



# **National Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII) Project**

## **Interim Evaluation Report**

**November 2020**

This report has been prepared by Justice Analytical Services, Scottish Government, in partnership with COSLA and Police Scotland.

This report provides an interim evaluation of the National JII Project.

It is important to note that implementation of the new JII model is at very early stages and impact and outcomes data is not yet widely available. Therefore, most of the data available at this stage relates to implementation processes and to learning about how the new model is being implemented in the two pilot sites.

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## **1. Intended Outcomes**

A number of partners across children's services and justice agencies are involved in supporting implementation of this new model for joint investigative interviewing (JII). The intended outcomes of the new model sit across the interests of these partners and our collective desire to improve protection and justice for all of Scotland's children.

It can be useful to consider the intended outcomes from the perspective of the child, and from the perspective of justice. Clearly, these outcomes are interlinked, but for the purposes of reporting, setting them out side by side may aid clarity.

We continue to develop this work on intended outcomes as the new model for JII becomes implemented in practice and we learn more about how this model helps improve how we serve the needs of children and their families. We expect these initial intended outcomes set out here may evolve over time.

In 2019, researchers from Justice Analytical Services (JAS) worked with stakeholders to develop a logic model that outlined the proposed short-, medium- and long-term intended outcomes for the JII pilot that related to justice.

These are set out below, underneath initial intended outcomes from the perspective of the child.

### Children's outcomes

Short-term intended outcomes:

- Children's needs and wishes are taken into account in planning interviews, wherever possible;
- Children are effectively supported before, during and after their JII;
- Children experience a JII that is adapted to their specific background characteristics;
- Children are supported to tell the interviewers what has happened

Medium-term intended outcomes:

- Children experience a JII that is undertaken by specialised staff trained in evidence-based interview protocol;
- Children are safer and better protected as the JII is used to inform care planning and decision-making

Long-term intended outcomes:

- Children have a better experience of the (criminal and civil) justice system by having their JII used as evidence in chief

### Justice outcomes

Short-term intended outcomes:

- JII is used for intended purpose successfully;
- The substance of the statement recorded in the JII is credible and reliable;
- The JII corroborates other existing evidence.

Medium-term intended outcomes:

- Fewer children have to appear in court;<sup>1</sup>
- Stakeholders get the best outcome for the child.

Long-term intended outcomes:

- Vulnerable witnesses (including children) have better experience of the (criminal and civil) justice system.

## 2. Background

The National Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII) Project is a project to develop a new approach to the joint investigative interviewing of children in Scotland.

The aims of the new approach are to improve the quality of experience of child victims and witnesses, minimise re-traumatisation, and improve the quality of evidence gathered during joint investigative interviews to prevent the need for these children to have to give evidence in person as part of court or children's hearing processes.

This new approach is called the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM)

The development of the SCIM for joint investigative interviewing forms part of the response to recommendations within the [Evidence and Procedure Review](#), Scottish Court Service, 2015.

*The Evidence and Procedure Review- Next Steps* report, published early in 2016, set out the findings from further consideration undertaken by Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) in relation to obtaining best evidence from child and vulnerable witnesses. Following publication of this report, the Justice Board commissioned the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service to lead further work to develop the recommended systematic approach to capturing and presenting evidence in pre-recorded form.

Two work-streams were established, one focusing on the visual recording of evidence in chief, in particular existing approaches to conducting and recording JIIs with certain child witnesses, and one focusing on the pre-recording of further evidence.

The JIIs Work-stream Group focused initially on current approaches to conducting JIIs, the extent of their use in proceedings and barriers to their use. The JIIs Work-stream Group published a report of their work in June 2017.

The Group established that the primary barrier to the use of JIIs as evidence in chief is the quality of the interviews, either in terms of the way in which the interview is conducted by the joint investigative interviewers or in terms of the audio-visual quality of the recording. The Group identified steps that can be taken to improve the quality of JIIs and to facilitate their more frequent use as evidence in chief.

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<sup>1</sup> It was noted that, in some specific instances, the Procurator Fiscal/Reporter does not call the child witness to appear at a proof/trial because the JII provides sufficient evidence (notwithstanding other factors which result in the child appearing because the defence call them).

Since 2017, Police Scotland and Social Work Scotland have been leading on work (alongside other agencies) to improve the quality and process for joint investigative interviews with children in light of the recommendations of the Evidence and Procedure Review Joint Investigative Interviews Work Stream. Fundamental to that work has been the development of the SCIM.

This new approach to joint investigative interviewing is aimed at providing a higher quality of forensic interview that ensures best evidence for court and for civil proceedings such as children's hearings and local child protection services. The ultimate outcome is to keep children safe and ensure that they have the right to justice.

The new approach to joint investigative interviewing is trauma-informed, designed to minimise re-traumatisation and keep the needs and rights of children at the centre of their interview experience. The principles of trauma-informed practice are woven through the new model and the underpinning training programme for interviewers.

The Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2019 created a new rule for child witnesses under 18 to ensure that, where they are due to give evidence in the most serious cases, they will be allowed to have it pre-recorded in advance of the trial. This came into force on 20 January 2020. The regulations ensure that any child witness under the age of 18 giving evidence in the most serious cases in the High Court, will be allowed to have it pre-recorded, intending to spare them the potential trauma of giving evidence during a trial.

The JII of a child forms part of their pre-recorded evidence.

The new model of joint investigative interviewing aims to improve the quality of this evidence so that it can be used as evidence in chief in line with this new rule, and, also improve children's experiences of child protection and court processes.

Two pilot sites were established in 2019, at Lanarkshire and North Strathclyde (outlined below). The key stakeholders in both pilot areas are:

- Police Scotland
- Local authorities (Children and Families Social Work in both and Education Services in Lanarkshire only)
- Children 1<sup>st</sup> (North Strathclyde only)
- Local NHS Board
- Scottish Children's Reporter Association (SCRA)
- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Services (COPFS)
- Local Child Protection Committees

## **2.1 Pilot site one: Lanarkshire**

Pilot site one is comprised of two local authority areas: North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire; covering 10 social work locality teams; and one policing division covering both local authority areas - Q division.

The new JII practice model launched in Lanarkshire on 10 February 2020.

At the launch of the pilot, the area was assessed to have a population of 111,870 children.<sup>2</sup>

There were approximately 70 social workers trained in the existing model across the area in 2018/2019 and 97 police officers registered as trained in JII. The objective for pilot site one was for 12 interviewers to be trained in the new model: 3 social workers from North Lanarkshire, 3 social workers from South Lanarkshire and 6 officers from Q division.

The criteria for a SCIM JII to take place in Lanarkshire is as follows:

- An Inter-Agency Referral Discussion (IRD)<sup>3</sup> must take place;
- A JII is identified to be required;
- A SCIM-trained police officer and social worker are available;
- A male interviewer is available if required;
- Reports may be familial and non-familial;

JII's under the new model were planned to be undertaken Monday to Friday during the day and early evening.

The social work locality in which the child resides retains responsibility for the wider child protection investigation, and if a medical is required, the interviewing police officer attends to ensure integrity of all evidential production(s) seized.

## **2.2 Pilot site two: North Strathclyde**

Pilot site is comprised of four local authority areas: East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire, Children 1<sup>st</sup> and two policing divisions: G (East Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire) and K (Inverclyde and Renfrewshire).

The new JII model launched in North Strathclyde on 10 August 2020.<sup>4</sup>

At the launch of the pilot, the area was assessed to have a population of approximately 91,000 children.<sup>5</sup>

The objective for pilot site two is a collocated cadre of 8 interviewers, one manager and one Participation Worker. That is, four social workers (one from each of the local authorities in

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<sup>2</sup> Aged 17 and under

<sup>3</sup> An Inter-agency referral discussion (IRD) is the first stage in the process of joint information sharing, assessment and decision-making about a child whose well-being and safety is potentially at risk. Information is shared between social work services, police, health services and all other key services as appropriate.

<sup>4</sup> The launch date was delayed due to the Coronavirus crisis.

