**NACPC Business Plan 2018 / 2019**

**PART ONE** - **Introduction**

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee is a locally based inter-agency strategic partnership which leads on child protection policy and practice. The Committee has an Independent Chair and is comprised of senior staff from across key services in North Ayrshire, including both statutory services and the third sector. The Committee meets quarterly and brings all partners together to scrutinise the effectiveness of child protection arrangements in North Ayrshire – from public awareness to risk analysis – and ensures that a programme of continuous improvement is in place that responds to both local need and national drivers.

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee (NACPC) adheres to the responsibilities for all Child Protection Committees which are set out in the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014). As such the NACPC has a range of day to day business activities to ensure we fulfil our responsibilities. We also develop additional activities on a yearly basis, which focus on particular priorities for the forthcoming year. This business plan outlines the additional planned work of North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee from April 2018 to March 2019. Reports on the progress of the business plan are presented quarterly to North Ayrshire Child and Public Protection Chief Officers Group who provide governance, leadership and direction to North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee.

Our business plan links with other key local strategies including the North Ayrshire Children’s Services Plan and Corporate Parenting Strategy and our plan should be understood within this local context.

This year, the Child Protection Committee has agreed to continue structuring the plan thematically. The four key themes in the 2017/18 Business Plan have been retained as they continue to be our priorities, however an additional theme has also been incorporated into the plan.

These themes are:

**1. Well-being and Vulnerability**

**2. Engagement and Empowerment**

**3. Learning and Improvement**

**4. Risk Assessment and Analysis**

**5. Working Together**

**PART TWO - Themes and Priorities**

Part two of our business plan expands each of our five key themes to outline for each, a vision that is designed to articulate our high level aspirations, the context within which the NACPC is operating, current areas of priority and a broad indication of the planned work.

1. **Well-being and Vulnerability**

NACPC Vision

We aim to reduce vulnerability and promote, support and safeguard well-being by **nurturing** children at all stages of their lifespan, from pre-birth to adulthood, providing additional support where required in specific circumstances when in need of protection and within the changing legislative and policy landscape.

NACPC Context

From evaluation activity conducted by North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee, we have agreed that our approach to promoting well-being and reducing vulnerability is rooted in recognition of the role that mental health plays in the lives of children, young people and their families. Locality models are being developed within North Ayrshire, which aim to support multi-agency working and ensure that children receive early and effective support to meet their needs. Kilwinning has been identified as a pilot area for the locality model, and in September 2018 health and social services will be based within Kilwinning Academy. Evidence suggests that a whole system approach will build resilience in local communities and create a shared vision of mental health. The project will be evaluated and will report to the Children’s Strategic Implementation Board, with plans to scale across North Ayrshire.

All of our children’s services work will continue to be geared around supporting the implementation of the Children & Young People’s Act, and the development of the Named Person Service. The NACPC will continue to have a particular focus on vulnerable children and young people, including those who are looked after or looked after and accommodated.

This year, our areas of priority include:

**Addressing vulnerability in pregnancy**

We will provide additional support to vulnerable women and their partners where circumstances arise that may adversely impact on the unborn child. Initial evaluation feedback is indicating that the introduction of a dedicated child protection team is reducing the time scales to convene pre-birth conferences where they are required. This will continue to be monitored via the Management Information Subgroup.

**Safeguarding missing children and young people**

We will support the implementation of the National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland and co-ordinate learning and development opportunities for multi-agency staff, enabling them to make better use of opportunities to discuss missing episodes with children and young people with the intention of providing necessary supports and reducing the risk of further missing episodes.

**Supporting children in their early years**

We will do further investigative work, through the Management Information sub group, to better understand why there are increasing numbers of children under five years of age on the Child Protection Register. This will be brought to the CPC for consideration and we will use this understanding to improve support to vulnerable families with infant children.

**Addressing the impact of poverty and its links with child protection**

We will analyse indicators in relation to the links between poverty and the protection of children within areas in North Ayrshire, and take a localised approach to address what preventative and supportive measures can ensure that children are safe and that their needs are being met. We will ensure our findings are communicated to inform wider strategic planning.

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**An improved response to the mental health needs of children and young people**

We will deliver improvements in response to recent Case Reviews, ensuring that appropriate mental health preventative and support strategies are in place for children and young people. We will continue to strengthen the relationships between adult mental health and children’s services as identified in our Significant Case Review, and continue to improve awareness of the impact of adult mental health on children and young people.

**The development of a suicide community action plan**

We will form a strategic and operational multi agency working group to develop a suicide community action plan in response to a cluster of youth suicides within North Ayrshire with the intention of reducing the risk of further instances and ensuring consistent support is provided to young people incorporating outcomes of research and other good practice evidence.

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| 1. **Engagement and Empowerment**
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NACPC Vision

We meaningfully **involve** our stakeholders so that everyone has a **voice** in the effective protection of children and young people. We **listen** to our stakeholders in order to make best use of their expertise in our efforts to improve the protection of children and young people.

NACPC Context

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee has a Communication Strategy which outlines how we promote key child protection messages to stakeholders and how we listen to, and involve, children, young people and their families. From our evaluation work, we have identified the need to improve how well we listen to and make use of the experiences of others.

This year, our areas of priority include:

**Revising our NACPC Communication Strategy**

We will review our communication strategy annually, to ensure that our messages are responsive to the communities within North Ayrshire and engage with vital stakeholders who are instrumental in keeping children safe. This will form part of the work plan for the Public Information and Engagement Subgroup.

