



CHILD PROTECTION MINIMUM DATASET

Report by Chief Social Work Officer

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to inform Members of child protection activity over the previous 6 months via completion of the National Minimum Dataset template.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Minimum Dataset for Child Protection Committees is a 'package' of resources that collectively support Scotland's 30 Child Protection Committees to collate, analyse and report on an agreed set of indicators in a consistent and meaningful manner.
- 2.2 The minimum dataset indicators have been developed and agreed following extensive consultation with Child Protection Committees and national partners that include the Scottish Government, Care Inspectorate, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), Police Scotland and NHS/ISD Scotland.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle:
 - (a) Note that the number of child protection activities in the past two quarters shows a general cycle of the data increasing by 50% quarter by quarter; and
 - (b) Note the number of children on the Child Protection Register is at its highest level for past 7 quarters;
 - (c) Note the strong performance in terms of meeting the timescales for Child Protection meetings;
 - (d) Note the significant increase in both offence and non-offence referrals to the Children's Reporter.

Contact Officer: Jack Libby - Chief Social Work Officer
Appendix: NMD Jan – May 2024 Analysis Report
Background Papers:

IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	None
Legal	None
Staffing	Although child protection activity is increasing, staffing levels have remained steady although a reduction in staffing is imminent due to efficiency savings having to be made so there could be some impact on performance i.e. quality of case recording and assessments and available time to spend with service users.
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	The Service is prioritising the most vulnerable children. Early intervention and prevention activity reduces when child protection referrals increase, such has been the case over past two quarters.
Equalities/Child Rights	Children have a right to be protected from harm and this continues to be the Services priority.
Corporate Strategy	Safeguarding the most vulnerable in our community.
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	None

BACKGROUND

5.1 The value to Child Protection Committees of collating, analysing and reporting the minimum dataset indicators are:

- The indicators provide clarity to Child Protection Committees on what indicators they should be collating, analysing and reporting on a quarterly basis.
- The indicators provide intelligence about the vulnerable children and young people and the workings of their local child protection system.
- The indicators support improvement activities as they help to: highlight local issues / priorities for local attention and action. Monitor the impact of new approaches and/or improvement activities.

5.2 The indicators increase the opportunities to benchmark and learn from other Child Protection Committees.

DETAIL

6.1 The Audit and Self-Evaluation Group has reviewed all the data in the Appendix, considered the scrutiny questions and other questions and identify the headline messages to highlight to the Committee.

- Generally, there has been an increase in child protection activity.
- Our figures per 10,000 population are comparable with Shetland and Highland, although lower than in Orkney.
- The reasons for Registration are largely surrounding parental concerns: mental health, alcohol and substance misuse, domestic abuse, and neglect. This has been a consistent presence over the span of this data from 2019.

CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Minimum Dataset will assist the Child Protection Committee and the wider Children's Services Partnership with finance and other resource allocation, identify where training needs are and what the future direction of travel should be in terms of type and extent of services required.
- 7.2 Children's Services Social Work have to respond to the increase in child protection concerns and given it is a relatively small pool of staff, the quantity and quality of outputs can be impacted upon at times such as these. There are robust quality assurance methods in place to ensure the most vulnerable children are safeguarded.