

# Fife Child Protection Committee

## Children in Fife

Annual Report 2016/17



getting  
it right  
for every child

## Foreword

I have been the Independent Chair of the Fife Child Protection Committee (CPC) since April 2015, and this report reflects some of the achievements made by the Committee in that that time. Child Protection is a complex and at times challenging area of business however the strong commitment of the Chief Officers Public Safety Group, the CPC, supporting working groups and all involved in protecting children and young people across the partnership is obvious and augurs well for the future. The Care Inspectorate carried out a Children's Services Inspection in 2015 and their report published in 2016 is an indication of the efforts of all involved in promoting, supporting and safeguarding Fife's children. This has been a particularly challenging time for the CPC who have been intent on delivering a significant change programme whilst heavily involved in the inspection combined with a high degree of internal and external attention following a number of significant cases.

Continuous improvement remains the major focus of the work of the CPC. We have reviewed and updated our multi-agency Child Protection guidance and continued to develop supporting policies and procedures so that staff are familiar with best practice in child protection work. The learning from Significant Case Reviews and other Child Protection focused work in the partnership has led us to identify six key themes for improvement and has led to the creation of an ambitious Improvement Plan for 2017 to 2020 which will provide a focus for all of our activities.

This Fife CPC Annual Report is the first of its type and will hopefully set the scene for similar reports in years to follow. It provides a welcome opportunity for the Fife Child Protection Committee (CPC) to evidence achievements and plan for the year ahead. Importantly it coincides with the launch of the CPC Improvement Plan 2017–20.



CPC Independent Chair

## Introduction

Fife's Child Protection Committee brings together all the organisations involved in protecting children in the area. The Committee's purpose is to provide individual and collective leadership and direction for the management of child protection services within Fife, contributing as appropriate to the provision of effective child protection across Scotland. Representation is from Fife's partner agencies with direct responsibilities for matters of child protection across Fife. The Committee has direct links to the Children in Fife Group and reports to the Chief Officers Public Safety Group who in turn report to the Safer Communities Committee.

**OUR VISION** is for all children in Fife to be safe and protected from harm.

## How we work together

In Fife we ensure that the work of partners can make **every child and young person matter** through the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) framework. Child Protection in Fife is rooted in GIRFEC which means that every child in Fife has the right to be safe, have their needs met and their rights respected.

## Children's Rights

**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** provides a comprehensive statement of the rights of children. The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life. It explains how public services must work together to ensure that the rights of all children are recognised and given effect. UNCRC Articles 19 and 33 to 36 are particularly relevant to Child Protection:

**Article 19:**  
"The right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated"

**Article 33 – 36:**  
"The right to be protected from dangerous drugs, sexual abuse, abduction and other forms of exploitation"

## Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

**GIRFEC** is Scotland's approach to supporting children and young people. It is designed to ensure that all practitioners working with and for children and young people have the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of the work they do. GIRFEC recognises the importance of taking a rounded view of wellbeing, with the aim of ensuring that all children and young people are: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.



As a Child Protection Committee, safety is our prime concern, however often other signs of need or risk in respect of the other wellbeing indicators are key to identifying risk of harm. It is unusual for a child or young person to be at risk of harm and not have other wellbeing needs.

Providing support at an early stage can help children and families. At the heart of the GIRFEC approach is an emphasis on early, proactive intervention in order to create a supportive environment and identify any additional support that may be required as early as possible. Early intervention and support can prevent a problem from escalating into a crisis and ultimately, ensure positive outcomes for children.

## Getting it Right in Fife (GIRIF)

**Getting It Right In Fife (GIRIF)** is the basis for implementing GIRFEC in Fife. It provides an overarching framework which enables Fife's Children's Services to provide more effective and outcome-based services to children and young people in Fife. GIRIF recognises and reflects the varying needs of children and young people, and the roles played by a diverse range of universal, additional and intensive services in supporting them.

