



Children's Services Service Plan 2017-18

Joan Tranent
Head of Children's Services
Midlothian Council
Fairfield House
8 Lothian Road
Dalkeith
EH22 3AA

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Overview of the Service	4
3. Activity Review in 2016/17	8
4. Challenges 2016 – 2017.....	8
a) Budget and resource pressures affecting the Service include:	8
b) Legislation/National Policy changes:	9
c) Management challenges:	9
d) Changes in Service Delivery:	10
e) Technology:	11
f) Culture change:	11
g) New initiatives:	11
5. Consultations/ Engagement	12
6. Equalities	12
7. Sustainability	12
8. Future Development of Services	12
a) Child Protection	13
b) Looked after and accommodated children and care leavers.....	13
c) Self-Directed Support	14
d) New Integrated Children’s Services Plan	14
e) Participation	14
f) Residential services improvement programme	15
g) Early Intervention and Preventative Work	15
9. Service Objectives.....	15
APPENDIX A: Single Midlothian Plan 3 year priorities 2016/19.....	16
APPENDIX B: Children’s Services Service Plan 2017-18.....	18
APPENDIX C: Equality Impact Assessment.....	20
APPENDIX D: Children’s Services Structure	25

1. Introduction

This document provides a clear picture of the Service's planned activities for the period 2017-18. It contains:

- *Service Overview:* This provides the reader with a basic understanding of the Service and its purpose
- *Update on Children's Service Review – Implementation Date - 1.4.17*
- *Future Development of the Service:* This section identifies the key challenges facing the Service and notes the areas for future development and improvement
- *Service Priorities:* The information captured here is critical in terms of providing clarity of the priorities and outcomes being targeted by the Service and also identifying the focus of activities for the 2017/18 deliverables. Appropriate consideration of risks should also be carried out as part of the service planning activities.
- *Management Arrangements:* This section gives a high level view of the management arrangements in place for the Service such as structure and resources but also includes information on scrutiny activity and performance management.

The purpose of a service plan is to:

1. Clearly show the key tasks and challenges of the service. This provides direction and an overview of the service's plans to those within and out with the service.
2. Provide a basis for measuring and reporting on the progress of the service in achieving its priorities.
3. Provide an overarching plan which supports the link between individual staff performance and development plans, work plans, team plans and council and Community Planning priorities.

2. Overview of the Service

The following should be read in conjunction with the Midlothian Single Plan; a high-level community planning document developed with our partners and progressed via the *Getting it Right For Every Midlothian Child Board*.

Children's Services, both Social Work and Family Support Teams have been under review since 1st October 2015. The new structure has now been approved and at the time of writing we are recruiting staff into posts.

The new structure is not locality based but created through a desire to transform how we currently work with children and their families. We were driven by a desire to achieve greater efficiency both in working practices and use of resources. Our service vision is to improve families' lives by giving them the support they need, when they need it. Our aspiration is to have a workforce that is flexible and creative in its working. Our approach will be outcome focused through our person centred planning and working in multi disciplinary teams with an emphasis on developing positive relationships.

Children's Services new structure Appendix 1.

Further detail on the range of responsibilities carried out by each of these teams is provided below:

Early Intervention and Prevention Teams:

Children's Services Early Intervention and Prevention Teams of which there are three, consists of Social Workers and Children & Families Practitioners reporting directly to a Team Leader. This will be the first point of contact for new referrals.

The Early Intervention and Prevention Teams will undertake short-term intervention work where it is identified that short term involvement is most appropriate. It is likely the team will only be involved with cases for around 12 weeks; however, the team will work closely with the practice teams to ensure the right support is provided based on what meets the needs of the child, young person and the family.

Early Engagement, underpinned by GIRFEC, should ensure that fewer children need to become looked after over the longer term. Supporting families to ensure that children have the best start in life and ensuring that families get the appropriate support at the right time can prevent difficulties arising or escalating. However, some families may still struggle and early engagement may mean earlier decisions are made to improve the situation for the child or young person sooner.

We endeavour to shift the frontline workforce from a focus on procedures and process towards evidence based support and help. We shall continue to ensure that interventions with vulnerable and chaotic families is thoughtful, measured and outcome focused.

Practice Teams 0-12 and 12+

There are four Practice Teams in the new structure consisting of Social Workers and Children and Families Practitioners each reporting directly to a Team Leader. Two teams will primarily focus on supporting families with children under 12 years of age and the other two teams will focus on supporting young people from 12 years onwards, in particular during key stages of transition.

Whilst we have defined the teams as pre-birth to 12 and 12 up to 26, taking into consideration our duties under the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. We also recognise that our

families do not fit neatly into these categories, therefore we shall adopt a flexible approach in how we allocate cases and respond to the needs of children, young people and their families.