<sup>5</sup> Aged 17 and under

the partnership); four detective constables (two from G division and two from K division), a newly created post of cadre co-ordinator and a Children 1<sup>st</sup> Participation Worker.

The criteria for a SCIM JII to take place in North Strathclyde is as follows:

- Whether or not a JII is required is a decision made at **every** IRD meeting. The IRD must consider if the child has been or may have been the victim of abuse, and if it is necessary to consider criminal charges against an individual accused of causing the harm.
- In such cases, the IRD should nominate the relevant DS or SSW/TM to make contact with the North Strathclyde JII Cadre who will plan and carry out this interview.
- It is essential that the IRD considers the reason for the JII, any safety concerns and any known needs of the child that require consideration by the interviewers, noting this detail on the IRD record.
- The IRD must also consider if the child has been witness to harm, which may not have directly been inflicted on them, for instance domestic abuse or online exploitation. In such cases, the IRD must consider if a JII is required in order to obtain a witness statement from the child. In making this judgement the IRD should consider; the likely impact of the incident on the child and the likelihood of the child having to attend court in respect of the incident.

### **3. Evaluation aims:**

At the beginning of implementation, the aims and objectives of the JII pilot evaluation and associated research questions were set out and agreed.

The aims of the JII pilot evaluation are:

1. To determine the extent to which the Scottish Child Interview Model for joint investigative interviewing was implemented as intended, identify variation and any associated impacts.
2. To determine the impact of the Scottish Child Interview Model for joint investigative interviewing on children interviewed and on the quality of the investigative interview.

### **4. Objectives:**

The objectives of the JII pilot evaluation are:

1. To explore fidelity to the core Scottish Child Interview Model and variation of processes of implementation within each site.

2. To gather data at service, staff and individual levels to ascertain whether outcomes in the Scottish Child Interview Model theory of change have been achieved;
3. To investigate whether interviews are perceived by children as responsive to their needs and contribute to keeping them safe;
4. To investigate whether interviews are conducted in such a way as to provide better quality of evidence for criminal proceedings, children's hearing system proceedings and/or children's planning processes;
5. To investigate whether the audio, visual, space and equipment elements of the investigative interview are of sufficient quality for their intended purpose;

## **5. Research questions**

The associated research questions are identified as:

1. How does the Scottish Child Interview Model for joint investigative interviewing work, for whom and in what circumstances?
2. Did children experience a trauma informed, well planned interview that was responsive to their needs? What are the determinants of this type of experience?
3. Were interviews conducted as intended as part of the Scottish Child Interview Model? What were the factors that facilitated or impeded this?
4. Was the quality of evidence secured during the interview of sufficient standard as required to be used for the respective purpose (whether for court, for children's hearings or for care planning)?

## **6. Learning from the pilots to inform national implementation of this model**

The piloting phase of this project began in 2019 and will extend through 2020 and into 2021. This section of the paper is divided into four subheadings as per the Evaluation and Learning Framework agreed at the National JII Governance Group meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

### **6.1 Evaluation of the training course and impact on interviewer practice**

#### **Credit Rating**

The National Joint Investigative Interviewing Training (NJII) was developed in response to the findings and recommendations following The Evidence and Procedure Review (2015). It was developed by a project team comprising of members of both Police Scotland and Social Work Scotland. The aim of the programme is to support police officers



and social workers to apply the essential skills, knowledge and behaviours to develop a professional and consistent approach to interviewing children.

The SCQF is Scotland's lifelong learning framework and is the unified framework for all qualifications and learning programs in Scotland. Credit rating is the process of allocating an SCQF Level and Credit Points to a qualification or learning in the work place which the new training for JII will be applying for.

Over the past two years members of the training team have engaged closely with Police Scotland Quality Assurance Team to ensure that the programme aligns with SCQF credit rating. The application for credit rating has been completed and awaits submission to Police Scotland Credit Rating Body. This however is currently on hold pending further consultation with Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to ensure alignment with their Specialist Award. Credit Rating of the programme will place a rigorous quality assurance of the training and ongoing professional competence of interviewers.

### **Quality Assurance Evaluations**

The new training programme has many stakeholders and it is of high importance nationally, to ensure a consistent approach to interviewing by both agencies. The evaluation of the training needs to be full, thorough and insightful. Therefore, Police Scotland Quality Assurance Staff, independent bodies, have conducted focus group evaluations, level one reaction evaluations and workplace evaluations of the training delivery for Modules one, two and three. This work was carried out to evaluate the training delivered to ensure that the aims and learning outcomes were met and to identify where the training needed to be further developed.

In October 2019, an interim evaluation report was published by Police Scotland Training Quality Assurance Unit who had reviewed Module one of the training program. This report contained details of daily feedback forms submitted by the learners, a level one reaction evaluation which was conducted at the end of Module one and a focus group which was conducted at the conclusion of level 1 to allow tweaks to be made to Module two.

Three recommendations were made:

- pre read material being more comprehensive detailing more of the course requirements (implemented)
- consideration is given to how future delegates are identified and should be in a current role where they work with children (not clear to evaluator that all delegates would be moving into a role where they would be interviewing children therefore not applicable)
- another room should be considered as delegates commented on the lack of space and temperature not comfortable (not implemented due to restrictions on accommodation)

On 29 November 2019 a focus group report was published by Police Scotland Training Quality Assurance Unit who had reviewed Module two with Cohort one. It stated that there was some repetition in the learning. The Module was reviewed, and adaptations made.

On 13 December 2019 a focus group report was published by Police Scotland Training Quality Assurance Unit who had reviewed Module two with Cohort two. No areas of

concern re the learning were identified although some concerns re the classroom and facilities were raised. In April 2020, an interim evaluation report was published by Police Scotland Training Quality Assurance Unit who had reviewed Module three of the training program completed by Cohort one. The basis of this evaluation was based on a Workplace Evaluation Questionnaire which wished to explore how learning had transferred to the workplace.

Three recommendations were made:

- Consideration could be given to increasing the delivery time for the module
- Consider the inputs deemed as not relevant or helpful, although the comments received indicate that issues with these would be addressed with more time being available
- Consider the inputs that were deemed as being incorrectly pitched, although again comments indicate that these could be addressed with the allocation of more time

All of these recommendations had already been identified by the course facilitators and as such were accepted and implemented for Module three Cohort two.

As such when the same process was carried out by Police Scotland Training Quality Assurance Unit for Cohort two, no recommendations were made due to the improved feedback.

A similar evaluation process will be carried out for Modules four and five.

In general, the training has evaluated very highly. Some of the learners have stated the following after being in practice for some time.

*“Training has been of a high-standard, relevant and well planned. The tutors have all been experts in their field, and that has come across during each module. How each topic impacts on Joint Investigative Interviewing has been demonstrated throughout, and how this can in turn be implemented into practice”. (North Strathclyde Child Interviewer)“*

*“I would’ve previously been terrified to lead an interview, but since having training in the new JII model, I feel so much more confident in leading interviews. It’s great knowing I have the support of my Police colleagues.” (Lanarkshire Child Interviewer)*

## **6.2 Testing different approaches to implementing the model and identifying factors which impede or facilitate effective application of the new model**

Both pilot sites have implemented the new model in slightly different ways and the learning from these different approaches has been captured by the National team.

Lanarkshire built on elements of their existing JII practice which already had a number of associated Pan Lanarkshire processes. As part of their pilot, they tested the efficacy of a Pan Lanarkshire rota for the social work interviewers and the blend of other social work tasks with interviewing tasks. That is, social work child interviewers continued to hold a (reduced) case load and undertook other social work tasks in addition to their joint

investigative interviewing tasks. A rota system facilitated this testing. There was no intention to collocate and the role of a bespoke coordinator/manager was not considered.

North Strathclyde's approach was to develop a new, whole system approach across large number of partners, informed by Barnahus PROMISE Exchange quality standards. All eight interviewers are collocated and operate as a specialist interviewing team where joint investigative interviewing is their only responsibility. A newly created post of designated coordinator on site to manage the cadre was recruited as part of this arrangement. The partnership with Children 1<sup>st</sup> ensures that capturing children's experiences of the new model is at the heart of their pilot.

