Serving Falkirk's Children and Young People

Falkirk Children's Services Planning Partnership

Staff Handbook

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falkirk COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership

CVS Falkirk The Third Sector Interface for Falkirk and District

Forth Valley College Making Learning Work

Skills Development Scotland

Central Scotland Fire and Rescue Service

POLICE SCOTLAND Keeping people safe

NHS Forth Valley

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Overview

The Children's Services Planning Partnership brings services that work with children together to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

This staff handbook supports you to understand the priorities of Falkirk's Children's Services Planning Partnership and how these are influenced by national policy and local implementation.

In Falkirk we understand the need to work together to promote the best outcomes for all our children and young people. This makes sure we provide the right help, at the right time, when it is needed most. Each and every one of us has an important role to play in keeping children safe. You are all part of the 'bigger picture' in a child's life and crucial to keep children safe. Your contribution is invaluable and essential to achieving our vision.

In Scotland all intervention with children, young people and their families are underpinned by the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). In Falkirk we benefit from the positive relationships across the Children's Services Planning Partnership which help achieve our vision and improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, embeds the rights for all children and young people in law. The Act promotes early intervention as the best way of supporting families to make sure their needs are identified and addressed effectively. The addition of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in Scots Law will further enhance our work around participation and engagement with children and young people and our commitment to a rights-based approach. This approach ensures children and young people have their voices heard and actioned in Falkirk.

In Falkirk our Children's Services Planning Partnership is represented through the Children and Young People's Strategic Leadership Group. Our collective ambitions are contained in our Integrated Children's Services Plan.

Our Falkirk vision is that:

"Children in Falkirk will grow up loved, safe and respected so they can realise their full potential."

National Performance Framework

Scotland's National Performance Framework aims to create a more successful country. This includes increasing the wellbeing of everyone living in Scotland and reducing inequalities to achieve better outcomes.

Core to the framework are the values of

- respecting the rule of law
- being treated with kindness, dignity and compassion
- undertaking all actions in an open and transparent manner

The following outcomes are most important for those we work with:

- grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential
- live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
- are creative and their vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely
- are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society
- are healthy and active
- respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination
- tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally

Falkirk's Integrated Children's Services Plan is based on working towards achieving the national outcomes. We recognise the importance of working together to make sure that we deliver good quality, joined up, responsive services.

Scottish Government

The Promise

Independent Care Review

In October 2016, the First Minister committed to find out how Scotland could love its most vulnerable children and give them the childhood they deserve and commissioned the Independent Care Review. Between February 2017 when Fiona Duncan was appointed as Chair, and February 2020, the Care Review worked to figure out how to keep that Promise.

The Care Review listened

It heard from those with experience of living and working in and around the ‘care system’ to properly understand what needs to change.

The Care Review heard over 5,500 experiences. Over half were children, young people and adults who had lived in care. The rest were families and the paid and unpaid workforce.

There were four phases of the Care Review

Orientation

Discovery

Journey

Destination

The work of the Care Review was published in 7 parts in February 2020 with The Promise as the main part.

The Promise is based on 5 Foundations:

Voice

Children must be listened to and meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision-making about their care, with all those involved properly listening and responding to what children want and need. There must be a compassionate, caring, decision-making culture focussed on children and those they trust.

Family

Where children are safe in their families and feel loved they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way.

Care

Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed.

People

The children that Scotland cares for must be actively supported to develop relationships with people in the workforce and wider community, who in turn must be supported to listen and be compassionate in their decision-making and care.

Scaffolding

Children, families and the workforce must be supported by a system that is there when it is needed. The scaffolding of help, support and accountability.