The teams in this part of the service will work mainly with children and young people who reside at home, or in various care settings, including, foster care, kinship care and residential care. Children and young people will often be subject to compulsory measures or involved within the child protection system and the role of the social workers in these teams will be to fulfil the council's statutory role and obligations as a corporate parent. These teams shall also support children, young people and their families who have or are affected by disability.

The responsibility to work with all young people who are making the transition into adulthood will rest with the 12+ teams. Their work will include supporting the young person to move from a school based placement to either live independently or with appropriate support. This team shall work closely with education, life-long learning and adult health and social care services to ensure these transitions are proportionate and meet the ongoing needs of the young person.

Early Intervention and Prevention Development Officers:

Within our new structure we have developed two new posts. The role of the Early Intervention and Prevention Development Officer shall support the creation and implementation of a Midlothian Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy. The strategy will provide an overarching framework that draws together early intervention and prevention, an initiative already embedded in operation across Midlothian, to further enable us to share good practice, and ensure a coherent and consistent approach that is based on evidence of what works.

These officers shall work in a multi-agency context with officers across the directorates, schools, integrated health and social care professionals, partners in the voluntary and community sectors and service users in the local communities. One of the main purposes of this role is to build capacity and resilience within communities and across services making best use of resources and delivering early and effective interventions.

Resources :

Midlothian Residential Services
Family Placement Team (Adoption, Fostering and Kinship, Corporate Parenting)
Hawthorn Children and Families Centre.
Reviewing Officers

Midlothian Residential Services

Midlothian residential services comprises three 4-bedded houses located in Gorebridge, Penicuik and Woodburn. The residential services provide direct support to young people usually aged between 10-18, who are no longer able to live with their family. The service is required to provide a flexible approach to caring which is dependent on the needs of the young people we care for and the demands made upon the service as a whole. An example of this being when we had to accommodate a five year girl for a short period of time as a result of being unable to secure an alternative placement within Scotland. Working with a specific team around the child within one of our houses we managed to support the child until such times that we could place her in a more appropriate placement. The learning from this is currently being analysed as it was a successful piece of work that was supported by the Care Inspectorate and a Sheriff who endorsed the placement when challenged in court.

As a result of the introduction of the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 legislation the Local Authority now has a duty to provide care placements for eligible young people up to the age of 21 years. This is a new challenge for us and we are currently looking at how best to redesign our service to support our young people who want to reside with us post 16 years of

age. As a corporate parent the Local Authority and others have a duty to offer a service for all eligible young people. This has required a further commitment from our partner agencies such as Police Scotland, Health, Education and Children's Reporter in particular to devise a plan that advises Scottish Government how we are meeting this legal requirement.

Family Placement Team

The Family Placement Team are currently situated within Lawfield Primary School however will move to our new premises in Dalkeith in May 2017, where they shall be working alongside all other children's service teams. Under the new structure the Family Placement Team will work more closely alongside the practice teams 0-12 in particular to assess and support robust and swift decision making around longer term planning for our very young children. The team will also provide appropriate services to our young people who are unable to remain living within their own families.

The Team carries out the Council's work as a Registered Fostering Agency and a Registered Adoption Agency. It supports foster carers and kinship carers and has a marketing strategy which continually promotes the recruitment and retention of foster carers through the Skills to Foster scheme and a robust recruitment and training campaign.

The Family Placement Team also recruits its own Adoptive parents. This service continues to develop but it does come with its own challenges when working in such a small local authority. Often it is not possible, nor appropriate to place a young child for adoption within the same local authority where their parents and extended family reside, therefore we continue to work with neighbouring local authorities so that we can 'share' our adopters cross the counties. Private fostering is also covered by the team.

Kinship Care is further area of growth within the Family Placement Team. Scottish Government have committed to ensuring that kinship carers have greater parity with local authority foster carers in regard to not only payment of fees but also access to training etc. Over the past year we have held several kinship events and developed an email box for kinship carers to contact us if they have any queries. We have established a kinship strategy group and are just about to sign off a new and updated kinship policy. We have also had some very successful training events for kinship carers and foster carers together.

Corporate Parenting is a duty placed upon not only the local authority but other agencies involved with care experienced young people. Within Midlothian we have a dedicated Project Co-ordinator who works with care experienced young people and supports us to ensure that our Corporate Parenting Plan meets the agreed targets. Following a successful bid to Life Changes Trust we have ensured a commitment to embedding corporate parenting within the Local Authority across services and beyond.