**Actively involving children and their families in all child protection processes, and practitioners adopting a more child centred approach to ensure that support is individualised to meet their needs.**

We will continue to review and analyse the involvement of children through the Management Information Group, Evaluation and Improvement Group and Public Information and Engagement Group, and will use this information and feedback to further improve service user involvement and as appropriate, their roles in decision making.

**Harnessing assets within the community by engaging with stakeholders to support their understanding of their role and sense of efficacy in the protection of children**

We will continue to develop and deliver practice development child protection sessions to key stakeholder groups in the community, such as taxi drivers and local sports and community groups. We will also support the development of child protection guidance and procedures with stakeholders within local communities.

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| 1. **Learning and Improvement**
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NACPC Vision

We effectively **share** learning from a range of sources, both locally and nationally, and then use this learning to agree and deliver improvements.

NACPC Context

We have great opportunities for learning and improvement at this current time. Nationally, we are in the implementation phase of the Child Protection Improvement Programme. Locally, we have concluded our first Significant Case Review, which identified a number of findings that we are using in order to better protect children and young people in North Ayrshire. This will be supplemented by our learning from the evaluation of our involvement in Stop to Listen, a national pathfinder in relation to child sexual abuse.

This year, our areas of priority include:

**Implementing the National Child Protection Improvement Programme**

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee will continue to review all actions and recommendations of the National Child Protection Improvement Programme and deliver the implementation plan to take these forward locally. We will participate with North Ayrshire’s Chief Officers in the Chief Officer Leadership Events, implementing recommendations locally.

**Developing and implementing improvements based on the findings from our Significant Case Review and other learning opportunities**

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee will work collaboratively with all stakeholders to implement the amalgamated improvement plan based upon learning from our Significant and Initial Case Reviews undertaken in 2017/18 in order to better protect children and young people.

**Evaluating our Stop To Listen Pathfinder and utilising this learning to improve our response to child sexual abuse and exploitation**

The Stop To Listen Pilot programme involving the 4 pathfinder areas is currently being evaluated and this will be reported into the CPC. We will use this evaluation to maximise learning and plan the continuation of implementation of Stop To Listen methodology across North Ayrshire over the coming year.

**We will provide a range of child protection learning and practice development opportunities which will ensure that practitioners and managers are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement and progress learning within their agencies.**

This will form part of the work plan for the Learning and Development Subgroup.

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| 1. **Risk assessment and Analysis**
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NACPC Vision

We **protect** children and young people by sharing information effectively to support the collective understanding of potential risks and then by working collaboratively to address these risks.

NACPC Context

We have a strong evidence base stemming from joint self- evaluation activity over a number of years which places us in an excellent position to understand where our priority areas of focus lie. This evidence base has been strengthened by our experience of our first Significant Case Review which provides greater insight into how we can improve risk assessment and analysis to better protect children.

This year, our areas of priority include:

**Continuing to develop our chronology practice**

We will increase our efforts to improve this area of practice by supporting agencies to improve the use of chronologies by evidencing findings from our recent Significant Case Review and audit activity; with a specific emphasis on how this reduces risk and has a significant impact on children’s lives.

**Improving child protection awareness within adult services**

We will work with adult services to ensure that there is sufficient awareness of child protection and practitioners are clear regarding their responsibilities in keeping children safe.

**Improving practitioner’s awareness and interpretation of children’s needs**

We will use the findings of the recent Significant Case Review and learning from the Stop to Listen pilot to develop practitioner’s awareness and understanding of how children communicate both verbally and non-verbally, and provide guidance to manage risks appropriately.

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| 1. **Working Together**
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NACPC Vision

We work **together** to keep children and young people safe by building collaborative multiagency relationships underpinned by effective communication and informed assessments, which are based on a shared understanding of children’s needs, development and their wider world.

NACPC Context

NACPC recognises not only the importance of effective communication between agencies, but also acknowledges the importance of a culture where agencies work together collaboratively and build working relationships which put children and young people at the heart of decision making and is responsive to need. Our Significant Case Review and recent Initial Case Reviews have found that although practitioners will share information, there needs to be a culture where agencies work together and feel able to have honest, reflective and analytical discussions to help inform professional judgement.

This year, our areas of priority include:

**Strengthening communication and engagement within and across services**

The findings of our SCR and recommendations of recent ICRs will be used to progress this priority area.

**Promoting an ethos and culture where practitioners jointly collaborate and build effective working relationships to meet the needs of children and young people.**

We will consider how we can best support a multi-agency work based culture which encourages discussion, reflection and accountability; and also encourages practitioners to be innovative in how they work together within different agencies. We will improve awareness and understanding for practitioners across all services regarding the roles of Lead Professional and Named Person to ensure there is a co-ordinated overview of children’s needs.

**PART THREE - Improvement**

In implementing this business plan, plus our ongoing day to day business activities, we are aiming for the following improvement:

* High visibility of key child protection messages
* Earlier identification of potential risk
* Faster responses when risk is identified
* Reduced harm to children and young people
* Families’ experience of services is collaborative – Doing with families rather than to families
* Improved multi-agency engagement resulting in better assessment and hence action when necessary

**PART FOUR - Measurement and Reporting**

A subgroup of North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee will develop a detailed action plan with specific measures of progress which will sit underneath this business plan as a live working tool.

North Ayrshire Child Protection Committee will report on the progress of this business plan on a quarterly basis. In keeping with the format of this business plan, each quarterly progress report will focus on themes one to four. In addition, we will report on theme five every quarter throughout the business year as creating a cultural shift on how practitioners work together is a priority for the committee.

Progress reports will be submitted quarterly to the North Ayrshire Child and Public Protection Chief Officers Group. This will provide opportunity for scrutiny, challenge, accountability and support.