The framework provides a basis for the Fife's Children's Services partnership to develop both the capacity and quality of services across the continuum of support - Universal, Additional, and Intensive. It also outlines and describes how these services can work together more effectively to provide a more integrated service for children, young people and families, ensuring that:

- Their needs are identified, based on relevant information relating to all aspects of the wellbeing of the child or young person
- That appropriate support is identified, including access to other services if needed
- A key person is available to coordinate support, as required (the Named Person for the child/young person, and the Lead Professional for the service concerned)

*Universal services* – for all children and young people

*Additional support* – for key disadvantaged groups, or those who would benefit from focused working (e.g. those living in socially disadvantaged communities)

*Intensive support* – for the vulnerable, those with significant needs, and those at risk



## Children's Services Inspection

The Care Inspectorate undertook a Children's Services Inspection during 2015 with the report being published in March 2016. The report identified significant improvement since the previous inspection in 2012 and evaluated Fife partnership services against 9 quality indicators:

<b><i>How well are the lives of children and young people improving?</i></b>	
Improving the wellbeing of children and young people	<b>Good</b>
Impact on children and young people	<b>Good</b>
Impact on families	<b>Very Good</b>

<b><i>How well are partners working together to improve the lives of children, young people and families?</i></b>	
Providing help and support at an early stage	<b>Good</b>
Assessing and responding to risks and needs	<b>Good</b>
Planning for individual children	<b>Adequate</b>
Planning and improving services	<b>Good</b>
Participation of children, young people, families and other stakeholders	<b>Very Good</b>

<b><i>How good is the leadership and direction of services for children and young people?</i></b>	
Leadership of improvement and change	<b>Very Good</b>

During the inspection, the Care Inspectorate identified particular strengths which were making a positive difference for children and young people in the Fife community planning partnership area. These were:

The family nurture approach which was embedded across the area and was having a positive impact on families

Participation and engagement of wide groups of children, young people and families which was making a difference to how services were being delivered

The breadth of approaches that were in place to address disadvantage and tackle the impact of poverty

Developing approaches to self-evaluation leading to demonstrable improvement in practice

The Inspection report was analysed alongside Fife's own self-evaluation of Children's Services and an update of outcomes within the Fife Children's Services Plan (2014-2017). This work led to an inspection specific action plan with a small number of key priorities which provides a focussed approach to address the main areas for improvement. The 9 key priority areas are as follows:

- Co-ordinated Family Support
- Multi-Agency Child's Planning Process
- Returning Looked After Children to Fife
- Permanency Planning
- Child Protection Committee Plan
- Young Person's Participation Strategy
- CAMHS Waiting Times
- Chronologies / Multi-Agency Chronologies
- Strategic Commissioning of Children's Services

The action plan is closely monitored by the Children in Fife partnership group.

### CPC Multi-Agency File Audit October 2016

Multi-agency audits are undertaken as one of many strands of self-evaluation activity within children's services and support learning about what works well and where improvements may need to be made. A focus on a particular theme measured against specific quality indicators is identified for each multi-agency audit. Care Inspectorate Quality Indicators (QI: 2.1; 5.1; 5.2; 5.3; 9.2<sup>1</sup>) were considered in the audit. The theme is generated from activity relating to Improvement Plans, Children's Services 6 monthly performance reports, Development Days, CPC Conference and findings from self-evaluation activities.

The overarching theme for the October audit was Children affected by 'Domestic Abuse'. During the file read auditors focussed on information sharing, chronologies and planning, and the following key themes:

- Child at the Centre
- Relationships
- Quality of assessment and planning and the need to consider cumulative concerns
- Information exchange / communication
- Early intervention and its interface with statutory services
- Professional support / oversight

For this audit 23 cases were selected using agreed criteria.

There has been an **overall improvement** from the last audit in 2014, however, it is clear that some areas require further improvement. It should be noted that, whilst the audit covers the same indicators, there have been significant changes to processes for some of these (e.g. 5.2 Chronologies and 5.3 Quality of Child's Plan) and as such the criteria for assessing against these indicators is different from the 2014 audit and therefore comparative data has been treated with caution.

<sup>1</sup> The Care Inspectorate Quality Indicator Framework can be accessed at:

<http://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/2600/Care%20Inspectorate%20Joint%20Inspect%20Quality%20Indicators%20Children%20&%20Young%20People.pdf>

## Key Strengths Identified Overall

- There is an improving trend in the overall scoring of 9 key questions.
- Practitioners consistently place the child at the centre, with good practice focusing on early recognition of concerns and assistance being sought as appropriate from other agencies.
- Positive collaborative working with Women's Aid and CEDAR ensuring co-ordinated support.
- Health services recognise early risks to unborn babies and take appropriate, timeous action.
- Consistent information sharing, regular multi-agency discussions and involvement of carers and wider family in planning.
- Good quality, flexible plans which are generally reviewed at intervals appropriate to child's needs.
- Positive, multi-agency collaborative working to improve outcomes for the child.
- Practitioners recognise signs that children may be at immediate risk of harm and respond without delay.
- Police notifications to social work result in robust information sharing and appropriate and timely action being taken.