Hawthorn Children's Centre is a day service, offering support to vulnerable children from 0 to 5 years old and their families. As well as being a partnership nursery with Education it also provides parenting support and assessments, group work for parents and assessment of contact arrangements. The focus of the service is for children who are looked after, on the child protection register or affected by disability. With the implementation of the early years agenda Hawthorn Children's Centre have provided placements for those eligible 2 year olds who have been offered a nursery placement. Hawthorn Children's Centre has established wellbeing meetings in preparation of the Named Person legislation where voluntary groups as well as family support, nursery staff and health colleagues discuss referrals for those aged 0-5 and identify a suitable and proportionate resource.

Independent Reviewing Officers:

As Corporate Parents, Midlothian Council acts for the children we look after as a responsible and conscientious parent would act. One of the most important functions of an Independent Reviewing Officer's role is to monitor how the Council manages each child's case and makes sure that each child's current wishes and feelings have been established and taken into account. This is undertaken in statutory reviews of the child's care plan where all relevant family members and professional attend.

In addition to these services provided directly by the Council, a range of services are also purchased through the Independent Sector; this includes agencies such as 'Who Cares? Scotland' who provide advocacy, advice and support to vulnerable Looked After and Accommodated Children. Children 1st who provide support to our young carers, and also work intensively for a short period of time with children and young people affected by parental substance misuse. Barnado's offer respite and support services to children and young people with additional support needs.

The service is supported by a range of teams within the Council including finance, legal services, contracts, planning, performance management, staff training and development and human resources.

3. Activity Review in 2016/17

Children's Services have shown solid and consistent improvement throughout 2016/17 and it is our intention to improve on this. Inspection Reports and performance data evidence that we are improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people within Midlothian.

- Positive Midlothian Residential Service Inspection in October 2016.
- Maintained below Scottish average statistics for children both Looked After at home and away from home.
- Relatively static numbers over the year of children on the Child Protection Register.
- Completion of the Children's Services Review
- Continuing to reduce the number of children and young people placed out-with Midlothian either in external foster or residential placements.
- Introduction of Safer Families into Midlothian to offer support for children aged 0-12 and their families at the earliest point of contact.
- Scottish Abuse Inquiry Team has been set up and began working on a plan to take forward this piece of work.
- Life Changes Trust grant of £194K to help us improve outcomes for our care experienced children.
- Policy Development Award for our Framework for Permanence in the 2016 Scottish Public Services Awards.
- Promotion of our outcome focused assessment into all areas of work within Children's Services. This piece of work underpinned by Self Directed Support (Act) 2013 was highlighted at Social Work Scotland Event.
- 3 x workers seconded into health visitor service for a year to support our health visiting teams.
- Kinship Strategy Group in place with a new updated Kinship Policy and training plan in place.
- Continuing to recruit foster carers and prospective adopters.

4. Challenges 2016 – 2017

The strategic challenges over the past year have been:

- Midlothian is the fastest growing Local Authority in Scotland which equates to more families moving into the area and an increasing need of more resources.
- Continuing to try and reduce the number of children fostered and educated out-with Midlothian
- The impact of welfare reform on the children and families we work with in terms of reduced income and/or increased outgoings for some.
- Implementing the legislative changes required through the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the Social Care (Self-Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013. The implementation of the Named Person has once again been postponed until 2018.
- Budget constraints, ever reducing budgets with increasing demands upon services.
- Increasing number of referrals in relation to Mental Health issue amongst young people

a) Budget and resource pressures affecting the Service include:

Unavoidable cost pressures such as:

- The new legislative requirement upon the Council to provide care placements for looked after children until the age of 21 and other duties placed upon us from the Children & Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014
- Children's Services Review began 1.10.15 with a commitment to deliver £300,000 savings.
- Increase in the number of young people being placed in secure care.
- Budget pressures – the financial landscape is continually changing with requests for a reduction in spend an ongoing issue.

MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL

Children's Services

SERVICE FUNCTION	Budget	
	2016/17	2017/18
	£	£
Children's Services Management	286,168	293,090
Children's resources	6,477,736	6,333,996
Locality Teams	8,574,854	7,915,757
NET EXPENDITURE	15,338,758	14,542,843
SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS		
Employee Costs	5,376,643	5,349,240
Premises Costs	80,978	80,978
Transport Costs	274,909	294,157
Supplies and Services Costs	149,765	149,765
Third Party Payments	5,505,469	4,808,153
Transfer Payments	4,067,507	3,977,063
GROSS EXPENDITURE	15,455,270	14,659,356
INCOME	116,512	116,512
NET EXPENDITURE	15,338,758	14,542,843

b) Legislation/National Policy changes:

- Additional duties placed on the Local Authority in relation to the Children & Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014, such as the Named Person (August 2016 – postponed until August 2018), Corporate Parenting Duties (April 2015) legislative single planning process (August 2016).
- Social Care (Self-Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013.
- Mental Health agenda for Children & Young People, increased waiting lists and referrals.

c) Management challenges:

- Ensuring all staff are aware of the financial pressures and the need for creativity and change whilst also delivering a professional and efficient service and maintaining a high standard of quality.
- Bringing together all of Children's Services staff within one building by May 17 whilst also ensuring that through the Delivering Excellence Framework we review the remainder of the service and ensure we meet our savings target.
- With the implementation of the Named Person now proposed for 2018, there is a real challenge around sharing of information between the relevant services. We await on information from Scottish Government as to how they intend to rectify this issue.
- CAMHS Service waiting list is a challenge with increasing referrals and lengthy waiting times.

d) Changes in Service Delivery:

We have now concluded the Children's Services Review and at the time of writing are recruiting staff for our implementation date of 1st April 2017. This has been a challenging time for children's services staff.

The blueprint for Children's Services going forward is one of a commitment to change how we do our usual business ensuring that we offer a more efficient way of working by having multi disciplinary team who focus on promoting a more relational style of working. We are fully committed to engaging with relevant partner agencies to promote Midlothian Council's ethos that all children, where possible are educated and cared for within Midlothian.

The ongoing pressures to reduce spend requires us to ensure that we continue to provide and promote the early intervention and preventative work to help us maintain a reduction in the number of complex and challenging cases that require more intrusive and costly forms of intervention. We are also ensuring that we are working more closely with our third sector partners to ensure there is no duplication of work and that we are clear about our roles and responsibilities. Research clearly tells us that intervening earlier with many families in order to prevent the problems they experience escalating reduces costs in the longer term. Intervening when there is a crisis incurs high costs not only in relation to budgets but also in relation to poorer outcomes for children and their families.

At the most recent announcement from Scottish Government in March 2017, they reported that the Named Person Service will not be implemented until 2018; therefore further discussions will be required as to how we take this piece of work forward. Children's services are working closely with health and education to create a service that continues to be robust yet is able to respond at the appropriate level of need.

A further change within our service delivery is the commitment to second a member of staff for one year to fully implement self directed support and our outcome focused assessment. This worker is currently working with social workers and legal services on our more complex cases to ensure that our outcome focused assessment is fit for purpose within our court process and the children's hearing system.

There are a number of cross cutting themes within Midlothian which Children's Services contribute to:

- Welfare Reform Group
- GIRFEMC Board
- Changing Lives Overview Group
- Performance and Quality Assurance Sub Group
- Self Directed Support Programme Board
- Secondment of staff to support our health visiting teams
- Public Protection Committee
- Inclusion Review with Education
- National Abuse Inquiry Team
- Transition Work with young people who have complex and challenging needs
- Curators Scheme
- Transformational Change

The establishment of the Education, Communities and Economy Directorate has resulted in changes in planning support. This function is provided for the whole Council by the Performance and Planning team within Communities and Support service. There are a number of actions in the service plan which are dependent on support from this team.

There has been progress within the following partnerships:

- Children's Services partnerships with East Lothian Council; where possible and where there are clear benefits we continue to work in partnership.
- The Integrated Children's Services Plan is now complete and has clear outcomes which are agreed via the GIRFEMC Board
- We have a Public Protection Committee formed in April 2014 which covers all areas of public protection across East and Midlothian.
- Safer Families for Children

e) Technology:

- MOSAIC is the social work management information system.
- There are working groups looking at IT systems between health and social work that will allow for improved sharing of information processes.
- SEEMIS will be the tool used by all 32 Local Authorities for the implementation of the Named Person Service. Therefore training will be required for children's services staff for holiday periods and to initially screen referrals until such times that we are confident that our education colleagues are confident in the assessment and screening of this work. Our colleagues in Life Long Learning & Employability shall also require training so that they can offer support to those aged 16-18 who are no longer in school but require/request support via the named person service.
- As children's services staff move to one building in May 2017 all staff shall have a laptop so that they have the opportunity to undertake flexible and mobile working.

f) Culture change:

Over the past few years children's services have been on a journey that promotes all staff within the different areas of work within children's services to work as one service. As this review is drawing to a conclusion and we move to new premises in May 2017 where we shall all be together under one roof, our aspiration to have us all working together as one service will become easier and more evident.

We shall endeavour to support children and their families to the best of our ability and to ensure that we are respectful and considerate at all times. The worker with the most positive relationship with the family shall be the key worker and will gain support from colleagues with expertise in other areas of work to support them. We continue to be committed to ensuring that all children and young people should be educated and cared for within Midlothian unless there are exceptional circumstances as to why this cannot happen.

Over the past year we seconded three family support staff into health visiting teams to assist health visitors due to a national shortage. This was a successful piece of work and we are currently looking at how we can transfer the learning from this to other areas of work.

g) New initiatives:

Within children's services we are committed to working alongside education where the vast majority of our referrals come from. The inclusion review shall further enhance our commitment to educate all young people within Midlothian, and any gaps within our current infrastructure shall be highlighted through this review and further discussions shall then ensue as to how we address them.