The following factors have been identified as being essential for effective application of the new model.

### **Staffing Considerations**

#### Interviewers

The recruitment, selection, training and ongoing support and professional development of a team of specialist interviewers sits at the heart of this new model.

Both sites achieved their objective of recruiting and training sufficient staff for their first specialist cadre. The numbers of specialist interviewers required to meet JII demand on an ongoing basis in each pilot site is subject to close monitoring.

The pilot sites are currently working to implement arrangements for the ongoing support and professional development of their interviewers, and this will be included in future papers.

#### Cadre Manager

An example of how Lanarkshire developed their thinking and implementation strategies as the model developed, is evidenced in their approach to the management of their cadre. Their initial vision did not include a bespoke line manager. However, it quickly became apparent that the lack of someone filling this role was impacting on quality briefing and debriefing and risk assessment. A decision was quickly taken to fill this role and a Detective Sergeant was dedicated to the management of the team. Thinking has further been developed to dedicate a Senior Social Worker on a part time basis from each local authority area for further management and leadership support in addition to their twelve interviewers.

North Strathclyde identified the need for a coordinator role from the outset of their planning and recruited this post prior to the commencement of their go live date.

#### Implementation lead

Both sites identified a Social Work Service Manager from the lead local authority to be the implementation lead/single point of contact.

Decision making in respect of the implementation lead/single point of contact took into account a range of factors such as the individuals skill set, the fit with responsibilities within their substantive post, and capacity for leading a change project.

Notwithstanding these considerations, both implementation leads would note that this project has taken up more of their time than originally anticipated.

Implementation leads were responsible for co-ordinating a number of work strands required to operationalise the new model, lead on finding solutions to challenges, monitor and report on progress and maintain ongoing support to partners.

The role of implementation lead was found to be invaluable in progressing the implementation of the new model.

### **Transition management**

Both sites established local pathways for allocation of JII's to the specialist cadre which incorporated a prioritisation system that ensured a safe transition from the existing JII practice to the new model. Prioritisation incorporated attention to the best interests of the child and adherence to the Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence)(Scotland) Act 2019 which creates a new rule for child witnesses under 18 to ensure that, where they are due to give evidence in the most serious cases, they will be allowed to have it pre-recorded in advance of the trial.

For Lanarkshire, this included moving from some police only child interviews, as well as transitioning from current 5-day trained JII staff, to the new JII model. Chart one in appendix two contains this data.

### **Wider child protection system links**

Making effective links across the local child protection system with the new JII model is another critical success factor. Within this, alignment with IRD process and practice as the key decision-making for a for JII's is paramount. Also of key importance, is establishing effective arrangements for interviewers to link directly with those who know the child well, in order to plan for the child's needs during interview. Finally, links with those overseeing the child protection investigation and those with responsibility for ongoing care and protection planning helps to ensure that the information from the JII itself is used appropriately to protect and safeguard the child.

### **Vision and Aims**

Having a shared input and understanding of what the partnership is trying to achieve, how they hope to do this and what success will look like assists in successful implementation. Both pilot sites invested the time and effort at the beginning of their journey to set out their vision clearly and in detail. They have stated that having a clear, collective vision of what is to be achieved has helped maintain focus and direction as their implementation plans progress.

For instance, the vision for North Strathclyde of a holistic trauma approach included the aim to collocate their specialist cadre. There were challenges in identifying a suitable base for the interviewers, with appropriate equipment and access to systems, but the early articulation of their vision helped maintain clarity of focus to achieve this aim.

### **Resourcing**

Implementing the new model for JII will have resourcing implications which will vary from area to area depending on the local strategic vision for how the model will be implemented in the local context.

Resourcing includes staffing such as the interviewers themselves, management of the interviewer team and ongoing coaching and continuing professional development support to the interviewers. Additional staffing costs may be incurred.

Other cost implications are linked to the office base for the interviewer team, development and maintenance of the interview suite(s) and equipment and running costs of the service.

It is recommended from learning in the pilot sites that is vital to ensure that all partners are clear on what resources they are willing and able to contribute in order to achieve their vision and aims.

### **Interviewer Role and Remit**

To build and maintain their specialist skills, interviewers must have sufficient opportunity to utilise their skills in practice and be effectively supported in respect of the Interviewer Practice Evaluation Model that forms part of the new approach to JII.

Early learning from Lanarkshire has shown that due to the amount of interviews the specialist cadre carry out, there is limited opportunity for them to carry out any other roles or duties. It is however recognised that it may not be the case in every area. Accurate data on the number of JIIs carried out and the nature of the enquiry should be captured at an early stage to inform this decision making.

### **Operational Considerations**

Learning from the pilot sites has shown that the accommodation of the interviewer cadre is a key consideration. Interviewers from both pilot sites have stated that the allocation, organisation, planning, conduct, and analysis of interviews is easier when interviewers are co-located in a shared office base.

Collocation raises potential challenges such as sufficient physical space for all staff, sufficient IT equipment for all staff, access to relevant organisational systems from that location, access to printers and other relevant equipment, costs of office premises and links with the interview suite(s) if office base is in a different location.

Linked to this is the critical aspect of ensuring interview suites and equipment are of a sufficient standard and fit for the purposes of producing high quality interviews of children. Both pilot sites had initial IT challenges which had to be addressed quickly in order to support the extensive training which the cadres receive in the set up and use of the recording equipment. Due to the learning in the pilot sites it is recommended that a review of these facilities is carried out and any issues highlighted to senior management prior to any go live date. (This must include laptop, docking stations, camera, leads, microphones)

It may also be necessary to review arrangements for transporting children to/from interviews and to/from medical examinations. A dedicated vehicle may have to be resourced, particularly in light of COVID-19. This issue emerged for the pilot sites after they had gone live in practice.

### **6.3 Investigating the implementation contexts in order to identify why something works well or doesn't work well depending on the context**

Tailoring an implementation plan to the context in which the plan is being actualised is key to its success. Including a focus on understanding the challenges experienced in implementing complex practice change in different contexts will assist in embedding and scaling-up that change.

Pfadenhauer et al<sup>6</sup>. view context as the set of active unique characteristics and circumstances surrounding implementation that hold the capacity to modify, facilitate or inhibit the implementation of an intervention.

Contexts are dynamic: contextual factors that might constitute barriers to implementation in one place may facilitate it in others.

The Dynamic Sustainability Framework<sup>7</sup> argues that the contexts in which interventions are being delivered are constantly evolving. It is unrealistic to expect a one size fits all approach. The success of sustaining an intervention is dependent on its ongoing adaptation to fit within a setting.

The implementation context can include a wide range of factors such as setting, demographics, implementation processes, intervention delivery and uptake.

Section 6.2 above sets out some of the factors identified to date which impede or facilitate implementation of the new JII model based on the two different approaches taken to date. Considering the contexts within which these factors play out provides a greater depth of understanding how this new model of practice is being implemented.

For North Strathclyde, the setting, in terms of a colocated, dedicated interviewer team, with onsite dedicated manager and embedded support for children experiencing JII via the involvement of Children 1<sup>st</sup> has been a critical contextual factor to support realisation of their strategic vision for implementation of the new model.

This has demanded particular resource commitments across their partnership which have been challenging to meet.

In North Strathclyde, the pre-existing strong partnership with Children 1<sup>st</sup> facilitated the development of a shared vision for children experiencing trauma, with implementation of the new JII model envisaged as part of a progressive move towards a holistic trauma approach.

Lanarkshire's initial delivery of the new model for JII's was via a rota system, with some staff located in a central office base and some attending at the office base on particular days. The volume of JII's within Lanarkshire made this delivery model particularly challenging and this was exacerbated by social work staff continuing to hold (a reduced)

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<sup>6</sup> Pfadenhauer LM, Gerhardus A, Mozygemba K, Lysdahl KB, Booth A, Hofmann B, et al. Making sense of complexity in context and implementation: the Context and Implementation of Complex Interventions (CICI) framework. *Implement Sci.* 2017;12(1):1–17.