## Key Areas for Improvement Overall

- The standard of chronologies remains an area for improvement. New single and multi-agency guidance should improve this but needs to be addressed swiftly.
- Use of agreed risk assessment tools, particularly in Education and Health services should be re-enforced.
- Evidence suggests that further improvements are required by single agencies in the development of agreed outcome indicators for the child.
- Plans are generally good, but some need to be more specific to support evidencing change and improvement.
- Some improvement required to ensure recordings are sufficiently detailed to evidence how judgement and decision making was undertaken.
- More effort should be made in obtaining child's views as appropriate, and make use of the potential provided by Education Services daily contact with the school aged child.

The CPC has considered this report and areas for improvement are being addressed either through the new CPC Improvement Plan 2017-20 or by single agencies. These improvement activities will be monitored by the CPC to ensure they are progressed.

## CPC Multi-Agency Training

Fife Child Protection Committee (CPC) has overall responsibility for the planning, development, provision and delivery of all inter-agency child protection training across Fife. It is also responsible for monitoring, reviewing, evaluating and quality assuring this training to ensure it is relevant and effective.

The Inter Agency Child Protection Training Programme for 2015 – 2016 was developed in line with the Scottish Government's Common Core of Skills, Knowledge & Understanding and Values for the "Children's Workforce" in Scotland

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0039/00395179.pdf>

and the National Framework for Child Protection learning & development in Scotland

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0040/00409124.pdf>

which outline the competencies/knowledge/skills required in three workforce categories:

- General Contact Workforce
- Specific Contact Workforce
- Intensive Contact Workforce

Training is provided for practitioners, managers, non-statutory agencies and for CPC members themselves. Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, 50 training events were scheduled with 48 delivered, consisting of 10 courses. The total % update attendance of multi-agency training courses throughout 2015 – 2016 was 82% and meets the local target for attendance of 80%.

Exit evaluation questionnaires are completed on the day and these are input in the CLMS system which has the functionality to produce a number of management reports to allow for monitoring and course review.

A review of Child Protection training currently on offer was undertaken in 2015 and 2016 and minor changes were made to ensure training remained up-to-date.

**The existing training programme continues to evaluate very positively with an average satisfaction rate of:**

89%

With the development of a local Trainers Forum as well as the involvement with the National Child Protection Learning and Development Group, training will have a platform for wider professional feedback. Non-attendance, particularly in respect of participants from the private and voluntary sector, remains an area of focus.

## CPC Improvement Plan 2014-16

The CPC Improvement Plan 2014-16 was the subject of regular monitoring by CPC to ensure agreed activity was progressing. The Plan contained five priority areas where key improvement activity was identified as being required:

- **Priority 1** Our ability to self-reflect in support of continuous improvement
- **Priority 2** Improvement to the wellbeing of children through early and proportionate intervention
- **Priority 3** The long term wellbeing of children within key vulnerable groups
- **Priority 4** Ensure staff of single services and at inter-agency level understand child sexual abuse and exploitation and know how they should respond
- **Priority 5** Grow the competence and capability of all staff with the child protection community partnership

The CPC received a final monitoring report in February 2017 where it was noted that the majority of activity was completed.

For example under Priority 1 key activity focused on the development of a self-evaluation framework to support the quality of inter-agency working across children's services in respect of areas such as Getting It Right, as well as child protection. This framework has been in place for some time and is working very well to the extent that it is now considered 'business as usual' with refinement ongoing as required to ensure that activity and reporting are both current and relevant.

In terms of Priority 4 the CPC set up a Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Working Group. This Working Group has supported the development of a CSE Strategy and published practitioner guidance, both of which fully reflect national activity.

