



**Perth and Kinross
Child Protection Committee
Quality Assurance Strategy**

**Getting it Right
in Perth and Kinross**
Helping children be the best they can be

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Introduction

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) has a key role in developing, implementing and improving child protection practice and strategy across our multi-agency partnership within Perth and Kinross.

The CPC is committed to ensuring the best possible service to unborn babies, babies, children and young people in need of care and protection within Perth and Kinross, in line with one of our primary statutory functions - driving and supporting continuous improvement. This strategy has been developed to clearly set out how our activity will support self-evaluation and quality assurance with the aim of continuously improving the services our partnership delivers.

Purpose of Quality Assurance and Self-Evaluation

Quality assurance and self-evaluation create opportunities for all services, both singly and collaboratively, to review and reflect on practice to identify strengths and areas for improvement or development. They allow the CPC and its partners to answer the three key questions: ***How good are we now? How do we know? What do we plan to do next?***¹

Principles

The CPC believes that protecting unborn babies, babies, children and young people is **everyone's job**. The CPC considers this to be a shared responsibility for all practitioners and managers working across the public, private and third sectors, in partnership with all our citizens and communities. The CPC believes that quality assurance should be an ongoing and integral activity within all services. It must not be considered a single event - it is a constant process of reflection and learning to inform and drive continuous improvement within and across our services.

The principles of this strategy are:

- **Outcomes** for unborn babies, babies, children and young people are central.
- **Participation** – children, young people and their families' voices must be sought, listened to and used to inform practice improvement and service delivery.
- **Partnership** - services working and learning together to improve service delivery and outcomes for unborn babies, babies, children and young people.
- **Reflection** - holding space for practitioners and managers to reflect on practice to identify improvements.

Policy, Plans and Governance

This strategy is informed by national policy, local plans and the governance structure of the CPC.

¹ [quality-framework-for-children-and-young-people-in-need-of-care-and-protection-nov-2022.pdf \(careinspectorate.com\)](#)

National Context

The care and protection of unborn babies, babies, children and young people in Scotland is set within the policy context of these documents:

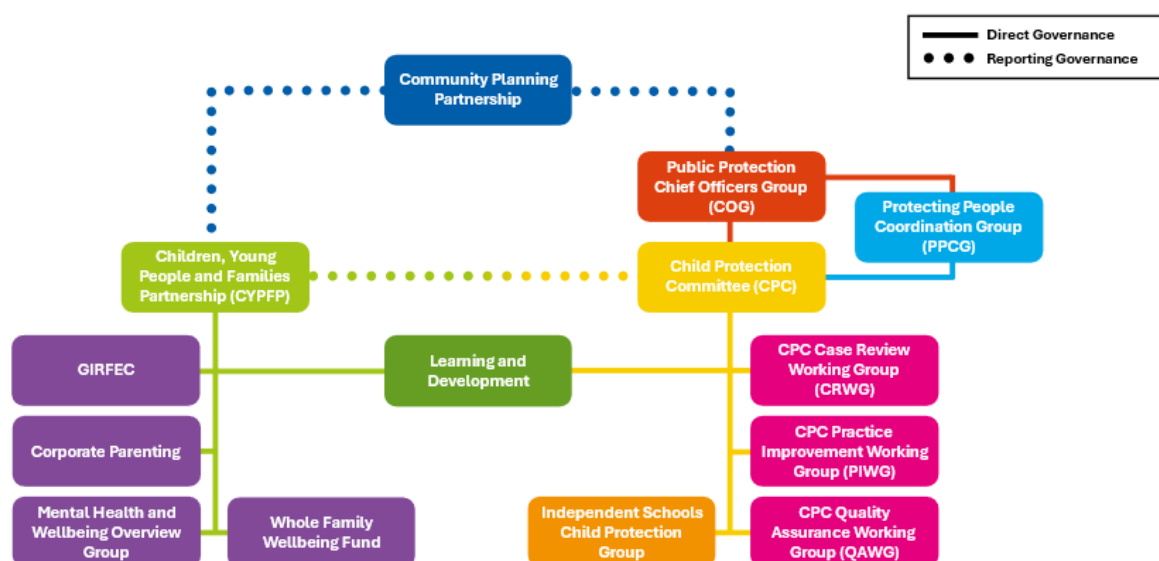
- [National Guidance for Child Protection \(2021, updated 2023\)](#)
- [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\)](#)
- The [Independent Care Review: The Promise](#) (2020)
- [The Promise: The Plan 2021 – 2024](#) set out the five priority areas – ***the right to a childhood; whole family support; supporting the workforce; planning and building capacity.***
- The Promise [Plan 24-30](#) and its five foundations: ***family, care, scaffolding, voice and people.***

