



West Dunbartonshire  
**Child Protection**  
Committee

# **West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee Annual Report**

**1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

## Foreword

### ***"Child Protection is Everyone's Responsibility"***

Welcome to the West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee Annual Report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2023.

I would like to note the Committee's sincere thanks to Paula Godfrey, Independent Chair who completed her tenure in June this year having chaired both the Adult and Child Protection Committees for the last four years and during a period of considerable change nationally and locally.

This report sets out our focus and achievements during the past year and areas of priority for further development in the coming year. While, in common with all services and Partnerships, there are real challenges relating to recruitment and retention of our workforce and the wider economic situation there have been some significant areas of development aligned to the aims of the Committee. In particular we have strengthened our working arrangements with Scottish Children's Reporter Administration to improve timescales and quality of information; enhanced school nursing and responsive Health Visiting services; safeguarding training and mentor programme by Scottish Fire and Rescue services; GIRFEC approach strengthened in the Police concern pro forma; the development of a local website to improve access to information; continued strengthening of our trauma informed approach; and a focus on improvement through our self-evaluation activity through audit and learning from Reviews.

The Committee will continue to review its role, function and effectiveness over the next year to support the delivery of the national and local priorities. As the newly appointed Independent Chair I look forward to working with partners to continue the work of improving outcomes for children and young people at risk of harm across West Dunbartonshire.

Thank you to the many people and staff who are committed to the delivery of high-quality services to children and young people in need of care and protection and who have contributed to the work of Committee in this past year.

**Shiona Strachan**  
**Independent Chair, West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee**

## **Contents**

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>Pg. 04</b>
<b>2. Priorities for 2023-2024</b>	<b>Pg. 09</b>
<b>3. Achievements</b>	<b>Pg. 10</b>
<b>4. Challenges</b>	<b>Pg. 17</b>
<b>5. Child Protection Activity</b>	<b>Pg. 18</b>
<b>6. Partnership Links</b>	<b>Pg. 26</b>
<b>7. Learning Reviews</b>	<b>Pg. 27</b>
<b>8. Priorities for 2024-2025</b>	<b>Pg. 28</b>

## 1. Introduction

The annual report of West Dunbartonshire's Child Protection Committee covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and provides a summary of the work undertaken during the past year by the Committee and partners.

### What is child protection?

The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021, Updated 2023) integrates child protection within the Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) continuum and wider strategic landscape, including incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and The Promise.

It sets out responsibilities and expectations of everyone who works with children, young people and their families in Scotland and describes how agencies should work together to protect children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.

The Guidance builds on evidence and well established single and multi-agency practice, however, there are key changes of note:

- Integration of the previously separate Child Protection Guidance for Health Professionals (2013) - the "Pink Book", underlining the multi-agency nature of child protection.
- Further clarification of the role, function and contribution of Health Boards, professionals, designated staff, and services for child protection to support discharging their responsibilities safely, both individually and collectively.
- A 'child' defined as being a child or young person up to the age of 18 years, where appropriate, in line with UNCRC. The legal situation regarding young people aged 16 and 17 years is summarised.
- Widening the scope of child protection to include young people at risk in the community and not just those at risk of harm within the family.
- The criticality of multi-agency collaboration and Inter-agency Referral Discussions (IRDs) is outlined where there is risk of significant harm.
- And the importance of continuity and consistency across organisational and sector boundaries is emphasised.

The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021, Updated 2023) states Child Protection refers to the processes involved in consideration, assessment, and planning of required action, together with the actions themselves, where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm.

National guidance emphasises that Child protection is part of a continuum of collaborative duties upon agencies working with children. The Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach promotes and supports planning for such services to be provided in the way which best safeguards, supports, and promotes the wellbeing of children and ensures that any action to meet needs is taken at the earliest appropriate time to prevent acute needs arising. As part of our response to the updated guidance and ongoing improvement work our partnership has carried out awareness raising and has been mapping out the process changes required. We have worked with others in the West of Scotland to develop policies and guidance for staff.

Our partnership is committed to enabling, prevention, early intervention approaches and protective work. We will continue to build on existing knowledge, workforce skills, strategic planning approach and effective multi-agency partnership working, and self-evaluation to reduce the risk of harm and to meet the needs of children, young people and their families. Work on implementation of process and practice changes to better reflect national guidance, good practice and strengthening the voice of children, young people, carers and families will be a focus of our improvement work over the next two years.

## **West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee**

The Protecting Children and Young People: Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer Responsibilities (2019) outlines the roles and responsibilities for the Child Protection Committee and the Chief Officers Group. Child Protection Committees (CPC) and partners are central to fostering an inter-agency approach and providing support for the development and delivery of processes, common standards, and continuous improvement.

CPCs are the key local bodies for developing, implementing, and improving child protection strategy across and between agencies, bodies, and the local community. A Child Protection Committee (CPC) is expected to perform a number of crucial functions in order to jointly identify and manage risk to children and young people, monitor and improve performance and promote the ethos that ***“It’s everyone’s job to make sure I’m alright”***. Child Protection Committees (CPCs) must ensure all these functions are carried out to a high standard and are aligned to the local Getting It Right for Every Child arrangement.

The functions of Child Protection Committees (CPCs) are grouped as follows:

- Continuous improvement,
- Public information, engagement, and participation,

- Strategic planning and connections,
- Annual reporting on the work of the CPC.

