

# Public Document Pack



To: Councillor Greig, Convener; Councillor Mennie, Vice Convener; Councillors Al-Samarai, Blake, Boulton, Bouse, Brooks, Hazel Cameron, Grant, MacGregor, McLellan, McLeod and Radley and Mrs Frances Cardno (Parent Representative - Primary Schools/ASN), Mr Michael Crawford (Parent Representative - Secondary / ASN), Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative), Mr Mike Paul (Teacher Representative (Secondary Schools)), Mr Madhav Regmi (Third Religious Representative), Miss Pamela Scott (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools) and Mrs Hilda Smith (Church of Scotland representative).

Town House,  
ABERDEEN, 13 November 2023

## **EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE**

The Members of the **EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE** are requested to meet in the **Council Chamber - Town House** on **TUESDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2023 at 10.00am**. This is a hybrid meeting and Members may also attend remotely.

The meeting will be webcast and a live stream can be viewed on the Council's website. <https://aberdeen.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

JENNI LAWSON  
INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER - GOVERNANCE

### **BUSINESS**

#### **NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS**

1.1 There are no items of urgent business at this time

#### **DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS**

2.1 Members are requested to determine that any exempt business be considered with the press and public excluded

#### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS**

3.1 Members are requested to intimate any declarations of interest

## **DEPUTATIONS**

4.1 There are no requests for deputation at this time

## **MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

5.1 Minute of Meeting of 12 September 2023 - for approval (Pages 5 - 16)

## **COMMITTEE PLANNER**

6.1 Committee Business Planner (Pages 17 - 26)

## **NOTICES OF MOTION**

7.1 There are no Notices of Motion at this time

## **REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL, COMMITTEES & SUB COMMITTEES**

8.1 There are no referrals at this time

## **PERFORMANCE AND RISK**

9.1 Education & Children's Services Committee Annual Effectiveness Report - COM/23/348 (Pages 27 - 48)

9.2 Performance Management Framework Report - Children's and Family Service/National Improvement Framework Progress Update - COM/23/371 (Pages 49 - 106)

9.3 Cluster Risk Registers - CFS/23/335 (Pages 107 - 134)

## **EDUCATION**

10.1 Inspection Reporting - CFS/23/369 (Pages 135 - 152)

10.2 St Peter's RC School - Long Term Education Provision - RES/23/365 (Pages 153 - 160)

10.3 Outline Business Case: New Secondary School Provision for Hazlehead and Countesswells - RES/23/366 (Pages 161 - 170)

- 10.4 Options to Rationalise Early Learning and Childcare settings to match the Scottish Government Grant - CFS/23/301 (Pages 171 - 216)
- 10.5 MCR Pathways Update - CFS/23/260 (Pages 217 - 222)
- 10.6 School Holidays - Amendment to 2023/2024 pattern - CFS/23/367 (Pages 223 - 226)

### **EXEMPT BUSINESS - NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

- 11.1 St Peter's RC School - Long Term Education Provision - Exempt Appendices (Pages 227 - 288)
- 11.2 Outline Business Case: New Secondary School Provision for Hazlehead and Countesswells - Exempt Appendices (Pages 289 - 372)

### **AT THIS JUNCTURE, THE EXTERNAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE WILL DEPART**

### **PUBLIC BUSINESS**

### **CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

- 12.1 Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report - CFS/23/341 (Pages 373 - 406)
- 12.2 Aberdeen City's Child Protection Committee Annual Report 2022-23 - CFS/23/370 (Pages 407 - 438)
- 12.3 Keeping The Promise - Year 2 Evaluation Report - CFS/23/264 (Pages 439 - 496)

Impact Assessments for this Committee can be viewed here:- [Search Integrated Impact Assessments | Aberdeen City Council](#)

Should you require any further information about this agenda, please contact Steph Dunsmuir, [sdunsmuir@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:sdunsmuir@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

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## EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 12 September 2023. Minute of Meeting of the EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Greig, Convener; Councillor Mennie, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Blake, Boulton, Bouse, Brooks, Hazel Cameron, Grant, MacGregor, McLellan (as substitute for Councillor van Sweeden), McLeod (to article 15) and Radley. External Members:- Mrs Frances Cardno (Parent Representative - Primary Schools/ASN) (to article 18), Mr Michael Crawford (Parent Representative - Secondary / ASN) (for articles 1 to 16), Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative) (to article 14), Mr Madhav Regmi (Third Religious Representative) (to article 15) and Mrs Hilda Smith (Church of Scotland representative) (to article 18).

**The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be located [here](#).**

**Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.**

### DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

1. The Committee was requested to determine that the following item of business which contained exempt information as described in paragraph 8 of Schedule 7(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 be taken in private – Item 12.1 (Outline Business Case: Oldmachar Primary Schools Excess Capacity – Exempt Appendix).

#### **The Committee resolved:-**

to consider item 12.1 with the press and public excluded.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

2. The Committee noted the following transparency statements:-

- In relation to item 9.1 (Music Service Update), Councillor Blake advised for reasons of transparency that she had two sons who attended music lessons; Councillor Grant advised that he had a son who took music lessons; and Mrs Cardno advised that she had two children who also participated in music lessons, however none of the Members considered that this amounted to a declaration of interest, and they advised that they would be participating in the discussion on the item;
- Also in relation to item 9.1 (Music Service Update), Councillor McLeod advised for reasons of transparency that he had previously been employed by Aberdeen City Council as Music Co-ordinator for the Council, but did not consider that this amounted to an interest which would prevent him from participating in the item;
- In relation to item 11.4 (Summer in the City Programme), Councillor Blake advised for reasons of transparency that she was on the Board of Aberdeen Sports Village,

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and had also participated in one of the Summer in the City activities, but she did not consider that this amounted to a declaration of interest and would be remaining in the meeting for that item;

- In relation to item 11.8 (Outline Business Case: Oldmachar Primary Schools Excess Capacity) (School Estate Plan Update), Mrs Cardno advised for reasons of transparency that she had two children attending school in the Oldmachar catchment area, but did not consider that this amounted to a declaration of interest and would be remaining in the meeting for that item;
- In relation to item 11.9 (School Estate Plan), Mr Murray advised for reasons of transparency that he had two grandchildren who attended St Joseph's RC School, but did not consider that this amounted to a declaration of interest and would be remaining in the meeting for that item.
- In relation to item 11.10 (St Peter's RC School – Long Term Education Provision), Mr Murray advised for reasons of transparency that his daughter was a teacher at St Peter's RC School, but again, he did not consider that this amounted to an interest which needed to be declared and he would be remaining in the meeting for consideration of that item.

### **MINUTE OF MEETING OF 4 JULY 2023**

3. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 4 July 2023 for approval.

**The Committee resolved:-**

to approve the minute as a correct record.

### **COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER**

4. The Committee had before it a planner of committee business as prepared by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance (Legal).

**The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to note that the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord had advised that he expected to present the withdrawn report (Item 13 – Northfield ASG Primary Schools Excess Capacity - Outline Business Case) to Committee within two cycles;
- (ii) to agree to remove item 31 (Health and Wellbeing Summit Progress Update) as it was due to be merged with item 51 on the planner;
- (iii) to note that the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord had undertaken to provide an update to each Committee on the situation with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) when appropriate; and
- (iv) to otherwise note the planner.

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**MUSIC SERVICE UPDATE - CFS/23/232**

5. With reference to article 11 of the minute of the former Educational Operational Delivery Committee of 8 September 2022, the Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which set out an evaluation of the quality and provision of music across the city and report the findings to Committee, including details of the digital offering.

Members of the Committee were also given a musical performance by pupils prior to consideration of the report.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) note the evaluation of the second year of free instrumental instruction;
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to continue to extend opportunities for music making through partnership working between the Music Service and Aberdeen Music School and others; and
- (c) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to report back on progress within one calendar year.

**The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to thank the pupils for their performance and officers for their work to date on the music provision; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK REPORT - CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY SERVICE/EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK DATA TRACKER - COM/23/281**

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Commissioning and the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which presented (a) the status of key performance measures relating to the Children's and Family Services function and (b) Education Improvement Data Tracker information arising from analysis of National Benchmark data suites released over the course of the past 12 months.

Members asked a number of questions on the report.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee note the report and provide comments and observations on the information contained in the report appendices.

**The Committee resolved:-**

to note the report.

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**ABERDEEN CITY NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN - CFS/23/268**

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which sought approval to implement the refreshed Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan for 2023/24 following submission of the Self-Evaluation and Plan to the Scottish Government.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the service Self-Evaluation and Plan contained in Appendices A and B;
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to implement the proposed Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan 23/24;
- (c) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to maintain a review of the 23/24 Plan in light of any impacting national legislative or policy provisions through the education reform agendas and advise Committee of any required changes in due course;
- (d) note the evaluative reports on MCR pathways included in Appendices C and D of the report; and
- (e) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to work with MCR Pathways to address the data issues to inform a further review in March 2024 to help shape a longer term and sustainable approach to the delivery of mentoring for young people.

**The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to request that officers provide a demonstration for Members on Power BI and school profiles;
- (ii) to note that the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services had undertaken to circulate research in relation to mentoring and experience of a working environment;
- (iii) to approve recommendations (a), (b) and (c);
- (iv) to note recommendations (d) and (e) of the report and the instruction to work with MCR Pathways to "address data issues";
- (v) to note section 3.14 of the report which suggested that, by agreeing to officer recommendations, MCR Pathways programme would no longer be funded centrally by Attainment Challenge Funding and instead paid for by participant schools Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) allocation, should they wish to continue with the programme;
- (vi) to instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to report back to Committee outlining which of the participating MCR Pathways schools were agreeable to support the programme via their respective PEF allocation;
- (vii) to note the suggestion that Attainment Challenge funding be diverted to in part accelerate phase 2 of the ABZCampus; and
- (viii) to instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to report back to Committee detailing specific deliverables on how Phase 2 of ABZCampus, the



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expansion of the edge of care pilot to St Machar Academy, and the expansion of Pathways co-ordinators would support a larger group of care experienced young people before any agreement by Committee to support this change in allocation of Attainment Challenge funding.

**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES REFORMS - CFS/23/228**

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided an update on the progress being made on education and wider children's services reforms.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) note the update on education and wider children's services reforms;
- (b) instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to continue to consider the implications of each published report to ensure the Council remained ready to respond positively to any national policy changes; and
- (c) instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to update Committee following publication of the final Daniel's report in October 2023.

**The Committee resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

**INSPECTION REPORTING - CFS/23/234**

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which detailed how Aberdeen City schools and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings had engaged with His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and The Care Inspectorate and had a report published since July 2023.

The report provided updates on the following:-

Flexible Childcare Services Cummings Park  
Glashieburn ELC  
Kittybrewster ELC  
Milltimber ELC  
Walker Road ELC  
Kirkhill ELC; and  
the Disabled Children and Young People Thematic Review.

Members asked a number of questions of officers on the inspection outcomes. It was noted that the action plan for Kittybrewster ELC had some gaps in relation to actions

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which had been taken. Officers advised that the plan had been updated since the papers had been prepared and undertook to circulate the revised version to Members.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of this report; and
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools to implement continuous improvement in keeping with the Quality Framework agreed at Committee in July 2023.

**The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to note that the Interim Chief Education Officer would circulate the updated action plan in relation to Kittybrewster ELC; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

**NORTHFIELD ADVISORY GROUP - CFS/23/229**

10. With reference to article 14 of the minute of its meeting of 23 May 2023, the Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided an update on the output of the Advisory Group, established to help drive improvements at Northfield Academy in the longer term, following its first meeting of 23 June 2023.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee note the output of the first meeting of the Advisory Group.

**The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to note that the Interim Director for Children's and Family Services would provide a copy of the earlier report on the Advisory Group to Councillor Boulton; and
- (ii) to note the report.

**SUMMER IN THE CITY PROGRAMME 2023 - CFS/23/257**

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided detail on the high level evaluation of the Summer in the City programme 2023 and outlined a planned approach for delivering a holiday programme for the 2023 autumn holiday period.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) note the high level evaluation of the Summer in the City programme; and
- (b) note that the Interim Chief Education Officer would report to Committee on the impact of the autumn 2023 programme following delivery.

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**The Committee resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

**ARMED FORCES COVENANT - CFS/23/243**

**12.** The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided detail on how the Education Service intended to continue to discharge its duties under The Armed Forces Covenant which came into force on 22 November 2022.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to monitor implementation of the proposed actions for education and build them into the National Improvement Framework Plan; and
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to update on progress through routine reporting on the National Improvement Framework Plan.

**The Committee resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

**COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN - CUS/23/288**

**13.** The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which (a) provided an update on progress towards delivery of the Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024; and (b) proposed a change in governance arrangements to better align the work of Community Learning to other partnership activity relating to the model of Family Support.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress made towards delivery of the Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024;
- (b) endorse the proposed change in governance for the Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024 and for future Community Learning and Development plans; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to report to the Education and Children's Services Committee with an annual update on progress.

**The Committee resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

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**ACCESSIBILITY PLAN - CFS/23/263**

14. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which sought approval for the Aberdeen City Accessibility Plan 2023-2026.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) approve the Aberdeen City Accessibility Plan (Appendix 1);
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to review the impact of the Plan in 2026 in accordance with legislation; and
- (c) instruct the Interim Chief Education Officer to present an updated Accessibility Plan to the Education and Children's Services Committee within 3 calendar years.

**The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to note that officers would circulate information to Members outwith the meeting on the proportion of schools with an Active Schools assistant; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

**OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE: OLDMACHAR PRIMARY SCHOOLS EXCESS CAPACITY - RES/23/278**

15. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which presented a completed Outline Business Case, setting out the findings of a recent feasibility study, to identify options for reducing the number of primary schools within the Oldmachar Associated Schools Group (ASG).

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) note that no suitable options for reducing the number of primary schools within the Oldmachar ASG have been identified within the outline business case; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out further work to identify potential future options for improving and consolidating primary school provision in the Oldmachar ASG, alongside the planned work to review secondary school provision in this area of the city, and to report back to the Committee with recommendations and next steps as appropriate.

**The Committee resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

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**SCHOOL ESTATE PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE - RES/23/282**

16. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which presented the 2023 annual update to the School Estate Plan, providing updates on progress with implementation of the Plan, and highlighting new priorities which had been identified since the School Estate Plan was first approved in September 2022.

Members also received an update from the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord on the work which was being undertaken in relation to the Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) situation.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) note the updates to the School Estate Plan which were provided at Appendix 1 of the report;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to continue to implement the School Estate Plan in accordance with the updated timeline, presented at Appendix 1 of the report;
- (c) note that the review of sports facilities at Harlaw Road and Rubislaw sports fields would now be incorporated within the feasibility study for improving the suitability of facilities at Harlaw Academy (Recommendation H1); and
- (d) instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out a public consultation on a proposal to alter the school catchment areas for Greenbrae School and Scotstown School, so that they aligned with the city boundary and no longer extended beyond it into Aberdeenshire. (Recommendation O4/BD2).

The Convener, seconded by Councillor Al-Samarai, moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor Blake, seconded by Councillor Grant, moved as an amendment:-

That the Committee –

- (a) notes officer recommendations;
- (b) notes with concern the reports about RAAC concrete being identified in seven schools in Aberdeen City Council and that in the school estate plan all of these schools received a B rating for condition;
- (c) instructs the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to report back to the next Committee on where the school estate plan might require to be amended in light of the changing risk to our schools and pupils; and
- (d) instructs the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services, in consultation with the Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee, to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills expressing concern at the continued delays to the announcement of LEIP 3 funding and asking for an updated timeline, advising members of the Committee by email as soon as possible and reporting back to the Education and Children's Services Committee thereafter on any

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implications for the LEIP funded projects on the Education and Children's Services Committee business planner.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (9) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillors Al-Samarai, Bouse, Hazel Cameron, MacGregor, McLellan and Radley; and Mrs Smith; for the amendment (4) – Councillors Blake, Boulton, Brooks and Grant; declined to vote (3) – Mrs Cardno, Mr Crawford and Mr Haywood; absent from the division (3) – Councillor McLeod, Mr Murray and Mr Regmi.

**The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to note that officers would circulate information to Members when it was available in relation to the timescale for the full business case for the Bucksburn Academy extension;
- (ii) to note that officers would circulate information to Members in relation to the trigger numbers for the Grandhome primary school provision to be built; and
- (iii) to approve the motion.

**ST PETER'S RC SCHOOL - LONG TERM EDUCATION PROVISION - RES/23/283**

17. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which (a) provided an update on the work to date regarding the refurbishment of the Riverbank school building; and (b) sought instruction from Members to conduct a feasibility study to assess the potential of refurbishing Old Aberdeen House, as an alternative option for providing improved facilities for St. Peter's RC school.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) note the identified alternative option and instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to carry out a feasibility study to assess the feasibility of refurbishing and repurposing Old Aberdeen House to provide a two stream building for St. Peter's School;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to commence engagement with the RC diocese and the school community regarding this new additional option; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to report back to the Committee in November with an updated Outline Business Case for the relocation of St Peter's RC Primary School, to include the outcome of this feasibility study as an additional option, and the associated stakeholder feedback.

**The Committee resolved:-**

- (i) to note that since officers were tasked, in September 2022, with submitting an application to the Scottish Government's third phase of LEIP funding, that no material update had been provided;
- (ii) to instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to seek and circulate any written confirmation that there would not be any risk associated with

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- the existing LEIP funding application which had been “pending” with the Scottish Government since September 2022 as a result of the feasibility work taking place;
- (iii) to agree that the feasibility work should also report on the potential interim arrangements and costs that would be required should officers propose at the November Committee a preference for a two-stream school at Old Aberdeen House;
  - (iv) to agree that if, at the November Committee, officers recommended a preference for a two-stream school at Old Aberdeen House, that due regard be given to the potential uses/costs associated with any exit strategy of the existing Riverbank School site; and
  - (v) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

**OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE: OLDMACHAR PRIMARY SCHOOLS EXCESS CAPACITY - RES/23/278 - EXEMPT APPENDIX**

18. The Committee had before it an exempt appendix in relation to Item 11.8 (Outline Business Case: Oldmachar Primary Schools Excess Capacity) (article 15 of this minute refers).

