Convener
Lewis MacDonald MSP
Health and Sport Committee
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
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Dear Convener

The Care Inspectorate is pleased to provide information to support the Health and Sport Committee’s work on the Year of Young People 2018. In this letter, I will set out some of our recent and ongoing work aimed at improving outcomes for children and young people.

About the Care Inspectorate

The Care Inspectorate is the official body responsible for inspecting standards of social care in Scotland, including integrated health and social care. That means we regulate and inspect care services to make sure they meet the right standards and help them improve if needed. We also carry out joint inspections with other scrutiny bodies to check how well different organisations in local areas are working to support adults and children. We help ensure social work, including criminal justice social work, meets high standards. Across all our work, we provide independent assurance and protection for people who experience care, their families and carers, and the wider public. In addition, we play a significant role in supporting improvements in the quality of care in Scotland, and reducing health and social inequalities.

We regulate and inspect over 9,000 care services for children and young people, one or more of which almost everyone in Scotland attends before they start school, or during their school years. We also conduct joint inspections of services for children and young people with our scrutiny partners.

Health and Social Care Standards

We recently jointly led with Healthcare Improvement Scotland on development of the new Health and Social Care Standards. The new standards are outcome-focused and describe what the consequences of good care should be, rather than how it should be delivered. They see rights from the perspective of a person experiencing care, and set out how these rights should be experienced in practice rather than on paper. The new standards are relevant across all health and social care provision. They are no longer just focused on regulated care settings but for use in health and social care, as well as in early learning and childcare, children’s services, social work and community justice.
Some of the statements apply specifically to children and/or young people. For example:

- 1.32 As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment.
- 3.10 As a child or young person I feel valued, loved and secure.

The new Standards were introduced for use by all settings in April 2018 and in the Care Inspectorate we are now using them in all the scrutiny decisions we make and improvement interventions we support.

**New model for joint inspections of services for children and young people**

From April 2018, we have introduced a *new model* of joint inspections of services for children and young people. The revised model of scrutiny focuses on the experiences of and outcomes for children in need of protection and those subject to corporate parenting, within the context of GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child). This includes those who are looked after at home, those in residential and secure care, those in kinship care and those using throughcare and aftercare services. The inspections are led by the Care Inspectorate in co-operation with Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland, Education Scotland and Healthcare Improvement Scotland. We will carry out a minimum of five joint inspections across the country each year.

Inspection will be designed around the experiences individual children and young people have of the services that support them. This puts their perspective, and their journey, at the heart of quality assurance and will support continuous improvement in the way we plan and deliver care and protection for them. It strongly reflects the views and advice of care experienced young people, who we have consulted in developing the model.

**Expansion of early learning and childcare**

The Care Inspectorate has responsibility to register, inspect and support improvement in all daycare of children and childminding settings in Scotland, whether or not they provide funded early learning and childcare (ELC). We are therefore playing an important role in the continued expansion of ELC provision in Scotland and contributing to the vision of making Scotland the best place in the world to grow up.

To date, we have published two reports on progress made in increasing ELC entitlement for children and we worked with Education Scotland to analyse the 14 new models of childcare pilots as part of the expansion. In addition, as set out in the Scottish Government’s recent Blueprint for 2020: Quality Action Plan, we now include a specific focus in our inspections of ELC to assess the extent to which graduate level practitioners are leading pedagogical practice and improving outcomes for children.
We are also working with Education Scotland to further enhance our single shared inspection model for early learning and childcare. This will ensure that services will only be subject to a single inspection per cycle, with the aim of providing a more coherent set of messages for the service and service users and to minimise unnecessary scrutiny. A collaborative working group has been established and tasked with developing a shared inspection framework for all early learning and childcare and out of school care settings which will be ready for implementation by December 2018. An external stakeholder group has also been established to ensure the sector can input into this process.

Young inspection volunteers

Young inspection volunteers with personal experience of care work with us to inspect care and social work services to make sure they are high quality and meet the needs of the young people who use them. They join us on inspections to talk to children and young people using services and their personal experience gives a unique insight into care.

Resources

As part of our improvement role, we produce and contribute to a range of resources aimed at supporting social care and social work services to improve their practice. Some relevant examples are outlined below.

My World Outdoors

Children generally love to play and explore outdoors in all weathers, and we want to encourage care staff to support them. Produced in collaboration, My World Outdoors is a good practice resource designed for people who provide services, people who commission them, and parents of children who attend them. It shares inspiring stories from different types of services showing how much children are benefiting from outdoor play and aims to encourage all early learning and childcare services to make the most of the natural environment, whether in an urban or rural setting. Because innovative and refreshed models of provision will be needed to deliver the planned expansion of ELC, this provides an opportunity for people providing and commissioning services to plan now for how access to the outdoors can be built into future provision.

Space to Grow

We worked in partnership with the Scottish Government and the Scottish Futures Trust on development of design guidance for early learning and childcare and out of school settings. Published in June 2017, Space to Grow provides examples of how nurseries and early years services across Scotland can use design and clever approaches to the built environment to support high quality care. The guidance acts as a tool for providers, planners and architects when planning or extending early learning and childcare and out of school care settings.
A number of the case studies within the resource show how access to outdoor space can provide children with a variety of developmental opportunities and experiences. Outdoor play has many benefits for children: it has a positive effect on their health, wellbeing, learning and development and promotes curiosity, inquiry and creativity.

Through Space to Grow, we are now in a better position to support providers to plan quality settings that deliver high-quality environments that impact positively on outcomes for children.

Our Creative Journey

We recently launched a new resource exploring and sharing good practice examples from across Scotland of how expressive arts benefit children. Our Creative Journey has been developed on a collaborative basis with a number of partner organisations, who worked with practitioners to tell their own stories, with individual children and parents involved. The resource brings to life how taking part in expressive arts can transform children’s experiences. It is aimed primarily at practitioners, but will also be of interest to parents/carers and anyone looking after or working with children or young people, including statutory social work and education, voluntary sector support services and activity-based provision.

Intergenerational practice resource

We know that intergenerational practice, bringing children and adults of all ages together in a variety of care settings, can promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contribute to building more cohesive communities. As part of our Care About Physical Activity (CAPA) project, we are currently developing a resource that will provide examples of intergenerational practice in care settings and identify points to consider while planning and undertaking an intergenerational project.

I trust this information is helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

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