The vision, values and aims of West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee have been reviewed and agreed by all parties represented on the Committee, and the Public Protection Chief Officers Group in early 2022, and are as follows:

## ***"Child Protection is Everyone's Responsibility"***

<b>We believe that:</b>	<b>We aim to:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Child's right to protection from harm is our primary and overriding concern</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the safety of children in West Dunbartonshire</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people should get the help they need when they need it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an integrated approach to identifying, intervening and providing ongoing support to protect children and young people at risk of harm</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people should be listened to and respected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure we have a competent and confident workforce</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information should be shared about children and young people where this is necessary to protect them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to the views of children and families at all times and involve them in the delivery of services</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children, young people and their families have a right to be kept informed of all processes involving them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support families and the community to safely care for children</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide public information about child protection. Agencies individually and collectively should demonstrate leadership and accountability for their work and its effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support our children and young people to achieve their full potential</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The promotion of cultural diversity and equality of opportunity in our communities is central to our work in improving the lives to children and young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer our children and young people a safe place to live, work and play</li> </ul>

The membership of West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee (WDCPC) is multi-agency and includes senior representatives of the Health and Social Care Partnership, West Dunbartonshire Council, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Services, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Independent Advocacy and third sector and other organisations who have a role to play in child protection. The role of the Committee is to provide individual and collective, collaborative leadership and direction for the delivery of Child Protection Services. As part of the Community Planning Partnership arrangements

the Child Protection Committee reports to the Public Protection Chief Officer's Group and strong links exist between the other planning groups for Public Protection such as the Violence Against Women and Girls; MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements); Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP); Adult Support and Protection and the Children's Planning Partnership. At the time of writing, work is being undertaken to review the focus for the Public Protection Chief Officer's Group with a view to strengthening governance and supporting greater cohesion and synergy between the strategic planning groups who, in line with the national guidance, report to directly to PPCOG.

West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee (WDCPC) is responsible for the design, development, implementation and evaluation of child protection policy and practice across the public, private and wider third and independent sectors in West Dunbartonshire. We are responsible for continuous improvement, strategic planning, public information and communication and involving children and young people and their families.

WDCPC has a number of multi-agency subcommittees to support its work in key areas. The groups were reviewed earlier this year and are:

- **Learning and Development**
- **Communication and Engagement**
- **Policy and Practice**
- **Self-Evaluation and Quality Assurance**
- **Inter-Agency Referral Discussion**
- **Special Needs in Pregnancy**

The subgroups are chaired by members of WDCPC and have representatives across the partners as members, assisting in the progression of each subcommittee's action plan. The sub committee's action plans are created from actions agreed for West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee (WDCPC) improvement plan.

Additional activity was undertaken in relation to the national Learning Review Guidance to develop our local guidance and implementation. This is an area of activity that continues to develop.



## **2. Priorities for 2023-2024**

The following priorities were set out in our 2023-24 annual report –

### **Learning and Development**

- Undertake a full learning needs analysis to identify training priorities across partners.
- Further enhance the child protection training calendar to include training on neglect.
  - Additional funding has been agreed for a 2-year fixed term post to support this work.
- Implementation of the Scottish Child Interview Model is ongoing.
- Develop our processes for multi-agency reflective practice based on learning from recently established reflective practice meetings. This will be progressed in the format of a complex case forum.
  - Training will support the principles of the UNCRC rights of children.

### **Communication and engagement**

- Finalise our communication and engagement strategy, implement and review its impact.
- Develop mechanisms to ensure children, young people and their families are fully engaged and listened to and obtain feedback on how services impact on their lives.
- Review and update the child protection website informed by feedback from young inspectors and children, young people and families in West Dunbartonshire.
- Continue to develop the CPC Newsletter.
- Actively promote national campaigns and child protection awareness raising locally.

### **Policy and Practice**

- Establish a centralised location for all child protection policies, procedures and protocols to ensure this is easy for staff to access.
- Agree and undertake a plan to update all policies, procedures and protocols, and develop new ones that may be required. All policies to reflect the 2021 National Guidance.
- Implement National Guidance 2021.

## **Self-Evaluation and Quality Assurance**

- Data Scrutiny - To implement version 2 of the minimum dataset to support focused inquiry of areas to inform our priorities.
- Seek feedback from children, young people and families as part of our evaluation process.
- Place more focus on measuring outcomes for children, young people and families.
- Ensure audit schedule is followed and reported to CPC.
- Track recommendations from audit activity to ensure these are completed.

## **Learning Review**

- Review and implement the National Learning Review model across the Adult and Child Protection Committee.

## **3. Key Achievements**

Partners across West Dunbartonshire continue to highlight collaborative, partnership working as a strength over the past year. An example of where this has been successful in identifying, better management and mitigation of risk is in relation to the provision of Reports to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA). Regular meetings are now in place with Social Work Services to improve quality, submission time scales and share information on the recruitment and retention issues within Social Work Services which impact on this area of work. Over the last year there has been a reduction in the number of outstanding referrals and work is ongoing to manage submission time scales.

The review and enhancement of School Nursing Services has led to therapeutic interventions to school age children, particularly those in need of emotional support. In addition, school Nurses have been able to attend and contribute to child protection meetings.

Health Visiting Services have continued to deliver parenting and targeted intervention programmes to families in need, including completing routine sensitive enquires, providing dental health support for preschool children working in conjunction with preschool education services and support for children and young people who have emotional and or mental health issues.

Police Scotland colleagues have increased awareness of Getting It Right for Every Child, including raising awareness of SHANARRI indicators across response practitioners, to ensure improved response to wellbeing concerns and children's views are captured accurately. This is now recorded on police concern forms.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) colleagues have developed a GIRFEC Guidance note for SFRS staff which supports their safeguarding policies and procedures. All SFRS operational and community action team Staff have completed annual Safeguarding Module refreshers on their E Learning Platform LCMS. In addition, their Community Action Teams continue to undertake enhanced training provided by CPCs and Partners where capacity permits.

SFRS continue to deliver Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV's) to homes throughout the area, conducting a total of 2791 across their 3 Local Authorities with 939 of these being within the West Dunbartonshire area. In addition, SFRS staff continue to undertake the role of mentors for our young people within school settings facilitated by MCR Pathways, with approximately 20 local staff signed up to be mentors. Furthermore, they continue to offer the Fire Safety Support and Education Programme which is designed to rehabilitate children and young people who have a fascination with fire and/or setting fires. They receive referrals from schools, Police Scotland colleagues and other partners and between 2023 and 2024, 3 referrals were made.

Education colleagues have led on the development of the multi-agency equal protection from assault guidance (2023), along with being involved in a variety of child protection subcommittees and wider child protection related groups eg MARAC, VAWG and PREVENT. They have also contributed to statistical information relating to the number of displaced pupils across education establishments within West Dunbartonshire, allowing for robust tracking of these children and families.