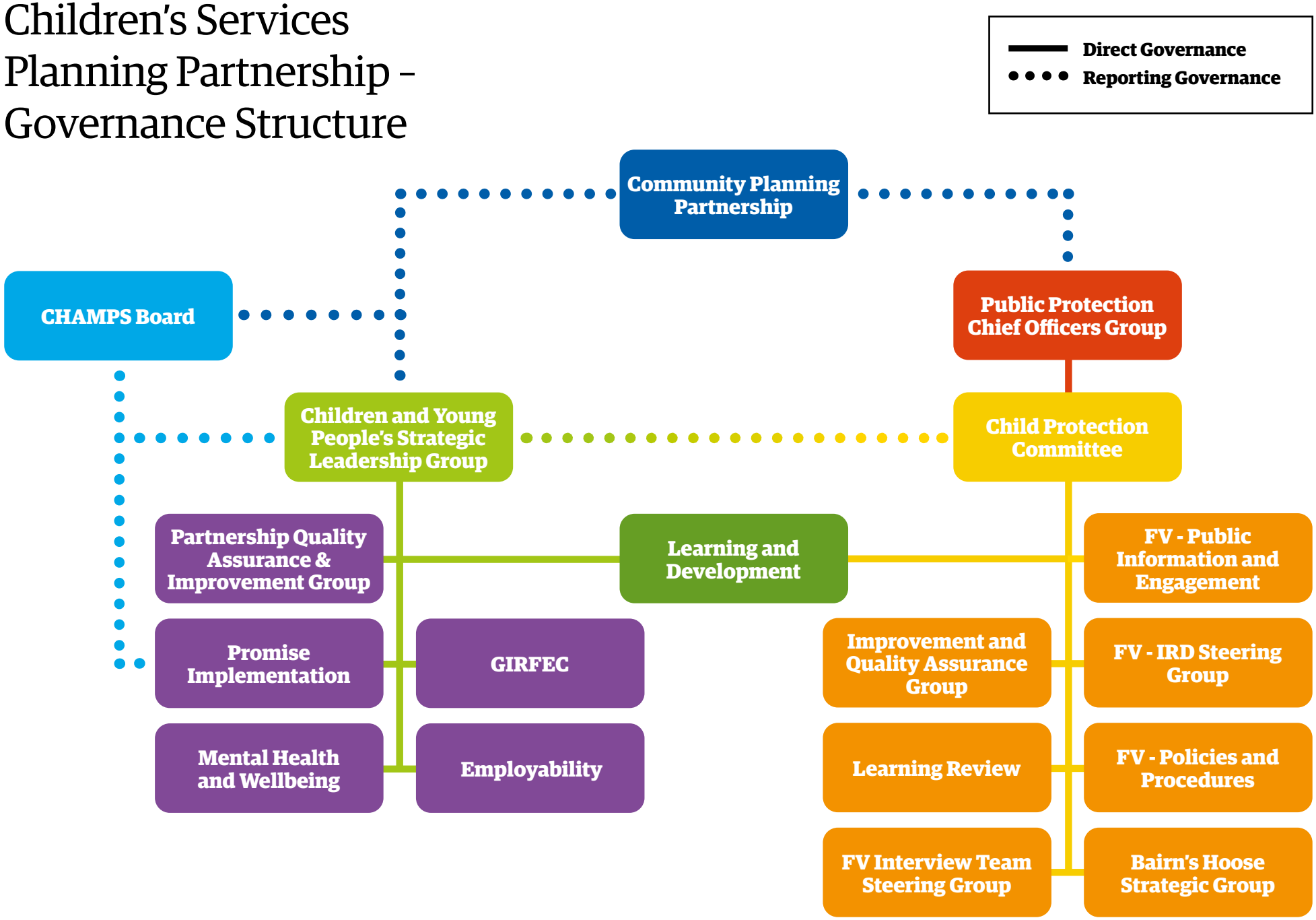
The foundations encourage us to listen carefully to what matters to care experienced children and young people and change how we work. The Promise offers advice on supporting our workforce to change culture and systems to improve support for all our children and young people.

Changing culture and systems require time. While we are currently making small but significant changes in our language to describe care experienced lives, other changes must be made as part of the Promise by 2030. This will mean that all of Scotland's children have the same health, education and employment opportunities.

The Promise Roadshow - Falkirk

We are delivering "Keeping the Promise & Corporate Parenting" Learning Sessions to staff across the partnership with a focus on language used. The sessions also consider the range of relationships the workforce can have that will offer care and support to our children and young people.

Children's Services Planning Partnership – Governance Structure



Our Integrated Children's Service Plan

Our Integrated Children's Services Plan is developed by Falkirk's Children and Young People's Strategic Leadership Group which directs the strategic planning, development and, where applicable, delivery of children and young people's services.

The Children and Young People's Strategic Leadership Group is made up of the following partners:

- NHS Forth Valley
- Third/Voluntary sector
- Falkirk's Health and Social Care Partnership
- Forth Valley College
- Skills Development Scotland
- Police Scotland
- Falkirk Council
  - Falkirk Council Education Services
  - Falkirk Council Children & Families Social Work Services
  - Falkirk Council Transformation, Communities & Corporate Services
  - Falkirk Council Place Services

Our current plan identifies 6 priority themes based on Falkirk's Strategic Needs Assessment, that informed key areas for action for children, young people, and their families.

For the greatest impact, we focused on priority themes where joint action and delivery is needed. These are the areas which have the clearest potential to improve outcomes and make positive changes. The 6 priority themes are:

- Promise Implementation
- Children's Rights and Engagement
- Young People's Employability
- GIRFEC
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Workforce Learning and Development

Following a development session in May 2025, the partnership agreed four key priority themes for Plan 26-29. Based on a refreshed Joint Strategic Needs Assessment our priorities will focus on Mental Health & Wellbeing; Poverty; Gender Based Violence; Alcohol & Substance Use.