**The Committee resolved:-**  
to note the exempt appendix.

**At this juncture, the External Members of the Committee departed the meeting.**

**CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK STATISTICS, SCOTLAND 2021-22, AND AN ABERDEEN COMPARISON - CFS/23/260**

19. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children’s and Family Services which outlined the Children’s Social Work Statistics, Scotland 2021-22 report and provided a commentary on the performance of Aberdeen City Council compared with the national position.

**The report recommended:-**  
that the Committee -

- (a) note that care experienced children and those children who needed protection in Aberdeen City, were, predominantly, receiving care and protection in line with national averages; and
- (b) note that where performance differed from national averages, there were improvement plans in place.

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**The Committee resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

**BAIRNS HOOSE - CFS/23/289**

**20.** The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services which provided an update on Aberdeen City's Children's Services partnership Bairns Hoose Pathfinder application and the associated planning.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Committee –

- (a) note Aberdeen City's Pathfinder Application, Appendix 1; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Integrated Children's and Family Services/Chief Social Work Officer to provide a service update in early 2024 on the outcome of the Pathfinder application and progress to develop Aberdeen City's Bairns Hoose.

**The Committee resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

**- COUNCILLOR MARTIN GREIG, Convener**



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	<b>EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER</b> The Business Planner details the reports which have been instructed by the Committee as well as reports which the Functions expect to be submitting for the calendar year.								
2	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
3	<b>21 November 2023</b>								
4	Inspection Reporting	A standing item to report on the outcome of Early Learning and Childcare and school inspections and any changes in the approach of inspection agencies if required		Shona Milne	Education	Children's and Family Services	1.1.6		
5	Hazlehead / Countesswells Secondary Provision - Outline Business Case (Rec HH1)	EODC 08/09/22 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to assess the feasibility of creating new secondary school provision to serve the communities of Hazlehead and Countesswells, to put this forward to the Scottish Government as a priority project for funding in Phase 3 of the Learning Estate Investment Programme, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with an update on the outcomes of the funding bid and recommendations on next steps.		Maria Thies	Corporate Landlord	Resources	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		
6	School holidays –amendment to 23/24 pattern	To seek approval of an amendment to the holiday pattern		Shona Milne	Education	Children's and Family Services	1.1.1		
7	St Peter's RC School - Long Term Provision	E&CS 12/09/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to report back to the Committee in November with an updated Outline Business Case for the relocation of St Peter's RC Primary School, to include the outcome of this feasibility study as an additional option, and the associated stakeholder feedback; to agree that the feasibility work should also report on the potential interim arrangements and costs that would be required should officers propose at the November Committee a preference for a two-stream school at Old Aberdeen House; and (vii)to agree that if, at the November Committee, officers recommend a preference for a two-stream school at Old Aberdeen House, that due regard is given to the potential uses/costs associated with any exit strategy of the existing Riverbank School site.		Maria Thies	Corporate Landlord	Resources	1.1.2		
8	National Delivery Framework for School Age Children	EC&S 24/01/23 - to instruct the Chief Education Officer to report on the National Delivery Framework for School Age Childcare and local delivery plans in 2023		Louise Beaton	Education	Integrated Children's and Family Services	1.1.1	D	A service update was circulated to Members on 13/09/23. Now that the national guidance has been published, a report can be presented to committee in February 2024
9	Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report	To present the Chief Social Work Officer annual report.		Graeme Simpson	Integrated Children's and Family Services	Children's and Family Services	2.5		



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
2	Secure Care Pathway Review Inspection	E&CS 08/11/22 - to note the 'Secure Care Pathway Review' thematic inspection currently being undertaken by the Care Inspectorate and instruct the Chief Social Work Officer to report back to committee on the findings of the inspection when it is published in Autumn 2023 and learning for Aberdeen City		Graeme Simpson	Integrated Children's and Family Services	Children's and Family Services	2.1	D	As the inspection findings have not been received, this report will now be presented to the February 2024 meeting
18	Cluster Risk Register - Education / Integrated Children's & Family Services	To report on the cluster risk register		Eleanor Sheppard	Education	Children's and Family Services	1.1.4		
19	Performance Management Framework Report – Education and Children's Services	To present the latest performance for the cycle and update on the progress made delivering the National Improvement Framework Plan		Alex Paterson	Data and Insights	Customer	1.1.3		
20									
21	<b>20 February 2024</b>								
22	Autumn in the City	E&CS 23/05/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Education to report to Committee on the impact of the summer, autumn (2023) and spring (2024) programmes following delivery.		Sharon Skene	Education	Children's and Family Services	1.1.1		
23	Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)	Council 11/09/23 - amongst other decisions, (i) agrees that costed proposals will be considered within the ongoing School Estate Plan to address the presence of RAAC in city schools; (ii) instructs the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to issue regular service updates; and (iii) instructs the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to report to the Education and Children's Services Committee on the outcome of inspections and identified risks.		Stephen Booth	Corporate Landlord	Resources	1.1.1		A verbal update will be given at the November meeting
24	Collaborative Improvement	To present an update to Committee		Shona Milne	Education	Children's and Family Services	1.1.1		
25	Bairns Hoose	E&CS 12/09/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Integrated Children's and Family Services/Chief Social Work Officer to provide a service update in early 2024 on the outcome of the Pathfinder application and progress to develop Aberdeen City's Bairns Hoose.		Graeme Simpson	Integrated Children's and Family Services	Children's and Family Services	2.1		
26	School Estate Plan - Review	To present a report on the re-ordering of the school estate		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Resource	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
2	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People (UASYP).	To provide assurance to members on Aberdeen City's response to support and protect UASYP transferred to Aberdeen City via the National Transfer Scheme in addition to UASYP who arrive spontaneously.		Alison McAlpine	Integrated Children's and Family Services	Children's and Family Services	2.1.1		
31									
32	<b>30 April 2024</b>								
33	Integrated Children's Services Plan - Annual Update	E&CS 21/03/23 - to instruct the Interim Director Children's and Family Services to ensure that yearly progress reports are presented to Committee & thereafter for approval by the Community Planning Management Board over the lifetime of the Plan; and in relation to the action to improve breastfeeding initiation from 20 to 30% in targeted communities (Sheddocksley, Summerhill and Mastrick) and decrease drop off at 6-8 weeks, to note that officers could include further detail around this in the next report.  E&CS 04/07/23 - to instruct the Interim Director Children's and Family Services to report progress in developing a Family Support Model and progress on the impact of delivering improved multi-agency support to Kinship Carers through the Children's Services Plan annual progress report.		Eleanor Sheppard	Education/ICFS	Children's and Family Services	1.1.1		
34	Education and Children's Services reforms	A standing item if required - To provide Committee with an update		Eleanor Sheppard	Children's and Family Services	Children's and Family Services	1.1.1/2.1		
35	Education Climate Change Annual Report	E&CS 21/03/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Education to report back on progress in one calendar year; and to request that the report back include further detail about the work of the various eco-groups in schools		Stuart Craig	Education	Children's and Family Services	1.1.1		
36	Inspection Reporting – Inspection of Regulatory Care Services	E&CS 21/03/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Children's & Family Services to bring an updated report to Committee in March 2024.		Graeme Simpson	Integrated Children's and Family Services	Children's and Family Services	2.2		
37	Proposed new primary school Bucksburn / Newhills / changes to catchment area for Brimmond School	E&CS 12/09/23 - in relation to the proposal to establish a new primary school at Bucksburn / Newhills, and on proposed changes to the catchment area for Brimmond School, to note that the statutory consultation for the proposed new school at Bucksburn / Newhills will be carried out from 5 February 2024 to 22 March 2024. The outcomes of the consultation would then be reported to the Committee for its consideration at its meeting in May 2024		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Resources	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		
38	Health and Wellbeing	E&CS 23/05/23 - to instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to consider the findings of the report and plan next steps as part of work being taken forward through the Children's Services Plan and associated National Improvement Framework Plan; and to instruct the Chief Officer – Education to report the findings of the next Health and Wellbeing surveys to Committee within one calendar year. To include the update on the Health and Wellbeing summit		Gael Simpson	Education	Children's and Family Services	1.1.1		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
2	Corporate Parenting Annual Report	To present the Corporate Parenting Annual Report for assurance		Amy Evans	Integrated Children's and Family Services	Children's and Family Services	2.1		
39	ABZCampus	E&CS 23/05/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Education to report back on progress within one calendar year.  E&CS 12/09/23 - to instruct the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to report back to committee detailing specific deliverables on how Phase 2 of Abz Campus, the expansion of the edge of care pilot to St Machar Academy, and the expansion of Pathways co-ordinators will support a larger group of care experienced young people before any agreement by Committee to support this change in allocation of Attainment Challenge funding. This will be reported as part of the ABZCampus report in April 2024		Mark Jones	Education	Children's and Family Services	1.1.1		
40	<b>2 July 2024</b>								
41									
42	Spring in the City	E&CS 23/05/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Education to report to Committee on the impact of the summer, autumn (2023) and spring (2024) programmes following delivery.		Sharon Skene	Education	Children's and Family Services	1.1.1		
43	Education and Children's Services reforms	A standing item if required - To provide Committee with an update		Eleanor Sheppard	Children's and Family Services	Children's and Family Services	1.1.1/2.1		
44	Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2022-2024 - progress / outcomes / Evaluation of Early Learning and Childcare Service	EODC 14/06/22 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Education to report on the progress and outcomes of the Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2022-24 in 2 years' time  E&CS 24/01/23 - to instruct the Chief Education Officer to report on the progress and outcomes of the Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2022-24, and to prepare an updated Delivery Plan for 2024-26, in June 2024, to dovetail with the Strategic Plan for Scotland  E&CS 24/01/23 - to instruct the Director of Education & Children's Services to report back to committee in early 2024 with the outcomes of the evaluation (March 2023 report refers) and any recommendations that may need to be considered.		Louise Beaton	Education	Children's and Family Services	1.1.1		
45	Free School Meals Annual Update	EOD Committee 19/04/18 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to bring a report to Committee prior to the close of each school year (a) detailing the numbers registered for and taking free school meals by school and (b) assessing the progress made by implementing the new workstreams and detailing any required adjustments for the following school year		Paul Tytler	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment	Customer	1.1.1		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
2	Consultation on proposed new school at Bucksburn / Newhills	EC&S 04/07/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out a statutory public consultation on the proposal to establish a new primary school at Bucksburn / Newhills, and on proposed changes to the existing school catchment area for Brimmond School, to create a new catchment areas which would be served by the proposed new school; to provide Members with a firm date for the statutory consultation and to report the date to the next Committee meeting; and to report back to the Committee on the outcomes of the consultation at the first available meeting following conclusion of the consultation process.  E&CS 12/09/23 - to note in the School Estate Plan that the Committee would consider consultation feedback & confirm decision on implementing proposals in July 2024		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Resources	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		
46	Loirston Loch Additional Primary Provision - Outline Business Case (L1)	EODC 08/09/22 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study and stakeholder engagement to identify options for creating the required additional school capacity to serve the planned Loirston Loch development, and report back to the Education and Children’s Services Committee with recommendations as appropriate.		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Resources	1.1.1, 1.1.3, 1.5		
47	Approaches to Quality Improvement	E&CS 04/07/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Education to review the impact of the arrangements on evaluations of core Quality Indicators over school session 2023/24, amending approaches as required, and report back to Committee in advance of the 2024/25 school session		Shona Milne	Education	Children’s and Family Services	1.1.1		
48									
49	<b>17 September 2024</b>								
50	Grandhome / Oldmachar / Bridge of Don Secondary Provision - Outline Business Case (NA1)	EODC 08/09/22 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study and stakeholder engagement to identify options for reducing the predicted long term excess secondary school capacity in Grandhome, Oldmachar and Bridge of Don, and report back with an outline business case for consideration by the Education and Children’s Services Committee	Autumn/Winter 2024 - may be November	Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Resources	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		
51	Denominational Primary Schools Feasibility - Outline Business Case (Rec RC1)	EODC 08/09/22 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study and stakeholder engagement to identify options for ensuring appropriate and sustainable long term denominational primary school provision for the city to meet forecast demand, and report back to the Education and Children’s Services Committee with recommendations.	Autumn/Winter 2024 - may be November	Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Resources	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		
52	Riverbank School Excess Capacity - Options Appraisal (S1)	EODC 08/09/22 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to carry out an options appraisal on potential uses of the additional capacity to be provided by the new school at Tillydrone, and to report back to the Education and Children’s Services Committee with recommendations as appropriate	The options appraisal is scheduled to be carried out in Winter 2023/24	Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Resources	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		







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	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
2	Minimising Exclusion Policy	To present the revised exclusion policy for approval		Mhairi Shewan	Education	Children's and Family Services	1.1.5		
71	Early Learning and Childcare Concession Agreements	E&CS 24/01/23 - to instruct the Chief Education Officer to continue to monitor the concession contracts and report back to Committee at the end of the first 3 full years of the current concession agreement.	January 2026	Louise Beaton / Fiona Lawrie	Education	Children's and Family Services			
72	Accessibility Plan	E&CS 12/09/23 - to instruct the Interim Chief Officer - Education to present an updated Accessibility Plan to the Education and Children's Services Committee within 3 calendar years.		Mhairi Shewan	Education	Children's and Family Services	1.1.5		
73									
74	<b>School Estate - decisions from Education Operational Delivery Committee 08/09/22</b>								
75	School Estate Plan - Riverbank School - Learning Estate Investment Programme funding update	EODC 08/09/22 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Capital to put forward to the Scottish Government details of the planned refurbishment of the existing Riverbank School building ahead of the relocation of St Peter's School, for this to be considered as a priority project for funding in Phase 3 of the Learning Estate Investment Programme, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with an update on the outcomes of the funding bid and recommendations on next steps	No further update on Phase 3 of the Learning Estates Investment Programme funding has been announced therefore a service update was issued to Members in August	Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Resources	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children's Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	21 November 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Committee Annual Effectiveness Report
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	COM/23/348
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Gale Beattie
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Vikki Cuthbert
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Steph Dunsmuir
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	GD 8.5

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the annual report of the Education and Children's Services Committee to enable Members to provide comment on the data contained within.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:-

- 2.1 provide comments and observations on the data contained within the annual report; and
- 2.2 note the annual report of the Education and Children's Services Committee.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

#### Annual Reports on Committee Terms of Reference

- 3.1 The annual committee effectiveness reports were introduced in 2018/19 following a recommendation from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as part of the Council's work towards securing that organisation's accreditation in governance excellence. The Terms of Reference set out that each Committee will review its own effectiveness against its Terms of Reference through the mechanism of the annual report.
- 3.2 The annual effectiveness reports were mentioned by CIPFA in their report which awarded the Mark of Excellence in Governance accreditation to Aberdeen City Council. CIPFA highlighted the implementation of the annual effectiveness reports as a matter of good practice in governance and were encouraged that, during consideration of the reports at Committee and Council, Members had made suggestions for improvements to the reports in future years.
- 3.3 Data from the annual effectiveness reports is used to inform the review of the Scheme of Governance, ensuring that Committee Terms of Reference are

correctly aligned, and identifying any areas of the Terms of Reference which had not been used throughout the year in order that they can be reviewed and revised if necessary. The information from the effectiveness reports has also been used in the past to feed into the Annual Governance Statement.

- 3.4 The reports provide a mechanism for each committee to annually review its effectiveness, including data on attendance, any late reports, referrals to Council and the number of times officer recommendations were amended, and to ensure that it is following its Terms of Reference.
- 3.5 Similarly, recording the sections or stretch outcomes of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) which apply to each report allows Members to be aware of the direct impact of any proposals before them on the LOIP, and gives a general overview at the end of each year of the number of reports which have had an impact on the LOIP stretch outcomes.
- 3.6 The annual effectiveness reports for committees retained from the previous structure were delayed to allow the newly established Committees to have a full year of data to report.
- 3.7 Any comments from Members on areas of data that should be considered would be welcomed to ensure that Members are presented with meaningful data.
- 3.8 The annual report for 2022/2023 is therefore appended for the Committee's consideration. Following consideration by the Committee, the report will be submitted to Full Council in December for noting.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations of this report.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

#### **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

#### **7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
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<b>Strategic Risk</b>	N/A			Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	Failure to submit this report would mean that the Council would not be complying with its instruction that all committees and Full Council receive such a report each year.	L	Council is given the opportunity to consider the reports and provide feedback on any amendments Members would wish to see in the content so that this can be taken on board for next year's Scheme of Governance review.	Yes
<b>Operational</b>	N/A			Yes
<b>Financial</b>	N/A			Yes
<b>Reputational</b>	N/A			Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	N/A			Yes

## 8. OUTCOMES

There are no links to the Council Delivery Plan, however the committee effectiveness annual reports link to the Scheme of Governance, by ensuring that each committee is fulfilling its Terms of Reference.

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Impact Assessment</b>	It is confirmed by Interim Chief Officer – Governance (Assurance), Vikki Cuthbert, that no impact assessment is required.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Education and Children's Services Committee Annual Effectiveness Report 14 October 2022 to 14 October 2023

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Steph Dunsmuir

Committee Services Officer  
[sdunsmuir@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:sdunsmuir@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

# Education and Children's Services Committee Annual Effectiveness Report 2022/2023



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## 1. Introduction from Convener

- 1.1 This is the first annual effectiveness report for Aberdeen City Council's Education and Children's Services Committee (ECS). These reports inform the review of the Council's Scheme of Governance. They enable officers to identify any changes that are required, for example, to the Committee Terms of Reference.
- 1.2 The ECS Terms of Reference were considered earlier this year as part of the 2023 Scheme of Governance Review. No changes were made as a result of the 2023 review. The use of the Terms of Reference will be monitored in the coming year in order to continue the review process into 2024.
- 1.3 Over the reporting period, the Committee has worked together in an effective and constructive way. It is important to recognise and appreciate the powerful spirit of cooperation that is shared by everyone involved in the care of young people in the city. Thank you.