Within our education establishments, they have continued to deliver single agency child protection training and between February and April 2024, 72 members of staff have attended their child protection level 1 training. Feedback from this was that all staff agreed/strongly agreed that they had an increased knowledge on the topic after the session. They have undertaken annual child protection refresher training to 928 members of teaching staff, 400 members of support staff, and 666 member of Facilities Management staff (janitors, cleaners, catering staff etc). In addition, single agency training has been completed in relation to chronologies, with 5 sessions taking place, including 91 member of staff. Feedback from these sessions highlighted those who attended overwhelmingly appreciated session with 100% return on evaluations. Of note, staff liked

- the collaborative, cross sector working
- the exemplars of good practice
- would like an annual refresh of the session

Feedback from education colleagues highlights the benefits of SCIM and the support from key staff has resulted in joint interviews of children and young people being a supportive, trauma informed process for children and young people.

As part of the violence against women and girls plan, education staff have been involved in the Rosey project, where they have planned development of parental sessions for sensitive topics such as online safety, consent will further develop parental engagement across the partnership.

Education have also developed a Child Protection and safeguarding newsletter developed to deliver key messaging to a wider audience and this was commented as good practice by HMle

**The following achievements have been identified from the CPC subcommittees -**

**Learning and Development**

- Two training sessions have taken place in relation to the Assessment of Care toolkit used to measure neglect. Further training is planned on a monthly basis for the remainder of 2024.
- Additional training has taken place in relation to -
  - Awareness of Neglect
  - Child protection roles and responsibilities in child protection planning meetings.
  - Social work specific training across children and adult services in relation to reflective supervision.
- Implementation of the Scottish Child Interview Model has been ongoing.
- A planning group comprised of key Partners has been established to progress a complex case forum and a written proposal has been agreed detailing the scope of the forum.

**Communication and engagement**

- A joint child and adult protection communication and engagement strategy was agreed at the child and adult protection Committees.
- Work is ongoing to review and update the child protection website informed by feedback from young inspectors and children, young people and families in West Dunbartonshire.
- Plans are underway to develop our Child Protection Committee newsletter.

- We continue to promote national campaigns and child protection awareness raising locally.

### **Policy and Practice**

- As part of our local implementation of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021, Updated 2023), we have made changes to the timescales of key child protection meetings (implemented in January 2024) and have been reviewing our procedures for implementation in late summer 2024.
- A child protection escalation and dissent protocol were ratified by the CPC.
- Signs of Safety has been explored, and implementation will commence at the end of 2024.

### **Self-Evaluation and Quality Assurance**

- Data Scrutiny - Version 2 of the national minimum dataset was implemented.
- Our self-evaluation audit activity has included -
  - Police Concern reports.
  - Special Needs in Pregnancy.
  - A single agency Social Work audit and survey has commenced to understand the current position in relation to reflective supervision in children and families social work services.
  - An audit of child protection planning meetings is being progressed.

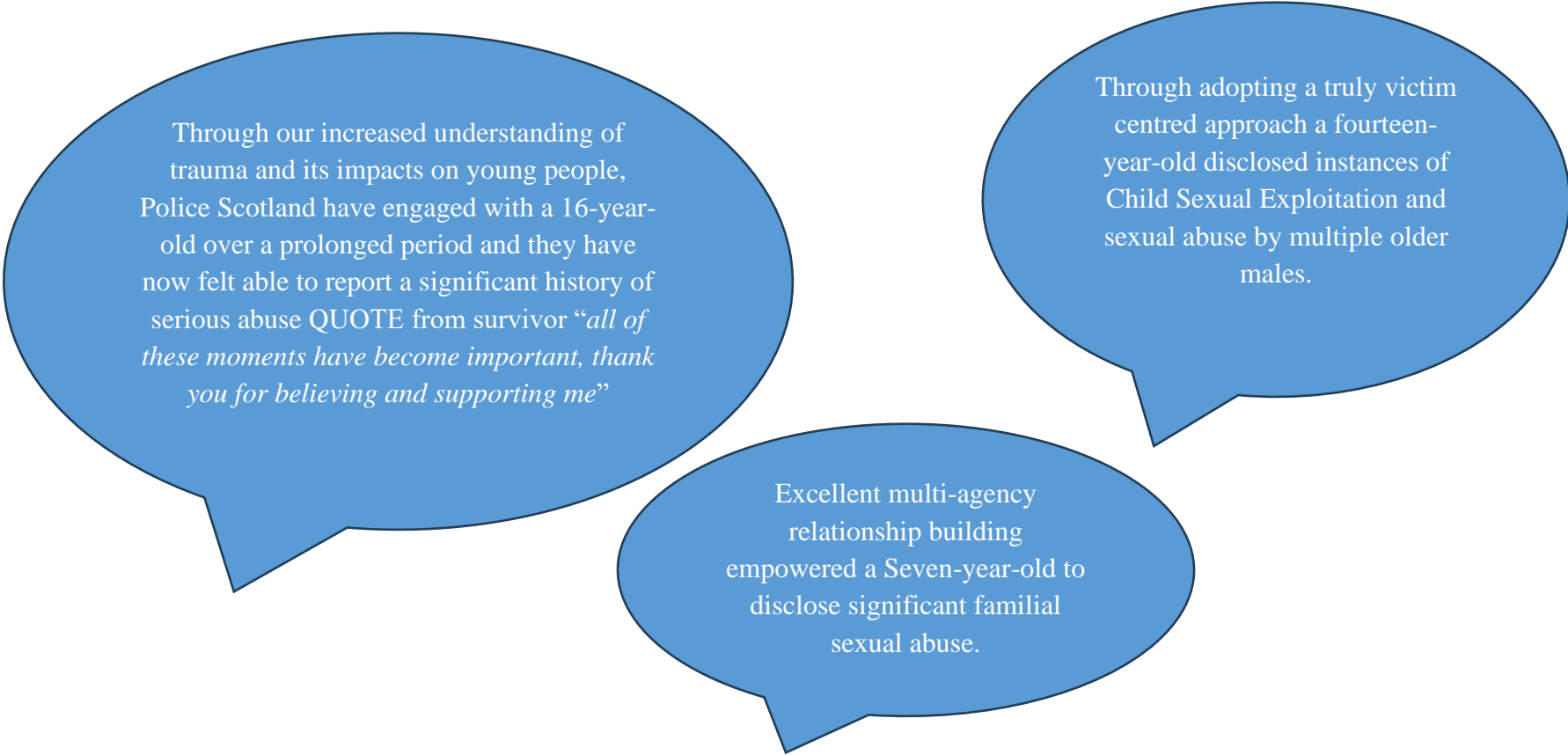
The Self-evaluation and Quality Assurance subcommittee ensures that the output and recommendations arising from audits are being implemented.