Workstream Groups

As part of our Children and Young People's Strategic Leadership Group structure we have 5 workstreams;

Promise Implementation

The Promise Implementation Team was established in 2023, using Whole Family Wellbeing Funding, to keep us focused on what we need to do to Keep the Promise and meet our Corporate Parenting responsibilities and ambitions.

Corporate Parents are known locally as Falkirk Family and Friends and our Corporate Parenting plan is reviewed and updated as a live document. Our plan aims to change culture, systems and practice and to incorporate the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child.

We have taken a Service Design approach in implementing the Promise and applying the principles of Whole Family Wellbeing. We are working in partnership with people who use our services and making sure that what is designed meets their needs and aspirations. We are currently supporting 14 different "test of change" projects which are all aimed at supporting families within the priority groups identified during our strategic needs assessments.

We continue to aim to make sure that "Every family that needs support gets the right support at the right time to fulfil children's right to be raised safely in their own families, for as long as it is needed"

Falkirk Children and Young People Employability

In Falkirk we aim to tackle the impact of poverty and engage our young people in education, training, apprenticeships, employment, or volunteering opportunities, particularly those young people identified as most needing our help. In addition, the group works with young people in the design and delivery of our services to ensure we meet a range of specific needs, including:

- All young people (aged 12 to 24)
- Care experienced young people (under 25 years) and care leavers (up to 26 years)
- Young people with Additional Support Needs
- Most disengaged (aged 12+)

GIRFEC

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is Scotland's national approach to supporting Children, young people and families. The refreshed guidance (2022) strengthens children's rights, promotes early help, and ensures services work together to achieve better outcomes.

In Falkirk, every child in need to an individual plan will have a single integrated assessment and plan, based on national best practice. This improve our assessment and planning of interventions to make sure that we achieve the best outcomes for each individual child.

We have refreshed our forth valley GIRFEC guidance and Team Around the Child materials to reflect the principles of UNCRC and the rights of the child.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Group aims to:

- Reduce the likelihood of children and young people experiencing poor mental health and wellbeing
- Increase capacity of the workforce to support those experiencing poor mental health and wellbeing
- Ensure families in Falkirk are clear on what support is available and how to access it

We identified actions to support improvements in the mental health and wellbeing of our children, young people and families:

- Creating a single point of access for requesting support for mental health and wellbeing
- Developing universal services to support positive mental health and wellbeing and increasing access to good quality, self-help resources
- Ensure children, young people and parents/carers are co-designers of new and changing service provision in Falkirk
- Provide staff development opportunities and work with parents to allow them to support their children and young people

We have made positive progress in all these areas over the last year, with our single point of access system and the associated engagement work with young people, parents/carers and the workforce taking up much of our time. We are on track to fully implement this new system in 2026.

Workforce Learning and Development

Our Multi-Agency Learning and Development Framework and Strategy, first launched in June 2023, has been updated each year to reflect, local developments, introduction of new national policy and new knowledge and skills frameworks.

Falkirk's Planning Partnership Learning and Development Strategy and Framework - Forth Valley Practitioner Pages

Both documents align to the aims, ambitions and vision of Falkirk's Children's Services Planning Partnership, Falkirk Child Protection Committee and the Scottish Government. Our focus is on building workforce confidence and competence through developing knowledge and skills and embedding these into practice. A key priority is to establish mechanisms that help us to demonstrate and measure the impact we are making within our local communities.

Multi-agency learning and development activity reflects Falkirk's key priorities of Gender Based Violence; Mental Health and Wellbeing; and Drug and Alcohol Use. The impact of poverty and taking a rights-based approach is threaded through all our training, learning and development work.

Learning and development activity also reflects findings from Learning Reviews and local case file audits towards achieving and embedding practice change that will better protect children, young people and adults.

Chief Officers Group and Child Protection Committee

Public Protection Chief Officers Group

Public Protection includes Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection, Alcohol and Drug Partnership, Gender Based Violence and Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

The purpose of the Public Protection Chief Officers Group is to provide leadership, direction and oversight through scrutiny of the joined up public protection response in Falkirk, to make sure they are delivering the best services.