<sup>7</sup> The dynamic sustainability framework: addressing the paradox of sustainment amid ongoing change, Chambers, Glasgow & Stange, 2013.

case responsibility. Thus, a context characterised by a very operationally busy JII team, with competing workload demands, meant that a rota system was not fully successful. This learning was used by Lanarkshire to continue to adapt their delivery model to their local context.

One of the contextual factors linked to the new model for JII that has been identified as being of interest is the urban/rural settlement areas for those areas implementing the new model.

The Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification (version 2016, which updates the 2013-2014 version) was first released in 2000 and is consistent with the Government's core definition of rurality which defines Settlements of less than 3,000 people to be rural. It also classifies areas as remote based on drive times from Settlements of 10,000 or more people.

Based on this classification system, the Lanarkshire JII Pilot consists of mainly other urban settlements (South Lanarkshire does have some large urban) with accessible small towns and some accessible rural areas. South Lanarkshire also has a very small proportion of remote rural areas.

North Strathclyde consists of mainly large urban areas (with the exception of Inverclyde which is predominantly other urban area), accessible small town and some accessible rural areas. There are no remote areas.

This type of contextual information is useful to consider in relation to the location of the specialist cadre. From the first two pilot sites there is emerging evidence that collocation of the entire cadre together has assisted in the operation of the new model of practice. The large proportion of urban settlements in these areas lends itself well to this arrangement. For other areas with remote and very remote small towns and rural areas, one collocated team of interviewers may not be the optimum arrangement.

#### **6.4 Identifying costs of implementing the new model**

The two pilot sites which have implemented the new model of practice have required to undertake a range of adaptations and adjustments to local processes, systems, structures and services. This has had a significant impact on resources and created pressure points in the local system.

Work is underway to explore these pressure points and to understand more about the costs of implementing this new model of practice. This work will be reflected in future evaluation reports.

#### **7. Measuring the quality of the application of this model**

The SCIM for JII consists of five core components (Strategy, Planning, Action, Outcomes, Support & Evaluation) and all five components must be implemented effectively for the model to realise the intended benefits.

Put simply, children will not benefit from an innovation which they do not experience.

Therefore, creating a position where local areas can measure how well they are applying this new model of practice – and all five core components - is critical to supporting improved outcomes for children.

A Quality Assurance and Data Framework which sits across the five components of the new model has been developed by the National JII Team. This is being tested during the pilot phase and is subject to ongoing development. (See Appendix One)

Some of the quality standards within the framework lend themselves more easily to quantitative measurement.

For example, some of the quality standards linked to the second core component of the model – planning – are things such as completion of a Plan for the Child's Needs, completion of a Topic Identification Plan and completion of an Interview Plan. These are tangible documents which can be counted against the total number of JII's conducted. This data is collected via the Data Capture Tool and, as can be seen from the data in the appendix, there is high adherence to this aspect of the new model in Lanarkshire.

How well these planning tools are then utilised to provide a high quality interview experience for the child is much more complex to measure.

An Interviewer Practice Evaluation Model sits alongside the new model for JII and this includes aspects such as, "Interviewers respond to the needs of the child during interview".

Data from the Interviewer Practice Evaluation Model can then be combined with feedback from children themselves (in due course) to provide a more robust measurement of how well the model is being applied to achieve the intended benefits.

A Quality Assurance Tool which sits across the new model and is well aligned with the Quality Assurance and Data Framework has recently been developed by the National JII Team in partnership with the two pilot sites. This will be tested in coming months by local multi-agency quality assurance groups and, as with all tools being developed to support the new JII model, will be subject to ongoing learning and development, with a view to this being used in all areas who implement this new model.

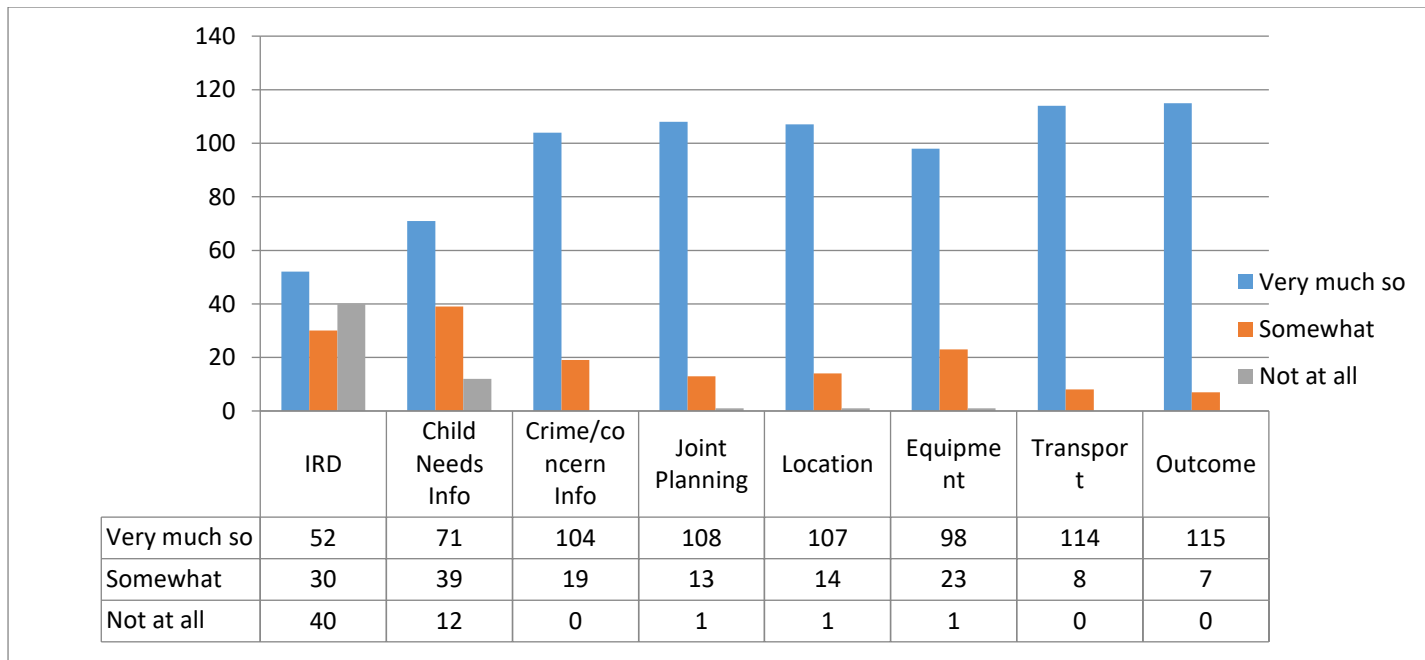
To support a system for ensuring early learning was being fed back into the local system quickly, the National JII Team produced a short template to gather feedback from the perspective of the child interviewers.

During the first three months of the Lanarkshire JII Pilot going live, interviewers were asked to provide feedback following every interview, in order to quickly identify and utilise learning to improve the local system. This feedback was gathered through a standard form completed following each interview and submitted to local managers and the National JII Team. The form had eight key questions, plus additional space for interviewers to suggest improvements to the local system. The eight questions with response options are shown below:



	Very much so	Somewhat	Not at all
Sufficient strategic direction from the IRD was provided to inform interview planning			
Sufficient information about the child was made available to plan the interview accordingly			
Sufficient information about the concern/crime was made available to plan the interview accordingly			
Both interviewers contributed to planning the interview			
The location of the interview met the child's needs			
The interview equipment worked well			
Transportation arrangements for the child worked well			
The output from the interview was analysed and shared with a manager/supervisor in order to inform next steps for the child			
Date of interview:                      Name:                                      Pilot Area:			

During the time period this tool was in use, 122 forms were completed. The results are shown below:



A number of themes quickly emerged in the initial days of utilising the new model of practice:

### Equipment

Initially, interviewers fed back that the equipment in the interview room was presenting some difficulties. These included the inability to bookmark salient points of the interview using the mobile equipment. At that stage, due to incompatibility of some parts of equipment in the fixed suite, it was necessary to use the mobile equipment. Microphone leads in use at the time were noted to be too short to allow sufficient flexibility in placement of mics and the camera leads were also limited. These equipment issues were resolved fairly early on in the pilot through local purchasing of additional leads and through national prioritisation of Lanarkshire to receive the new docking stations to allow compatibility of equipment.