Councillor Martin Greig

Convener – Education and Children's Services Committee

## 2. The Role of the Committee

### PURPOSE OF COMMITTEE

To advise on and discharge the Council's functions as:

- an education authority as set out in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 and all other relevant legislation and regulations where not otherwise delegated; and
- a social work authority as set out in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and all other relevant legislation and regulations where not otherwise delegated, in relation to children.

The Committee will also:

- monitor the delivery of educational services undertaken as education authority (including community learning and development) and children's services provided by Integrated Children's and Family Services;
- receive assurance on the statutory and regulatory duties placed on the Council for Child Protection and Corporate Parenting;
- make recommendations in respect of school property matters to the Finance and Resources Committee;
- scrutinise performance; and
- agree changes such as school zoning arrangements (within set budgets), or make recommendations to another committee, for improvements to functions related to education in order to ensure best value and delivery of the Council's agreed outcomes, commissioning intentions, service specifications and service standards.

### REMIT OF COMMITTEE

#### 1. Service Delivery and Performance

1.1 The Committee will, in respect of educational services (early years, schools and community learning and development) and children's services provided by Integrated Children's and Family Services and services delivered within the school estate:-

- 1.1.1 oversee, and make decisions relating to, service delivery (such decisions including those relating to population changes);
- 1.1.2 approve options to improve/transform service delivery relative to the functions of the Council as education authority and social work authority;
- 1.1.3 scrutinise operational performance and service standards in line with the Performance Management Frameworks and consider recommendations for improvements where required;
- 1.1.4 receive the cluster risk registers relative to its remit and scrutinise to ensure assurance of the controls in place;
- 1.1.5 approve all policies and strategies relative to its remit; and
- 1.1.6 receive reports on school inspections and peer reviews in order to ensure best practice and note any resultant improvement actions arising from those inspections and reviews.

- 1.2 In undertaking the aspects at 1.1, the Committee will ensure that it is acting within the budget set by Council and is supporting the delivery of the Council's agreed outcomes, commissioning intentions and service standards.
- 1.3 The Committee may make recommendations to the appropriate committee(s) or sub committee(s) on matters affecting its remit where the authority to approve sits within the remit of another committee or sub committee.

## **2. Child Protection**

The Committee will receive assurance from the Child Protection Committee and the Children's Services Board on:

- 2.1 Services delivered to children and young people in need of care and protection including care experienced young people, including:
  - 2.1.1 delivery of national initiatives and local implications;
  - 2.1.2 learning from learning reviews;
  - 2.1.3 quality assurance;
  - 2.1.4 training and development; and
  - 2.1.5 local evidence-based initiatives;
- 2.2 effective working across child protection; and
- 2.3 statistics relating to the Child Protection Register and children and young people for whom the Council has Corporate Parenting responsibilities, whilst noting that it has no remit to challenge entries.

The Committee will also:

- 2.4 receive assurance on the Council's compliance with statutory duties in respect of child poverty; and
- 2.5 consider the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report.

## **EXTERNAL MEMBERSHIP**

- 3. The Committee's membership will include seven persons who are not members of the Council but who have full membership of the Committee and voting rights in connection with advising on and discharging the functions of the Council as Education Authority only. The seven external members will be appointed by the Council at its statutory meeting (or other meeting as appropriate) as follows:-
  - 3.1 three persons representing religious bodies in accordance with the requirements of s124(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973; and
  - 3.2 in accordance with the discretion conferred by s124(3) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

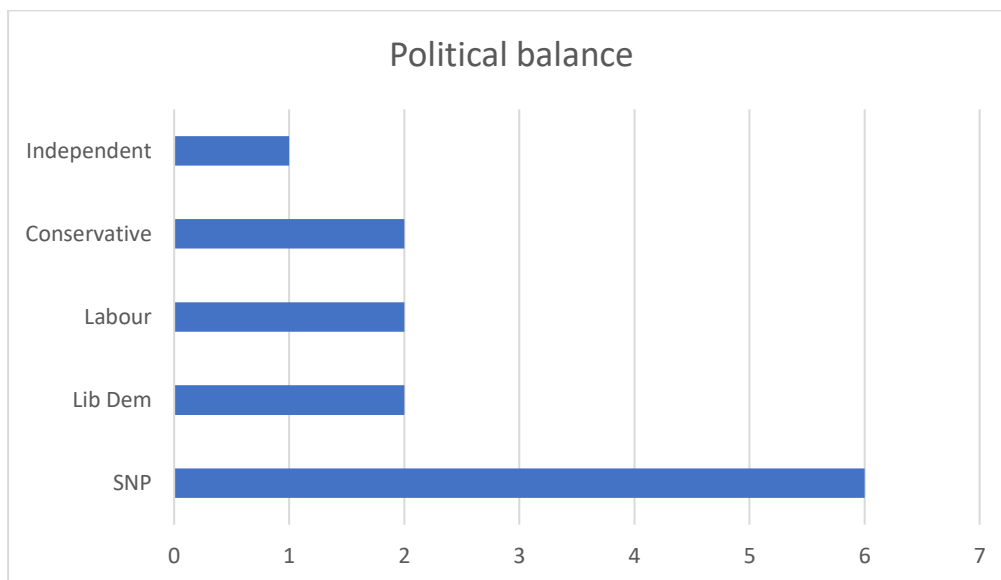
- 3.2.1 two teachers employed in educational establishments managed by the Council and nominated by the Teachers' Consultative Forum, comprising one representative from primary (including nursery) and one representative from secondary; and
- 3.2.2 two parent representatives, selected by the Aberdeen City Parent Council Forum from within its own membership, comprising one representative from primary (including nursery) and one representative from secondary.

**Executive Lead: Interim Director of Children's and Family Services**

### 3. Membership of the Committee during 2022/2023

3.1 The Education and Children’s Services Committee has 20 members - 13 Elected Members and 7 External Members.

3.2 The Committee composition is presented below:-



3.3 The Committee has seven External Members (who have full voting rights) as set out below:-

Mrs Frances Cardno	Parent Representative (Primary / ASN)
Mir Michael Crawford	Parent Representative (Secondary/ASN)
Mr John Murray	Roman Catholic Representative
Mr Mike Paul	Teacher Representative (Secondary)
Mr Madhav Regmi	Third Religious Representative
Miss Pamela Scott	Teacher Representative (Primary)
Mrs Hilda Smith	Church of Scotland Representative

## 4. Membership Changes

- 4.1 Councillor Macdonald was a member of the Committee until the meeting of 24 January 2023, following which Councillor Lawrence joined the Committee. Councillor Lawrence stepped down from the Committee following the meeting of 4 July 2023. Councillor Boulton joined the Committee from the meeting of 12 September 2023.

## 5. Member Attendance

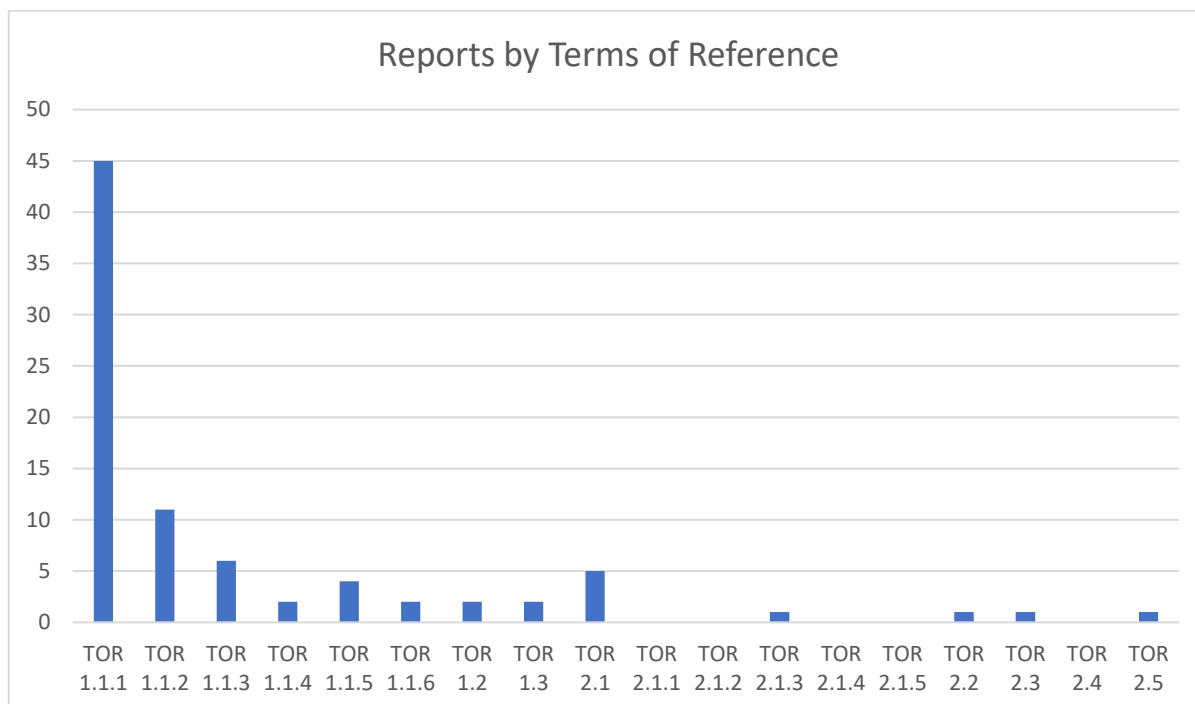
Member	Total Anticipated Attendances	Total Attendances	Substitutions
Councillor Martin Greig	7	7	
Councillor Jessica Mennie	7	7	
Councillor Gill Al-Samarai	7	6	Councillor Alex Nicoll
Councillor Kate Blake	7	7	
Councillor Marie Boulton	1	1	
Councillor Desmond Bouse	7	7	
Councillor Richard Brooks	7	7	
Councillor Hazel Cameron	7	7	
Councillor Ross Grant	7	6	Councillor Gordon Graham
Councillor Graeme Lawrence	4	3	Councillor Barney Crockett
Councillor Sandra Macdonald	2	2	
Councillor Neil MacGregor	7	7	
Councillor Ken McLeod	7	6	Councillor Emma Farquhar
Councillor Miranda Radley	7	7	
Councillor Kairin van Sweeden	7	5	Councillor Derek Davidson Councillor Alex McLellan
Mrs Frances Cardno	7	7	
Mr Michael Crawford	7	6	
Mr John Murray	7	6	
Mr Mike Paul	7	3	
Mr Madhav Regmi	7	6	
Miss Pamela Scott	7	5	Mr Doug Haywood
Mrs Hilda Smith	7	6	

## 6. Meeting Content

6.1 During the 2022/2023 reporting period (14 October 2022 to 14 October 2023), the Committee had 7 meetings and considered a total of 69 reports.

### 6.2 Terms of Reference

6.2.1 The following chart details how reports aligned to the Terms of Reference (set out at section 2 above) for the Committee.



6.2.2 During the course of 2022/2023 the Committee received reports under the majority of the main Terms of Reference which indicates that the Committee has discharged its role effectively throughout the course of the reporting period. The majority of reports fell under TOR 1.1.1 – “Oversee, and make decisions relating to, service delivery (such decisions including those relating to population changes)”, which is understandable given the nature of reports presented to Committee this year and the vast amount of work being undertaken by officers to review various aspects of Education and Children’s Services.

6.2.3 It is noted that a number of reports have been listed under more general Terms of Reference, for example, 1.1.1 as set out above, when some of the more specific TOR could have also applied. Officers have undertaken to monitor this next year to ensure that all applicable TOR are reflected. Although there are some TOR which have not been utilised this year, it is not anticipated that these require to be reviewed and altered, as the monitoring work should ensure that they are used in future.

6.2.4 As the committee structure was reviewed in late 2022, very few changes to the Terms of Reference (TOR) were made following the June 2023 Scheme of Governance review,

and no changes were made to the Education and Children’s Services Committee TOR. The new Terms of Reference will continue to be monitored throughout the year, in preparation for the 2024 Scheme of Governance review.

## 7. Reports and Decisions

7.1 The following information relates to the committee reports and Notices of Motion presented to Committee throughout the reporting period, as well as the use of Standing Orders and engagement with members of the public.

	Total	Total Percentage of Reports
Confidential Reports	0	0%
Exempt Reports	0*	0%
Number of reports where the Committee amended officer recommendations	2	3%
Number of reports approved unanimously	63	96%
Number of reports or service updates requested during the consideration of another report to provide additional assurance and not in business planner	3**	N/A
Number of reports delayed for further information	0	0
Number of times the Convener has had to remind Members about acceptable behaviour in terms of the Code of Conduct	0	N/A
Late reports received (i.e. reports not available for inspection at least 3 clear days before the meeting)	1***	1%
Number of referrals to Council under SO 34.1	0	0

\* There were no exempt reports, however there were two exempt appendices – the Newhills and Oldmachar business cases

\*\* Three additional reports were requested – a report on the scope for an evaluation of the Early Learning and Childcare service; a follow-up report on the evaluation of Early Learning and Childcare; and a report back in relation to the MCR Pathways schools and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) allocation

\*\*\*The late report was presented to the Special Education and Children’s Services Committee meeting of 30 March 2023, and could not be issued in line with usual deadlines due to an embargo on the inspection report to be considered



<b>Notices of Motion, Suspension of Standing Orders, Interface with the Public</b>	
Number of Notices of Motion to Committee	3*
Number of times Standing Orders suspended	None
Specific Standing Orders suspended	N/A
Number of deputations requested	0
Number of deputations heard	N/A
Number of petitions considered	0

\*The three notices of motion to Committee during the reporting period were as follows:-

Urgent Notice of Motion by Convener – Northfield Academy

Urgent Notice of Motion by Councillor Brooks and the Convener – Kingsford School

Urgent Notice of Motion by Convener – Dalguise Adventure Centre

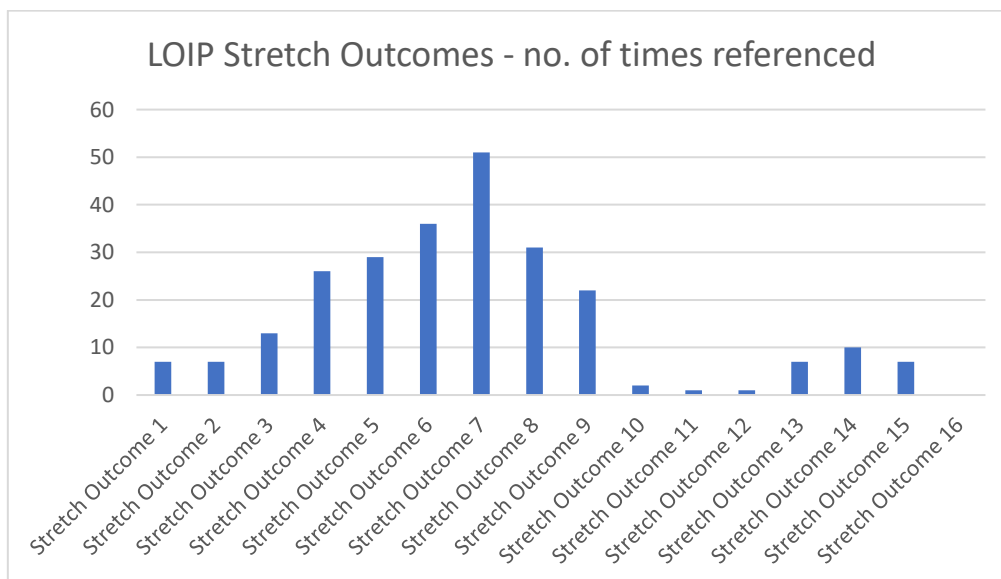
## 8. Reports with links to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan

8.1 The following table details of the 69 reports how each report linked to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP Stretch Outcomes are appended to this report for reference at Appendix 1). As can be seen from the chart below, reports to Education and Children’s Services Committee span across all of the Stretch Outcomes, although the greatest number of reports linked to the following, which would be expected for the nature of the business.

Stretch Outcome 6 - By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.

Stretch Outcome 7 - 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.

8.2 It is encouraging to see that the Stretch Outcomes have been used so frequently in reports presented, as it demonstrates that the reports are closely tied to meeting the objectives of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.



## 9. Training and Development

9.1 Training opportunities for Members during the reporting period were as follows:-

- A workshop on adolescent brain development
- A workshop to explore the findings of the SHINE data
- Integrated Children's Services Plan – briefing
- Child Protection Committee – briefing
- Health and Wellbeing data – briefing
- Invitation to meet with the Northfield Advisory Group
- Briefings were also given to Members at Committee meetings on the Aberdeen Computing Collaborative and ABZCampus
- A demonstration of data reporting / Power BI

9.2 As with previous years, officers have continued to support the Committee's External Members through hosting pre-Committee briefing sessions which enable them to ask officers questions about any aspect of education along with seeking clarity on reports within the committee business planner. This approach has strengthened the role of External Members and encouraged scrutiny through questioning at Committee.

9.3 Further development opportunities will be considered for next year based on Committee business throughout the year, Executive Lead proposals and Member feedback on what may be required to assist them in performing their roles.

## 10. Code of Conduct Declarations and Transparency Statements

- 10.1 0 declarations of interest and 29 transparency statements were made by Members during the reporting period. Information in respect of declarations of interest and transparency statements is measured to evidence awareness of the requirements to adhere to the Councillors' Code of Conduct and the responsibility to ensure fair decision-making.