The group brings together senior officers from agencies who have a clear role in Public Protection. For children this includes:

- Council
  - Chief Executive
  - Director of Children's Services
  - Head of Children's Social Work / Chief Social Work Officer)
- Independent Chair of the Child Protection Committee
- Police Scotland Area Commander
- NHS Forth Valley Chief Executive
- Health and Social Care Partnership Chief Officer

Falkirk Public Protection Chief Officers Group recognised for Falkirk's priorities to be realised; we need to work more effectively together as part of a whole system approach. To support this the Public Protection, Lead Officers group was established in 2024 to deliver and report on combined work programmes. The group is expected to focus on wider shared ambitions and intended outcomes of multiple policy agendas. The group includes a Lead Officer from each of the following committee's and partnerships

Falkirk Adult Support and Protection Committee

- Falkirk Alcohol and Drugs Partnership
- Falkirk Community Justice Partnership
- Falkirk Child Protection Committee
- Falkirk Gender Based Violence Partnership
- Forth Valley MAPPA Strategic Oversight Group
- Falkirk HSCP Equalities and Human Rights Group
- Multi-agency workforce development for adults and children's services
- Trauma Informed Practice Development
- Suicide & Substance Use Deaths Strategic Prevention

Child Protection Committee

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) is a locally based, inter-agency strategic partnership. It is responsible for developing, implementing and improving our Child Protection strategy across and between agencies and the local community. The committee aims to support staff and members of the public to make sure Falkirk is the best place in Scotland to grow up, and to keep all children in Falkirk safe from abuse and neglect. The Child Protection Committee members hold senior roles in their organisation and have child protection as part of their remit. Members include Education, Social Work, Housing, NHS Forth Valley, Police, Third Sector and Scottish Children's Reporters Administration The Child Protection Committee has an independent chairperson and meets six times per year. The Child Protection Committee reports to the Falkirk Public Protection Chief Officers Group.

The key roles of the Child Protection Committee are:

- Public Information, engagement and participation
- Continuous Improvement
- Strategic planning and connections

Public Information, engagement and participation encompasses how we engage with the public, families, children and young people. The aim is to

- raise awareness about child abuse and neglect
- ensure information is available to the public about what to do if you have a concern about a child who may be at risk of harm.

Key messages include helping the public understand that all adults play a role in keeping children safe from harm.

Continuous Improvement is the largest role of the Committee as it is responsible for giving clear guidance, policies and procedures in child protection related areas.

The Committee

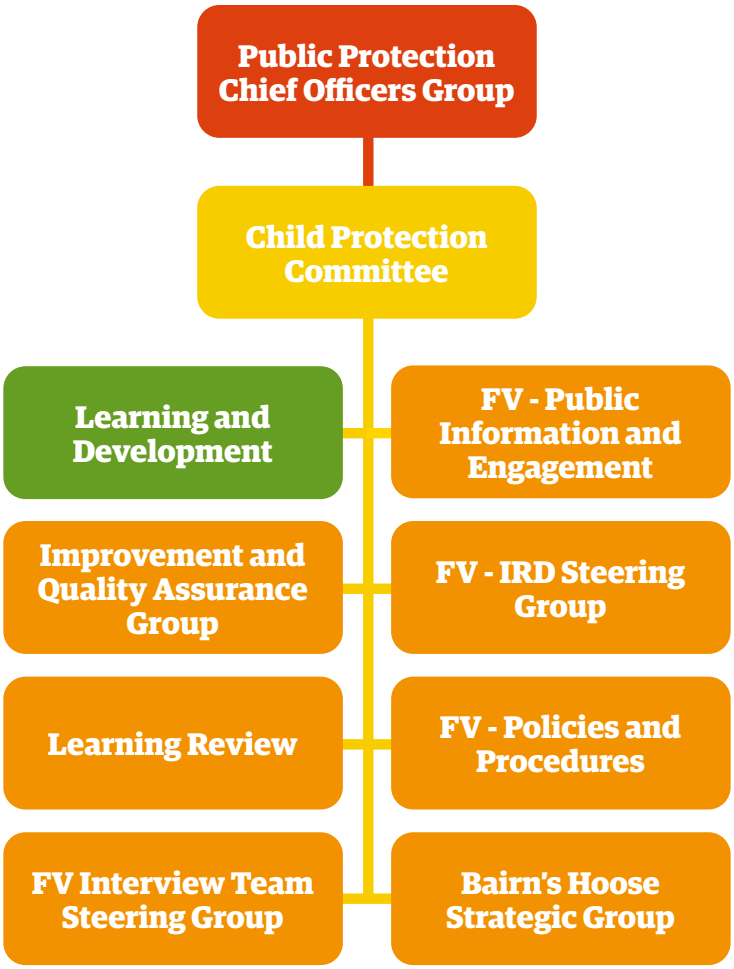
- has an overview of the quality of the work being carried out to protect children
- uses data, self-evaluation and scrutiny to identify any trends, patterns and practice that impact on keeping children safe.

Strategic planning links to the wider children services planning. It is vital that we have these links as we know that to design and deliver effective children's services, we need to have the 'big picture' in mind and work closely with all strategic groups to do this.

In fulfilling its functions and delivering on priorities, the CPC is supported by eight operational subgroups. Five of these groups are Forth Valley (FV) wide. Each of these groups has responsibility for ensuring that the strategic aims and goals of the Child Protection Committee are implemented and align with local and national practice including Child Protection Guidance and Legislation.