### Facilities

Initially one room was designated as an office for the interviewers to be based at Blantyre police station. Interviewers fed back that there was insufficient space to allow ease of planning. There were other issues linked to facilities that were identified through this feedback loop such as insufficient materials for children and adults to utilise while waiting, and no provision to offer refreshments/snacks for the children. Some of these issues were resolved quickly and some are continuing to be addressed as implementation of the model in Lanarkshire develops further.

### Interagency Referral Discussions (IRD)

In a small number of instances, interviewers reflected that the IRD did not provide sufficient information about the needs of the individual child. There was one particular example where the IRD did not identify that the child suffered from complex post-traumatic stress disorder, something that was critical to take into account when planning for that child.

Further exploration of interviewers' perspectives in relation to the IRD revealed that some interviewers expected more detailed information from the IRD than is appropriate for a decision-making forum. In relation to specific information about the needs of the child, the IRD should highlight considerations, and then signpost interviewers to key individuals with direct knowledge of the child. The interviewers should then contact these individuals after the IRD as a core part of their planning activity.

The other important influence on the IRD section of the interviewers' feedback, was the wider context within which they were being deployed: COVID-19. This is covered in the next section of this report but, broadly speaking, a proportion of the interviews that were undertaken by the Lanarkshire cadre during national lockdown did not have an IRD as they feel out with the parameters of usual child protection processes. This accounts for almost all of the 40 "not at all" responses to that question.

### Information Sharing

Interviewers fed back that there were some challenges in having colleagues return calls and/or give them information about individual children. Some found they needed to

provide an explanation of the pilot and that there was a low level of awareness across agencies about the JII pilot.

There were also some barriers due to information sharing policies. For example, some schools do not routinely call mobile numbers back, yet it was mobile phones that interviewers were using to contact schools for information.

To help combat this, a written communication was developed by the Implementation Group to outline what was involved in the JII Pilot and how other professionals could support effective information sharing.

When completing the interviewer perspective forms, some interviewers took the opportunity to comment on their reflections on practice:

*“On the whole I recognised from today’s interview, improvements in terms of the child’s experience. The new protocol ensures time is spent getting to know the children first and it is evident this aids their experience.”*

*“Venue was conducive to the child’s needs and I feel the interview today supported the child positively to enable her to disclose.”*

## **8. Evaluating the outcomes for children and the outcomes for justice achieved through implementing this model**

Given the early stage of implementing this new model, full outcomes data is not yet available. Instead, this section provides the context within which outcomes for children and for justice have been discussed and agreed and some, limited, outcomes data is indicated.

Section 9 of the Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2019 outlines the reporting requirements of the Act and includes a requirement to report on the operation of section 1 of the Act (Child witnesses in certain solemn cases).

In late 2018, the Scottish Government’s Justice Analytical Services (JAS) were asked to provide analytical support to two Scottish Government-funded pilot sites introducing new processes for JII.

Researchers from JAS worked with stakeholders in the pilot to identify and inform on evaluation of the justice outcomes of the new JII model. Primarily, JAS’s remit was identified as advising stakeholders on data collection to satisfy the requirement in Section 9 of the Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2019 and informing on data collection to satisfy evaluation objectives 3 and 4, i.e

- To investigate whether interviews are conducted in such a way as to provide better quality of evidence for criminal proceedings, children’s hearing system proceedings and/or children’s planning processes; and

- To investigate whether the audio, visual, space and equipment elements of the investigative interview are of sufficient quality for their intended purpose,<sup>8</sup>

Researchers from JAS identified a number of challenges preventing a traditional evaluation of the JII pilot sites, including:

- The lack of reliable/robust baseline data for either pilot site (discussed in a later section);
- The inability to isolate causality due to the number of external factors and influences involved in the JII process; and
- Local differences between the pilot sites, which prevented reliable comparison.<sup>9</sup>

Initially it was agreed that JAS would work with partners to take stock of the data (qualitative and quantitative) generated through improvement methodology to review what could be observed about the short term success of the pilots, what improvements were still required, and what gaps around measurement still required to be filled. Pending outcomes, consideration would be given to whether further evaluation activity was required, in particular around engagement with child witnesses and interviewers.

An early review established that Police Scotland were the only justice stakeholder that routinely collected data on JIIs prior to the introduction of the Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Bill (herein referred to as 'The Bill').<sup>10</sup> Initially Police Scotland's data capture was not standardised and some processes were locally owned across Scotland. From mid-2017 however, Police Scotland established a process whereby JII data was centrally recorded.<sup>11</sup>

Across several Reference- and Governance group meetings in early 2019, it was agreed that stakeholders would collect and collate data on JIIs to inform evaluation of the pilots and fulfil the statutory requirement. Stakeholders expressed concern over the challenges of resourcing as a barrier to data recording and some measures were taken by the Scottish Government to begin to address and resolve these challenges.

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<sup>8</sup> The associated research question, relevant to justice outcomes, was: "Was the quality of evidence secured during the interview of sufficient standard as required to be used for the respective purpose (whether for court, for children's hearings or for care planning)?"

<sup>9</sup> For example; The strategic visions of the pilot areas differed; North Strathclyde included Children 1<sup>st</sup> as a key child advocacy partner to the pilot; There was variation between local authority areas across both sites on responding to non-familial concerns via JII prior to the launch of the pilot.

<sup>10</sup> JII Reference Group meeting, 05/06/19

<sup>11</sup> Data recorded included: the unique reference marker (VRI/(Division)(Subdivision)number of interview/year); date of interview; division; whether fixed or mobile site, interview type (joint, but in certain areas "police only interviews; or "police child" interviews were used); whether social work were available; and some divisions recorded whether it was a SOLO interview); and reported (as in crime reported to COPFS or SCRA). The data was not associated with a crime reference number on the centralised recording mechanism and thus could not be matched to cases. There was an additional challenge in that, due to the delay in cases being reported, there was a lag in recording whether or not cases were reported to SCRA/COPFS.

Due to the iterative and dynamic nature of the pilots, JAS identified there may be a role for the Scottish Government's Leading Improvement Team (LIT).<sup>[1]</sup> In June 2019, the Scottish Government offered the input of the LIT to the pilot site stakeholders. LIT engaged with stakeholders at a JII Pilot Overview event in January 2020 and provided support to Police Scotland and COSLA to develop a driver diagram in early 2020.

From January 2020, the National JII Team worked with both pilot sites to develop a comprehensive SCIM for JII Data Capture Tool, informed by existing data sets in use and consideration of the requirements of the new model of practice.

This data capture tool was then used in work with JAS and the LIT in terms of linking the initial justice logic model which had been developed in 2019 with stakeholders (as above) and developing a driver diagram that depicted the overarching improvement aims of the project.

At a Pilot Overview Session on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020, with representatives from both pilot sites, JAS negotiated an information-sharing agreement with stakeholders. This allowed JAS senior researcher to use information disclosed and discussed at either pilot's working group, reference or governance meetings in the evaluation of the pilot sites.

The SCIM for JII Data Capture Tool was adopted by Lanarkshire and the initial return of data was submitted to JAS on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, with the first 3 months' data. North Strathclyde also adopted the tool, in an amended form which maintained the original data metrics and added some additional metrics for local monitoring purposes.

The pilot sites presented their initial learning from the introduction of the new model (prior to launch) at the Pilot Overview Session on 31 January 2020.

In terms of measuring justice outcomes, a number of challenges were identified for both pilot sites around data baselines.

