

Agenda Item	11
Report No	HCW-07-22

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Health, Social Care and Wellbeing

Date: 10 February 2022

Report Title: Integrated Children's Services Update Report

Report By: Executive Chief Officer – Health and Social Care

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide assurance on the progress being made to deliver the outcomes outlined within the children's services planning partnerships integrated children's services plan 2021 – 2023
https://www.forhighlandschildren.org/index_70_464745328.pdf
- 1.2 It also provides an update on additional areas of integrated partnership working.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Note and comment on the work undertaken by the children's services planning partnership in delivering the Highland Integrated Children's Services Plan 2021 - 2023.
 - ii. Note and comment on the work undertaken in other partnership areas.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – The children's services planning partnership will help determine future resource needs and priorities for improvement.
- 3.2 Legal – None
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) – Improvement to outcomes for infants, children, young people and their families outlined in this report consider the themes of equality, poverty and rural issues.

- 3.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever – None
- 3.5 Risk –Risks are determined through the Community Planning Partnership risk register.
- 3.6 Gaelic – None

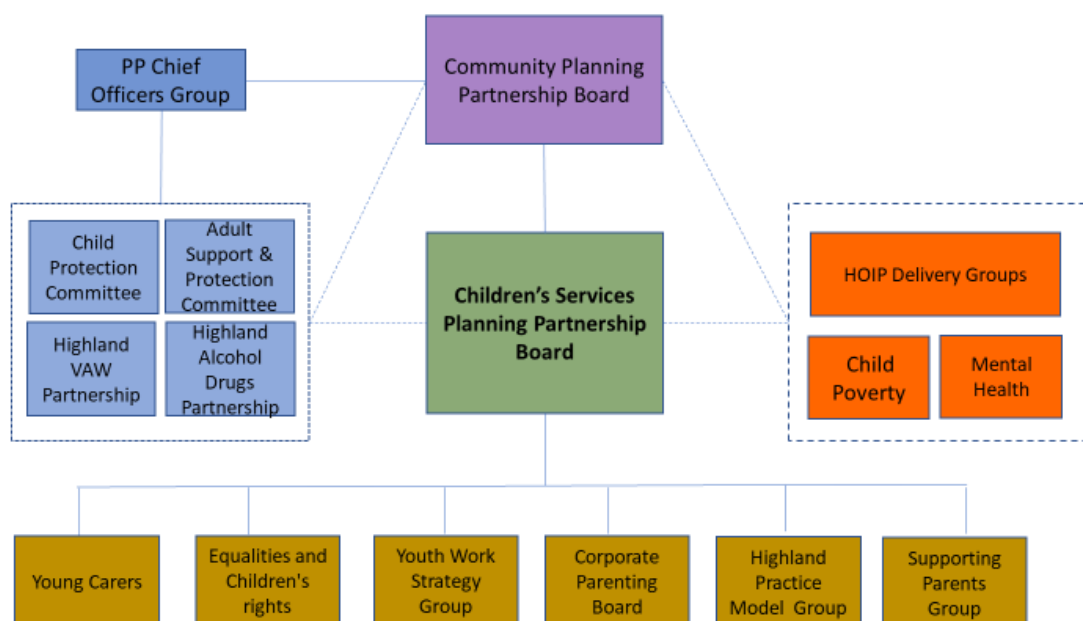
4. Integrated Children’s Service planning

- 4.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Part 3), outlines the need to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland by ensuring that local planning and delivery of services is integrated, focused on securing quality and value through preventative approaches, and dedicated to safeguarding, supporting and promoting child wellbeing. It aims to ensure that any action to meet need is taken at the earliest appropriate time and that, where appropriate, this is taken to prevent need arising.
- 4.2 Section eight of the Act requires every local authority and its relevant health board to jointly prepare a Children’s Services Plan for the area of the local authority, in respect of each three-year period.
- 4.3 The current plan outlines our priorities for improving outcomes for Highland’s Children. It articulates where partnership working improves outcomes for children, young people and their families acknowledging that individual services have their own plans.
- 4.4 Within the plan, partnership priorities for improvement are set around the following themes:
- Health and wellbeing including mental health
 - Child poverty
 - Children’s rights and participation
 - Child protection
 - Corporate parenting
 - Alcohol and drugs

5. Governance

- 5.1 The children’s services planning partnerships Board provides oversight to the on-going work of the plan. This group has broad membership, including lead officers from The Highland Council, NHS Highland, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and a number of Third Sector organisations. The Board reports to the Community Planning Partnership Board with additional reporting to Highland Council, NHS Highland Board and the Joint Monitoring Committee.