In addition 28 members of staff from across the partnership were trained in using the highly regarded Barnardo's CSE training materials. This has resulted in significant activity, both single and multi-agency, to ensure that awareness raising sessions and more in depth training is widely available. For example in 2016 social work trained over 200 practitioners with plans to repeat this in 2017, almost all Police Officers up to Inspector level have been trained throughout 2016 with further sessions for Probationer Officers and Inspectors in place from April 2017.

NHS Fife have implemented a training strategy which covers all relevant health staff who may have contact with children who may be at risk of CSE. The NHS Fife CSE Training Strategy 2017-2020 is now in place and details the multi-faceted training approach for CSE training for NHS Fife staff over the forthcoming three year period.

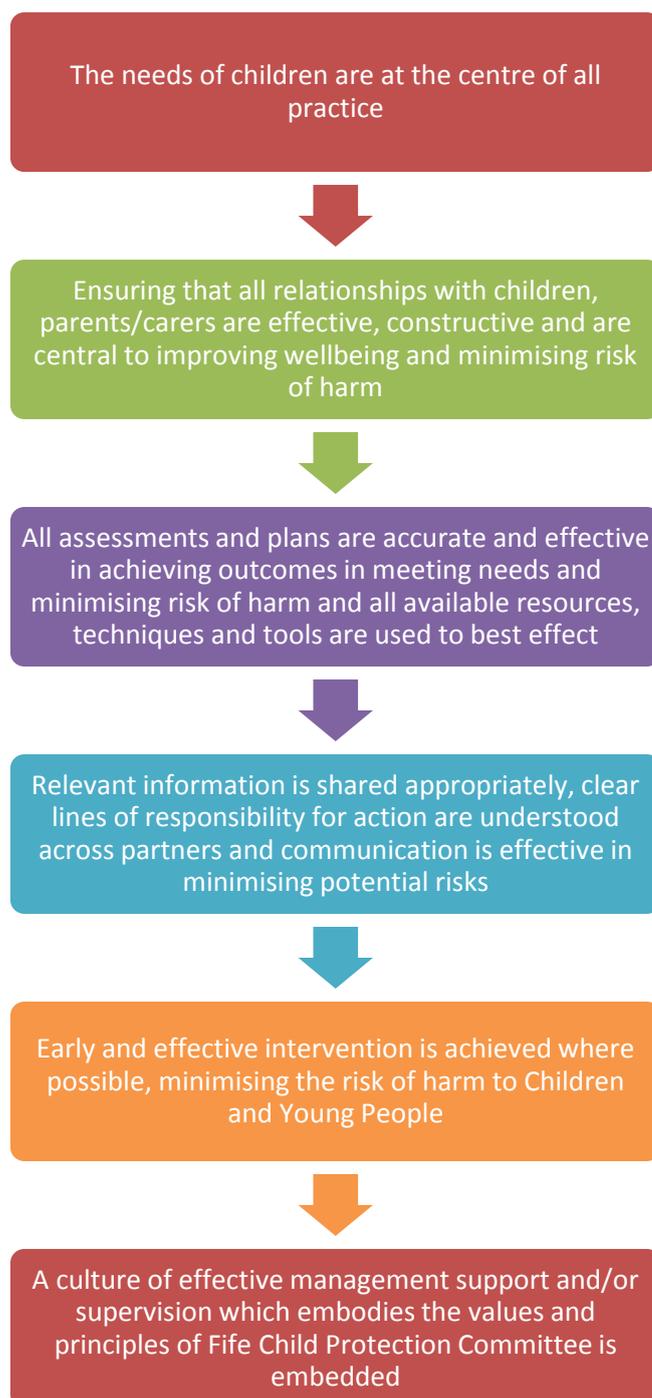
## CPC Improvement Plan 2017-20

The Fife CPC improvement Plan 2017–2020 was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. It is linked to the Fife Children’s Services Plan 2017–20 and contributes to the overall vision and commitment to promoting, supporting and safeguarding the wellbeing of all children and young people in Fife.

The improvement plan has been structured around the 6 key themes that are a priority for Fife CPC. The objectives within the plan are supported with a range of actions each of which have evaluation criteria which will help us understand when we have succeeded.

The CPC have acknowledged that satisfying actions alone does not signify improvement. Most important to any change regime is the embedding of best practice in culture and practice. We acknowledge that some changes take longer to embed than others and that our frontline staff are extremely busy and operating in challenging environments. Through our process of self-evaluation we hope to evidence sustained and continuous improvement.