For Lanarkshire a significant challenge was that the baseline number of JIIs conducted was not clear and therefore the future need was uncertain. It was estimated that, prior to the launch of the new model, the Lanarkshire area recorded 586 JIIs in a year, including police-only interviews.<sup>12</sup> North Strathclyde also highlighted "uncertainty of data" as an identified challenge, however provided that, based on 2018/19 figures, the area had generated:

- Approximately 700 IRDs, relating to approximately 1000 children;
- 326 Visually Recorded Interviews (VRIs) of children; 48% of which were recorded as 'Police Constable Interviews'.<sup>13</sup>

North Strathclyde also identified that self-evaluation activity was immature, only beginning in August 2018, and the regularity of self-evaluation activity varied greatly across areas and

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<sup>[1]</sup> The leading improvement team (LIT) use quality improvement techniques to help teams and individuals test and put into practice sustainable improvement, based on a 3-step improvement framework.

<sup>12</sup> Pilot Overview Session, 31/01/20

<sup>13</sup> Pilot Overview Session, 31/01/20

stakeholders, from quarterly audits to no self-evaluation activity. The pilot area notes that the number of JIIs evaluated was small, with 17 JII evaluations taking place to date (as of 31 January 2020). Similarly, Lanarkshire identified challenges related to a “consistent evaluation framework”.

Of the available evaluations in North Strathclyde it was noted that recording quality and venue quality were “routinely recorded as impacting on quality” of JIIs.<sup>14</sup> It was noted that some of the challenges relating to the existing model included: “inappropriate people being present during interview”; the “(r)ecording quality in venues (being) consistently poor; wires surrounding child preventing them walking about so they are confined to their chair; video not on child's face; (and) couldn't hear child”.<sup>15</sup>

In terms of measuring outcomes for children, the key focus is that the JII process and practice is child-centred and helps children tell their story in a way that meets their needs.

The two areas for children set out in the Evaluation and Learning Framework are:

- Evaluating whether children are safer and better protected
- Evaluating whether the experience of a joint investigative interview with this new model is better for children than the experience of a joint investigative interview currently

Some of the pathways for gathering this data are at an early stage of development and some of the pathways in place are at an early stage of being implemented.

In Lanarkshire, these pathways are still in development. Work has been underway throughout the initial implementation period to consider ways of creating and embedding suitable pathways to support children and their families to provide feedback on their experience.

For North Strathclyde, the partnership with Children 1<sup>st</sup> has meant these pathways have been considered from the outset of thinking about their JII pilot.

Children 1st was awarded funding through Scottish Government, Victim Support Scotland, Renfrewshire Local Authority and RS McDonald Trust to ensure that children and families' experiences of current child protection and justice processes are heard. Two Child Rights and two Participation workers are employed to systematically gather feedback from children, young people and their families with a particular focus on gathering information and experiences in relation to: JIIs, forensic examinations and giving evidence in court, including the High Courts in Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as feedback on experience of the journey for children and families in relation to the child protection and justice processes.

This work will provide invaluable feedback to support the development of an effective Barnahus model for Scotland.

This work is also connected to the North Strathclyde JII Pilot and one of the Participation Workers referenced above, is linked to the specialist interviewer cadre.

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<sup>14</sup> North Strathclyde Partnership presentation, Pilot Overview Session, 31/01/20

<sup>15</sup> North Strathclyde Partnership presentation, Pilot Overview Session, 31/01/20

The Children1st Bairnshoose Worker works alongside the specialist interviewer cadre to undertake an assessment of the child/young persons need for recovery support, as well as providing short term support as required and ensuring that all children and young people who are interviewed, have an opportunity to give feedback about this experience.

This will enable the North Strathclyde JII Pilot to hear the difference that the new approach to JII is making to children and young people, and to collectively make changes that young people and/or their parents or carers tell us are needed.

## **9. Initial successes experienced by both pilot sites**

The experience of the local interviewer staff undertaking the new National JII Training Programme jointly and at the same time, helped to create a strong sense of team cohesion and a shared sense of team identity which occurred even before both teams were deployed live in practice.

*“The group have quickly developed effective working relations, and the mixture of experience has been beneficial in developing positive group dynamics. There has not been a divide between the professions, and it has been useful and insightful to learn about each other’s role.”* (North Strathclyde Child Interviewer)

This sense of team was further strengthened once the teams were live in practice:

*“Collocation promotes cohesion - this benefits police and social work as we know each other well and this familiarity assists in the interview promoting a more relaxed environment thus benefiting the child.”* (Lanarkshire Child Interviewer)

*“Police and social work are very much equal partners in the whole joint investigative interview process and we rely on each other greatly during a joint investigative interview. This benefits the child as they can sense a rapport and relationship from us, their interviewers.”* (Lanarkshire Child Interviewer)

Informal qualitative feedback was collated from the Lanarkshire interviewer cadre during the initial phase and was overwhelmingly positive. A number of the comments related to the short-, medium- and, to some extent, long term justice outcomes, for example:

*“I feel that our input will reduce children going to Court which is why I remain fully committed to being part of the team”;*

*“The most rewarding part of the new model is the high ratio of disclosures made. In addition, the fact that children are receptive to further interviews if they are required is an indication that the interview experience has not been traumatic.”*

A high proportion of the qualitative feedback related to the new model responding effectively to the needs of the child.

*“This new model is night and day in comparison to the old model. This is evident in terms of the child’s engagement and presentation throughout with the new model certainly being child centred and pitched at their pace throughout.” (Lanarkshire Child Interviewer)*

*“Children want to talk to us again, even if this is not about concern. I feel this shows they gain to trust us in the interviews and are happy to engage with us. Children leave smiling!” (Lanarkshire Child Interviewer)*

*“The biggest reward I feel is that no matter what the children are there to talk to you about the model supports the children emotionally throughout, incorporating and promoting the trauma informed principles.” (Lanarkshire Child Interviewer)*

*The most rewarding part of the new model is the high ratio of disclosures made. In addition, the fact that children are receptive to further interviews if they are required is an indication that the interview experience has not been traumatic. (Lanarkshire Child Interviewer)*

This final point is supported by initial outcomes data from the Data Capture tool which indicates a high proportion of children make a disclosure during interview (See Appendix Two).

## **10. Initial challenges experienced by both pilot sites**

One of the most challenging issues related to justice outcomes identified in the early stages of the pilots was the dual process of the JIIs, as a criminal justice-focused, evidence-gathering process and as a mechanism to ensure child protection. Some stakeholders (namely those involved primarily in child protection roles) communicated that the emphasis on reporting outlined in the Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2019 was placing more importance on the criminal justice purposes of the JII process which was disproportionate given that the majority of JII’s sit within child protection processes and do not progress via criminal justice processes. The tensions between the dual purpose included:

- **The inclusion of hearsay evidence:** COPFS indicated that the new JII model was designed to take account of hearsay evidence, which would be inadmissible in criminal court. SCRA indicated that evidence, which would be categorised as ‘hearsay’ by COPFS was admissible in Children’s Hearings Proceedings and was desirable in some cases.
- **Rapport-building:** Research indicates the need for rapport-building as a key stage in forensic interviewing of children and the National Institute of Child and Human Development (NICHD) interview protocol, which includes rapport-building, has been incorporated into the SCIM. Representatives from COPFS communicated that, while they understood the need for rapport-building, it would be problematic to play a long period of rapport-building to a jury.
- **Length of interview:** Similarly, there was a tension between COPFS requiring the interview to provide corroborative evidence of a crime/offence having taken place,



which could be used in evidence for a jury; and the interview being used as an exploratory evidence-gathering exercise with a child welfare focus. SCRA communicated that, in some proceedings, the JII footage may be the only source of evidence, and therefore the quality, depth of detail and length were key in decision-making and establishing sufficiency.

