



**Edinburgh Child Protection Committee
Annual Report 2022-23**

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1. Introduction

Colleagues,

As you will be aware there has been a significant period of change of personnel, the previous chair left post during the reporting period alongside the lead officer. Consequently Annual Report for 2022-23, has been constructed from the information held on record rather than comment from the individuals involved

Over the last year despite the changes the Edinburgh Child Protection Committee, has worked across the multi-agency partnership to keep children safe.

This report outlines the work we have done in the last year to continually improve our services.

The Child Protection Committee and associated Subcommittees have continued to meet throughout the reporting period to ensure protection of Edinburgh's children. These meetings have in the main been virtual, however, there was the opportunity to hold one hybrid session. The frequency of in person committee meetings will increase moving forward.

This annual report is structured around the functions of the Child Protection Committee, as laid out in Scottish Government guidance. It highlights the achievements during the reporting period, and importantly what we plan to do moving forward.

There is evidence of strong partnership working which we have reflected in showing the good work being done to keep children safe. We know that this requires collaboration and cooperation, qualities which I have seen throughout the multi-agency partnership, and which continues to provide strong foundations going forward.

Lillian Cringles

Independent Chair – Edinburgh Child Protection Committee

2. Demographics

Between 2001 and 2021 the population of Edinburgh increased by 10% to an estimated 526,400. This is triple the national figure over the same period. The estimated number of children and young people aged 0-17 within Edinburgh in 2021 was 87,500 and this is the same as for 2001.

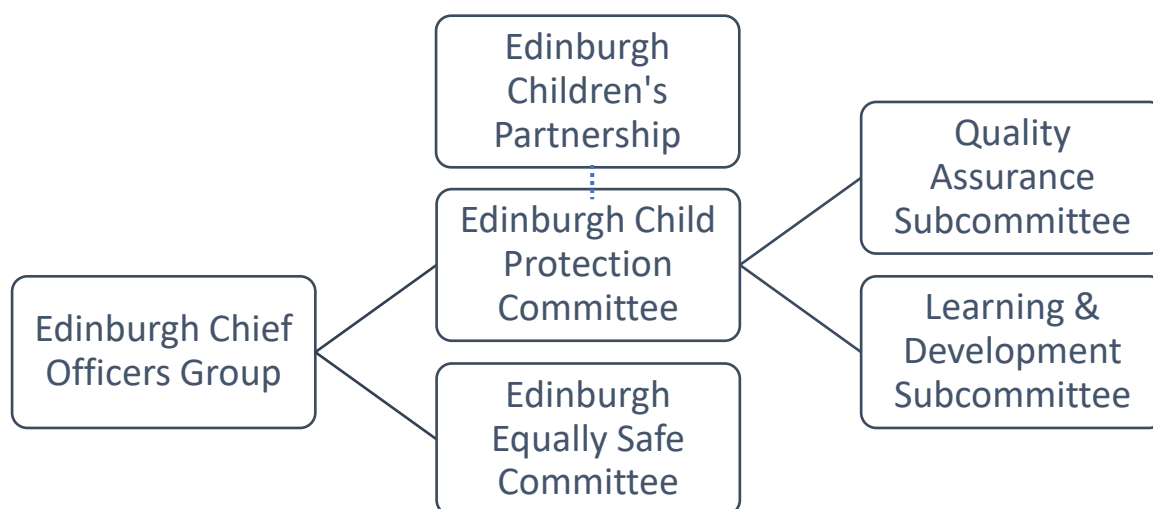
The population was projected to increase by a further 3% by 2026 though this is 10% for those aged 60 and over compared to less than half a percent for those aged 0-17. Within the young population there is expected to be little change for those of pre-school age with a decrease of around 8% for those of Primary school age and an increase of 12% for Secondary school age.

In 2022 of the 53,500 children and young people attending Edinburgh's local authority schools almost 12,000 (22%) were Black, Asian and minority ethnic. One in five children or young people do not have English as their first main language and round 1,100 were asylum seekers or refugees.

Around 2,200 pupils were assessed as having a disability and around 40% of our school pupils are assessed as having an additional support need.

In 2022/23 there were over 11,500 child welfare concern contacts, a 15% increase on the previous year, and 1,100 inter-agency child protection discussions. There has been an average of 94 children or young people on the Child Protection Register from April 2022-March 2023.