### **Inter-Agency Referral Discussion**

- The inter-agency referral discussion Guidance was ratified by the CPC to align with the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021, Updated 2023).
- Introduction of a daily multi-agency triage meeting.
- Draft terms of reference have been written in terms of implementing quarterly audits of IRDs.

- E-IRDs have been explored with the Public Protection Services at NHSGGC. Discussions are presently underway with initial agreement from Police, Social Work and Health to look at West Dunbartonshire as a Pilot Project/test of change for a new booking system designed by NHS GGC which will allow an interface between agencies and remove current manual and repetitive booking processes. Initial discussions with information security and IT across agencies have been positive which has allowed for a next steps meeting to be convened. It is anticipated this app-based solution will significantly improve IRD processes and timescales.
  - Significant amendments to multi-agency process have been made to ensure compliance with national guidance for Child Protection Scotland 2021, including IRD's being conducted for 16- and 17-year-olds and un-born children.
- **SNIPS**
    - A Special Needs in Pregnancy (SNIPS) Guidance is being progressed, along with a review of the current SNIPS processes.

**Partners have provided the following good practice examples in relation to how they have supported children, young people and their families -**

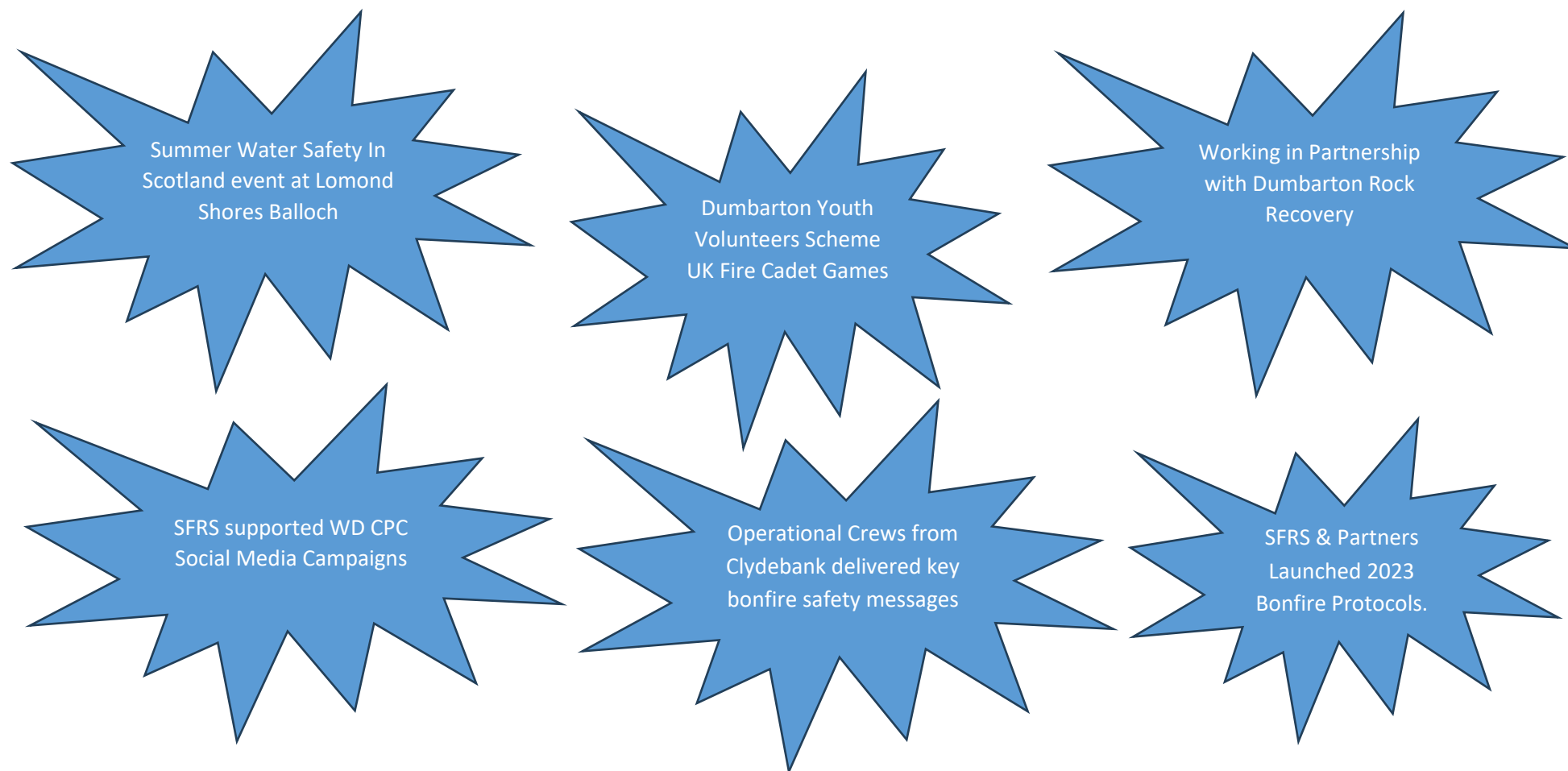


Through our increased understanding of trauma and its impacts on young people, Police Scotland have engaged with a 16-year-old over a prolonged period and they have now felt able to report a significant history of serious abuse QUOTE from survivor *“all of these moments have become important, thank you for believing and supporting me”*

Through adopting a truly victim centred approach a fourteen-year-old disclosed instances of Child Sexual Exploitation and sexual abuse by multiple older males.