It was discussed that a good facility for editing might alleviate this challenge, so that the interview may be adapted easily, quickly and cheaply.<sup>16</sup>

Also discussed was the need for a high-quality transcription service. It was identified that in most divisions, Police Officers were responsible for providing written transcriptions of (all) interviews to COPFS as evidence.<sup>17</sup>

As the Pilot sites began preparing for implementation of the new model, **resourcing** became a challenge. This was particularly pertinent in respect of staffing issues (recruiting interviewers, reallocating workloads, releasing staff for long period of training, key staff leading on implementation locally etc) but also emerged in other ways such as accommodation and equipment for interviewers. Resourcing continues to be a key challenge now that both sites are live as the demands of the evaluation framework in respect of the interviewers and the model of practice are now being experienced.

The **lack of baseline data** and the subsequent infrastructure required to accommodate the effective collection, collation, reporting and analysis of data is a further challenge experienced by the pilot sites.

**COVID-19** has presented very particular challenges, as well as unexpected opportunities, and this is covered in the next section.

## 11. The impact of the COVID-19 crisis

The COVID-19 or Coronavirus crisis, which began in Scotland in March 2020, had a significant and detrimental impact on many of Scotland's statutory and third sector services' provision.

Pilot site two paused the pilot and delayed the launch date for the new model due to the pandemic.

Pilot site one continued to implement the new model of practice and to use SCIM-trained interviewers for JII's. However, in the initial weeks of lockdown, the number of child protection referrals decreased significantly across Scotland and, as a result, there was a decrease in IRDs and in demand for JII's.

As a means of allowing interviewers to retain and develop the new skills learned from training, the Detective Sergeant carrying out the role of coordinator contacted all frontline response sergeants and communicated that, if a child required to be interviewed for any criminal investigation, a SCIM trained interviewer would conduct the interview. This was

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<sup>16</sup> JII Reference Group meeting, 05/06/19

<sup>17</sup> JII Justice Governance Group meeting 20/02/19

also the case for all non-contact sexual crimes involving a child complainer/witness. In addition, the Detective Sergeant also coordinated with the Major Investigations Team (MIT) and child interviews were planned by SCIM-trained interviewers for an ongoing murder investigation.

This led to the following additional opportunities for the SCIM for JII trained staff in Lanarkshire:

### **Procurator Fiscal Enquiries**

If a child is present during the course of a criminal act and a sufficiency of evidence is gained, then it has been deemed good practice not to submit a child to an interview if it is not required.

However, on occasion, the Procurator Fiscal may, on review of the case and evidence, request that a witness statement is noted from the child in order to strengthen the case against the accused.

Historically, this would have been carried out by uniform officers or the original JII cadre using the Stepwise Model.

With the option of utilising the specialist cadre for these interviews, this helped the new interviewers hone their skills in practice and also alleviated workloads for both uniform colleagues and the stretched resources of the Child Protection Investigation Unit (CPIU).

### **Domestic Abuse Enquiries**

It was also intimated to the Domestic Abuse Unit (DAU) at Lanarkshire that the Pilot should be contacted in the first instance if a child required to be interviewed in respect of a domestic abuse enquiry.

The Pilot interviewers commenced these interviews and found that not only were children recounting what had taken place in the case under investigation but were disclosing other incidents which had taken place which police and partners were unaware of resulting in increased detections and more robust safety planning.

### **Murder Investigation**

The implementation plan for the roll out of the Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Bill detailed that the main initial focus was to commence provisions for children giving evidence in High Court cases. As such, it was decided that the Pilot cadre at Lanarkshire should be used in every occasion where possible where there was a likelihood that a case would be indicted under Solemn Procedure.

On Saturday 7 March 2020, a murder investigation was launched in Lanarkshire and the investigation of the crime allocated to the Major Investigation Team (MIT) based at Livingston Police Office. In the course of this investigation a number of child/vulnerable witnesses were identified who required to be interviewed. The requirement for these witness interviews was brought to the attention of the JII Pilot and a bid was made to the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) to carry them out.

On receiving information the JII Team were asked to plan and arrange six interviews. Two Vulnerable witnesses and four children. The allocated JII Team workers thereafter

proceeded to plan for said interviews however due to a number of factors, only one interview went ahead.

This raised the profile of the JII Pilot and ensured that these children were approached in a trauma informed manner with a multi-agency approach being taken to ensure no further significant harm was caused.

### **Review of Code 62 Incidents (Sexual Offences Incidents)**

In Lanarkshire Division, a review of all sexual offences incidents is carried out on a regular basis to ensure compliance with the Scottish Crime Recording Standards (SCRS) and that no evidential opportunities have been missed.

The JII Pilot were made aware of a number of occasions where an incident had taken place and a child witness was identified who had not previously been interviewed. The JII Pilot were tasked with carrying out these interviews which in some cases resulted in a detection of the crime under investigation or a reclassification of the crime type.

While this approach deviated from the agreed model (i.e. the entry point for a JII was the IRD), an unexpected positive consequence of this approach meant that officers observed an increase in evidence being gleaned on non-recent complaints. This was attributed to SCIM-trained officers' focus on a child's wider context and their trauma-informed approach. It was noted that the calibre of disclosures in summary-level investigations was improved as a result of this approach.

## **12. Summary**

This interim evaluation report highlights some early features and findings from the first phase of piloting this new model of practice.

The stage of this work necessarily means that this interim evaluation report contains more information about implementation of the new JII model, than data on impact and outcomes. As the work progresses this difference will be addressed, and we will have more data in respect of the impact of this model on improved protection and justice outcomes for children.

Overall, despite a number of differences in variables between the two pilot sites, there are early indications that the intended outcomes of the new JII model, particularly in relation to achieving better outcomes for children, are being realised in both areas, suggesting the universal applicability and intended effect of the model.

The new JII model and its desired outcomes coincide and are consistent with several other initiatives recently introduced in Scotland, relating to improving outcomes for children, improving vulnerable witnesses' experience of court, and ensuring protection of vulnerable people via effective multi-agency working.

There are a number of factors which have been identified as impeding or facilitating effective implementation of the new model. The impact of these differs depending on context and, as the model is rolled out to other areas, the learning from this will become increasingly valuable information.

Close collaboration, strong relationships and the collocation of police and social work interviewers appears to have assisted in the operationalisation of the new model of practice.

It is recognised that collocation of all interviewers may not be the best option for all areas in Scotland due to geographical differences.

Iterative and dynamic communication between Police Scotland and Children and Families Social Work has allowed some minor operational challenges related to equipment to be quickly resolved during the initial stages of the pilot.

Practitioners who have attended the National Joint Investigative Interviewing Training Programme have reflected this has provided positive benefits to their practice in that they feel more attuned to the needs of the child during interview and more confident in leading interviews.

One of the key characteristics of the new model is improved planning practice. New planning tools have been developed to aid this aspect of practice and early data suggests very good adherence to this part of the model.

The lack of baseline data prevents a traditional evaluation of the JII pilots. However, meaningful and robust data captured by the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM Data Capture Tool) complemented by qualitative feedback from practitioners suggests initial outcomes are promising.

In relation to better outcomes for children, in both sites there are high levels of disclosures made during interview. This is an indication that children feel able to talk to interviewers about what has happened to them. This assists ongoing assessment, planning and decision-making for children. Being able to talk about what has happened and receiving a supportive response to disclosure is important for children's recovery. Interviewers have commented on the presentation of children after interview, noting that their emotional and physical presentation indicates that the interview has been a supportive experience for them. We don't yet have data in respect of the number of continued or subsequent interviews taking place but interviewers have noted that children are agreeable to returning for a continued interview when suggested and this agreement is made positively.

Pathways to hear the experiences of children and their families in relation to the new model of JII are at an early stage of development and the voices of children need to be amplified as the pilot develops so that we can gain an understanding of how this model of practice is being experienced by children and their families.

Due to the longer time frames involved in investigations and solemn court proceedings, it is currently too early to make meaningful assessment about the medium- and long- term justice outcomes, as too few cases that use JII as evidence in chief had progressed to trial at this time.

One of the most challenging issues identified in the early stages of this work was the dual process and purpose of the JIIs, as a criminal justice-focussed, evidence-gathering process and as a mechanism to ensure child protection.