6.



- 6.1 In December 2021 Scottish Government provided feedback on the Integrated Children's Services Plan 2021 -20023. Within this feedback they acknowledged that, "it has been fantastic to see the wide range of innovative and creative services and support being delivered, especially given incredibly challenging circumstances being faced through the coronavirus pandemic. The dedication and commitment to children, young people, families, and the workforce, is very clear to see".
- 6.2 The report recognised key strengths stating, "Overall, the Plan focuses on early intervention and prevention and provides a great narrative of actions and services offered to achieve its strategic priorities. The priorities cover a broad range of children's needs, from health and wellbeing, to child poverty, children's rights, Child Protection, corporate parenting, alcohol and drugs – including a mix of specific wellbeing needs, process improvements, and engagement with children and young people. The Plan has adopted a whole system, whole family approach including services for children and young people, but also for parents, families, staff, workforce and schools. The Plan presents strong links with UNCRC, GIRFEC and The Promise".
- 6.3 The report also identifies areas for improvement and says, "the statutory guidance states that CSPPs are required to discuss their budgets and how these are spent across services, with a view to demonstrating a shift towards early intervention and prevention. Inclusion of this information in Highland's next Plan would address this review criterion".

- 6.4 The report finally concludes, “There is no requirement to provide an update to the Scottish Government in response to the feedback which has been provided in this report”.

7. Progress with the plan

- 7.1 The planning framework within the Integrated Children’s Services Plan outlines that it is the responsibility of each planning group to develop the priorities and actions within their plans, based on the agreed outcomes and needs assessment. Plans are monitored and evaluated and updated on a regular basis and formally reviewed annually. The thematic plans are dynamic and regularly reviewed and updated. For the purpose of this report the current focus of each of the groups is outlined below. It should be noted that this is not a comprehensive list of all current activity.

7.2 Child protection committee

The committee is establishing Local Child Protection Procedures. This marks a significant shift moving from Multiagency Child Protection Guidance to Multiagency Child Protection Procedures. A series of information, training and awareness events will be held across Highland to inform all staff of the updated procedures and discuss any key changes to practice.

The committee is also seeking to adopt the National Learning Review Guidance. This is an approach that replaces Significant Case Reviews and Initial Case Reviews. Information on the new Learning Review Guidance will be disseminated and discussed with frontline practitioners, managers and leaders.

The committee have drafted a Child Protection Committee Quality Assurance Strategy and established a new Quality Assurance Sub-Committee. They are also developing a suite of recommended resources for use with young people in relation to exploitation as well as developing and delivering training on exploitation awareness for residential staff, front line practitioners and community groups. In addition, they are delivering training in relation to trafficking and the National Referral Mechanism to ensure timely sharing of concerns. This work includes updating the local trafficking protocol to ensure practitioners and managers are clear how to share information in relation to trafficking concerns.

Within the committee’s alcohol and drug sub group the focus is on developing services and support using a whole family early intervention and prevention approach to alcohol and drugs. Additional resource has been identified to improve partnership initiatives including a Perinatal Mental Health midwife, CAMHS Psychologist for Drugs and Alcohol and a health development officer to support early prevention and education.

7.3 Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership

The partnership are currently focussed on, increasing access to online resources for young people, parents and professionals via Highland Substance

Awareness Toolkit, establish a specialist maternity service for pregnant women with alcohol and drug problems, extending psychological support for young people experiencing alcohol or drug related harm and establishing a pilot project to support whole family approaches and implementation of forthcoming whole family practice standards.

7.4 Child Poverty

Within the partnership the current focus is on improving opportunities for training and apprenticeships for parents and young people, addressing food insecurity by increasing equity of access to good quality food, recognising the value of financial support for families during the school holidays, supporting the development of sustainable food tables and fridges in order to reduce the stigma associated with accessing food support and developing strategies to increase the uptake of free-school meals.

The partnership is also undertaking work to reduce the financial barriers of families by promoting the uptake of clothing grants, encouraging the uptake of concessionary leisure schemes for children with low income backgrounds, maximising the uptake of child related social security benefits and child specific benefits and the implementation of the health visitor financial inclusion pathway.