We have embarked on a venture of partnership working with Safer Families for Children. This is voluntary organisation run by volunteers who offer support to families within Midlothian. This

support can be befriending or short term hosting for children who require this should a parent be unwell or needs some respite. This is a 3 year partnership which Midlothian Children's Service have agreed to.

We are also working alongside adult health and social care around a more robust transition policy for our children and young people affected by disability and who have complex needs. A clearer pathway is required in order to support the young people and their families at what can be a difficult time when transitioning into adulthood.

We have agreed to undertake work with PACE (Permanence and Care Excellence) re our permanence pathway however this work has been postponed until October 2017 due to the review and the need to get workers in post and settled prior to undertaking any quality improvement exercise.

Children's services were key in supporting the resettlement project which supported our Syrian Refugee families who arrived in Midlothian in 2016. This was a successful piece of work with over 20 people now living in Midlothian. Children's Services have also successfully accommodated and supported 2 unaccompanied asylum seeking children into Midlothian, following the closure of the Calais camps.

We have already begun discussions with our colleagues in the voluntary sector to consider how we can work more closely together sharing resources and staffing to improve outcomes for our children and their families.

5. Consultations/ Engagement

As the majority of the work undertaken in Children's Services is of a multi-agency nature, our partner agencies, staff and a limited number of service users have taken part in a series of self evaluation exercises which have contributed to this plan. Service priorities are derived from the Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child (GIRFEMC) thematic priorities in the Single Midlothian Plan.

6. Equalities

This service plan has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA).

7. Sustainability

The service acknowledges the role of its various functions in contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. The service will work through the Council's Climate Change & Sustainable Development group, using Corporate Management Team-agreed self-assessment procedures, to identify improvement actions/priorities for inclusion in the Council's 2013-18 Sustainability Action Plan.

8. Future Development of Services

This plan outlines how the Service will work towards the achievement of its priorities. Midlothian's 3 new key priorities are to reduce inequalities in economic circumstances, health and education

learning outcomes. Within Midlothian we also have three targeted communities where we have been asked by the CPP to direct resources in order to close the gap. The new service is not locality based therefore we shall need to ensure that sufficient resources are within the three targeted areas (Woodburn, Gorebridge and Mayfield) in order to try and reduce inequalities. In addition to this we shall also be looking at the following areas of work:

- Support Education Service with their Inclusion Review
- Develop a robust Named Person Service.
- Continue to promote the role of the Corporate Parent and offer ongoing support to our care experienced young people via the Champions Board.
- Review the staged intervention system with the creation of the Midlothian Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy.
- Scottish Abuse Inquiry Team
- Transition work for children and young people affected by disability
- PACE – Permanence Framework - October 2017
- UASC - Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- Resettlement Project – supporting Syrian Refugee families to settle in Midlothian
- Work with Health colleagues and other relevant agencies to develop a robust mental health pathway that more appropriately supports the needs of the young people in Midlothian
- PREVENT agenda – ensuring that appropriate awareness training is offered to all staff across the council.
- Consideration to the Introduction of a Personal Assistant Scheme and policy so support families who are entitled to Self Directed Support and chose option? Direct Payment

a) Child Protection

We are at a stage where our child protection statistics have remained fairly static over the past year with little variation. The number is just above the Scottish average however all three agencies involved in child protection agree this is proportionate for Midlothian given the demographics. Whilst numbers themselves don't necessarily tell us the full story the ability to maintain some stability within this complex area of work is further evidence of the changing culture within Midlothian Children's Services. We have moved from a risk adverse culture to one of permission for workers to better manage risk and consider proportionate and appropriate interventions whilst ensuring that they continue to promote collaborative and safe working with their partner agencies.

The Public Protection Office plays a key role in how we continue to improve practice within the child protection area of work. Staff regularly attend at the Public Protection Office and liaise with Police and Health and the Lead Officer for Child Protection to discuss new referrals and agree a way forward.

b) Looked after and accommodated children and care leavers

We are promoting our Corporate Parenting duties including developing a work experience and training programme for looked after children and care leavers. The now established Young Champions Group (previously KICK Group) meets quarterly with The Professionals Champions (previously known as Corporate Parenting Board) to discuss any ongoing issues and raise awareness of new concerns. This work is progressing and we are proposing that the governance of the Corporate Parenting Plan is reviewed at the GIRFEMC Board to promote a more streamlined overview.