The Coronavirus crisis presented a significant challenge to the introduction and maintenance of the new JII model. Despite challenges experienced, there were some unintended positive outcomes and important learning resulting from the innovative use of this new model of practice during the period of lockdown, such as an increase in evidence being gleaned from non-recent complaints through SCIM trained officers' focus on a child's wider context and their trauma informed approach.

We will continue to build on this interim evaluation report by further developing and strengthening pathways to gather data to help ascertain whether the intended outcomes are realised; by testing the quality assurance and data framework and learning from the experiences of the pilot areas; by drawing children's experiences of this model of practice into our understanding of how we can better meet their needs; and by further developing the intended outcomes for the new JII model.

It is proposed that a further evaluation report will be prepared in 6-9 months time.

**13. Appendix One: Quality Assurance and Data Framework**

	<b>1. Strategy</b>	<b>2. Planning</b>	<b>3. Action</b>	<b>4. Outcome</b>	<b>5. Support and evaluation</b>
<b>Quality Standard</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All IRDs take place within 1 working day</li> <li>• All core agencies are involved in IRDs</li> <li>• Decision to proceed to JII is taken at IRD</li> <li>• Aims of, and rationale for, JII are recorded</li> <li>• Aims of, and rationale for, JII are shared</li> <li>• Sufficient strategic direction is provided by the IRD to effectively inform planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All JIIs are jointly planned by Police and Social Work</li> <li>• Sufficient information about the needs of the child is available to interviewers to inform planning</li> <li>• Sufficient information about the nature of the concern/essential elements is available to interviewers to inform planning</li> <li>• A Plan for Child's Needs was completed prior to all JIIs</li> <li>• A Topic Identification Plan was completed prior to all JIIs</li> <li>• An Interview Plan was completed prior to all JIIs</li> <li>• The best interests of the child are taken account of in planning the date, time and venue of the JII</li> <li>• The child was offered advocacy support</li> <li>• The child was effectively supported before the interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All JIIs are jointly conducted by Police and Social Work trained in the new model</li> <li>• All JIIs have fully operational audio/visual technology</li> <li>• All JIIs are conducted at an appropriate location</li> <li>• Interviewers incorporate the interview plan into the interview with the child</li> <li>• Interviewers respond to the needs of the child during interview</li> <li>• Interviewers apply knowledge of the phases of the Scottish NICHD Protocol to the structure of the interview</li> <li>• Interviewers apply the principles of the Scottish NICHD Protocol</li> <li>• The child's views are heard and respected</li> <li>• Analysis of the JII is undertaken jointly by both interviewers</li> <li>• A debrief between the interviewers and a supervisor is held following all JIIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child's safety and protection is improved</li> <li>• The child experienced an interview that was well planned, trauma informed and responsive to their needs</li> <li>• The child was effectively supported after interview</li> <li>• All JIIs generate high quality evidence from the child</li> <li>• The child's evidence generated from JIIs is used in Children's Hearings / criminal proceedings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewers receive feedback in relation to the quality of the interview</li> <li>• Interviewers are supported to reflect on their own practice</li> <li>• The local child protection system operates effectively to support the new model of joint investigative interviewing</li> </ul>

14. Appendix Two: Data from pilot site 1

Chart 1: Transition to specialist cadre; Q3 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and Q4 1<sup>st</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020

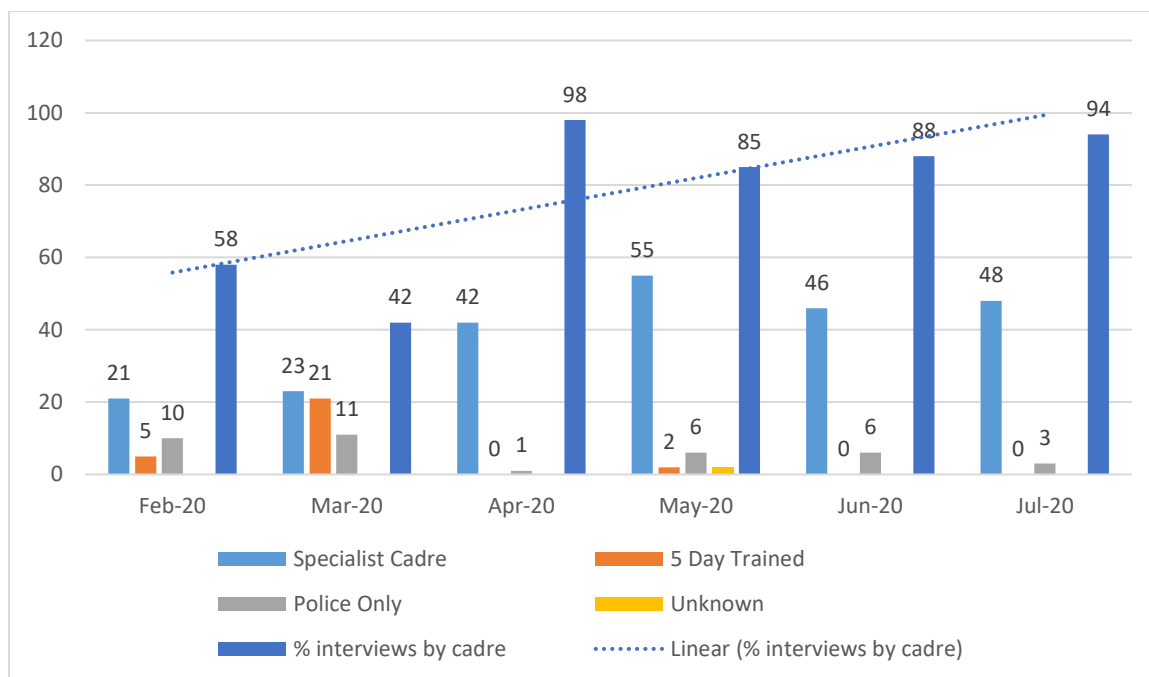


Figure 1: Children Experiencing a Joint Investigative Interview by Local Authority, Gender and Age; Q3 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and Q4 1<sup>st</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020

	Number		%	
<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA</b>				
	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
<b>North Lanarkshire</b>	34	74	40%	52%
<b>South Lanarkshire</b>	49	64	58%	45%
<b>Not answered</b>	2	4	2%	3%
<b>GENDER</b>				
	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
<b>Female</b>	59	85	69%	60%

<b>Male</b>	24	55	28%	39%
<b>Not answered</b>	2	2	2%	1%
<b>AGE</b>				
	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
<b>3 years</b>	0	1	0%	1%
<b>4-5 years</b>	11	7	13%	5%
<b>6-7 years</b>	10	15	12%	10%
<b>8-9 years</b>	21	25	25%	18%
<b>10-11 years</b>	17	21	20%	15%
<b>12-13 years</b>	15	32	18%	22%
<b>14-16 years</b>	10	41	12%	29%
<b>Not answered</b>	1	0	1%	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Figure 2: Planning Tools Used by Interviewers and Planning Activity Undertaken; 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not recorded</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not recorded</b>
	<b>Q3</b>			<b>Q4</b>		
<b>Planning Tools</b>						
<b>Joint Planning Meeting</b>	80 (94%)	2 (2%)	3 (4%)	142 (100%)	0	0
<b>Plan for the Child's Needs</b>	82 (96%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	140 (96%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
<b>Topic Identification Plan</b>	82 (96%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	140 (96%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
<b>Interview Plan</b>	82 (96%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	140 (96%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
<b>Planning Activity</b>						
	<b>Q3</b>			<b>Q4</b>		
<b>Follow up call to health services</b>	7 (8%)			11 (8%)		
<b>Follow up call to education services</b>	47 (55%)			59 (42%)		
<b>Follow up call to social work services</b>	12 (14%)			11 (8%)		
<b>Follow up call with parent/carers</b>	10 (12%)			19 (14%)		



<b>Other (eg. Residential worker, intensive support workers, counsellor, planning mtgs)</b>	3 (4%)	1 (1%)
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**Chart 2: Number of children who make a disclosure during JII; Q3 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and Q4 1<sup>st</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020**