## 11. Civic Engagement

- 11.1 During the reporting period, the Service has engaged in a wide variety of engagement and consultation. The following bullet points list some, but not all, of the engagement undertaken to give a flavour of the work throughout the year.

- An online consultation on the School Estate Plan, aimed at children and young people, was launched.
- Statutory consultation undertaken with the public on proposals to establish a city-wide catchment area for Gaelic Medium Education
- Consultation on 'Let's Talk Scottish Education', undertaken with children, young people, families and wider communities; school communities; Head Teachers; and Committee members and wider stakeholders.
- Consultation with school communities on the Hayward Review to reform qualifications and approaches to assessment
- Engagement with parents and carers in respect of the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and the biannual review of ELC.
- Collaboration with children and young people in relation to how the Council supports and promotes Children's Rights
- Engagement with children and young people and stakeholders for the production of the Integrated Children's Services Plan
- Statutory public consultation on proposals in relation to Greenbrae School / Glashieburn School Catchment Areas and Walker Road School Relocation
- Engagement with young people, staff and the school community following the inspection at Northfield Academy, as well as engagement with staff involved in other inspections
- Regular engagement between officers and the Aberdeen City Parent Forum

- Promotion of the Aberdeen Computing Collective through engagement, curriculum support and professional learning
- Consultation with pupils, parents, staff and partners in relation to the naming of Greyhope School
- Consultation with children and young people, parents and carers, Grampian Regional Equality Council, and staff on the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Consultation and engagement in respect of the Edge of Care Pilot
- Consultation with learners, children’s services staff, voluntary organisations and a range of Council functions on the review of the Accessibility Plan.

## 12. Executive Lead to the Committee - Commentary

- 12.1 Officers have presented a wide range of reports to the Education and Children’s Services Committee over the year, highlighting the very broad range of work undertaken by Education, Children’s Social Work and most recently by Community Learning and Development.
- 12.2 It has been particularly pleasing to see how areas of work, such as the development of the Music Service, work to support mental health and wellbeing and on-going delivery of The Promise have progressed over successive reports to Committee demonstrating the clear and positive impact of the Education and Children’s Services Committee. Work to address variation in education outcomes remains a key priority with Head Teachers now attending Committee to respond to questions from Members on published HMIE and Care Inspectorate Inspection reports. This is thought to be a very positive step.
- 12.3 Officers continue to respond to feedback from Members of Committee to ensure that reports presented provide information and analysis in a transparent and accessible format. Officers continue to appreciate both the scrutiny and high level of interest in our work with children and young people across the city.

## 13. The Year Ahead

- 13.1 Although there were no changes to the ECS Terms of Reference in 2023, in accordance with the usual practice of an annual review of the Scheme of Governance, the Terms of Reference will be reviewed and officers will reflect on whether any areas require further refinement moving forward to ensure the continued efficient operation of the Committee.
- 13.2 Aside from the regular annual reports and performance reports received for assurance, a selection of the business for the next year is listed below:-

- Autism Strategy and Action Plan
- A progress report on Keeping the Promise
- An update on the Secure Care Pathway Review inspection
- An update on the Inspection of Regulatory Care Services
- Various business cases and reports as a result of the School Estate Plan
- Continued updates on Education and Children's Services Reforms
- A report back on the impact of the arrangements on evaluations of core Quality Indicators over school session 2023/24
- An update on ABZCampus

## Appendix 1 – Local Outcome Improvement Plan Stretch Outcomes

<b>Economy</b>	
1.	No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026
2.	400 unemployed people supported into fair work by 2026
3.	500 people skilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026
<b>People (Children &amp; Young People)</b>	
4.	95% of children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27-30 month review by 2026
5.	90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026
6.	By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026
7.	95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026
8.	83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026
9.	100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/disabilities will experience a positive destination
<b>People (Adults)</b>	
10.	25% fewer people receiving a first ever Court conviction and 2% fewer people reconvicted within one year by 2026
11.	Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026
12.	Rate of harmful levels of alcohol consumption reduced by 4% and drug related deaths lower than Scotland by 2026
<b>Place</b>	
13.	Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate
14.	Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026
15.	Addressing the nature crisis by protecting/ managing 26% of Aberdeen's area for nature by 2026
<b>Community Empowerment</b>	
16.	100% increase in the proportion of citizens who feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children’s Services
<b>DATE</b>	21 November 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Performance Management Framework Report – Children’s and Family Service/National Improvement Framework Progress Update
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	COM/23/371
<b>DIRECTOR/INTERIM DIRECTOR</b>	Gale Beattie/Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER/ INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Martin Murchie/Graeme Simpson/Shona Milne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Alex Paterson/Shona Milne
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.3

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To present Committee with (a) the status of key performance measures relating to the Children’s and Family Services function, (b) a progress update in relation to implementation of the Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan 2023/24 and (c) a summary attainment and achievement data briefing relating to the August 2023 Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examination diet release.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Committee note the report and provide comments and observations on the information contained in the report Appendices.

**3. CURRENT SITUATION**

**Report Purpose**

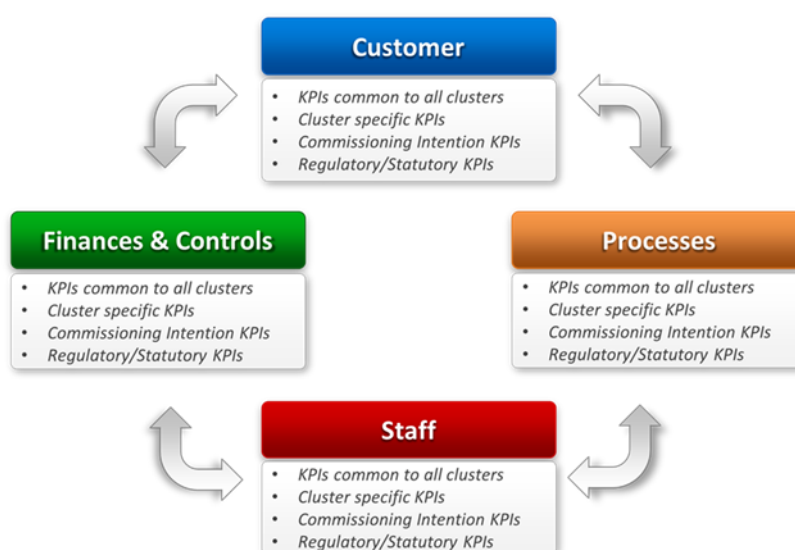
- 3.1 This report is to provide members with key performance measures in relation to Children’s and Family Services expressed within the 2023/24 Council Delivery Plan (the Plan), a progress summary around the National Improvement Framework Plan and data from the initial SQA release from the 2023 examination diet.

**Report Structure and Content**

- 3.2 Performance Management Framework Reporting against in-house delivery directly contributing to, or enabling delivery against, the City’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan, (LOIP) has informed development of successive Council Delivery Plans, including the [2023-24.Council Delivery Plan](#) that was agreed by Council on the 1st March 2023.
- 3.3 The Council’s Performance Management Framework, supporting and enabling scrutiny against progress of the Council Delivery Plan and its key measures,

establishes a robust performance management and reporting system which encompasses single and multi-service inputs, outputs and outcomes.

- 3.4 Service Standards against each function/cluster, associated with Council Delivery planning, offer continuous insight into the effectiveness, and accessibility of core service provision to the Council's stakeholders and City communities.
- 3.5 Where appropriate, data capture against these Standards is directly incorporated within the suite of measures contained within Appendix A and will be reported against on either a quarterly or annual basis.
- 3.6 The Performance Management Framework provides for a consistent approach within which performance will be reported to Committees. This presents performance data and analysis within four core perspectives, as shown below, which provides for uniformity of performance reporting across Committee.



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- 3.7 This report, in Appendix A, details (i) operational performance measures up to Quarter 2 of the current fiscal year, (ii) year-to date information around Service Standards and Attendance, and (iii) initial analysis around pupil outcomes from completion of the 2022/23 academic year, including those provisional data against the Broad General Education, and Senior Phase Local Benchmark Measures derived from the first tranche of Insight pre-review data releases.
- 3.8 Full analysis and presentation of both Curriculum for Excellence and Insight data will be offered at the next cycle of Committee subsequent to the release of additional national data against the Curriculum for Excellence in December 2023. This will enable the application of benchmarking and progression tracking across both phases of our pupil's education journey.
- 3.9 Appendix B reflects on progress against the present National Improvement Framework Plan for the City, agreed at the September meeting of this Committee, as at October 2023.

- 3.10 Appendix C offers a summary data briefing derived from the initial national educational releases relating to August SQA outcomes from the 2022/23 academic session, aligned with the Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan for that period.
- 3.11 Within the summary dashboard the following symbols are also used:

### Performance Measures

Within the summary dashboard the following symbols are used

#### Traffic Light Icon

-  On target or within 5% of target/benchmarked outcome
-  Within 5% and 20% of target/benchmarked outcome and being monitored
-  Below 20% of target/benchmarked outcome and being actively pursued
-  Data only – target not appropriate/benchmarked outcome not available

## 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications arising out of this report

## 7. RISK

The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement”

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) <small>*taking into account controls/control actions</small>	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic</b>	None	NA	NA	NA
<b>Compliance</b>	No significant legal risks.	Publication of service performance information in the public domain ensures that the Council is meeting its legal obligations in	L	Yes

		the context of Best value reporting.		
<b>Operational</b>	No significant operational risks.	Oversight by Members of core employee health and safety/attendance data supports the Council's obligations as an employer	L	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	No significant financial risks.	Overview data on specific limited aspects of the cluster's financial performance is provided within this report	L	Yes
<b>Reputational</b>	No significant reputational risks.	Reporting of service performance to Members and in the public domain serves to enhance the Council's reputation for transparency and accountability.	L	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	None	NA	NA	NA

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u>Council Delivery Plan</u>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<p><a href="#"><u>Aberdeen City Council Partnership Agreement</u></a></p> <p>Improving Educational Choices</p> <p>Creating Better Learning Environments</p>	<p>This report supports the following key Council priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commit to realising the potential of each individual, by seeking to widen curriculum choice and implement progressive choices.</li> <li>- Work with the city's universities, North East Scotland College and businesses to increase educational and training options and the number of care experienced young people and young people from deprived communities, going onto positive destinations, including further and higher education, vocational training and apprenticeships.</li> <li>- Promote the number of apprenticeships on offer through the council.</li> <li>- Work to ensure that every school community provides a safe and respectful environment for young people and staff.</li> </ul>

Caring for Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seek to make Aberdeen a UNICEF Child Friendly City.</li> <li>- Ensure the Council follows best practice as a corporate parent to get the best outcomes for looked-after young people, those in kinship care and those with additional support needs such as autism, developmental disorders or mental health problems.</li> <li>- Work with the Scottish Government to expand free early learning and childcare to one- and two-year-olds from low-income households.</li> <li>- Continue to seek to support young people to receive care in Aberdeen, through fostering, adoption and other services and seek to reduce “out of authority” placements</li> <li>- Ensure local education services identify young people with mental health problems and help them get early support and help, where appropriate, to transfer to adult services.</li> </ul>
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**[Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#)**

Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	<p>The detail within Performance Management Framework reporting to this Committee contributes to evidence of how Education Service delivery leads, contributes to, or influences, Stretch Outcomes 2 and 3 in the LOIP through the following objectives.</p> <p>Support 15 care experienced young people to progress to employment through public sector funded employability programmes by 2023.</p> <p>Increase the number of people within Aberdeen City gaining qualifications in ICT and Digital skills at SCQF Levels 7 and above by 10% by 2023.</p>
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p>The detail within Performance Management reporting to this Committee evidences how Education Service delivery leads, contributes to, or influences, Children &amp; Young People Stretch Outcomes 4 to 9 in the refreshed LOIP. This includes the following objectives</p> <p>Reduce the number of children starting P1 with an identified speech delay by 5% by 2023.</p>

	<p>Increase to 80%, the number of staff who feel confident about how to directly support, or refer a child for support, and signpost to appropriate services by 2022.</p> <p>100% of schools offer sustainable and equitable access to counselling for those children aged 10 and above who require it by 2022.</p> <p>100% of children and young people have free access to physical activity which improves mental health and wellbeing by 2022.</p> <p>Increase the number of care experienced young people accessing a positive and sustained destination by 25% by 2022.</p> <p>Increase the number of accredited courses directly associated with growth areas by 7% by 2023.</p> <p>Increase the number of vulnerable learners entering a positive and sustained destination by 7% by 2023. Increase the number of young people who leave school with a minimum of SVQ 3 in literacy and numeracy and 4 other qualifications to 93% by 2023.</p> <p>Achieve UNICEF badges in: - Leadership - Culture - Communication - Place - Child Friendly Services – Participating</p> <p>Increase to 100% of staff working directly and indirectly with children who have received child friendly city training by 2023.</p> <p>Increase number of young people who need support in relation to trauma and bereavement having access to such support by 50% by 2023.</p>
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The detail within Performance Management reporting to this Committee evidences how Education Service delivery leads, contributes to, or influences, LOIP Stretch Outcomes 14 and 15. Respectively, this contributes to delivery of the following improvement projects:</p> <p>Increase % of people who walk as one mode of travel by 10% by 2023.</p> <p>Increase % of people who cycle as one mode of travel by 2% by 2023.</p> <p>Increase community food growing in schools, communities and workplaces by 12 programmes by 2023</p>

<p><b>Regional and City Strategies</b></p>	<p>The detail within Performance Management reporting to this Committee evidences how Education Service delivery leads, contributes to, or influences outcomes aligned to the City’s National Improvement Framework Plan, and outputs/outcomes related to the City’s involvement in the Northern Alliance collaborative.</p> <p>Data contained in the report is also contextual evidence of the Education Services contribution to Children’s Services planning, along with both regional Economic and Skills strategies.</p>
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**9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

Assessment	Outcome
<p><b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b></p>	<p>It is confirmed by Chief Officer, Martin Murchie, that no Integrated Impact Assessment is required for this report</p>
<p><b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b></p>	<p>A Data Protection Impact Assessment is not required for this report.</p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<p>No additional impact assessments have been completed for this report.</p>

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan 2022/23 – CUS/22/166  
Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan 2023/24 – CFS/23/268

**11. APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Education and Children’s Services Performance Summary Dashboard  
Appendix B – National Improvement Framework Progress Update October 2023  
Appendix C – August 2023 Scottish Qualifications Authority Attainment and Achievement Data Briefing

**12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS**

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## Appendix A - Performance Management Framework Report – Children’s and Family Services

### Education

#### 1. Customer

#### Service Level Measures – 2023-24 Service Standards

Performance Indicator	2023/24 Academic Year to Date Value	2023/24 Target	Status	Long Trend - Annual
We will meet all requests for early learning and childcare placements.	100%	100%		
We will meet all requests for a primary and secondary school placement.	100%	100%		
ACC managed/funded Early Learning and Childcare settings will meet the National Standard *	100%	100%		
Primary, secondary, and special schools will achieve an average evaluation of ‘good’ or better in formal evaluations of core Quality Indicators by Education Scotland **	NA	100%		
We will process requests for additional support to meet the wellbeing needs of children and young people within 40 days	100%	100%		

#### Service Commentary

The metric suite above offers evidence against the Service Level Standards which were agreed at the Budget meeting of Council on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023, In some instances, the phrasing around these may differ marginally from that expressed in the Appendix of that report to enable conversion of the statements in the Standards for presentation as reportable measures.

ELC National Standard – Day Care of Children and Out of School Care

\*The National Standard is deemed not to have been met where, subsequent to full inspection, a provider is unable to meet the recommendations for improvement within a reasonable timescale, and to the satisfaction of the inspecting agency. through a series of follow-up visits. This Standard remains unchanged.

As reflected in the Inspections report also being considered at this, and previous, meetings of Committee, a number of ELC establishments are/were implementing actionable recommendations arising from previous Care Inspectorate inspections in the previous monitoring periods. Officers provide more intensive support to ELC settings who are implementing requirements/recommendations and in almost all cases, this helps to successfully implement these within agreed timescales. Appropriate action is taken when settings cannot demonstrate improvement within reasonable timescales as these settings cannot be funded to provide 1140 hours of ELC.

The Service has reviewed the collation and presentation of data related to ELC inspections and the National Standard ( equivalent to a grading of Good or Better) with a view to enhancing transparency around this measure. The outcome of this consideration is reflected in the table below which harmonises the use of averaged numerical equivalency across both Care Inspectorate (CI) and Education Scotland datasets.

With the availability of a full year of data since routine CI inspections re-commenced, it is now possible to establish an effective metric to enable tracking of outcomes from these published inspections that are less limited by sample sizes and allow the capture of follow up activity which enables the deflationary effect of lower initial scorings that have been addressed to feed out of the measures, providing a more real-time picture of the quality of provision. Changes to the CI Quality Indicator titles and evaluations emphasis of inspections were introduced at the beginning of 2023.

Table 1. Percentage of Care Inspectorate Evaluations of Core Quality Indicators receiving an average score of Good or Better ( 12 month rolling average)

	Care Inspectorate Core Quality Indicators				
Core Quality Indicator Scope	How good is our care, play and learning? Score	How good is our setting? Score	How good is our leadership? Score	How good is our staff team? Score	Overall Core Quality Indicator Score
Percentage of assessments achieving National Standard (average score)	91.1%	95.5%	93.8%	95.5%	94.0%

The sample size reflects outcomes from published inspections of 28 publicly funded day care of children establishments over the course of October 2022 to September 2023 and encompasses the evaluation of 112 Core Quality Indicators. Where an establishment has been subject to more than one inspection over the course of this 12-month period ( e.g., as a result of a follow up recommendation in the original inspection) only the most recent outcomes are captured in these metrics.

The current data appears to show an improving trend across the four quarters to date but sample sizes in the early part of this period are too small to provide valid comparisons at this stage.