Local Context

The CPC's work is strongly aligned with the [Tayside Plan for Infants, Children, Young People 2023 – 2026](#).

Governance

The diagram below sets out the governance and reporting structure for the CPC:



The CPC's subgroup, the Quality Assurance Working Group (QAWG) has responsibility for this strategy and the implementation of the quality assurance calendar, (appended). The QAWG may remit pieces of quality assurance work to the Child Protection Interagency Coordinator (CPIC) and to the CPC Practice Improvement Working Group (PIWG). Both the CPIC and PIWG will then report their findings to the QAWG. In turn, the QAWG reports to the full CPC to take forward any improvement actions determined from the quality assurance activities.

How good are we now? How do we know? What do we plan to do next?

Understanding and evaluating how good we are now, being able to evidence and support our self-evaluation and planning effectively to make improvements, will require the following:

- Intelligent use of performance management information and data to benchmark against previous performance and national performance.
- Audit activity using a range of qualitative and quantitative approaches.
- Feedback from children, young people and their families who are using or have used our services.
- Feedback from staff regarding their training, levels of confidence in child protection work, the context and systems within which they are working.

These four areas are considered in more depth below.

Intelligent use of performance management information and data

The QAWG is the subgroup responsible for interrogating performance management information and data. The QAWG meets six times per year and will devote time quarterly to have a detailed discussion on the performance management information, what it is telling us about the delivery of our services and the impact on unborn babies, babies, children and young people and their families. The CPIC will complete a brief report for the following full meeting of the CPC which will briefly detail the discussion and include suggestions that the QAWG has made regarding any further exploration or information that may be required. On an annual basis, the performance management information and data will be analysed within the CPC Standards and Quality annual report. This will include benchmarking against previous performance, comparator authorities and national data. This will enable the CPC to be confident that the delivery of key child protection processes is being objectively scrutinised on a regular basis.

Audit activity

From January 2025, a three-year audit plan will set out a schedule of each year's planned audit activity until 2028. This will be shared across the partnership. Each year will include a minimum of three desktop audits and a full multi-agency audit. The topics for two desktop audits per year will be set in advance and will link with earlier audit activity to ensure that progress has been made in the identified areas. Each year, the QAWG will determine what the third will be to leave space for issues that may be identified as new or pressing within the period. The subject of the annual multi-agency audits will be set out within the schedule. This transparent approach aims to move away from the current model of auditing which can tend to be deficit-based, to a strength-based approach in which services have an opportunity to focus on the improvements that may be required ahead of the planned multi-agency audit. In this way, the multi-agency audit process will function as a secondary and objective level of self-evaluation which builds on the work of each service.

Feedback from children, young people and their families who are using or have used our services.

Centring the voices of children, young people and their families in all aspects of child welfare and protection work is essential if we are to fully understand the quality and impact of our services.

As with quality assurance itself, seeking and receiving feedback from children, young people and their families should not be seen as a discrete event at the time of any planned self-evaluation activity. We need to ensure that the views of children, young people and their families are routinely sought in ways that are meaningful to them and accurately recorded within case files, assessments and minutes of meetings. An important part of the scheduled audit activity will be looking at the inclusion of the voice of the child, young person and their families within records to determine if this is happening.

