data Not Yet Available