3. Child Protection Committee Structure and Functions



The Edinburgh Child Protection Committee is the inter-agency strategic partnership, responsible for the design, development, publication, distribution, dissemination, implementation and evaluation of child protection policy and practice across the public, private and wider third sectors in the City of Edinburgh area. Through our local structures and membership, we provide individual and collective leadership and direction for the management of child protection services.

The Committee is made up of senior representatives from across all key areas and partners concerned with the care and protection of children. Guidance issued by the Scottish Government requires every local authority area to have a Child Protection Committee. Strong links exist between the Committee and the Edinburgh Children's Partnership (the Partnership) through the Edinburgh Children's Services Plan (2020 - 23). Work continues to ensure that this is a developing partnership.

As previously identified the vision for both the Committee and the Partnership remains, this is to ensure that all Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and achieve their potential.

The Children's Services Plan was developed following consultation with children, young people, parents, carers and staff, whose collective feedback assisted the formation of the Plan's three main aims – the 3Bs:

- Best Start
- Bridging The Gap
- Being Everything You Can Be

In line with the GIRFEC well-being indicators, we aim to ensure children and young people are safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected, and included. The Committee has a key role in achieving these aims along with the Children's Services Partnership, recognising that the environment for some children in Edinburgh is more challenging, requiring additional measures to ensure children are protected from harm.

The governance of the Committee is the responsibility of the Edinburgh Public Protection Chief Officers' Group. This group consists of high-level representation from City of Edinburgh Council, Police Scotland and NHS Lothian, meeting on a regular basis to provide scrutiny and oversight.

In 2019, the Scottish Government published the document "Protecting Children and Young People: Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer Responsibilities". This sets out the functions of the child protection committee, which are:

- continuous improvement
- public information, engagement and participation
- strategic planning and connections
- annual reporting on the work of the CPC.

4. Continuous improvement

The Committee has a pivotal role in ensuring that services to protect children and young people are effective and continue to improve. This covers several areas:

i. Policies, Procedures and Guidance

The Committee:

- supports all agencies to have their own up to date policies and procedures in place.
- regularly develops, disseminates, and reviews inter-agency policies and procedures.
- ensures protocols are developed for key issues where agreement is required.

What we have done:

Supported the implementation of Care and Risk Management (CaRM) guidance which supports work with young people whose behaviour is a concern.

Consulted with the workforce on changes to our local child protection procedures to bring these in line with the National Guidance for Child Protection In Scotland (2021).

We have continued to work closely with the Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council (EVOC) and particularly their Children, Young People and Families Network, which is made up of over 100 local charities & organisations. There is a Child Protection Liaison group, attended by EVOC representatives and the Lead Officer to CPC, which meets on a quarterly basis to strengthen links and support the network to update their own processes.

We continue to implement and evaluate the outcomes of the Assessment of Neglect Toolkit.

What we will do April 2023- March 2024:

Review the Terms of Reference and membership of the Child Protection Committee, given the significant changes in personal and structures within the Multi agency partnership.

Publish and implement the revised Edinburgh and Lothians Child Protection Procedures, following approval by all involved local areas.

Publish an Edinburgh Public Protection Learning & Development Strategy, alongside Adult Protection and Equally Safe Committees.

Review our additional local documentation to ensure this is in line with the overarching Procedures and Guidance.

Develop an action plan linked to the roles and functions of the Child Protection Committee

Seek assurance on the delivery of services that appear as integrated as possible to the children, young people and families who use them.

Ensure the best use of resources within the Public Protection budget.

ii. Data and Evidence

The Committee retains an overview of management information from all key agencies relating to the protection of children and young people. The Committee:

- has an overview of information relating to children and young people with their names listed on the Child Protection Register.
- receives regular management information reports, which include analysis of trends.
- identifies and address the implications of these management reports.
- ensures that management information informs the inter-agency child protection strategy and provides an oversight for the Public Protection Chief Officers Group (PPCOG).

What we have done:

We fully embedded version 2 of the National Minimum Dataset for Child Protection Committees in Scotland into our programme of work. This provides three-year trend data which helps us understand the operation of key processes as well as any emerging issues in the protection of children.

We have continued to work closely with colleagues in universal services to support and further understand the interaction between children who are supported through GIRFEC processes and those who become subject to formal child protection measures.

What we will do next:

Work closely with Edinburgh's Scottish Interview Model and the Sycamore Centre, we will gather additional data and evidence of the children and young people consenting to joint investigative interviews and the reasons for our involvement.

Carry out self-evaluation on a partnership basis to understand the extent to which we are operating in accordance with relevant National Guidance.