The Improvement Plan can be accessed at: [Child Protection Improvement Plan 2017-2020](#)



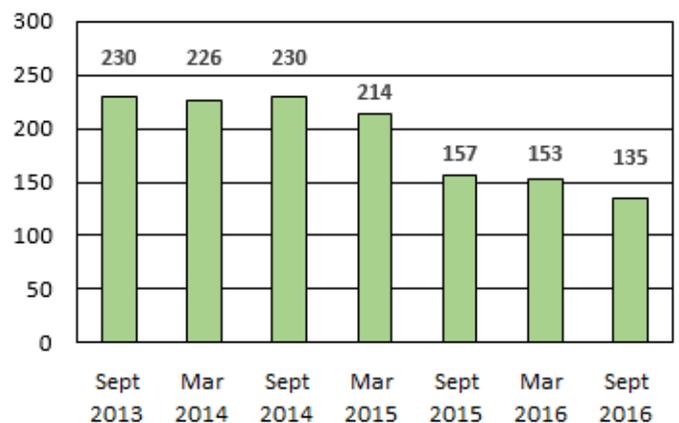
## Key Statistics

Due to current reporting structures the reported data in this report is for the reporting year 2015-16. We have added the reported data from April to September 2016 to show how trends are continuing. It is important that we present some 'hard' statistical data to evidence the identified trends in the area of Child Protection in Fife. Using this 'hard' data and comparing it to the findings of other forms of assessment, leads to a better and more evidenced analysis of improvement. Whilst statistical data provides a degree of understanding of trends it can only become meaningful when some form of analysis is carried out. The analysis can suggest that a particular upwards or downwards trend is a positive or negative and provide a degree of reassurance that the more qualitative analysis such as self-evaluation exercises are credible.

## Child Protection Registrations

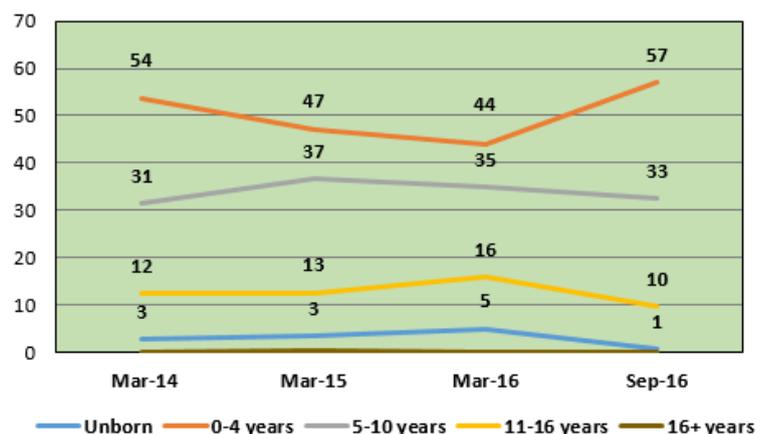
Children deemed to be at significant risk are placed on the Child Protection Register. During the 12 month period from April 2015 to March 2016 the number of children on the CPR reduced by 29% and a further 12% to September 2016.

These decreasing figures are due to a number of factors: growing multi agency understanding of the critical nature of the Child Protection Register; an increase in the number of social workers within area teams enabling earlier intervention with families in crisis; the Child Wellbeing Pathway is more embedded across the Partnership and the use of Child Wellbeing meetings is a means of ensuring effective multi-agency planning and practice; the benefits of referring, where appropriate, to the Reporter when there were ongoing concerns and considering the use of compulsory measures; the impact of early years collaborative work within the wider Children's Services.