Whilst individual agencies within the group are responsible for their responses to public protection; together they work to develop a wraparound approach through leadership, direction and scrutiny of public protection services. The Public Protection Chief Officers Group meets four times per year and considers progress, achievements and areas of improvement from the services they deliver. The Chief Officers group oversee the work of the Child Protection Committee to ensure they consider the priorities of our most vulnerable children within strategic planning.

The organisational structure of the COG includes the services below.



Care Inspectorate Quality Framework

We use the Care Inspectorates Quality Framework for children in need of care and protection to assess the quality of our services. This includes regularly carrying out self-evaluation activity and seeking the views of service users.

The Care Inspectorate Quality Framework offers benchmarking to assess the quality of services, in 6 areas:

- What key outcomes have we achieved?
- How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?
- How good is our delivery of services for children, young people and families?
- How good is our operational management?
- How good is our leadership?
- What is our capacity for improvement?

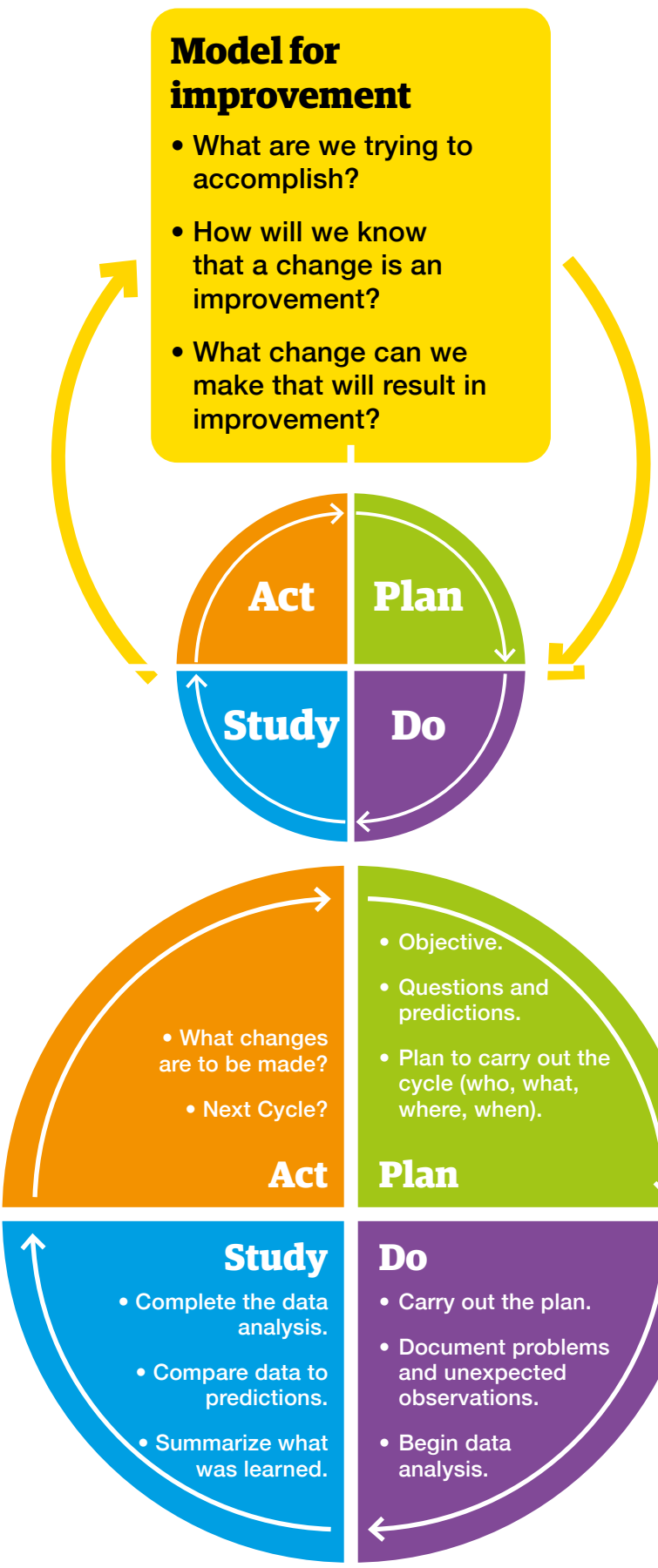
The quality indicators in each area allow us to examine the impact our services have on the lives of children and young people and where we need to make things better.

Continuous Improvement

Continuous Improvement and Quality Assurance are core functions for the Children's Services Planning Partnership and Child Protection Committee and take place in many ways. We use tools such as The Care Inspectorate Quality Framework for auditing files and the new National Guidance for Child Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews in Scotland. Our work is underpinned by legislation and guidance including the new National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021) and GIRFEC.