#### Inspection reporting

There have been no published inspections against the current academic year to date. The data presented to the July meeting of this Committee captured the full academic year outcomes for the 2022 session with an average of 80% of Education Scotland evaluations of Quality Indicators being graded as Good or Better. The instruction provided at the previous Committee around offering additional definition on inspection metrics will be captured in the context of reporting of future Education Scotland inspection publications but will follow the methodology outlined above for Care Inspectorate inspections.

#### Corporate Measures – 2023/24 Cluster Level Indicators

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2022/23	Quarter 4 2022/23	Quarter 1 2023/24	Quarter 2 2023/24	2022/23 Target	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	Value			
Total No. complaints received (stage 1 and 2) - Education	29	38	33	13			↑
% of complaints resolved within timescale (stage 1 and 2) - Education	86.2%	60.5%	78.8%	61.5%	75.0%	⚠	↓
% of complaints with at least one point upheld (stage 1 and 2) – Education	17.2%	7.9%	12.1%	23.1%			↓
Total No. of lessons learnt identified (stage 1 and 2) - Education	5	3	5	0			

#### Service Commentary

Quarter 2 saw a dip in the number of complaints and the % of complaints resolved within timescale. This is in line with historical patterns where operational restrictions arising from staff availability during the school holiday period, results in slowed response times.

The data for the financial year-to-date shows that complaint resolution within timescale sits at 73.9%, just under the target and performance in same period in 2022/23 ( 75.5%). The number of complaints received and the proportion which have at least one point upheld are both lower than the 6-month totals in the prior year

## Scottish Household Survey 2022 – Education Services - Satisfaction and Trust Data

Council	2022 Satisfaction with the quality of local schools	2022 Trust in the education system
Aberdeen City	73%	73%
Dundee City	73%	62%
Edinburgh City	68%	69%
Glasgow City	65%	71%
Scotland	74%	69%

### Service Commentary

Local authority level data releases from the most recently completed Scottish Household Survey (SHS) was originally published in June 2023, This data serves as a national benchmark metric supplemental to local surveying of community satisfaction levels and service surveying of pupil and guardian sentiment contained within a series of reports, including evaluations of Education Scotland Additional Inspection data,

Overall, Aberdeen City is performing well in both of the SHS metrics relative to its Large Urban comparators and the National levels, with trust levels being in the upper quartile of Scottish Local Authorities and above that of each of the three natural comparator models ( Large Urban, Urban and National).

Satisfaction levels are lower than the National figure but equal to the Urban authority average (73%) and higher than the Large Urban average ( 70%). This positions the City in the third quartile of Scottish Local Authorities. Although limited to three reports, the data from Education Scotland Additional Evidence documents from formal inspections undertaken in the past 12 months, covering roughly the same sample size, (c. 160 responses) offers a satisfaction level among parents/guardians of just under 75%.

N.B. Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, all face-to-face interviewing for the Scottish Household Survey was suspended and replaced with telephone/ video interviewing for both the 2021 survey and the 2022 survey. As a consequence, the results from these years are not directly comparable to SHS results from previous years Ony national level data was made available from the 2021 Survey due to reduced sample sizes so, on this basis, the 2022 data serves as a renewed baseline.

Source: Scottish Household Survey 2022 Local Authority Tables

## 2. Process

### Annual Participation Measure 2022/23 ( Percentages)

Year	Participating (16-19)	Participating in Education (16-19)	Participating in Employment (16-19)	Participating in Other Training & Development (16-19)	Not Participating (16-19)	Not participating Unemployed Seeking	Not participating Unemployed not Seeking	Unconfirmed Status (16-19)
2022/23	<b>92.8</b>	72.6	18.5	1.7	<b>4.0</b>	2.0	2.0	<b>3.2</b>
2021/22	<b>91.2</b>	74.8	14.6	1.9	<b>4.9</b>	2.8	2.1	<b>3.9</b>
2020/21	<b>89.4</b>	74.8	13	1.6	<b>4</b>	1.3	2.7	<b>6.5</b>
2019/20	<b>89.9</b>	72.2	16.3	1.3	<b>3.3</b>	1.4	1.9	<b>6.8</b>
2018/19	<b>89.7</b>	71.3	16.5	2	<b>4.7</b>	3.3	1.4	<b>5.6</b>

#### Service Commentary

The Annual Participation Measure for 2022/23 indicates upwards movement in year-in-year outcomes with a rise in the proportion of young people aged 16-19 who were in a positive participation destination during the course of the previous 12 months.

Aberdeen saw a 1.6 percentage point (p.p.) increase in positive participation levels from 91.2% to 92.8%, marginally lower than both the National and Urban Geography Average (**UGA**) comparators, both of which rose by 1.9 p.p. to 94.3% and 93.6% respectively year-on-year.

Education remains the most prevalent positive destination for school leavers in this age group for Aberdeen at 72.6%, slightly down on the prior year, closely matching the UGA outcome and statistically above the National standard of 71.3%. The data for participation in Employment shows the largest overall change of all the destinations, rising to 18.5% ( + 3.9 p.p.) from 14.6% in 2021/22 but with the National figure of 21.3% rising at an identical rate, the distance between the City's outcome and the National level is unchanged at - 2.9 percentage points. Outcomes for those in Training and Other Development are materially unchanged year-on-year at 1.7% of all participation, matching both the National and UGA comparators.

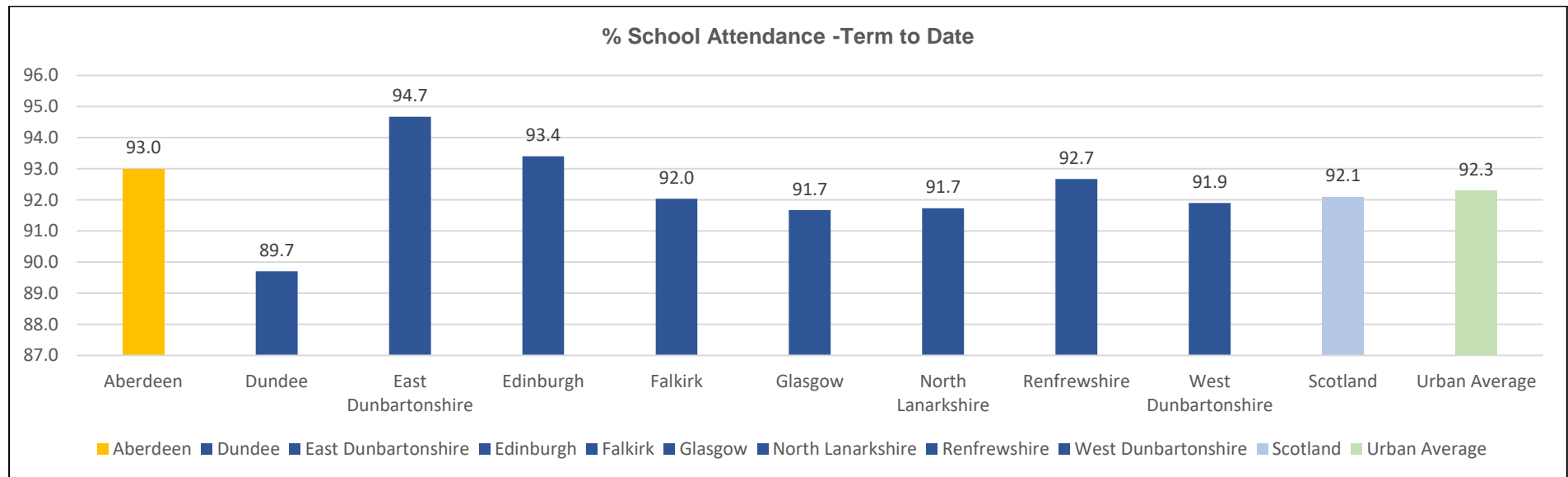
Combined Non-participation levels, encompassing those who were Unemployed Seeking and Unemployed Not Seeking employment show a reduction that is just short of being statistically significant at 0.9 p.p. At 4%, the Aberdeen outcome was marginally above the National level of 3.6% and equal to the UGA figure. Of the two contributing measures, those who were Unemployed and Seeking employment fell to 2% from 2.8% and those who were Not Seeking employment was stable at 2% ( 2.1% in 2021/22).

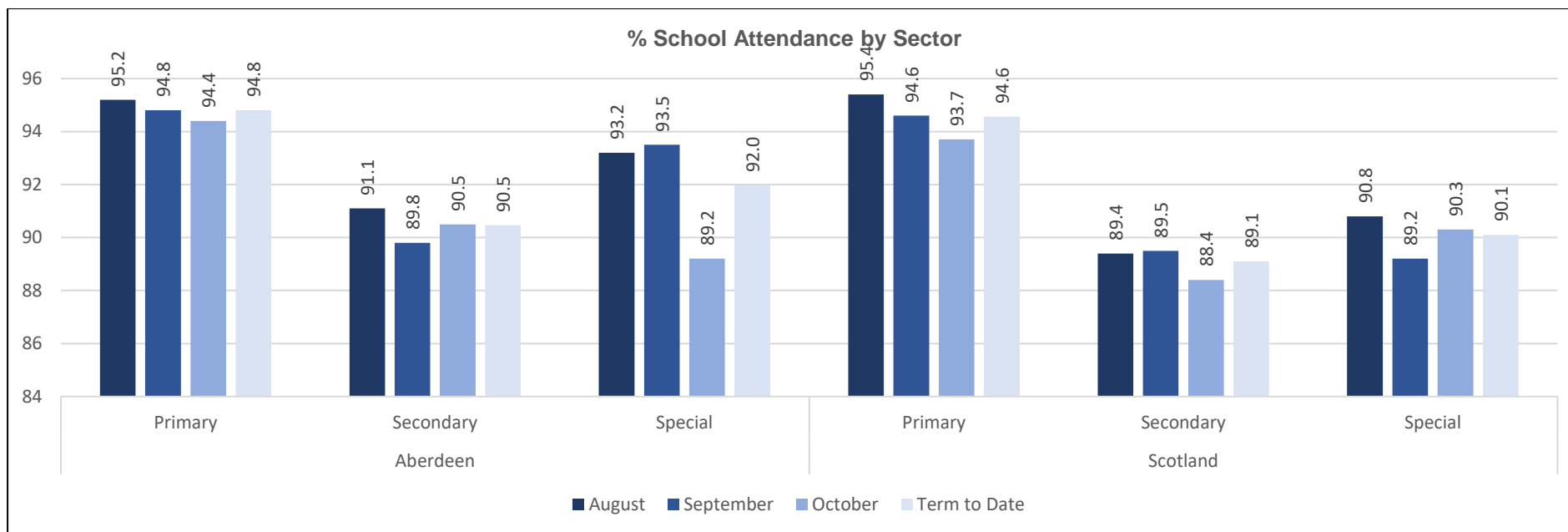
In terms of long trends, the high-level outcome ( % in a positive participation destinations), for Aberdeen had recorded a 3.1 p.p. improvement against the 2018/19 baseline that was stronger than the National picture ( + 2.7 p.p.) and the UGA of 2.5 p.p. This places Aberdeen among the second quartile for

improvement across Scottish Local Authorities but is insufficient to materially adjust the City's historical trend of placement in the lowest quartile for this measure.

At the same time, some consideration requires to be given to the impact of the disproportionately high levels of survey respondents from whom the survey owners (Skills Development Scotland) were unable to gain a response (classed as Unknown Status) In 2023/23 this has reduced substantially but, at 3%, was the highest rate of the 32 Local Authorities.

### National School Attendance Measure 2023-24





**Service Commentary**

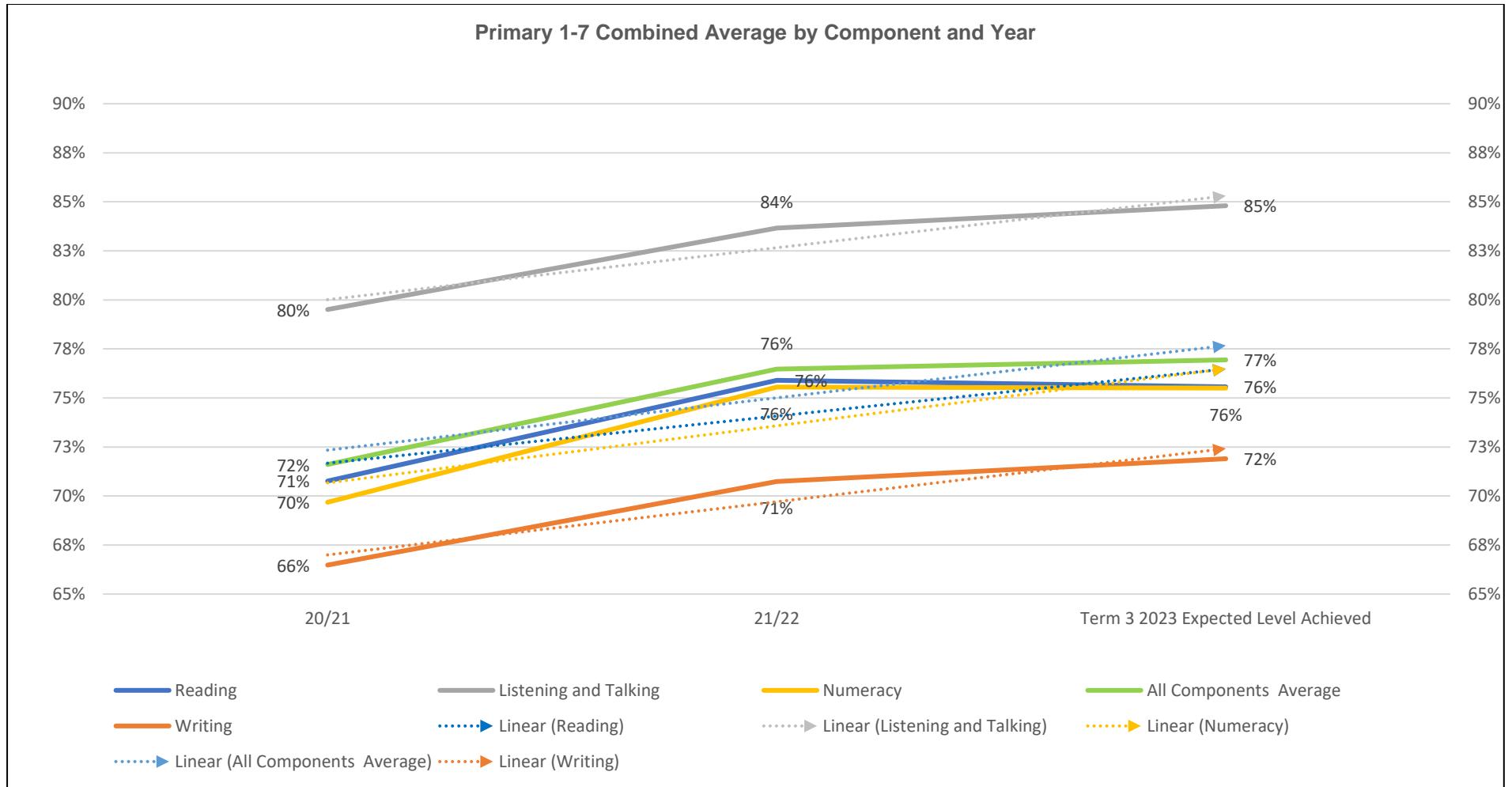
Year-to-date pupil attendance overall for Aberdeen City sat above that of the majority of its natural benchmark authorities, the Urban Geography Average and the National figure with a similar pattern being observed against each of the three Sectors both in term- to date and month by month datasets.

Secondary and Special school attendances were furthest ahead of our comparators at the snapshot point with Primary school attendance matching that of the national benchmark (being mid-table for all Scottish Local Authorities) with both Secondary and Special school attendance in the upper 40% of LA's.

Data as at 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 Source: Education Analytical Services, Scottish Government

**Local Benchmark Measures - Curriculum for Excellence- 2022/23 Predicted Achievement (based on Term 3 Assessment)**

Summary of Predicted P1- P7 averaged outcomes by Expected Levels achieved and Curriculum Organisers



**Service Commentary**

Overall, within current data confidence levels, the core combined averaged Primary 1 to 7 outcomes for each organiser are largely stable in comparison with 2021/22. At combined levels, achievement in Reading and Numeracy are statistically unchanged from the previous year outcomes at 76% with Listening and



Talking and Writing both experiencing increases of above 1 percentage point to 85% and 72% respectively. Resultantly, the averaged level of achievement for the whole P1-7 cohort shows a small statistical increase of 1 percentage point from 76% in 2021/22 to 77% in 2022/23.

Underlying the P1-7 combined data, the performance by each phase demonstrated that Primaries 1 and 4 were equally improved across the four organisers with the average achievement for each of these phases rising marginally by around 1 percentage point, whilst the outcome for P7 matched that recorded in 2021/22.