Excellent multi-agency relationship building empowered a Seven-year-old to disclose significant familial sexual abuse.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Services are committed to engaging with our children and young people in all community settings. Delivering key safety messaging in the dangers and implications of fire setting, the dangers of playing in or near water and ice and road safety. Examples of this are –



Education colleagues continue to signpost families to the West Dunbartonshire Council wellbeing hubs for 1:1 or specific supports. This has resulted in families having access to support where and when they need it for as long as required. Activities to date have included - Access to outreach workers and Educational Psychologist, Sleep Scotland sessions, Incredible Years parenting group and targeted attendance support.



## 4. Challenges

Many of the challenges for our Partnership reflect the experience of other partnerships across Scotland. In particular recruitment and retention in some key areas of service, including Health Visiting and Social Work, have had a direct impact on our ability to deliver the improvement and change at the pace we would want. In common with other areas, we have seen a rise in the level of demand for services and this comes at a time of fiscal constraint.

Child Protection services continue to be prioritised by the Partnership and as outlined above we have implemented significant improvement and best practice including the Scottish Child Interview Model and our initial approach to Learning Reviews, which is an area we continue to develop. We are aware that we have more to do in relation to our public awareness, promotion of best practice and improvement activity, and placing the voice of children, young people, their carers and families and those with lived experience at the heart of what we do. Our approach to self-evaluation will be strengthened by the development of a framework which will include our approach to audit activity, involvement and feedback from children, young people and their carers and families.

Areas for further practice improvement and development will include our approach to eIRD, thresholds, use of chronologies to inform intervention, SMART planning and risk assessment. Neglect training has been provided from March 2023, and it has been agreed that the Neglect toolkit will be used to assess and provide focus for intervention where neglect is a feature. A complex case forum is being progressed locally whereby children who meet agreed criteria would be discussed in a multi-agency reflective forum to understand the decision making and offer any advice in relation to interventions.

We have recognised that our learning and development programme requires further support and have secured funding for a 2-year fixed term post. Our programme of learning and development has been delivered by the Lead Officer and commissioned training and professional development.

We have developed our public facing website offering and will continue to work on an improved central repository for national and local guidance.

## 5. Child Protection Activity – What our data tells us.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee (WDCPC) has continued to present key child protection data in the format of the national minimum dataset.

The Minimum Dataset is a set collection of agreed measurements, criteria, or categories required to create a robust understanding of information about a service. The data populated through these measures provides a baseline and then a progress measurement for the planning and development of delivered services.

The Minimum Dataset for Child Protection Committees responds to an action within the Scottish Government's Child Protection Improvement Programmed to:

- Deliver robust datasets to support child protection improvement.
- Develop a national resource for advice on using child protection data for local planning and service development.
- Expand analytical capacity.

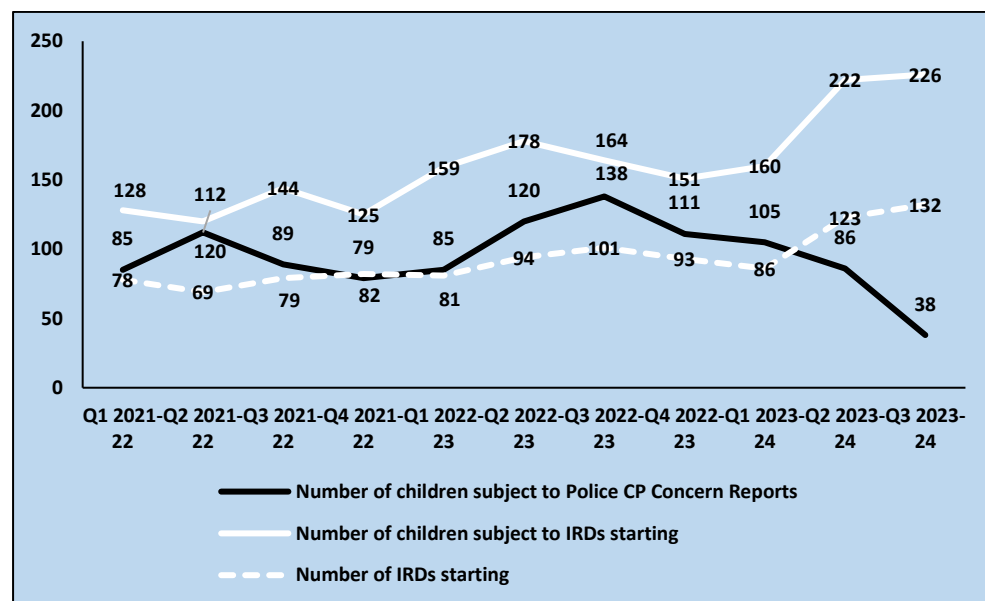
The Minimum Dataset for Child Protection Committees is a package of data collation, presentation, analysis, scrutiny questions and reporting.

West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee (WDCPC) have created a scrutiny group where key partners meet on a quarterly basis to consider the data and provide analytical context or recommendations to West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee (WDCPC) in terms of quality assurance or evaluative work that may be required.

In the summer of 2023 Version 2 of the dataset was implemented and work continues to ensure all indicators are reportable, requiring some changes to our data systems. This is in particular reference to Care and Risk Management and Age of Criminal Responsibility data.

Key data from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 can be found below.

## Number of Police Scotland-recorded Child Protection Concern Reports and Inter-Agency Referral Discussions



### Number of children subject to Police concern reports

- This peaked in Q3 (22/23) to 138, however has shown a downward trend since. This was at the lowest in Q3 (23/24) at 38.