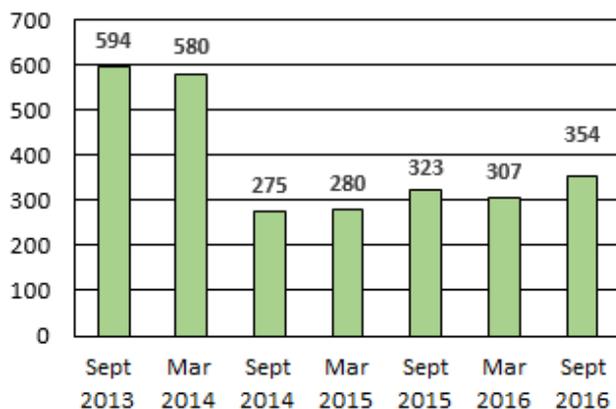
## Percentage Age Groups of children on the Child Protection Register

0-4 year olds have continued to be the highest number as an age group identified on the Child Protection Register



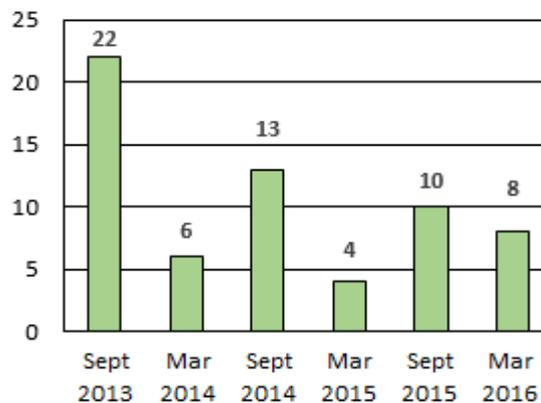
## Children in Temporary Accommodation

**Number of children residing in temporary accommodation other than bed and breakfast**



At the end of the 2015/16 reporting year there were 307 children within 149 households with pregnant woman or dependent children. By September 2016 this had increased to 354, a 15% increase since March 2016.

**Number of children residing in bed and breakfast accommodation**



At the end of the reporting year there were 8 children within 6 households, a 100% increase since March 2015 with a peak of 10 during September 2015.

The use of B&B for Homeless clients stopped with effect from 31/03/16. Families are now initially accommodated in family rooms in hostels and then moved to temporary flatted accommodation.

## Interagency Referral Discussions

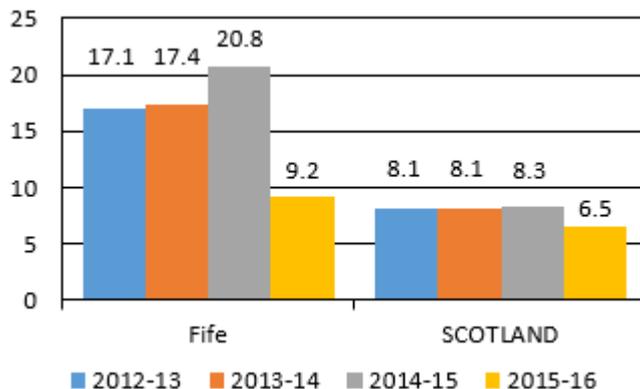
During the 12 month period from April 2015 to March 2016 there were 834 Interagency Referral Discussions (IRD), an increase of 6% over the previous year. This is the actual number of discussions and not the total number of children subject to an IRD. During the 6 month period from April 2016 to September 2016 389 IRDs took place.

Self-Evaluation work continues to be undertaken in order to support ongoing improvements.

## Benchmarking

Benchmarking information is available from the Scottish Government and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA).

### Number of children receiving a Child Protection Order (per 10,000 of the population of under 16s)



In 2014/15 Fife exceeded the national average of children receiving a CPO (per 10,000) by 12.5. However due to a significant fall of 55.6% by 2015/16, Fife were only 2.7 above the national average.

## Challenges for the Future

There is little doubt that the current economic climate is and will continue to have a significant impact on protecting Children in Fife. The issue of decreasing resources available to services is compounded with the daily financial pressures on the children and families that we work with and the inequality that exists in our society as a whole.

On Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017 the Scottish Government published the findings from the systems review of the Scottish Governments Child Protection Improvement Programme. Of note the review recommends the establishment of a National Child Protection Leadership Group to further support, strengthen and improve, from a national perspective, activity on child protection across Scotland. The full findings can be accessed at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00514758.pdf>

Fife CPC will continue to work towards all children in Fife being safe and protected from harm through the implementation of the 2017 -2020 Improvement Plan.

Child Protection has always been and remains everyone's responsibility. If you are worried about a child or young person speak to someone as soon as possible and tell them about your concerns.

**If you consider a child or young person to be in IMMEDIATE danger then call Police Scotland on 999.**

**For non-emergency calls you can call Police Scotland on 101 or the Social Work Contact Centre on 03451 551503**