Alongside this, when case files of children and young people are selected for scrutiny as part of the multi-agency audit, space will be created for them and their family members to provide feedback on the services they received. This will require a range of approaches to establish the best way or ways of seeking feedback from children, young people and their families. To explore this, a test of change is planned for the multi-agency audit in 2025 such that, in addition to the review team who will read the case files, another small group of professionals will be tasked with engaging with the children, young people and their family members to seek their views and input.

Feedback from staff

Engagement with staff to gather their feedback on the delivery of key processes in child protection is another important aspect of evaluating how good we are now. In August 2024, a staff survey was distributed across the partnership which sought the views of staff on their own efficacy with respect to child protection procedures and the effectiveness of our multi-agency child protection arrangements. This provided considerable reassurance regarding the strengths of multi-agency working within Perth and Kinross. The audit schedule plans to repeat this exercise in 2027 so that a comparison may be undertaken. Additionally, annual staff surveys across the partnership for relevant staff may provide a further source of information.

Assessing Practice and Upholding Rights

The Care Inspectorate [Quality Framework](#) for Children and Young People in need of Care and Protection (2022) is the key document which supports the quality assurance and self-evaluation activities of the CPC. Each multi-agency audit uses the relevant quality indicators as the basis for the assessment of practice. Practice in each multi-agency audit will be assessed against the Care Inspectorate six-point scale, using the examples provided within the Framework as a benchmark against which to assess practice. In all audits, the rights of babies, children and young people and the extent to which they are upheld will be a key consideration, in line with the incorporation of the [UNCRC](#) into Scottish legislation.

Providing Feedback from Audits

For Children, Young People and Families

When children, young people and their family members contribute to an audit by sharing their views, it is only right that they should receive an accessible overview of what its findings have been. The CPIC will prepare a summary for children, young people and their families in line with the infographic model commenced in 2024. This will be shared with those who have taken part directly and will also be published on the CPC website for transparency and for any individual or family who wishes to follow our improvement journey.

For Practitioners and Services

Where practitioners are aware that the records of an unborn baby, baby, child or young person that they are working with will be included in the multi-agency audit, it is important that they are given individualised feedback if necessary and appropriate. Reviewers will have an option within the multi-agency audit workbook to highlight good practice of an individual practitioner or team as a route for praise to be shared.

If an example of concerning practice was found during the audit process, or practice that required to be addressed to ensure that standards are met, this would be fed back to the individual and their manager for learning, development and additional support and/or monitoring. Findings from audits are shared at the CPC, after being reviewed at the QAWG, and the expectation is that members would share the audit information with their service. It may be helpful for the CPIC to attend team meetings in specific circumstances or in key teams and this can be arranged for a more individualised feedback experience for the practitioners.

Planning for Improvements and ‘Closing the Loop’

Planning for Improvements

Audits, whether desktop or full multi-agency, should identify areas of good practice to strengthen and areas which require improvement or development. Where these relate to single agencies, the recommendations will be passed to the individual agency or service to be progressed and should then form part of their improvement plan. Where there are multi-agency or systemic issues, it will be appropriate for the CPC to help either drive the resolution of these forward using the Short Life Working Group (SLWG) model and/or to escalate national or systemic issues appropriately.

Closing the Loop

Creating improvement actions without a mechanism to ensure that they have been completed or to record any external factors, for example, which may have prevented this, would not support continuous improvement. Therefore, to ensure that identified improvement actions have been progressed - *to close the loop* - the quality assurance schedule incorporates the follow-up these actions. Depending on the extent of the action that has been recommended or required, this may be follow-up desktop exercise or a simple check-in to ensure that progress has been made and is logged. An evidence bank will be attached to each audit's record to demonstrate the progress that has been made towards the linked recommended actions.