### Number of children subject to IRD's starting

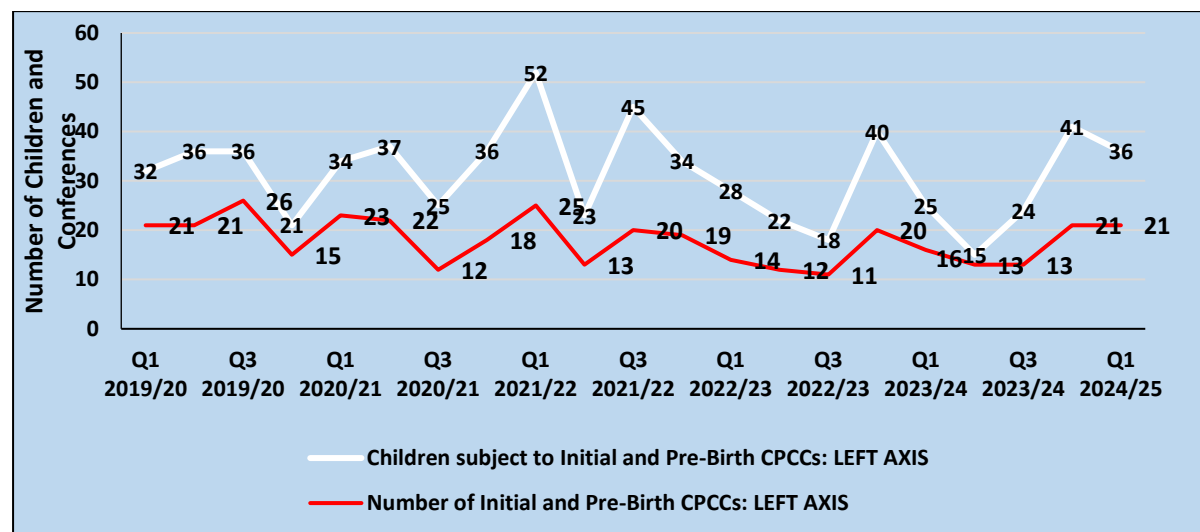
- This has increased in Q2 and Q3(23/24) and is currently at a peak of 226 in Q3.

### Number of IRD's starting

- This has increased in Q2 and Q3 (23/24) and is currently at a peak at 132 in Q3.

When exploring the source of child protection referral to Social Work Services, Police, Education and Health colleagues are consistently the Partners which make the most referrals. This is expected as core agencies. There remain 0 referrals from Fire and Rescue and Housing, with low anonymous referrals recorded and a similar picture in relation to housing providers. Plans are underway to ensure basic child protection awareness training is available to Partners, aiming to raise awareness of child protection to those who may not work directly with children and young people.

## Number of Children subject to Initial and Pre-Birth Child Protection Planning Meetings



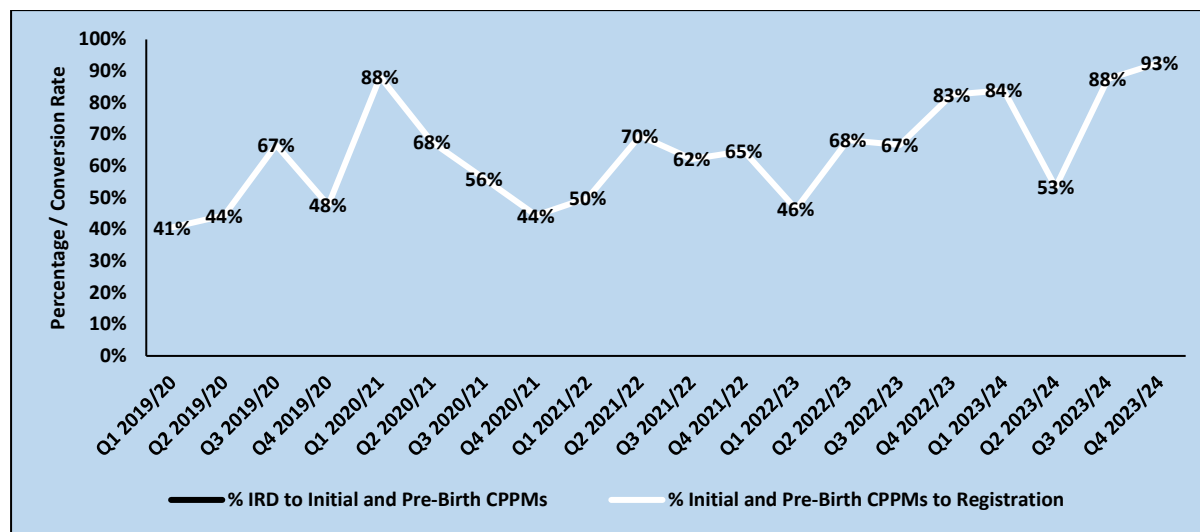
### Children subject to initial and pre-birth child protection case conference

- These figures had been on a downward slope between Q3 (21/22) and Q3 (22/23), however significantly increased between Q3 (22/23) and Q4 (23/22) to 40. From this point they have been variable. Decreasing over 2 quarter, then increasing for 2 quarters in 23/24.

### Number of initial and pre-birth child protection case conferences

- These figures have remained relatively steady in recent years.

## Conversion Rate CPPMs to Registration



## Percentage of initial and pre-birth child protection planning meeting to registration

- The figures in Q4 (23/24) where at their highest at 93%.

In June 2022 a test for change was implemented whereby the Social Work Team Leader, Senior Social Worker and Social Worker meet to discuss whether a CPPM was required based on information gathered for the child protection assessment and gathering views from Partners involved in the investigation. Work is being progressed to review this test of change to ensure this is a multi-agency decision, linking also to work being undertaken in relation to Inter-Agency referral Discussions and this being a process until either the decision is reached not to progress to a CPPM or a CPPM takes place.