Continue to develop and embed the practice of engagement with families at all points.

iii. Quality Assurance and Self-Evaluation

Whilst individual agencies have responsibility for the quality assurance of their own service, the Committee has responsibility for the development and implementation of inter-agency quality assurance mechanisms. The Committee:

- agrees, implements, and reviews multi-agency quality assurance mechanisms for inter-agency work, including auditing against the framework for standards.
- ensures that the quality assurance mechanisms contribute directly to the continuous improvement of services to protect children and young people.
- contributes to the preparation for the integrated system of inspection of children's services.
- considers the findings and lessons from inspection on a national basis, in relation to practice in Edinburgh and from initial and significant case reviews.
- co-ordinates initial and significant case reviews as necessary.
- reports on the outcome of the quality assurance processes and make recommendations to the Committee and the Chief Officers' Group.

The Quality Assurance Subcommittee is the central coordination point for this work in Edinburgh.

What we have done:

Overseen the progress of the Child Protection Improvement Plan, ensuring multi-agency activity is completed within agreed timescales. This includes key multi-agency work to tackle neglect through the introduction of a revised toolkit to support early assessment and identification.

Monitored progress of actions resulting from case reviews, audit, and evaluation activity, to ensure that these are progressed to completion in a timely manner. Engaged with Learning Reviews from other areas to understand the implications for practice more locally.

Carried out a review of our combined actions log, to ensure that those marked as completed are backed up by evidence and that improvements have been embedded into practice.

What we will do next:

Contribute to the partnership self-evaluation and use this to inform a future iteration of our Improvement Plan.

We will re-develop combined action log in line with new structure of sub-committee and the CPC Plan that will emerge from our current self-evaluation activity.

Revisit the scope and structure of the Multi-Agency Practice Evaluation process to ensure its focus on areas identified as priorities by the Committee.

iv. Conducting ICRs, SCRs and Learning Reviews

In September 2021 the Scottish Government published National Guidance for Child Protection Committees undertaking Learning Reviews, recognising the need to move beyond apportioning blame to learning together about what is helping and what is hindering efforts to help children.

Child Protection Committees, on behalf of the Chief Officers, are responsible for undertaking Learning Reviews and in 2022-23 Edinburgh Child Protection Committee carried out the necessary preparation to transition from the previous model of Initial and Significant Case Reviews to the Learning Review process.

The Committee will use the learning from these Reviews to promote good practice, improve practice and contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people.

What we have done:

Continued to liaise with and consider feedback from the Care Inspectorate, in their role as the central repository for Learning Review reports.

Contributed to the development of the Learning Review Hub – an online resource run by the Care Inspectorate with the aim of sharing learning from case reviews across the country.

Published the Edinburgh Public Protection Joint Protocol for Conducting Learning Reviews, bringing our local processes in line with National Guidance.

What we will do next:

Complete our first Learning Review and ensure any identified learning is shared and acted upon.

Establish a Public Protection Learning Review Panel to build a shared knowledge, understanding and shared ownership of the learning.

5. Learning and Development

Child protection training and staff development must be undertaken at both single agency and inter-agency level, for those working with children and families. This is underpinned by the promotion of children's rights and GIRFEC principles.

Through the Learning and Development Sub Committee, the Child Protection Committee is responsible for promoting, commissioning, and assuring the quality and delivery of inter-agency training. The Committee:

- retains an overview of single agency child protection training and considers the implications of inter-agency training.
- plans, reviews, and quality assure inter-agency training and learning and development activities.
- implements and reviews annually, a programme for inter-agency child protection training.
- ensures relevant and consistent inter-agency training is provided for practitioners, managers, non-statutory agencies, and Child Protection Committee members.

What we have done:

Continued to develop and deliver a varied programme of interagency training, both as self-directed e-learning and virtual training sessions, as well as moving much of our programme back to in-person learning events.

Reviewed our course calendar on an ongoing basis and returned to face-to-face or hybrid training opportunities to allow for the best transfer of multi-agency reflective learning on key topics.

This year we have reviewed and re-developed :

- Domestic Abuse for general and specific workforce
- Child Protection & Disability Training
- Identifying and Addressing Exploitation of Children & Young People
- Understanding & Responding to Neglect.

We have commenced development of new courses to meet unmet needs, particularly:

- LGBTQ+ Inclusive Practice.

We continue to use the Edinburgh Child Protection Knowledge Hub to disseminate information and publicise learning opportunities.