Falkirk's Child Protection Committee agreed to 6 themes for our improvement work in Falkirk:

Our model of improvement is based on the Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) Cycle



1 Risk & Need
Timely, proportionate assessment and planning integrated within GIRFEC

2 Development
Workforce development

3 Resource
Effectively resourced child protection system and pressures mitigated

4 Involvement
An approach to involving children and families

5 Self-evaluation
Knowing what progress we're making and the impact on children and families

6 Policy & Guidance
Effective policy and guidance in place for best practice

Our Improvement and Quality Assurance Group have oversight of this work and use a variety of methods and tools to do this:

- Multi-agency Dip Sampling of case files and Audit work across Falkirk
- Self-Evaluation of current practice and projects
- Identifying themes and trends using data collection
- Analysing the new Dataset figures for Child Protection
- Monitoring and analysing Child Protection Register figures and analysing trends from this to inform areas of strength and development
- Evaluating any themes from workforce training
- Reviewing the implementation of new national legislation and guidance and ensuring this is embedded in practice through training and upskilling the workforce
- Ensuring all learning from Learning Reviews is disseminated to staff and improves systems, policy and practice to meet the needs of children and young people
- Identify new and existing opportunities to strengthen engagement with children, young people and their families and involve them fully in decision making, service design and planning
- Ensuring the child's voice is central in all planning through monitoring systems, policy and practice and highlighting areas across services where this can be celebrated or improved.

We know that continuous improvement must be meaningful and make a difference to keeping children safe. It therefore needs a collaborative approach involving families, children and young people, all partner agencies and staff.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

What is the UNCRC?

The UNCRC is a legally binding international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities. The UNCRC is the most wildly adopted human rights treaty in history. It was created to ensure the rights of children and young people under the age of 18 are protected and respected in all areas of their lives.

What is in the convention?

The UNCRC has 54 articles in total. Articles 1-42 describe the different rights of children, whereas articles 43-54 explain how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.

The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland states that "the rights contained in the 54 articles of the UNCRC are universal, inalienable, indivisible and interdependent"

UNCRC rights are universal
Everyone under the age of 18 has the human rights contained in the UNCRC. They do not come with responsibilities

UNCRC rights are inalienable
Human rights can't be taken away from you. That includes the ones in the UNCRC.

UNCRC rights are indivisible
The rights in the UNCRC can't be separated from each other. They shouldn't be placed in an order so one's more important than another, because they're all part of a single broad structure that's essential to human dignity.

UNCRC rights are interdependent
Different rights in the UNCRC depend on each other.

Children and young people are rights holders. The adults in our children and young people's life are duty bearers, with a duty to respect, protect and fulfil these rights. The primary duty bearer is the state.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

In Child Friendly Language

"Rights" are things every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights. These rights are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Almost every country has agreed to these rights. All the rights are connected to each other, and all are equally important. Sometimes, we have to think about rights in terms of what is the best for children in a situation, and what is critical to life and protection from harm. As you grow, you have more responsibility to make choices and exercise your rights.

Article 1
Everyone under 18 has these rights.

Article 2
All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

Article 3
All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

Article 4
The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and create an environment where you can grow and reach your potential.

Article 5
Your family has the responsibility to help you learn to exercise your rights, and to ensure that your rights are protected.

Article 6
You have the right to be alive.

Article 7
You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognized by the government. You have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country).

Article 8
You have the right to an identity – an official record of who you are. No one should take this away from you.

Article 9
You have the right to live with your parent(s), unless it is bad for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

Article 10
If you live in a different country than your parents do, you have the right to be together in the same place.

Article 11
You have the right to be protected from kidnapping.

Article 12
You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

Article 13
You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people.

Article 14
You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.

Article 15
You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.

Article 16
You have the right to privacy.

Article 17
You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspaper, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.

Article 18
You have the right to be raised by your parent(s) if possible.

Article 19
You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.

Article 20
You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your parents.

Article 21
You have the right to care and protection if you are adopted or in foster care.

Article 22
You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in this Convention.

Article 23
You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.

Article 24
You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

Article 25
If you live in care or in other situations away from home, you have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate.

Article 26
You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need.

Article 27
You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should not be disadvantaged so that you can't do many of the things other kids can do.

Article 28
You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

Article 29
Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

Article 30
You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose. Minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right.

Article 31
You have the right to play and rest.

Article 32
You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and is bad for your health and education. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

Article 33
You have the right to protection from harmful drugs and from the drug trade.

Article 34
You have the right to be free from sexual abuse.Article 35No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.

Article 36
You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of).

Article 37
No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way.

Article 38
You have the right to protection and freedom from war. Children under 15 cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.

Article 39
You have the right to help if you've been hurt, neglected or badly treated.