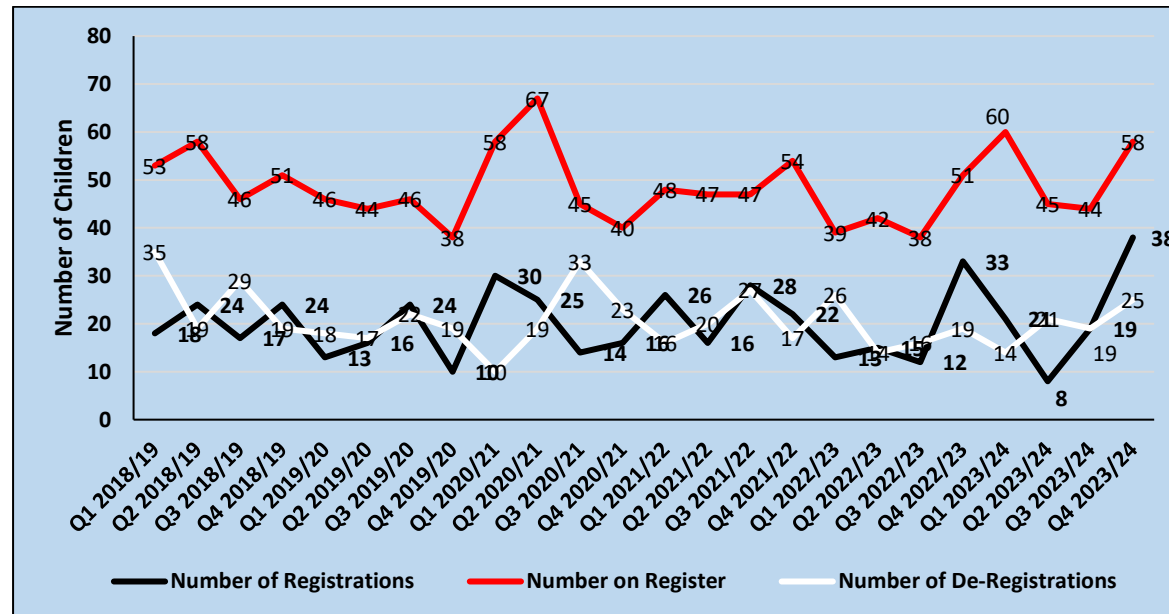
In addition, an audit of thresholds had previously taken place with findings reported to the CPC in March 2023 where the following was explored –

- Understanding the thresholds and process for initiating a child protection referral to social work services.
- Inter-agency referral discussion and the decision making in this forum and its relationship with the number of initial child case conferences taking place (please note these meetings are now referred to as child protection planning meetings).

- Partnership working relating to child protection registration and children being placed on the child protection register.

The findings from the audit reported no significant issue with the thresholds being applied.

### Number of Children (including Pre-Birth) on the Child Protection Register, New Registrations, and De-Registrations



#### Number of registrations

- These figures peaked in Q4 (24/24) at 38 and then began to decline to 8 in Q2 (23/24).

#### Number on register

- These figures have remained steady in the last 2 quarters of 23/24.

#### Number of De-registrations

- These figures have remained steady since Q2 (22/23).

The main reason for children being removed from the child protection register is due to improved home conditions.

In addition, further exploration has been completed in relation to children who have been removed from the register within 6 months between April and July 2024. This found that –

- 7 children were removed from the child protection register who had been removed from their parent's care and were deemed no longer at risk. This would be appropriate in those circumstances.
- 10 children were removed due to improved home conditions.

#### **Number of Re-Registrations within 3, 6, 12 and 24 months of de-registration**

Re-registrations	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar
	Q1 2019/20	Q2 2019/20	Q3 2019/20	Q4 2019/20	Q1 2020/21	Q2 2020/21	Q3 2020/21	Q4 2020/21
3 months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 months	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0
24 months	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0

Re-registrations	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar
	Q1 2021/22	Q2 2021/22	Q3 2021/22	Q4 2021/22	Q1 2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q4 2022/23
3 months	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
6 months	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
12 months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24 months	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	0

Re-registrations	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar
	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Q4 2023/24
3 months	0	0	0	0
6 months	0	0	0	0
12 months	1	0	2	0
24 months	0	0	0	0

In 23/24 3 children were re-register within 12 months of de-registration. This could also be considered within the complex case forum being progressed to provide further insight into the circumstances that led to re-registration and what support had been provided de-registration.

In addition, in June 2023 an audit of re-registrations took place. This found –

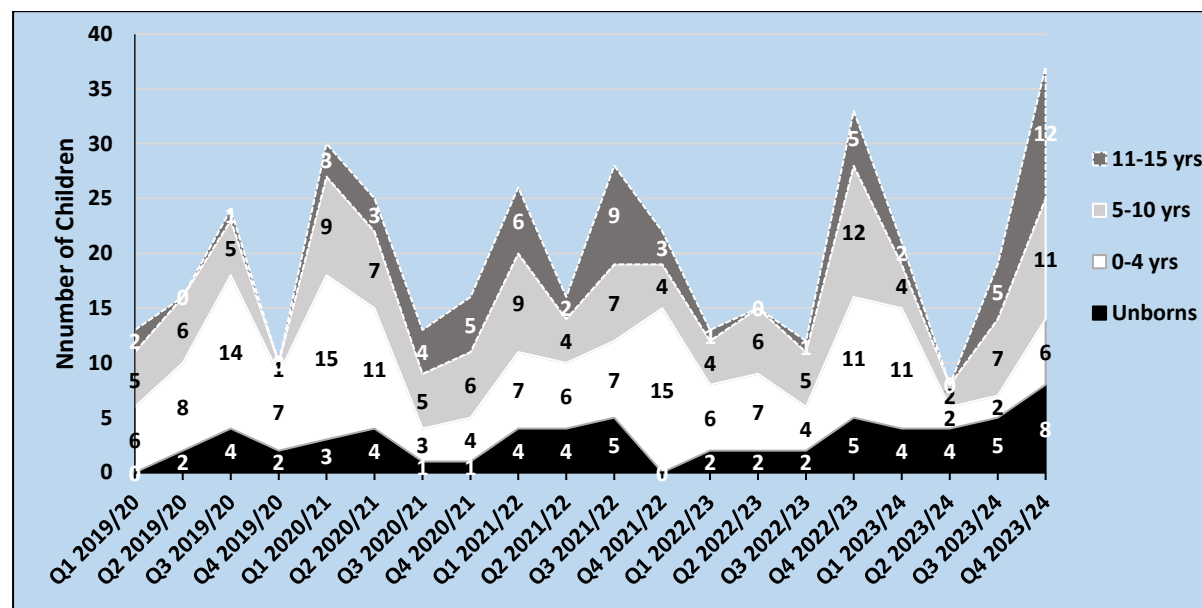
- Covid had an impact on some of the children who had been re-registered.
- Step-down processes following de-registration were not being consistently followed.
- For some, changes of worker impacted on assessments.
- Where neglect was a feature, there were occasions the team around the children were not always clear on the best methods of intervention.
- The quality of decision making, and assessments/planning was variable and there was a requirement for the multi-agency assessment to be aligned to GIRFEC.

There has been progress with some of these findings in that all social work staff have received training on chronologies, assessments and SMART planning and the Social Work assessment has now been aligned to GIRFEC.