Through the National Learning & Practice Development Group, we have contributed to the development of the revised National Framework for Child Protection Learning and

Development and shared our materials to inform the development of national resource packs.

What we will do next:

Publish the Public Protection Learning and Development Strategy.

Review the structure and membership of the Learning & Development subcommittee and produce a new work plan, which will align with the CPC Plan.

Further develop our capacity to utilise course feedback, both in order to ensure the continued quality of training but also to understand the impact of training upon the workforce.

6. Public Information, Engagement and Participation

The Scottish Government guidance for child protection committees states that:

Keeping children and young people safe is everyone's job and the CPC must be able to demonstrate that its work is informed by the perspectives of children, young people and their families. CPCs will maintain an overview of levels of knowledge and confidence in child protection systems within their area and address issues as required within their Improvement / Business Plans. Each CPC will develop, implement and regularly review a communications strategy that includes:

- *raising awareness so that members of the public, including children and young people, know what child protection means and what to do if they have a concern for a child or young person*
- *explaining and promoting the role of services in protecting children and young people*
- *engaging with local communities to raise awareness of indicators of concern*
- *increasing understanding of the role that communities and all adults have in protecting children and young people*
- *involving children, young people and families in its design and delivery*
- *taking account of new and emerging risks*

(Protecting Children and Young People, Scottish Government, 2019)

A priority for the Committee in recent years has been to maximise visibility and connectivity with frontline staff and the community, which closely aligns with the functions described above.

What we have done:

Continued the promotion of key public protection messages.

Completed the "All Of Us" campaign in partnership with NSPCC Scotland, ending with a family event in Leith.

What we will do next:

Plan and deliver a further prevention of Child Sexual Abuse campaign in partnership with NSPCC Scotland.

Continue to work collaboratively with colleagues across public protection to ensure key messages are communicated to staff and the public.

7. Strategic Planning and Connections¹

The Committee links into several multi-agency structures and ensures relationships are robust and productive. The Committee:

- identifies the key links with other bodies and ensure such links are strong and productive.
- in conjunction with other bodies, identifies issues where joint working would be beneficial or duplication could be avoided and ensure that action is taken to address these issues.
- implements and reviews the effectiveness of joint protocols linked to child protection.

Within Edinburgh, the Chief Officers Group for Public Protection is the key forum for collaboration at a strategic level, with close links to the Edinburgh Children's Partnership. This ensures there is a culture of collaboration threaded throughout the work of the Committee.

What we have done:

Engaged in national forums such as CPC Scotland and the National Learning and Development Network.

Members of the Committee are represented on the National Child Protection Implementation Group and associated subgroups, ensuring we are closely connected to key strategic forums relating to the implementation of child protection guidance.

Continued to promote interagency collaboration, including across local authority boundaries, for example through the continued investment in the eIRD system which has benefits across the public protection landscape on a Lothian-wide basis.

Consolidated previous improvements to the link between the Committee and the voluntary sector through the continuation of a bi-monthly liaison meeting as well as regular input from Lead Officer and other colleagues at the wider EVOC Network meeting.

¹ Scottish Government guidance states that:

CPCs must ensure strong and robust strategic planning links to wider integrated children's services planning arrangements in their local area in order to ensure that the need for support and protection of children and young people can be comprehensively met in well designed, effective and sustainable local services, programmes and initiatives.

CPCs must link effectively with other multi-agency partnerships and structures locally, regionally and nationally, including Chair and Lead officer participation in Child Protection Committees Scotland.

(Protecting Children and Young People, Scottish Government, 2019)

What we will do next:

We continue to work closely with East & Midlothian and West Lothian Public & Child Protection Committees as we publish a pan-Lothian Child Protection Procedures, whilst also exploring our differences.

We Continue to ensure that the Child Protection Committee is closely linked to Edinburgh's Promise. The Committee are also looking to strengthen their links with the Champions Boards or others with lived experience.

Continue to contribute to key strategic forums and link with the Scottish Government on implementation of the National Guidance for Child Protection In Scotland 2021.

Provide the wider multi agency parentship with an understanding of the work ahead extent to which the National Guidance is being implemented. We will additionally utilise the self-evaluation tool to support the planning and delivery of implementation activity.

8. Conclusion and next steps – Chief Officers

The Edinburgh Child Protection Committee Annual Report for 2022-23 is designed to demonstrate the key role of the Committee in ensuring the inter-agency response to the protection of Edinburgh’s children is cohesive, structured, and working towards continuous improvement. The report summarises some of our key achievements throughout the period under review.