Article 40
You have the right to legal help and fair treatment in the justice system that respects your rights.

Article 41
If the laws of your country provide better protection of your rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.

Article 42
You have the right to know your rights! Adults should know about these rights and help you learn about them, too.

Articles 43 to 54
These articles explain how governments and international organizations like UNICEF will work to ensure children are protected with their rights.

unicef

CRC DE

QUEEN ALEXANDRA

Canadian Heritage | Patrimoine canadien

Why is the UNCRC important?

Real change for children and young people can only happen when all adults listen to them and act on what is heard. The responsibility lies with everyone to embed children's rights and make them visible for all children & young people.

Young people have said:

What is the Incorporation of the UNCRC and what does this mean for children in Scotland?

The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament in 2020 and was passed unanimously on 16th March 2021. Incorporation of the UNCRC means it gets written into a country's law at a national level known as domestic law.

When a convention is incorporated into Scots Law, it has more power to bring about change. It would mean local authorities are required by law to respect and protect children's rights in all the work they do.

It also means children, young people and their representatives could use the courts in Scotland to enforce their rights.

"I feel the articles are what will help me grow into a better person and support me for my future"

"Just because we are not adults doesn't mean we are any less aware of what's going on around us. Children should be respected and given equal opportunities to thrive"

The Champs Board

Falkirk's Champions (Champs) Board enables and empowers care experienced young people to have a voice and influence policy and practice across the Falkirk Children's Services Planning Partnership.

The Champions Board has renamed Falkirk Corporate Parents as "Falkirk Council Family and Friends".

The Champion's Board was set up in 2017 and built in strength over the years. The Board offered an induction to new Elected Members who have recently joined the Council. The Chief Executive and Leader of the Council remain committed members. We want our children and young people to benefit from being members of the Champs Board as early as possible. We have 2 groups of younger participants "The Pups" aged 7 to 12 years and the "M Champs" aged 12 to 15 years. These groups meet regularly and provide opportunities for wider engagement before some of them are invited to join "The Champs" who are aged 14 to 26 years.

The young people have play an important role in

- challenging practice
- asking services to Keep the Promise in relation to use of language
- raising awareness of UNCRC
- providing valuable insights regarding their experiences in relation to brothers and sisters and relationship-based practice.

They are currently engaged in working specifically alongside Children's Hearing, School Nurses and Head Teachers and are working on developing a directory of information and advice for young people and families.

Closer to Home

Closer to Home is a Falkirk Council Children and Families social work strategy which is a key part of our improvement programme.

Collectively, as corporate parents we have responsibility to work across the Children's Services Planning Partnership to ensure our children have the best outcomes possible.

The Closer to Home strategy aims to have:

- reduce the number of children who are looked after away from home in residential placements and
- children looked after away from home to stay in or as close as possible to the Falkirk area.

We want to avoid children coming into care in the first instance, through the provision of early and effective preventative supports. The Initial Response Team (IRT) was set up to look at referrals to social work quickly to identify need, whilst working alongside partners to understand the issues.

We have reviewed our child protection processes to focus on reducing and managing risks. Worries and concerns about a child do not automatically translate into child protection. When concerns are raised an Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD) is held between Health, Education, Police and Social Work to determine if there is the risk of significant harm.

There are occasions where children cannot remain at home. In these instances, a family-based placement in the community is our ideal option. However, this is only possible if we increase our foster care placements. By working together, we have improved targeting of foster carer recruitment. This will help avoid use of residential care and offer a wider range of choice to meet the needs of individual children and young people.

By working with colleagues in Housing Services we have increased our housing options for young people leaving care, in a planned and coordinated way. We have invested in supported housing options and worked with partners to make sure young people have credible educational, training and employment opportunities to sustain positive outcomes.

We are increasing consultation with young people to identify areas for improvement and to provide earlier warnings of potential difficulties so we can respond proactively, while working towards the national framework principles of the 'holistic whole family support'.

Third Sector in Falkirk

The Work of the Third Sector in Falkirk - A Partnership Approach

'The third sector (which includes charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups) delivers essential services, helps to improve people's wellbeing and contributes to economic growth. It plays a vital role in supporting communities at a local level.' (Scottish Government, Third Sector Policy www.gov.scot/policies/third-sector/)

CVS Falkirk & District is the Third Sector Interface (TSI) for the Falkirk and District area and has supported the third sector for almost 40 years. CVS Falkirk helps third sector organisations with funding, governance, capacity building and volunteering by providing information, guidance, and training. CVS Falkirk has helped the sector to develop and grow by increasing regulation and collaboration. The organisation is committed to supporting the development of community empowerment, where local communities work alongside public services to improve people's lives, recognising that everyone has a part to play in that change.