7.5 Mental Health and wellbeing

The partnership has identified a number of key strands to the work of this group which includes maintaining a focus on staff wellbeing and professional skills development and responding to the needs of infants, children, young people and their parents/carers

The partnership are also developing detailed plans to;

- develop perinatal mental health support
- maintain and further develop trauma informed and responsive approaches to universal and targeted food and healthy weight related initiatives for infants, children, young people and families
- agree and implement a trauma-informed infant mental health strategy to support very young children and their parents.
- undertake planning and redesign to develop a whole system approach to understanding and responding to the mental health needs of infants, children and young people and related access to support and services based on the Thrive model.
- understand and summarise the research in regard to the immediate and long-term impact of COVID-19 for the mental health needs of infants, children, young people and families.
- develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of Highland's staff through supported learning such as Promoting Positive Relationships, Mental Health Awareness and Change-Loss and Bereavement.
- Develop and promote online programmes for parents, teachers and community volunteers.
- Develop a 'whole school approach' to improving mental health.

- Provide effective counselling within an integrated approach to supporting children and young people.
- Ensure routes to request assistance from specialist services are in place and part of a staged approach that is understandable and supports accessibility of services.

7.6 Supporting Parents

Taking a 'whole family approach', the focus of the supporting parents group is to develop a Highland Partnership Supporting Parents Framework which takes account of the need for a trauma informed workforce, the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences, the impact of the Covid pandemic, the national mental health strategy, including the PNIMH strategy and the changing role of workforce in the community

7.7 Highland Practice Model Improvement group

This partnership group are currently undertaking a review of the Highland Practice model guidance ensuring that it is consistent with the commitments to UNCRC, the promise and reflects a trauma informed approach.

7.8 Youth Work Strategy Group

The current focus of this group is to promote cross sector working by producing quarterly calendars of training and CPD opportunities and promote them across the sector. They have detailed plans to provide support for young peoples' mental health and wellbeing by supporting the Highland Youth Parliaments "MIND US" campaign on mental health, provide opportunities for disadvantaged young people including those most affected by the pandemic and improve youth work participation by carrying out a mapping of youth participation structures and working models across Highland.

7.9 Equalities and Children's rights

In addition to working to embed Children's Rights in curriculum, the group is currently focussed on ensuring Children's Rights and participation are evident in practice, how we can gather views from a variety of different children and young people and ensure that we do not reach out to the same children and young people and ensure that development and age are not barriers. A key focus on how the partnership can provide support and training on the why and the how of including Children's Rights and Participation. This requires ensuring developmentally matched approaches, an understanding of trauma and the understanding of behaviour as communication to enable our children and Young people to grow confidence and competence.

7.10 Young Carers

Newly reformed group which is currently focussing on ensuring that young carers who would benefit from a young carers statement have access to this.

8. Further partnership activity

In addition to the developing the integrated children's service plan there are a number of other groups and spaces where key integrated working is currently

being developed. A brief description of some of the work being developed is articulated below.

8.1 Highland Council / NHS Highland Project Management workstreams

Children's services

NDAS is a multi agency service which facilitates the assessment of children with neurodevelopmental needs. The service was established in 2017 following a rapid review and national requirements to support a more multidisciplinary approach to assessing needs for this group of children and young people. In response to a rising level of need and increased waiting times, in 2021 a four month review was commissioned to

- Listen to the voices of children, young people and families
- Evaluate systems, processes, data and practice within the existing service
- Transitions/Younger Adults with Complex Care Needs
- Review the impact of the new NDAS National Specification (Sep 2021)

The review outlined a number of key areas for development including the need to strengthen service and financial governance, leadership and service change which has the needs and voices of children and families at the centre.

9. Improving outcomes in child protection and for care experienced young people group

- 9.1 This multiagency group has developed a detailed plan for the coming year to;
1. Ensure key outcomes for this cohort of children and young people are identified and evidenced.
 2. Ensure the impact of service delivery on children, young people and families is assessed and evidenced effectively.
 3. Support operational and strategic management to ensure effective Policies, Procedures and Guidance are in place
 4. Ensure leadership across Partnerships is effective and evident.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer – Health and Social Care

Date: 6 January 2022

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