We are clear, however, that we are on a journey of continuous learning and improvement and we still have work to do. We maintain close working relationships with agencies in the statutory, voluntary, and independent sectors and are determined to ensure we retain an outcome-focused approach to child protection matters.

As Chief Officers, we fully appreciate the challenge of ensuring Edinburgh’s children are safe as well as providing a platform from which all children in Edinburgh can reach their full potential. We have continued to make progress towards achieving our aims since the publication of last year’s annual report. This annual report reflects on the successes and identifies our areas of further improvement. We extend our appreciation for the continuing efforts of all agencies in Edinburgh working together to protect children and young people. This work is challenging and complex, however, it is an area in which we are committed to achieving excellence.

We endorse the contents of the Child Protection Committee annual report for 2022-23



Appendix A – Remits and Membership list of Committee Sub Group structure

Appendix B – Child Protection Register Statistics

Appendix A – Remit and Membership of Committee Sub Group structure

Edinburgh Child Protection Committee Quality Assurance Sub-Committee

Purpose

1. To operate a quality assurance framework that allows the Child Protection Committee to monitor the effectiveness of local child protection services.
2. To operate a performance reporting framework and a system for self-evaluation in support of the above.
3. To implement a system of regular multi-agency case file reviews.
4. To oversee significant case reviews, commissioned by the Child Protection Committee; and to consider appropriate recommendations to the Child Protection Committee.
5. To monitor the implementation of any recommendations arising from reviews agreed by the Child Protection Committee.
6. To develop multi-agency improvement plans in response to external inspection reports or internal assessment processes.
7. To monitor the progress of member agencies' implementation of agreed improvement plans

Membership

Membership will include representation from the following agencies/ services:

- NHS Lothian
- Police Scotland
- City of Edinburgh Council (Communities and Families)
- City of Edinburgh Council (Health and Social Care)
- City of Edinburgh Council (Safer and Stronger Communities)
- Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
- Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council

Input from the voluntary sector representative on the Child Protection Committee will be sought as appropriate. Officers from other services/agencies may be co-opted onto the sub-group as required, subject to the approval of the relevant agency.

Meetings

The sub-group will meet at a frequency determined by the requirements of the agreed tasks, but not normally less frequently than the Child Protection Committee.

Meetings will be minuted and will be reported to the Child Protection Committee.

Edinburgh Child Protection Committee Learning and Development Sub-Committee

Purpose

1. To develop a learning and development strategy that allows the Child Protection Committee to monitor the effectiveness of interagency child protection training
2. To plan and coordinate an ongoing programme of interagency child protection learning and development opportunities for staff and volunteers working in Edinburgh.
3. To develop methods of reviewing the efficacy and impact of interagency training upon staff confidence and competence.
4. To contribute to multi-agency plans (such as the Child Protection Improvement Plan or those resulting from Learning Reviews) from a learning and development perspective.
5. To maintain an overview of developments in child protection matters both locally and nationally, in terms of the impact upon the learning and development needs of the interagency workforce, and to develop coordinated responses to address identified needs.
6. To liaise with the other subgroups of the Child Protection Committee to avoid duplication of work.

Membership

Membership will include representation from the following agencies/services:

- NHS Lothian
- Police Scotland
- City of Edinburgh Council
- Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council (EVOC)
- Scottish Children's Reporter's Administration (SCRA)

Meetings

The sub-group will meet at a frequency determined by the requirements of the agreed tasks, but not normally less frequently than the Child Protection Committee. Meetings will be minuted and will be reported to the Child Protection Committee.

Appendix B – Child Protection Register Statistics

	2022 Number	2022 Rate per 1,000 population	2021 Number	2021 Rate Per 1,000 population	2012 Number	2012 Rate Per 1,000 population
Edinburgh	104	1.3	97	1.2	223	3.1
East Lothian	41	2.1	29	1.5	62	3.3
Midlothian	24	1.3	38	2.1	117	7.5
West Lothian	92	2.6	103	2.9	118	3.3
Scottish Borders	39	2.1	34	1.8	37	1.9
Aberdeen	115	3.2	83	2.3	87	2.7
Dundee	61	2.6	84	3.5	82	3.5
Scotland	2,031	2.2	2104	2.3	2,698	2.9

Source:

[Scottish Government, Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland 2021-22](#)

Statistics at 31 July each year.