In 2016 we continued to hold regular recruitment campaigns across the locality to recruit foster carers and adopters. This has proven to be a very challenging area of work as there is a national shortage of foster carers coupled with the changes for the upper age range of young people who can remain in care. This has raised further challenges both in relation to additional financial resources and identifying suitable carers. The drive to ensure we have a sufficient number of

carers who are experienced and committed to caring for our children and young people is ongoing. Dedicated staff have been appointed to deliver and take forward this important area of work. We have also implemented the Skills to Foster scheme to enhance retention of carers through training and will review the effectiveness of this.

In addition to this we have a dedicated small team who also support and work with kinship carers. We have now developed a training plan and have a Kinship Strategy Group who meet twice yearly with the Head of Service to review the progress on their plan.

Within the new structure we have two independent reviewing officers who chair both Looked After and Accommodated Children's (LAAC) reviews and Child Protection Case Conferences. We have improved outcomes for our LAAC children and young people by making significant decisions around rehabilitation and our permanence planning is much swifter than in previous years. This is in part as a result of our Permanence Framework, a large piece of work undertaken by practitioners, team leaders, legal team and administrative support assistants who worked tirelessly to devise a workflow which supports staff to better understand and work through the permanence process. This piece of work has been recognized and we have been approached to by The Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) team to be part of a new innovative programme for improving timescales in securing a permanent home for children in care which will be rolled out across Scotland. This piece of work shall commence in October 2017.

c) Self-Directed Support

Children's Services have employed a new way of working with our service users with the introduction of self directed support on the 1st April 2014. This does not only affect children with disabilities but impacts upon our family support and social work services too. This approach requires all workers who are dealing with new referrals for support at all stages to have a discussion with the family around the 4 different options available to them. This then informs the outcome-focused assessment which could result in a family being allocated a sum of money to buy their own resource if eligible (based on the outcome of the assessment). Over the past year Children's services has embraced this new way of working and we now have a dedicated development worker who supports all staff to use the outcome focused assessment with all new cases.

d) New Integrated Children's Services Plan

The Integrated Children's Services Plan is now complete and aligns itself with the medium term priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan.

e) Participation

Children's Services is committed to improving how we involve children, young people and their families in the development of the service. We have introduced working agreements with all new referrals so that both the service users and ourselves have a clear understanding and expectation of the next steps. The Champions Board has close links with the Young Champions group and they are represented at the Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child Board. Through 2017/18 we will continue to work with our colleagues in Lifelong Learning and Employability, Who Cares Scotland and other relevant agencies to promote and engage with the development and implementation of the new participation strategy.

The anticipated outputs are:

- Future service and team plans based on what children, young people and their families are telling us.
- High quality information available to children and families
- Participation groups that are well supported by professionals and well attended by service users.
- Teams consulting service users on service improvement projects.
- Improved involvement in services users in day to day service delivery.

f) Residential services improvement programme

Residential Services have undergone a successful recent Care Inspectorate Inspection, and are aware of the need for continuous improvement and the needs of new legislation and the continued demands placed upon this service. There were no recommendations or requirements following this inspection but a desire to continue to improve outcomes for the young people who reside there.

g) Early Intervention and Preventative Work

Over the past year we have continued to see an increase in referrals coming into the service, yet we have seen no increase in the numbers of children whose names are on the child protection register or in the number of children who are looked after. Therefore we can determine from these figures that we are intervening and working with families at an earlier stage and preventing cases escalating. Our focus therefore has to remain on early intervention and preventative work so that we support not only the families but our colleagues in education, health and our voluntary sector partners to manage lower level referrals with a proportionate response and level of intervention.

In 2017-18 our commitment going forward is to improve families' lives by giving them the support they need, when they need it in addition to this we aim to continue to give focus on the targeted areas whilst having regard to other priorities such as Child Poverty and ensuring that vulnerable children receive the best start in life to help reduce inequality in future years.

9. Service Objectives

The following tables contain key service priorities, actions and indicators for 2017/18.

Appendix A: The overall set of Single Midlothian Plan outcomes and priorities for 2016/19

Appendix B: Key service priorities, actions and indicators for 2017/18

Appendix C: Equalities Impact Assessment

APPENDIX A: Single Midlothian Plan 3 year priorities 2016/19

Midlothian Community Planning Partnership Board agreed that all partners will focus for the 3 years on how they can contribute to:-

- 1 Reducing inequalities in the health of our population
- 2 Reducing inequalities in the outcomes of learning in our population
- 3 Reducing inequalities in the economic circumstances of our population

Each Thematic group has identified their 3 year priorities which link to the 3 agreed priorities stated above.