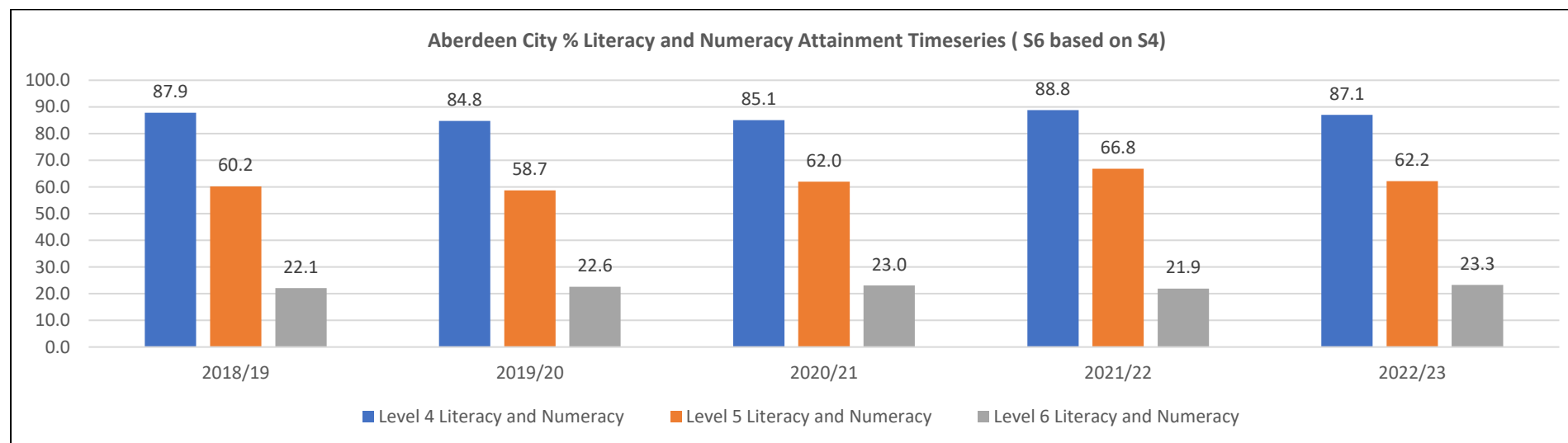
Cross assessment of achievement by both phase and organiser theme, indicated that Reading in P1 had risen to 76% (+1 percentage point) showing an extended recovery in this organiser which had been materially impacted by COVID-19 restrictions in 2020/21 as a result of both ELC and Primary education provision limitations. In 2020/21, the achievement level was 71%, having fallen by 7 percentage points on 2018/19 levels.

Most influential to the increase in Writing achievement across P1-7, the outcome for P4 pupils for this organiser, improved by 4 percentage points year-on-year, from 67% in 2021/22 to 71%. At P7, the most improved organiser was Listening and Talking which gained 2 percentage points on 2021/22 and 7 percentage points against 2020/21.

Overall, the three-year trends in all outcomes by phase and organiser are recording defined improvements in comparison with those of 2021/22, although the distance to the original 2018/19 baselines for the majority of Organisers ( now replaced by renewed Stretch Aim baselines) which extended during the height of COVID-19, although continuously improved, has yet to be fully closed, particularly around achievement in P1 and P4, The outcomes at P7 against each of the four organisers are ahead of the 2018/19 baselines.

**NB These data are a snapshot against available data up to, and including, those assessments completed in Term 3 2023. On this basis, the data should be regarded as an interim assessment of expected outcomes pending release of the national Curriculum for Excellence publication in December 2023.**

## Local Benchmark Measures – Senior Phase Literacy and Numeracy Attainment ( S6 based on S4)

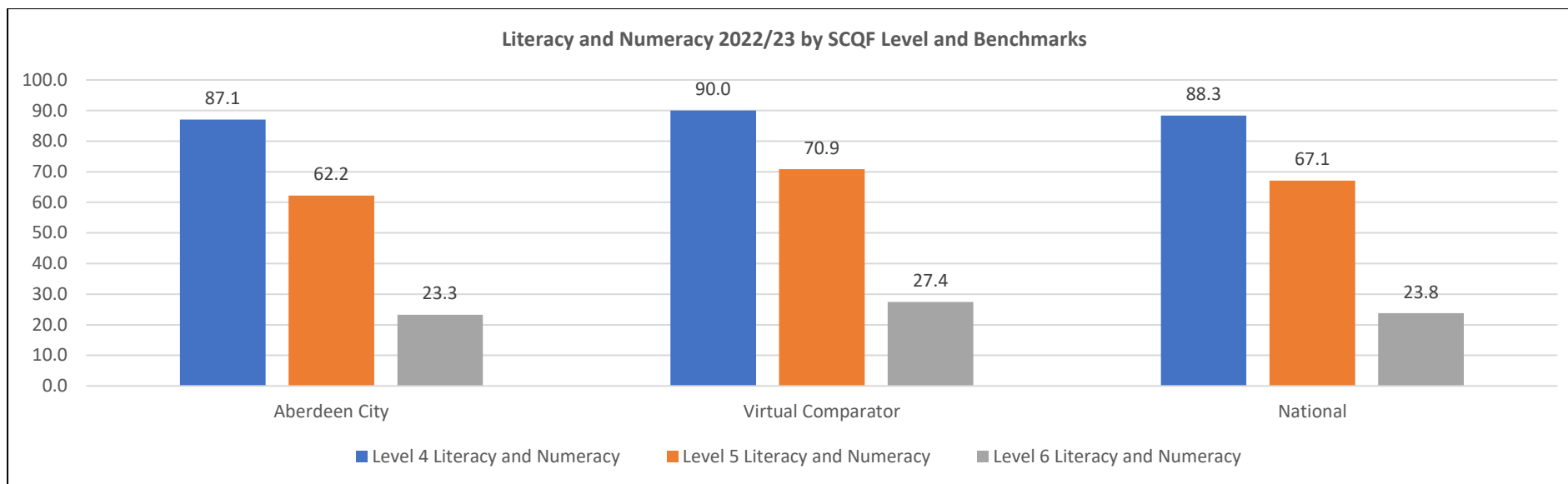


### Service Commentary

Over the course of the time series above, Aberdeen City has shown a stable pattern of attainment in Literacy and Numeracy at each SCQF Level.

Taking account of the natural variability linked to differing models of assessment and grading covering each of the three previous years, the long-term trends at 2022/23 show a marginal statistical increase (<1% percentage points) against average attainment at Level 4 and Level 5 Literacy and Numeracy, despite a noticeable dip in both outcomes from 2021/22 that are linked to the overall grade inflation that was experienced in part due to the model of SQA assessment applied that year.

At SCQF Level 6, the trend suggests a slightly greater rate of improvement, although this is still less than 1 percentage point higher against the five-year average of 22.5%, with a clear statistical advantage on the 2018/19 baseline (similar to that recorded against SCQF Level 5)



**Service Commentary**

Literacy and Numeracy outcomes in 2022/23 were in line with the National Comparator at both SCQF levels 4 and 6, although short of the national figure at Level 5. At each SCQF level, however, the City’s attainment was lower than the Virtual Comparator. This outcome, with the exception of the previous year, where the year-on-year distances to the National and Virtual Comparator closed appreciably, is in line with the long-term pattern.

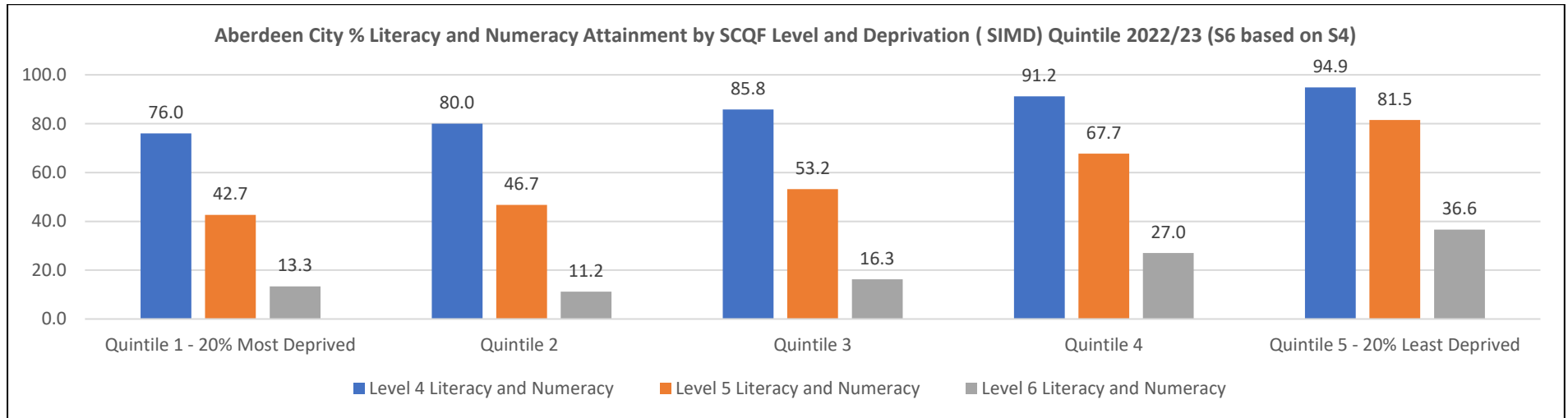
At the same time, there is significant empirical evidence that the distances to both benchmarks have been closing consistently since the 2018/19 baseline year at Levels 5 and 6. At Level 6, the distances to both comparators were reduced by 48% and 82% on the 2021/22 outcomes.

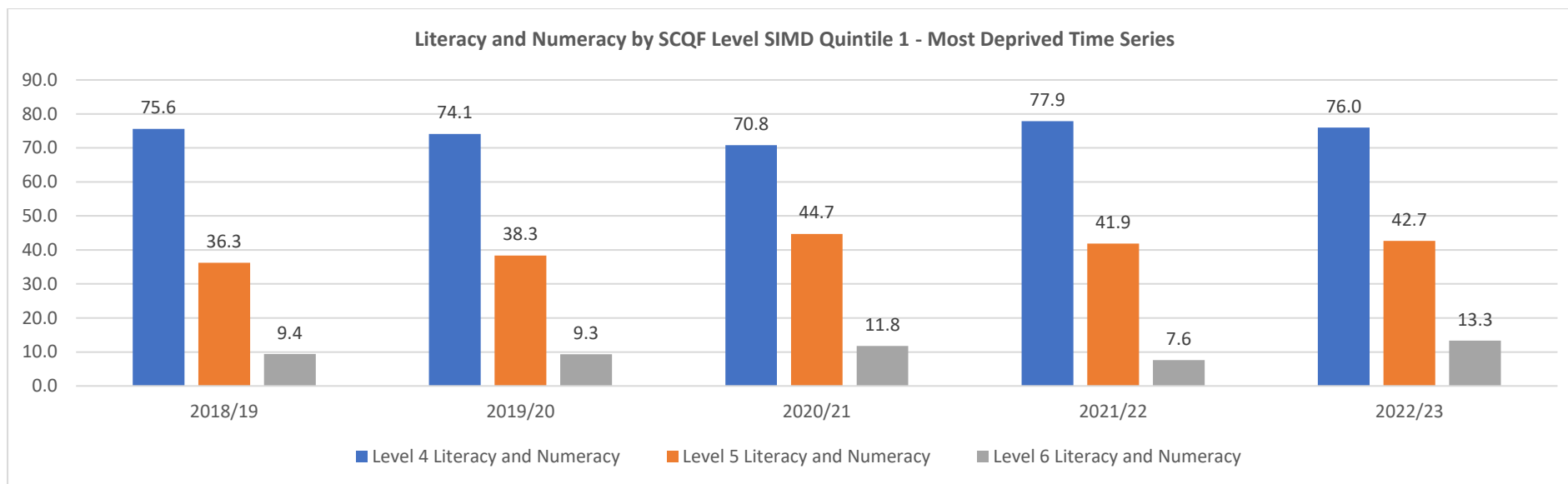
Attainment at SCQF Level 4 showed a similar pattern to Level 5 where the 2022/23 outcomes, with the exception of the 2021/22 outlier, showed a trend pattern of closing to the comparators and the average, although the City’s distances have traditionally been smaller than at the higher levels.

Table 1. Literacy and Numeracy Distance to National and Virtual Comparators 2018/19 to 2022/23

Comparator	National			Virtual		
	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
2018/19	-0.8	-5.5	-3.7	-3.3	-11.4	-9.7

2019/20	-3.2	-7.0	-2.1	-4.5	-10.3	-5.8
2020/21	-3.5	-6.3	-2.0	-5.1	-10.3	-6.4
2021/22	-0.9	-2.7	-2.8	-2.4	-7.1	-8.0
2022/23	-1.3	-4.9	-0.5	-3.0	-8.7	-4.2
Time Series Average	-1.9	-5.3	-2.2	-3.7	-9.5	-6.8



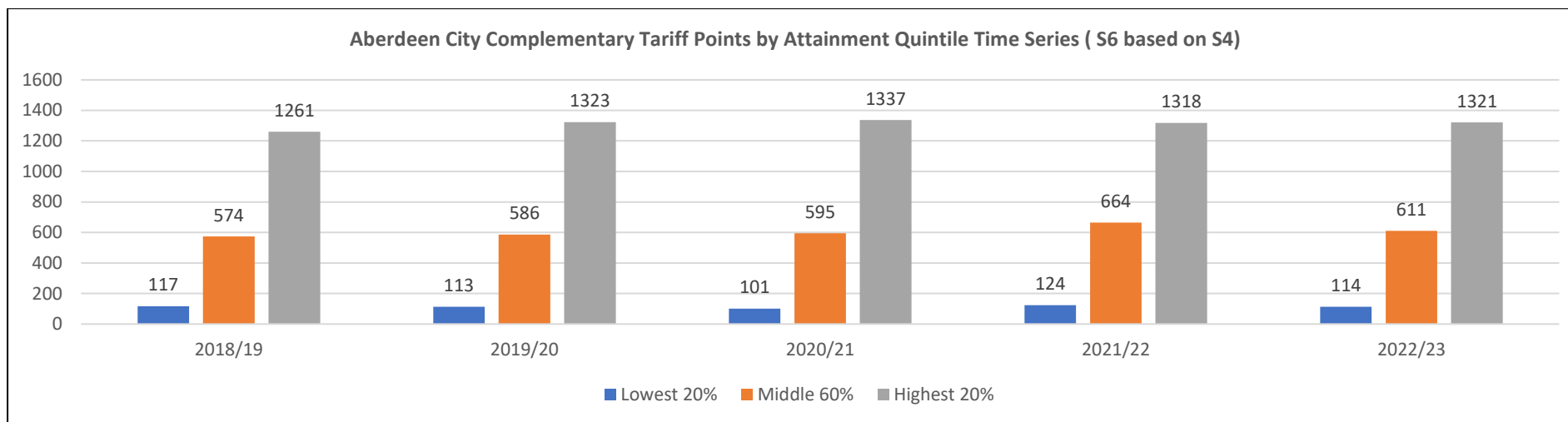


### Service Commentary

The outcomes of those pupils who are resident in the areas of the highest deprivation were displaying, as with the whole cohort, a stable but improving trend over the time series that, in the context of the pandemic and subsequent recovery period, is a substantive positive.

Although Level 4 Literacy and Numeracy showed a small decrease in 2022/23 in comparison with 2021/22, results at the two higher levels show gaining traction, with the proportion of pupils attaining Level 6 almost doubling on the prior year and being statistically ahead of each of the previous time series outcomes.

### Local Benchmark Measures – Senior Phase Complementary Tariff Scores ( S6 based on S4)

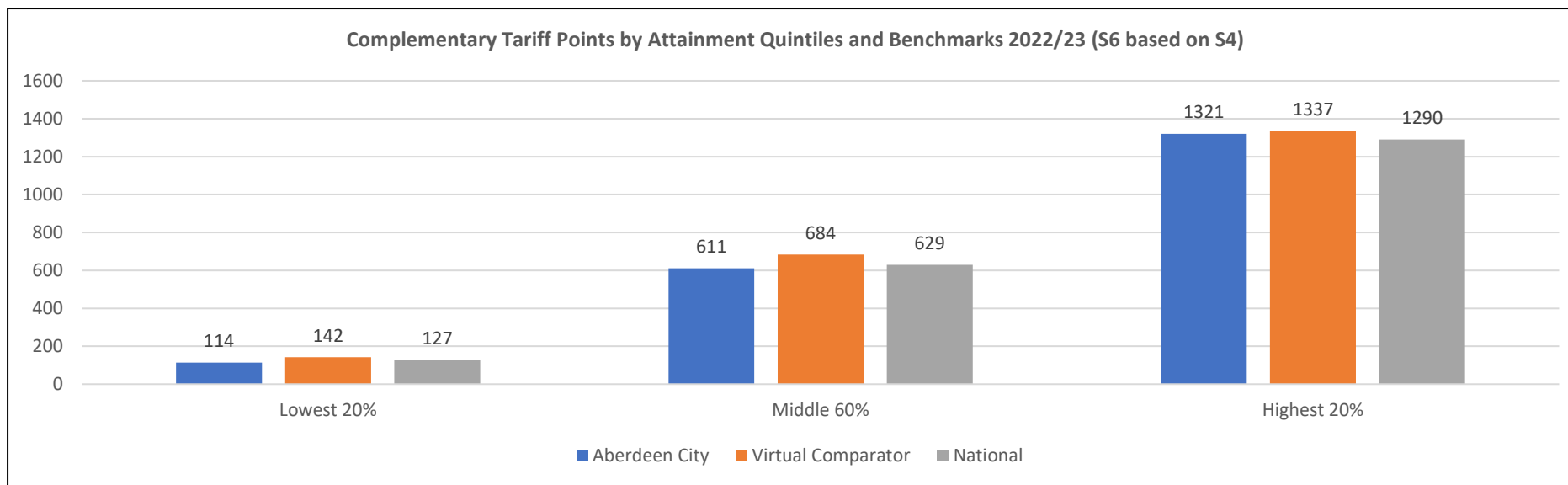


### Service Commentary

The chart above outlines the outcomes across the five-year time series, separating these by the attainment quintiles as described within Insight Tool benchmarked datasets.

The data suggests that the performance of the Lowest 20% of candidate attainment has been largely static across this period, with an average of 113 points which is matched in 2022/23. Accounting for the outlier data in 2021/22 that was influenced in part by assessment models and grade boundary mitigation connected to recovery from the pandemic, this is in line with expectations of a cohort which can include those pupils with significant individual challenges.

The Middle 60% of qualification attaining candidates demonstrates a stronger improvement trend with the 2022/23 figure of 611 points being marginally ahead of the time series average of 606 and above that of 3 of the prior 4 years. The Highest attaining 20% showed a less consistent trend pattern with variations in each of the years where assessment model interventions were applied but with a substantive improvement on the 2018/19 baseline in 2022/23.