Neglect training has been provided from March 2023, and it has been agreed that the Neglect toolkit will be used to assess and provide focus for intervention where Neglect is a feature. A complex case forum is being progressed locally whereby children who meet agreed criteria would be discussed in a multi-agency reflective forum to understand the decision making and offer any advice in relation to interventions.



## Age of Children and Young People at Registration



- There have been 0 children aged between 16-17 years placed on the child protection register from Q4 (202/21) onwards.
- There has been an increase in those aged 11-15 years placed on the register in 23/24. Work has been undertaken with our over 12s social work team to reinforce the use of child protection procedures for young people, which may have attributed to the increase in these figures.

## 6. Partnership Links

The work of West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee (WDCPC) is informed by and progressed through, links at local, regional and national level. The CPC Chair and Child Protection Lead Officer attend a number of National groups, including –

- Child Protection Committees Scotland.
- West of Scotland Chairs and Lead Officers meetings.
- National Lead Child Protection Officers meetings.
- National and West of Scotland Learning and Development groups.
- Social Work Scotland.
- National Working groups.
- Community of Practice for implementation of National Guidance.

Links are also made with the Scottish Government through consultations and there are representatives from West Dunbartonshire on Scottish Government working groups.

In addition, West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee (WDCPC) formed with a smaller cohort of other CPCs in the West of Scotland to consider ways in which the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021) can be implemented.

We continue to access the support of CELCIS to support areas of work including data gathering and analysis.

Involvement in national groups inform and help implement national objectives.

## 7. Learning Reviews

The Committee has a responsibility to critically review cases where an individual may have suffered serious harm, and the circumstances may provide cause for concern around the extent to which partner agencies had worked together to safeguard children at risk of harm. An initial consideration meeting would usually be convened by the Committee to consider whether a Learning Review is required. Learning Reviews are multi-agency reviews, and the purpose of the review is to identify and share learning to better support the safeguarding of children and young people at risk of harm.

The National Guidance for Child Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews was published in September 2021 and replaces the two-tiered guidance on Child Protection Committees (CPC's) undertaking Initial and Significant Case Reviews. The approach outlines a proportionate, timely approach to case reviews and fosters a learning culture, moving away from an emphasis on blame.

West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee (WDCPC) has progressed with local adoption of this across both the Adult and Child Protection Committee and a joint local guidance was ratified at both Committees in August 2022. Plans are in place to further enhance our local guidance, and a further update will be provided to both Committees.

Since 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, the CPC continue to progress one Significant Case Review (historical model followed for reviews and now replaced by Learning Reviews) action plan via a review group. Two Learning Reviews are being progressed, one of which is nearly concluded, and the other is delayed due to an ongoing criminal investigation.

One further Learning Review has been commissioned by the CPC in 23/24, which is due to commence imminently. We will work to further refine our approach to Learning Reviews as we gain experience of undertaking them and learn from other Partnerships experiences.

## **8. Priorities for 2023-2024**

Along with the implementation of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021), the following priorities have been identified -

### **Governance**

Over the forthcoming year we will work to ensure our vision and purpose are clear and known by staff across agencies and our governance and reporting arrangements are robust and inform scrutiny and improvement. We will do this by engaging with staff across services and use development sessions for Committee and with the Chief Officers group to refine and define our vision and our accountability arrangements.

### **Learning and Development**

- Undertake a full learning needs analysis to identify training priorities across partners.
- Further enhance the child protection training calendar.
- Appoint a Learning and Development Officer for a 2-year fixed term post.
- Continue to implement the Scottish Child Interview Model.
- Pilot a complex case forum, a reflective forum for practitioners to discuss challenges in progressing plans for children and young people.
- Update the Learning and Development Strategy to align with the Updated National Framework for Child Protection in Scotland (2024).

### **Communication and engagement**

- Develop mechanisms to ensure children, young people and their families are fully engaged and listened to and obtain feedback on how services impact on their lives.
- Review and update the child protection website informed by feedback from young inspectors and children, young people and families in West Dunbartonshire.
- Continue to evolve the CPC Newsletter.
- Review leaflets for children, young people and parents and carers involved in the child protection process.
- Continue to promote national campaigns and child protection awareness raising locally.

### **Policy and Practice**

- Establish a centralised location for all child protection policies, procedures and protocols to ensure this is easy for staff to access, linked to the CPC website.
- Agree and undertake a plan to update all policies, procedures and protocols, and develop new ones that may be required. All policies reflecting the 2021 National Guidance.
- Implement National Guidance 2021.

### **Quality Assurance and Self-Evaluation**

- Update our quality assurance framework to reflect work of both the Adult and Child Protection Committees.
- Seek the views of and feedback from children, young people, their carers and families as part of our evaluation processes.
- Place more focus on measuring outcomes for children, young people and families.
- Review priorities for quality assurance.
- Track recommendations from audit activity to ensure these are being progressed.

### **Learning Review**

- Review the National Learning Review model, including the use of the Learning Together (SCIE) model across the Adult and Child Protection Committees.

### **Inter-Agency Referral Discussions**

- Implement a quarterly IRD audit process and regularly reporting to the CPC.
- Update the current guidance to reflect IRDs as a process and closer align to SCIM.
- Implement and report on IRD dataset.
- Improve IRD timescales.
- Deliver training to the multi-agency team on IRDs and best practice.
- Develop our eIRD approach.

### **SNIPS**

- Conclude SNIPS Guidance.
- Ensure IRDs for pre-birth children is routinely undertaken.

- Implement a method of quality assuring pre-birth activity.

## **Conclusion**

This annual report of West Dunbartonshire Child Protection Committee (WDCPC) celebrates the developments and improvements throughout the year 2023-2024. It highlights our successes and the areas for continued development and improvement in our delivery of services to children and young people at risk of harm. Our approach to self-evaluation through audit activity, review of service areas and Learning Reviews continues to inform our understanding of how well we are doing.

Over the next year we will work together to strengthen our governance framework; develop our learning and development approach to support our workforce; further develop our use of data to inform intervention, self-evaluation activity and strategic planning; and, finally but not least develop our approach to placing the voice of the voice of children and young people at risk of harm and their families at the core of what we do.