ADULT HEALTH AND CARE (AHC)

- 1 People are able to look after and improve their own health and wellbeing and live in good health for longer
- 2 People, including those with disabilities/long term conditions or are frail are able wherever possible, to live independently and in their own homes
- 3 Health and Social Care have contributed to reducing health inequalities
- 4 Unpaid carers are supported to look after their own health and wellbeing

COMMUNITY SAFETY (CS)

- 1 Fewer people are victims of crime, abuse or harm
- 2 People feel safe in their neighbourhoods and homes
- 3 Our communities take a positive role in shaping their future

GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY MIDLOTHIAN CHILD (GIRFEMC)

- 1 Children in their early years and their families are being supported to be healthy, to learn and to be resilient
- 2 All Midlothian children and young people are being offered access to timely and appropriate support through named person service
- 3 All care experienced children and young people are being provided with quality services
- 4 Children and young people are supported to be healthy, happy and reach their potential
- 5 Inequalities in learning outcomes have reduced

IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES MIDLOTHIAN (IOM)

- 1 Poverty Levels in Midlothian overall are below the Scottish average
- 2 Midlothian residents are successful learners and young people go on to positive destinations when they leave learning
- 3 There is a reduction in inequality in health outcomes
- 4 Citizens are engaged with service development and delivery

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH (SG)

- 1 New jobs and businesses are located in Midlothian
- 2 Midlothian's economic growth rate consistently outperforms the Scottish average
- 3 Midlothian is an attractive place to live, work and invest in
- 4 The gap between average earnings of the working age population living and working in Midlothian and the Scottish average has decreased
- 5 Environmental limits are better respected, especially in relation to waste, transport, climate change and biodiversity
- 8 More social housing has been provided taking account of local demand
- 9 Homelessness has reduced, and people threatened with homelessness can access advice and support services

APPENDIX B: Children's Services Service Plan 2017-18

Actions	Due Date	Performance Indicator	Target	Baseline	Previous trend data	Managed by
GIRFEMC - All care experienced children and young people are being provided with quality services						
Improve opportunities for Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) to feed back their experiences in foster care, Midlothian residential services & Kinship care	31/03/18	Increase service user feedback	TBC		2015 = 24%	Children's Services
Ensure that all our commissioned services carry out annual reviews for service user feedback which is fed back to Midlothian Council Children's Services	31/03/18	External services report review of service user feedback	to be established from baseline	16/17 data to form baseline		Children's Services
Continue to promote active participation from our CEYP to promote the work of the champions board through mentoring/work experience and leadership work	31/03/18	Number of people attending young champions group meetings	data only	New Measure		Children's Services
	31/03/18	Ensure ongoing scrutiny of Life Changes Trust Plan and anything off target is reported to GIRFEMC	0			Children's Services
Implement alternative care arrangements for those young people who are at risk of secure care	31/03/18	number of Young People issued with a Movement Restriction Order Target	0		16/17 - 3	Children's Services
	31/03/18	Number of young people in secure care over the year period	data only			Children's Services
GIRFEMC - Inequalities in learning outcomes have reduced						
Improve educational outcomes of our looked after children (LAC/LAAC & Kinship)	31/03/18	Number of qualifications each 16 year Care Experienced Young Person (CEYP) gains	TBC			Children's Services
	31/03/18	Number of CEYP continuing into 5 th & 6 th year	TBC			Children's Services
	31/03/18	Number of CEYP are on part time timetables	TBC			Children's Services

Actions	Due Date	Performance Indicator	Target	Baseline	Previous trend data	Managed by
	31/03/18	Percentage of exclusion relate to CEYP over the school year – how many days?	TBC			Children's Services
GIRFEMC - Children and young people are supported to be Healthy, happy and reach their potential						
Implement the changes outlined in the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, as and when new duties apply	31/03/18	Establish a named person service	Yes/No			Children's Services
Increase opportunities to work in collaboration with partners, identify opportunities to work with voluntary agencies and local community groups, including resource- sharing and co-location	31/03/18	Evidence of resource sharing with other agencies	tbc	15/16 - 1	2	Children's Services
Service Priority Only (not included in the SMP) Disability:						
Establish a transition policy for children and young people who have severe and complex needs	31/01/18	Reduction in usage of external resources on an unplanned basis	to be established from baseline	16/17 data baseline		Children's Services

APPENDIX C: Equality Impact Assessment



Information published by Midlothian Council can be provided on request in many of the community languages e.g. Cantonese, Punjabi, Urdu and also in large print, Braille, or audio tape. For more information please contact Midlothian Council on 0131 270 7500.

Lead contact:

Joan Tranent

Section A: Introduction

1. Title of policy, procedure or function being assessed

Children's Services Service Plan 2017-18

2. Divisions/organisations/groups involved in doing this Equality Impact Assessment

Education, Communities and Economy Directorate

3. Date started:

16 March 2017

Date completed:

16 March 2017

Section B: Information

4. Please describe the Policy, Procedure or Function you are impact assessing

The purpose of the Service Plan is to show the tasks and challenges for the service. This will provide direction to employees and an overview of the service's work plan to those within and out with the service. The plan will also show the link between individual staff performance and the Single Midlothian Plan, and team plans.