### Service Commentary

As with the Literacy and Numeracy data above, Complementary Tarriff Point attainment in 2022/23 was generally close to the National figures with variances of just over -2% and +2% for the Middle 60% and Highest 20% respectively.

The result for the Lowest 20% of attainers, however, is around 10% lower than the National data, which may infer some statistical significance in the context of educational attainment. At the same time, the ability to directly compare relative characteristics, and outcomes, of pupils in this Lowest Quintile make purely statistically based evaluation more challenging.

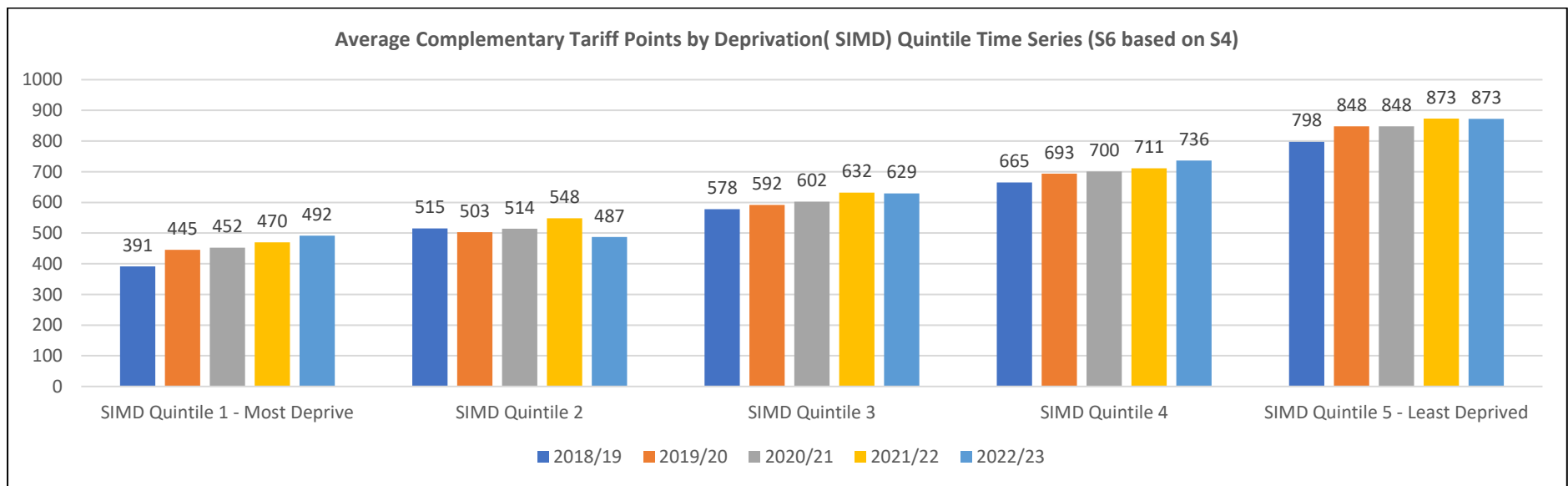
Comparison with the Virtual Comparator data show a similar trend but with marginally extended differentials to Aberdeen City outcomes for the Lowest 20% and Middle 60% and the scoring for the Highest 20% being statistically equal to the VC, with a difference of 1%.

In terms of closing to the comparators, the 2023/23 outcomes show materially reducing negative distances to both National and VC data for the Lowest 20% and Middle 60% of attainment, The Highest 20% also records a substantial reduction in the negative gap over time to the VC and an extending positive distance to the National figure.

Table 2. Complementary Tariff Point Distance to National and Virtual Comparators (2018/19 to 2022/23) by Attainment Quintile

Comparator	National			Virtual		
Year	Lowest 20%	Middle 60%	Highest 20%	Lowest 20%	Middle 60%	Highest 20%
2018/19	-21	-44	0	-45	-128	-66
2019/20	-11	-39	23	-19	-97	-25
2020/21	-23	-74	2	-33	-144	-53
2021/22	-11	-4	9	-29	-87	-55
2022/23	-13	-18	31	-28	-73	-16
Time Series Average	-16	-36	13	-31	-106	-43

**Local Benchmark Measures – Senior Phase Complementary Tariff Scores ( S6 based on S4) by Deprivation Quintiles**

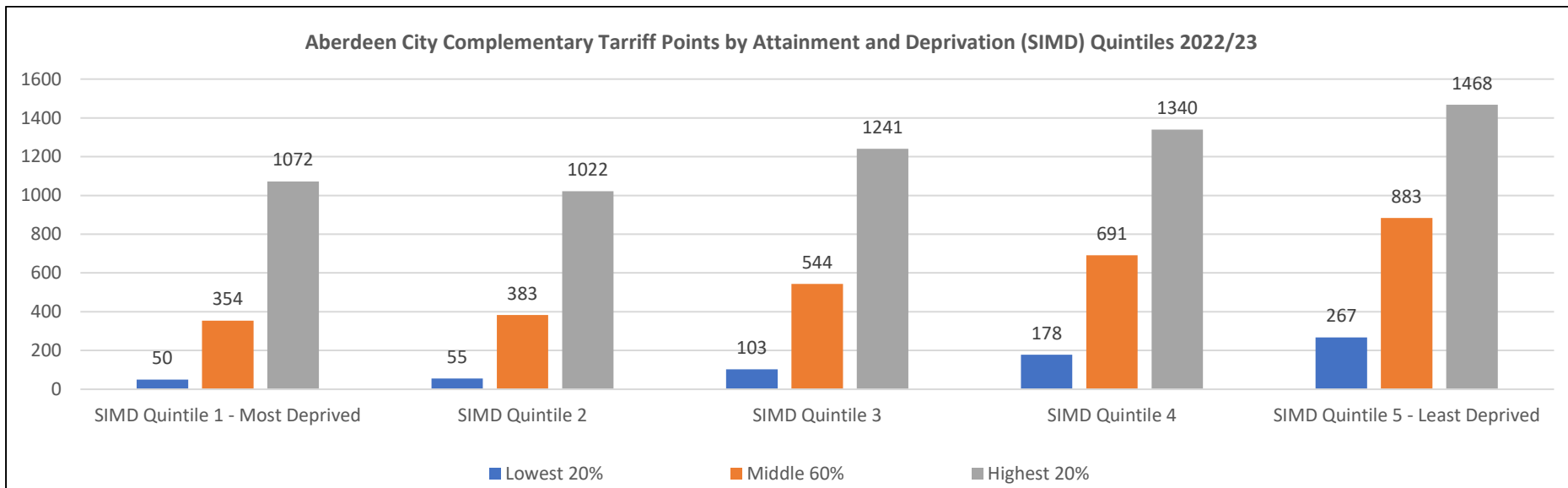


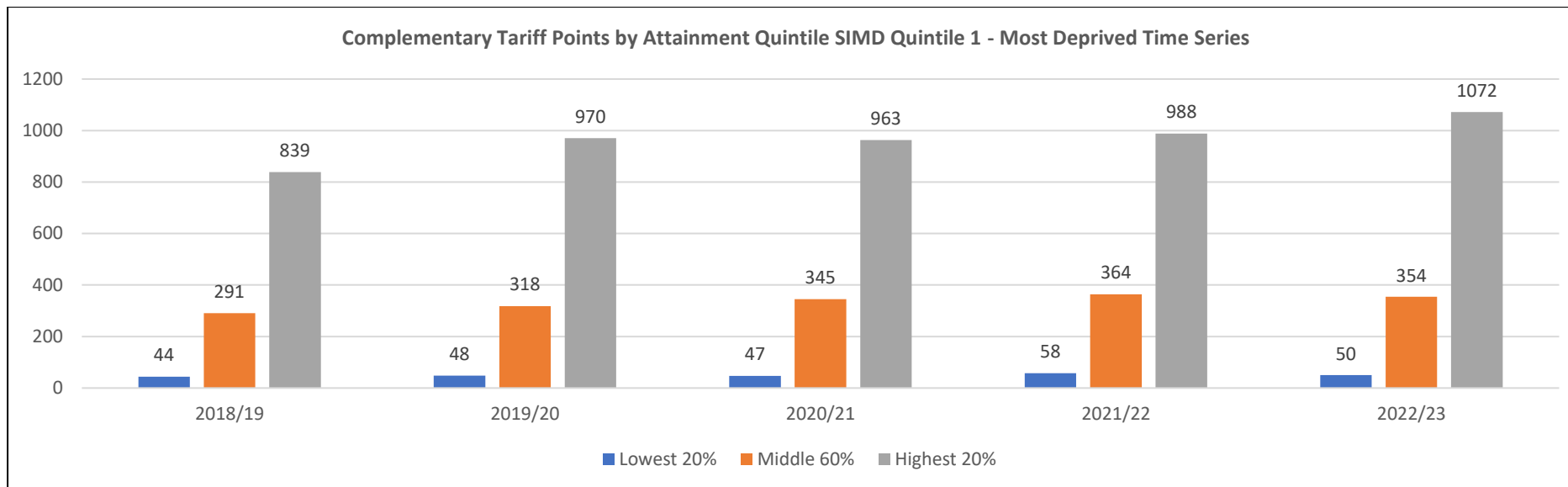
**Service Commentary**



Tariff point scoring across the SIMD based Quintiles show year-on-year statistical improvement at both SIMD 1 and 4 whilst those at SIMD 3 and 5 are materially unchanged from 2021/22. SIMD 2 outcomes, contrary to those of other Quintiles, experienced a fall in 2022/23 and does not follow the improvement trend recorded against the remaining pupil cohorts.

Additional deep dive analysis of the data for SIMD 2 pupils will further assist the Service to gain an enhanced understanding of the alignment of these outcomes with professional judgements in the context of what factors have been driving the relative instability of outcomes in 2022/23, and to continuously assess the extent to which the current NIF has the capacity to address this pattern.







**Service Commentary**





Young people from Quintile 5 continue to outperform their peers at all levels. It is interesting to note that young people in the highest 20% in Quintile 1 appear to be performing better than those in Quintile 2. The Service has added performance of young people in Quintile 2 to our stretch aims in order to allow us to target and track the performance of this group.

Performance of young people in the highest 20% in Quintile 1 shows a slight improvement on previous years. Those in the middle 60% and lower 20% show a slight dip on 2021/22 but are broadly in line with 2020/21. The service will work with individual schools through attainment reviews to identify potential interventions.

**3. Staff**

**Corporate Measure – 2023/24 Service Level Indicators**



Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2022-23	Quarter 4 2022-23	Quarter 1 2023-24	Quarter 2 2023/24	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Establishment actual FTE – Education	3,101	3,122	3,103	3,078		





Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2022-23	Quarter 4 2022-23	Quarter 1 2023-24	Quarter 2 2023/24	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	Value		
H&S Employee Reportable Accidents by Cluster – Education	2	2	1	3		
H&S Employee Non-Reportable Accidents by Cluster – Education	236	281	145	127		

#### Service Commentary

The number of Non-Reportable Accidents showed a material reduction in Quarter 2, in comparison with both of the previous quarterly periods and at a level which was below that of the comparable period in 2022/23 (160). The Q2 figure is below the average number of accidents across the past 12 months which was 197 reports per Quarter.

A full analysis of the factors underlying this improvement is currently being undertaken in collaboration with colleagues in P&OD, but indications are that a decline in the number of incidents involving pupil behavioural issues in the school environment are, in part, contributing to the gains made in this quarterly period. A more detailed understanding of the majority influences will be provided through close monitoring of trend patterns over the course of the year,

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2022/23	Quarter 4 2022/23	Quarter 1 2023/24	Quarter 2 2023/24	Quarter 2 2023/24 Corporate Figure	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE – Education (12 month rolling figure at quarter end)	5.6	6.25	7.1	7.7	8.5		

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2022/23	Quarter 4 2022/23	Quarter 1 2023/24	Quarter 2 2023/24	Quarter 2 2023/24 Corporate Figure	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE – Primary and Secondary Schools (12 month rolling figure at quarter end)	5.4	6	6.9	7.45	8.5		
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE – Early Learning and Childcare (12 month rolling figure at quarter end)	5.5	6.8	7.7	9.75	8.5		

#### Service Commentary





The trend patterns in absence levels are in line with, although at a lower level than, those in comparable front-line services, and below that being recorded at a corporate level.

The Service is keenly aware of the increase in the average number of working days lost and, in concert with the application of P&OD corporate policy measures, has been working closely with school senior management teams to ensure that current support frameworks provide the maximum opportunities to employees seeking to return to work following periods of absence.

The meeting of the Staff Governance Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November considered six-month data relating to sickness absence, including comparative Cluster absence levels, offering Members with observations and corporate recommendations around this theme. Any actions or intelligence arising from this report will be assimilated by the Service at pace. [EAS Six Monthly Progress Update Occupational Health and Absence Annual Update January 2023 – June 2023](#)

In the meantime, the Service maintains a continuous watching brief on levels of absence and encourages employees to access the various well-being tools provided by the Council to mitigate against illnesses/aid the process of recovery from absence.

#### 4. Finance & Controls

Performance Indicator	Quarter 3 2022/23		Quarter 4 2022/23		Quarter 1 2023/24		Quarter 2 2023/24	
	Value	Status	Value	Status	Value	Status	Value	Status
Staff Expenditure – % spend to full year budget profile – Education *	75.3%		102.35%		26.7%		50.0%	

### Service Commentary

Detailed budgetary and financial information relating to each Cluster by quarter is captured in reporting to the Finance and Resources Committee. Data covering Quarter 2 will be reported to the meeting of the Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.







Where Service savings, agreed as part of the Council's 2023/24 budget setting process, have a staffing element e.g., the application of VSER, removal of vacancies, these will be reflected against later quarterly outcomes as implementation plans at individual Cluster/Service levels are progressed.


\* Reported data does not take account of subsequent re-charges into and out of the Staff Expenditure budget line which may result in revisions to the projected trajectory to year-end financial forecasts as each periodic re-charge exercise is concluded

## Children's Social Work and Child Protection

### Corporate Measures – 2023-24 Cluster Level Indicators

#### 5. Customer

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2022/23	Quarter 4 2022/23	Quarter 1 2023/24	Quarter 2 2023/24	Status	2023/24 Target	Long Trend Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	Value			
Total No. of Complaints received (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work/Child Protection	5	13	6	10			
% of Complaints resolved within timescale (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work/Child Protection	80.0%	92.3%	83.3%	40%		75%	
% of complaints with at least one point upheld (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	40.0%	15.4%	16.7%	0%			

Total No. of lessons learnt identified (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	0	0	0	0			
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### Service Commentary








Performance in relation to complaints response times has reduced in Quarter 2. This is primarily due to unexpected leave within the team responsible for handling complaints relating to Children's Social Work. It should be noted that of the 6 responses that were not responded to within timescale, two were 1 day overdue and the remaining 4 were responded to within a revised timescale agreed with the complainant.







The year-to-date comparisons as at Quarter 2 show a consistent volume of complaints received, with 16 complaints in 2023/24 (14 in 2022/23), Although the YTD outcome for complaint resolution within timescale has dropped to 61.6% from 78.4% in 2022/23, this is primarily due to performance within quarter 2 which as explained was due to resource limitations at the time and is not anticipated to reoccur.

The rolling 12-month measure for complaint resolution sits at 73.9%, just below the corporate target, which is statistically comparable with the 76.7% recorded at Quarter 2 of 2022/23

None of the complaints submitted in Quarter 2 had any points of the complaint upheld, which was a short- and long-term improvement on prior quarterly performance

### Service Level Standards 2023/24

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2022/23	Quarter 4 2022/23	Quarter 1 2023/24	Quarter 2 2023/24	Status	2023/24 Target	Long Trend Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	Value			
% of care provided in Council children's homes, fostering and adoption services achieve a care standard of Good or better	100%	100%	100%	100%		100%	
We will ensure care provided by the Council's fostering service achieves a care standard of good or better through regulatory inspections.	100%	100%	100%	100%		100%	
We will ensure care provided by the Council's adoption service achieves a care standard of good or better through regulatory inspections.	100%	100%	100%	100%		100%	
% of children open to Children's Social Work supported to live at home, where safe to do so	NA	NA	75.5%	75%		75%	

% of Looked After Children looked after in a residential setting where living at home is not appropriate	11%	12%	12%	12%		10%	
% of Looked After Children looked after in Kinship where living at home is not appropriate	25%	24%	24%	24%		31%	
% of Looked After Children looked after in Foster Care where living at home is not appropriate	45%	46%	45%	44%		33%	

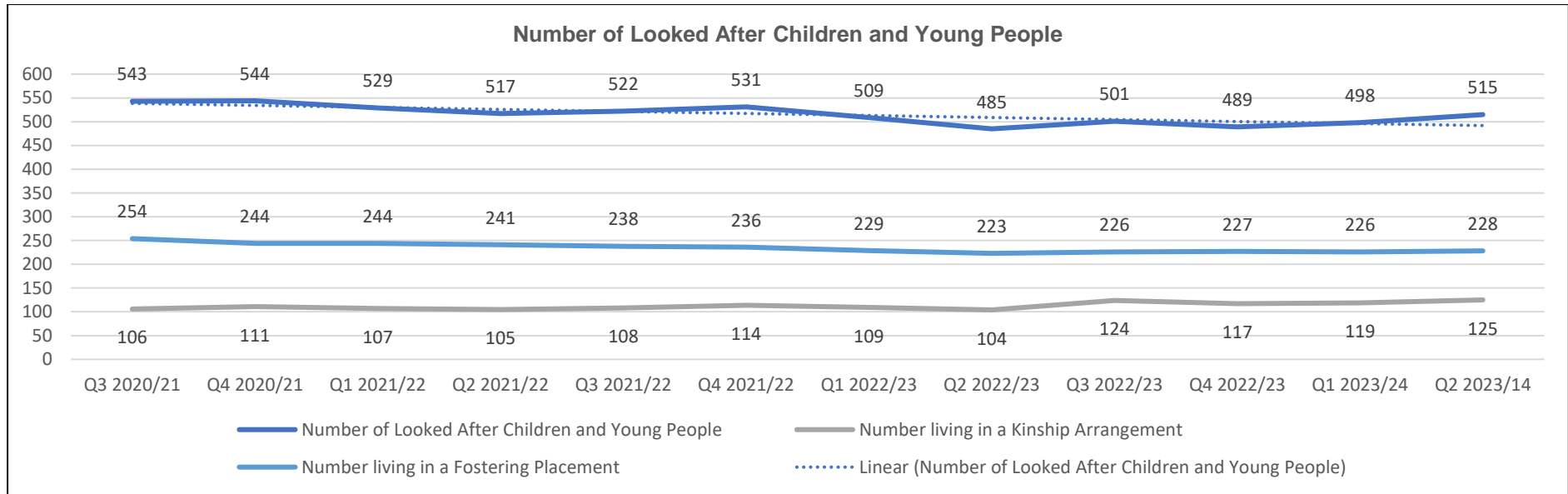
### Service Commentary

The outcomes above represent a largely unchanged short-term position from the previous quarter, although the long-term trends for Looked After Children in Foster Care at Quarter 2 show some gains over the course of the 12-month monitoring period in comparison with the target.