The Voluntary Sector Children's Services Forum acts as a two-way conduit for information on Children's Services. This includes, exchanging information between strategic meetings and local and national partnerships to make sure the third sector are well informed and can have their voices heard by decision makers. 'The Forum' is a space for the third sector to respond to local issues.

For information on anything relating to third sector Children and Young People Services across Falkirk, contact CVS by email: info@cvsfalkirk.org.uk

Falkirk has vibrant, diverse, and inclusive third sector organisations at the heart of providing support, activities and services for children and families across Falkirk. There are over 40 represented through membership at the forum alone.

The third sector is recognised for responding quickly to new and emerging need with flexible, innovative solutions. Many services are located in communities which supports close engagement. This provides insight, knowledge and expertise to agree local priorities that reflect need.

The third sector also brings much added value and community benefit to Falkirk, particularly volunteers who give their time and skills to support children and families.

Third sector groups and organisations rely on grant funding to deliver vital services. There has been considerable investment in third sector from strategic partners, local and national government as well as national funders, bringing additional funding to Falkirk. The sector wants to build on this, to develop their services and respond to the needs of Falkirk children and families.

This work is recognised and valued across Falkirk's Community Planning Partnership with third sector representatives engaged in all strategic partnership groups as central, critical partners. These strong partnership arrangements provide a robust network to achieve the priorities in Falkirk Integrated Children's Services Plan.

Falkirk's collaborative actions across the Third Sector and Community Planning Partnership provide services where "Children in Falkirk will grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential." (Falkirk Integrated Children's Services Plan 2021-2023)

Summary

This handbook provides you with a context to how the Falkirk Children's Services Planning Partnership works together to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

The National Performance Framework provides us with a clear direction on how we should both deliver our services and ensure that we do so in a way that is kind, compassionate and respectful. As a partnership we are committed to upholding these values in our work to make sure that 'children in Falkirk will grow up loved, safe and respected so that they can realise their full potential'.

Our governance structure has been developed to deliver on the important work to 'Keep the Promise' with our workstream groups focusing on 4 priority themes delivered through 6 subgroups in our Integrated Children's Services Plan.

We are committed to improve our services by undertaking quality assurance of our joint process through a variety of methods, to keep children safe and families engaged. The importance of upholding children's rights is central to understand how children experience the service they receive from us and their views on what is important to them and how we can make things better.

The importance of partnership working cannot be underestimated, by playing to our individual and collective strengths, as a Children's Services Planning Partnership we are able to address issues through a variety of ways and provide the wrap around support needed.

In Falkirk, we are ambitious to deliver high quality child centred services and recognise this is only possible through the important contribution that you make to keep children safe.

Representation Organisations

The membership of the Falkirk Children and Young People's Strategic Leadership Group is composed as follows:

- Chair
- Vice Chair

Falkirk Council Children's Services

- Head of Education
- Head of Children and Justice Services
- Senior Service Manager (Social Work)
- Education Services Manager (Early Years)
- Children's Coordinator & GIRFEC Lead

Falkirk Council Transformation, Communities & Corporate Services

- Head of Housing & Communities

Falkirk Council Place Services

- Service Manager

NHS Forth Valley

- Head of Service; Acute Women & Children's & Sexual Health Services & CAMHS
- Consultant Public Health

Falkirk Health & Social Care Partnership

- Locality Manager East

Third Sector, including Third Sector Interface

- Children's Services Manager
- Chief Executive Officer
- Partnership Manager

Police Scotland

- Area Commander

Fire Scotland

Group Commander

Skills Development Scotland

- Area Manager

Forth Valley College: Falkirk Campus

- Curriculum Manager

Links...

...to Relevant Websites and Key Documents

Getting it right for every child – Policy Statement – 2022

Getting it right for every child – Practice Guidance 1 – Using the National Practice Model – 2022

Getting it right for every child – Practice Guidance 2 – Role of the named person – 2022

Getting it right for every child – Practice Guidance 3 – Role of the lead professional – 2022

Getting it right for every child – Practice Guidance 4 – Information Sharing – 2022

Getting it right for every child – Statutory Guidance - Assessment of Wellbeing 2022 – Part 18 (section 96) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

Getting it right for every child – Information Sharing Charter – Parents and Carers – 2022

Getting it right for every child – Information Sharing Charter – Children and Young People – 2022

Getting it right for every child – Glossary – 2022

Forth Vally Practitioner Pages The Practitioner Pages are an online resource bank of policy, procedures, tools, governance, and learning & development for practitioners who work with children, young people, adults, and families across Forth Valley.

Falkirk Champs and the Promise - YouTube

CVS Falkirk & District is the third sector interface for the Falkirk area:
Website: www.cvsfalkirk.org.uk
Instagram: cvsfalkirk
Twitter: CVS Falkirk
E: info@cvsfalkirk.org.uk