5. What information and consultation data do you have to inform your assessment? What does it tell you?

The plan was developed following consultation with service users and strategic partner agencies. The plan links to the Single Midlothian Plan whose priorities were reviewed following a major public consultation exercise.

6. Do you need more information or more consultation/engagement data?

- Do you need anything more:
 - i. to do this Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)
 - ii. to monitor or assess, in future, the impact of the policy/procedure or function you are EQIAing on people with different equalities characteristics
- Lack of data is not a sufficient reason to conclude there is no impact. It is insufficient to state that a policy will affect everyone equally without having considered the different barriers some people may encounter.

No further consultation is required to develop the plan. However, as part of the monitoring process to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan there will be a programme of continual engagement and consultation with stakeholders.

Section C: Assessment

Midlothian Council equality impact assesses on **all** of the characteristics in the shaded area below, so you should consider all of these in your assessment. If you want you can consider other groups as well.

Race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality)

Disability (e.g. physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, mental health conditions or long-term illnesses)

Sex(male/female)

Age (all ages)

Sexual Orientation (gay man, gay woman/lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual/straight)

Religion or belief (including having no religion or belief)

Pregnancy and maternity (having just had a baby or being pregnant)

Gender reassignment or transgender status (a person who is proposing to undergo is undergoing or has undergone a process to change their sex)

Marriage and Civil Partnership

People experiencing poverty or at risk of poverty: (poverty may be simply defined as not having enough money to meet one's basic daily needs or to have the things that most people in the UK take for granted).

As you answer questions 7i. to 7iv. over the page:

a) Think about the policy, practice or function you are assessing and

- people with the above characteristics
- people associated with them (e.g. a parent or carer)
- people mistakenly assumed to have the above characteristics

Remember to consider impacts on staff as well as communities and customers.

Continued.../

b) Consider whether the above people are likely to have different needs, or be affected in different ways by what you are doing/proposing. e.g.

- People may need, or benefit from, information provided in a particular format, like large print or easyread.
- A queuing system which relies on people standing for long periods will make it very difficult for some people to use the service.
- Charging more for a service is likely to affect people from several of the groups in the shaded area above, as on average they have a lower income.
- Targeting an area of high poverty could leave people experiencing poverty outside the area even worse off in comparison

c) Consider the General Equality Duty requirements to pay due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, victimization, harassment or other local conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the characteristics listed in shaded area at the top of this page (except poverty)
- advance equality of opportunity between and foster good relations between people who share a characteristic in the shaded area and those who do not (except marriage and civil partnership and poverty)

7i. Note any positive impacts on the above equalities groups

Children's Services deliver a range of services to all groups and make no differentiation. The Service often works with the most disadvantaged members of the public and through early intervention and prevention endeavours to provide positive impacts at all stages.

7ii. Note any negative impacts on equalities groups

None

7iii. How significant would this negative impact be, and what kind of numbers would be affected?

Not applicable.

7iv. Note any opportunities for making a positive impact on equalities groups.

The work of Children's Service will make a positive impact on all groups with particular emphasis on those with a disability, those who are deemed to be at risk of abuse from either their parent or partner, those in poverty or at risk of poverty, looked after and looked after and accommodated children and young people and care experienced care leavers. Children, young people and their families on the Child Protection Register, children and young people at risk of exclusion, and those involved in Youth Justice etc.

Section D: Actions and Outcomes

Questions 8 and 9 below ask about actions which have been taken, or will be taken **as a result** of this Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). Any pre-existing actions should be included in earlier sections.

8. Note any actions you will be taking as a result of this EQIA:

Think about what you can do to:

- minimise or remove any negative impacts, and
- maximise the opportunities for positive impacts

Through the work of the service there is a great emphasis on early intervention and prevention for equality protected characteristic groupings.

9. Please note any actions you have already taken as a result of this EQIA here.

A strategic assessment of deprivation across Midlothian was undertaken and identified the areas of most need. Work is ongoing to ensure that appropriate services are put in place for families to try and mitigate the risk of health and education inequalities and to ensure that children get the best start in life and eventually move into positive destinations once they leave education.

10. How will you track/monitor that the actions you mentioned in 8. have been achieved?

e.g. by adding them to a work plan, service plan etc.

The plan is monitored through quarterly scrutiny by the Director, Corporate Management Team and Elected Members. An annual report on progress is published on the Midlothian Council website.

11. If you have decided not to take any action please note why this is, and any justification, here.

A significant negative impact, even if it affects only a small number of people, should be addressed.

Not applicable

12. Is a more detailed assessment recommended?

No

APPENDIX D: Children's Services Structure