Reflecting on the value of the Dynamics 365 case management and data framework tool, of which the monitoring measures above are a product, Aberdeen City Council, through the D365 Project, are finalists in the annual European Social Services Awards (ESSA) under the Excellence in Cities category. Aberdeen City Council is the sole UK finalist for this category, the award of which will be announced in November 2023.

The Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report being considered at this Committee offers substantive insight into the work of the Service in delivering progress towards the Service Standards around the balance of care to date, and on-going actions during the current year that will influence the direction of travel.

### Service Level Measure










**Service Commentary**

The number of Looked After Children and Young People saw a small increase in Quarter 2 2023/24, The linear projection for a continuously reducing number of children and young people in this category is unchanged, and with the greater proportion of this increase being met through Kinship, rather than Fostering arrangements which is a strategic operational objective for the Service.

**6. Process**

Service Level Standards 2023/24 -





Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2022/23	Quarter 4 2022/23	Quarter 1 2023/24	Quarter 2 2023/24	Status	2023/24 Target	Long Trend Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	Value			
% of initial screenings undertaken and decisions on action required on all new referrals within seven days	N/A	N/A	95%	97%		80%	
% of Child Protection (SCIM) interviews completed within 5 working days	N/A	N/A	91%	70%		90%	
% initial Child Protection Case Conferences held within 28 days	73%	45%	71%	65%		80%	
% Care experienced children and young people with three or more placements in 12 months	2%	3%	2%	2%		10%	
% Care Experienced Children and Young People with a pathway plan by the age of 15 years	N/A	N/A	73%	67%		95%	

### Service Commentary

The Child Protection Committee Annual Report being considered at this Committee outlines the work of the partnership in delivering against Aberdeen City's Children's Services Strategic Plan, and the contribution of the Service to this, in detail. These data are part of the National Minimum Dataset for Child Protection Committees and reflect outcomes that are delivered through this inter-agency approach, with a focus on those case management aspects that are primarily within the remit of ACC provision.

## 7. Staff

### Corporate Measure – 2023/24 Service Level Indicators

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2022-23	Quarter 4 2022-23	Quarter 1 2023/24	Quarter 2 2023/24	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Establishment actual FTE – Children's Social Work	342.3	338.4	341.4	344.1		

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2022-23	Quarter 4 2022-23	Quarter 1 2023/24	Quarter 2 2023/24	Status	Long Trend Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Accidents - Reportable - Employees (No in Quarter – Children’s Social Work)	1	0	0	0		
Accidents - Non-Reportable - Employees (No in Quarter - Children’s Social Work)	0	1	0	1		

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2022/23	Quarter 4 2022/23	Quarter 1 2023/24	Quarter 2 2023/24	Quarter 2 2023/24 Corporate Figure	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	Value			
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE – Children’s Social Work (12 month rolling figure)	4.7	5.8	6.9	8.3	8.5		

#### Service Commentary

As expressed above for the Education Service, Children’s Social Work and Child Protection management through the Integrated Children’s Services SMT, monitors absence levels on a consistent and detailed basis and has been taking steps to mitigate the impacts and durations of absence through the active signposting, and direction, of employees to the corporate advice and supports available to all Council employees.

**The** absence trend is very similar to that in Education with a rising level of average days absence through illness, again at rates which are below that of most other front-facing service teams where direct personal contacts with a significant clientele base, and other well understood risk factors from face-to-face contacts are prevalent.

## 8. Finance & Controls

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2022/23		Quarter 4 2022/23		Quarter 1 2023/24		Quarter 2 2023/24	
	Value	Status	Value	Status	Value	Status	Value	Status
Staff Expenditure – % spend to full year budget profile – Children’s Social Work *	75.0%		100.1%		30.9%		54.5%	

**Service Commentary**

Detailed budgetary and financial information relating to each Cluster by quarter is captured in reporting to the Finance and Resources Committee. Data covering Quarter 2 will be reported to the meeting of the Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.

Specific Service savings, agreed as part of the Council’s 2023/24 budget setting process, which have a staffing element e.g., the application of VSER, and removal of vacancies have been delivered and will be reflected against later quarterly outcomes as implementation plans at individual Cluster/Service levels are progressed. The distance between year-to-date spend and budget provision has closed from -23.9% in June to -9.6% in September

\* Reported data does not take account of subsequent re-charges into and out of the Staff Expenditure budget line which may result in revisions to the projected trajectory to year-end financial forecasts as each periodic re-charge exercise is concluded

**Appendix Data Notes**

- Complaints Data: Complaints data should be viewed in the round across each of the four measures in terms of the performance of individual Clusters. Targets are set by the Ombudsman as reportable annualised measures for the Council without adjustment for seasonal operational, and other external influences.
- Trend Directions: Unless stated to the contrary, Long-Term Trends are based on the average of 24 monthly, 8 quarterly and 3 annual consecutive periods, respectively.

PI Status		Long Term Trends		Short Term Trends	
	Alert (figure more than 20% out with target)		Improving/Increasing		Improving/Increasing
	Warning (figure between 5% and 20% out with target)		No or Limited Change		No or Limited Change
	OK (figure within target or better)		Getting Worse/Decreasing		Getting Worse/Decreasing
	Unknown				
	Data Only				

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## Appendix B - National Improvement Framework Update

Programme/projects	Update November 2023	
<b>Improve the leadership of change in schools</b>		<b>RAG</b>
Continue to respond positively to the education reforms and strengthen locality working	<p>The Education Service continues to engage positively with the various Education Reforms. The service and individual schools continue to engage with Scottish Government colleagues.</p> <p>Our locality working continues to build internally with more targeted support for schools through our quality improvement support model.</p>	
Increase opportunities for leadership collaboration with particular focus on Secondary settings	<p>There is a planned programme of development activities linked to each of the core QIs and areas of development.</p> <p>On September 6 there were two collaborative events focused on Quality Indicator (QI) 2.2 (Curriculum). The morning session focused on the creation of a curriculum rationale and the afternoon event on effective Pathway Planning for young people. Professional Learning events are planned across each Core QI for each term.</p> <p>Face to face head teacher meetings are designed to enable increased opportunities for collaboration and the feedback from our first session of the year confirms that this approach is welcomed. HT colleagues have supported a number of quality improvement visits to date.</p>	
<b>Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in schools</b>		
Continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment including the provision of appropriate levels of differentiation, pace, and challenge in collaboration with HMIE and the Regional Improvement Collaborative	<p>Our focus on improving learning and teaching is also now a feature of collaborative work across partner Local Authorities within the Norther Alliance. A regional plan is in place to support Local Authorities to learn from each other and benefit from economies of scale where appropriate.</p> <p>All headteachers attended a workshop delivered by our local HMIE link and HMIE Head of Secondary Scrutiny. This first session exemplified national expectations and clarified the role of each Head Teacher in leading the QI.</p> <p>High quality materials provided by HMIE have been well received by HTs, these will be built upon further over the year.</p>	
Work with Microsoft to pilot an increase in the use of Microsoft tools to support learning and teaching	<p>St Machar Academy and Woodside Primary have been identified as participants in a test of change project with a group of early adopter staff engaging with Microsoft and partners.</p> <p>Devices have been issued to staff and training needs identified.</p>	
Maintain work on the national improvement in writing programme – new cohort	<p>Cohort 3 schools (an additional 5) have now embarked on the Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative programme and will have completed this by January '24. A 4<sup>th</sup> cohort of schools will then undertake the training. By June '24, 21 Primary Schools will have been targeted with this intervention.</p> <p>Almost all schools in cohorts 1 &amp; 2 of the programme can evidence a rise in their overall P4 attainment in writing, with all schools seeing an improvement in writing for the children involved in the programme. Most schools within cohorts 1 &amp; 2 are spreading and scaling up the programme within their schools with around half also attending national meetings on a regular basis to benefit from the expertise of the CYPIC team and share good practice.</p> <p>A further development in writing is that 2 Associated Schools Groups (ASGs) are now working on a skills progression framework for writing with the Northern Alliance providing Career Long Professional Learning in writing for all teaching staff within the 2 ASG schools.</p>	

Improve learning transitions from primary to secondary including a focus on numeracy	Both Curriculum for Excellence Level and National Qualification data identifies numeracy and mathematics as an area for improvement. Work has begun to identify a skilled group of practitioners to review current approaches and develop a clear strategy to improve teaching and learning. It is hoped that this will increase attainment in numeracy across all sectors.	
Continue to support engagement with Excelerate to increase innovative approaches to learning, teaching and assessment in Secondary Schools	<p>Excelerate continues to support Bucksburn, Dyce, Harlaw, Northfield, Oldmachar and St. Machar Academies develop approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. Each school is focusing on an aspect of development related to their unique context. For example, Oldmachar Academy are focusing on <i>Oracy</i> and Northfield Academy on developing a pilot in S1 around <i>Crew</i>.</p> <p>Oracy is a specific approach to develop spoken language skills for young people. Crew is an approach that supports improved relationships and culture in a cohort through regular and consistent inputs from the same member of staff during the school week.</p>	
<b>Continue to improve the quality of universal health and wellbeing supports in response to changes in need</b>		
Continue to monitor wellbeing data and the impact of interventions in place including the provision of counselling	<p>The September Committee Report shared data being elicited from surveys of our pupils. All settings continue to participate in the SHINE mental wellbeing survey and the ACC wellbeing survey to support our understanding of the needs across our settings.</p> <p>Regular review of interventions including monthly meetings with counselling service leads, maintains our confidence in the impact of these interventions.</p>	
Maintain our focus on encouraging children and young people to be more physically active including those with sensory and other identified needs	<p>Aberdeen PEPAS (Physical Education, Physical Activity &amp; Sport) Group are leading aspects of the Children's Services Plan with agreed actions to take forward to improve opportunities for physical activity.</p> <p>The 'Big Run' was held in October. The event, which included all P6 pupils in partnership with the Daily Mile, saw over 2000 children participate in physical activity.</p> <p>Boccia training continues to be rolled out across all schools, with some schools groups taking this forward in local festivals.</p>	
<b>Increase the voice of children and young people in the design and delivery of services</b>		
Undertake a rapid review of our readiness for the incorporation of the UNCRC following publication of the statutory guidance	Work continues across all schools to increase learner voice. We are still awaiting the publication of the statutory guidance on the UNCRC and will undertake a rapid review of readiness when published.	
Make sure that we meaningfully involve children and young people in decision-making and respond to what children and young people tell us they want and need	All young people should have a voice in how they learn, and this is being explored through our focus on learning, teaching and assessment. Pupil voice is included in school improvement plans and we continue to share good practice across all sectors.	
Review the impact of mentoring programmes for children and young people to determine our long-term approach	An evaluation of the MCR Pathways programme across the 6 city schools was undertaken and presented to Education and Children's Services committee on 12.9.23 Discussions have begun with individual schools to look at self-funding MCR and work continues to improve the quality of data being gathered centrally. A further report on MCR will be presented at committee in November 2023.	

<p>Continue to work in collaboration with the Youth Climate Group to work towards Net Zero</p>	<p>An S5 pupil from Cults Academy has been named as the new Youth Climate Change President for Aberdeen, following interviews which took place across several schools. Our Youth Climate Change President will be assisted by four vice-presidents from both Cults and Dyce Academies.</p> <p>In the first year since the post was created, the President, and the Youth Climate Change Group have been involved in discussions with staff at Aberdeen City Council and NESCOL, to highlight the climate challenges as they see them, and have provided a focal point to promote citywide initiatives to other children and young people across the city.</p> <p>The new Youth Climate Change group had their first meeting at the beginning of September. They are currently deciding on what priorities and areas they wish to focus on for this session. An important consideration will be the areas of the council that they wish to invite to future meetings as well any local businesses.</p>	
<p><b>Deliver a broader range of senior phase learner pathways aligned to growth areas</b></p>		
<p>Continued curriculum alignment and expansion of learning pathways through delivery of Phase 2 of ABZ Campus</p>	<p>Following the launch of Phase 1 of ABZ Campus in Session 2023-24, work has already commenced to plan for Phase 2 in 2024-25. This includes working with partners to increase the range of available courses, creating a pilot for an ASN experience, piloting a twilight delivery model, and improving the consistency of experience for young people on ABZ Campus courses.</p>	
<p>Focus on developing pathways to support those with a range of additional support needs</p>	<p>A wide network has been established to support the development of the #WHATif (Inspiring Futures ) pathway pilot. The pilot will offer 5 participants the opportunity to develop and apply life and employability skills in a workplace which is of relevance to their personal motivators, skill sets and future aspirations.</p> <p>ABZ P2:F2 (Phase 2, Focus 2) has an umbrella partnership including colleagues from Education, SDS (Skills Development Scotland) and DYW (Developing Young Workforce). Subgroups have been created utilising the expertise of committed professionals focusing on 'Employability' and 'Education'.</p> <p>Other organisations, including Autism Understanding Scotland, ARC Scotland (Scottish Transitions Forum) and SQA are also supporting pathway development at an advisory and quality assurance level. Potential Candidates have been identified by Specialists Provisions (Bucksburn Wing, Orchard Brae School and Cults Academy Enhanced Provision). Profiles are being created for each of the potential candidates adopting elements of the CIRCLE Participation Scale. These profiles will be anonymised and shared with DYW to ensure participants are matched with appropriate employers committed and equipped to meet their individual needs.</p> <p>Once this alignment of candidate and employer is established the Compass ARC app is being considered as the tool to be used to centralise involvement of the young person, parent, school and employer in the pathway process.</p>	
<p><b>Improve the delivery of Computer Science from 3-18 and beyond</b></p>		
<p>Continue to improve computer science skills through on-going delivery of Aberdeen Computing Collaborative</p>	<p>Modules have been completed to support skills development at early, first and second level. The modules are designed to upskill the teacher and provide activities for pupils that can be adapted to the context for learning in the classroom.</p> <p>This approach is thought most likely to increase teacher confidence and ensure a more consistent approach to the teaching of digital skills. These resources have been made available to all staff working in ELC and Primary and will be reviewed regularly by digital champions in school.</p>	

<b>Improve the quality of environments/supports for those with additional support needs</b>		
<p>Continue to develop our approaches to supporting those with a range of additional support needs including on-going roll out of the Circle Framework and on-going delivery of trauma training through Compassionate and Connected Communities</p>	<p>The overarching CIRCLE (Child Inclusion: Research into Curriculum, Learning and Education) Partnership has branched out into stage specific subgroups – CIRCLE ELC (Early Learning and Childcare) and CIRCLE Primary/Secondary, to ensure a focused approach, aligning professionals with relevant expertise.</p> <p>The CIRCLE ELC Partnership (CELCP) is now well established. With the ELC Team, Central Education and NHS colleagues ensuring their settings are informed and well supported in utilising CIRCLE – Up, up and away.</p> <p>The CIRCLE Primary and Secondary Partnership (CPSP) has core members in place from ACC and NHS. Further members are being sought from schools to join the CPSP over this coming session with a view to developing LCSTs for Primary/Secondary in future, should the ELC LCST Model prove to have impact.</p> <p>A Young Person's (YP) version of the CICS and CPS is also under development. The YPICS and YPPS could impact curriculum in terms of HWB (Health and Wellbeing) and reflective life skills. This version may be suitable for transference into homelife to support parents/carers and gain parental voice.</p>	
<p>Continue to build a responsive Educational Psychology Service delivery plan to meet the changing needs of the school population</p>	<p>ACC Educational Psychology Service are continuing to provide Supervision to the 50 trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) to allow them to meet the needs of children with emotional regulation difficulties.</p> <p>In 2023/24 &amp; 24/25 Enhanced &amp; Specialist Provisions will send 20 support staff each year to be trained in the NEW ASN ELSA programme. To allow them to further support some of our most vulnerable pupils with their emotional regulation needs.</p> <p>In addition to the EPS Emotion Coaching digital training programme that can be accessed by all Education Establishments with follow-up coaching, new training programmes are being added:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance</li> <li>○ Executive Functions (relating to supporting self-regulation and/or memory difficulties)</li> <li>○ Supplementary information for schools &amp; parent/carers on these topics on the EPS Digital Resource Hub</li> <li>○ Teenage Brain Development</li> </ul> <p>Each EPS Locality Group have set their own improvement target for their work 2023/24, these include systemic projects within their localities, to meet the needs within their locality establishments and updates will be provided regularly.</p>	
<b>Reshape the Virtual School to ensure that those on the edge of care and the care experienced achieve at the highest levels in keeping with The Promise</b>		
<p>Increase scrutiny of the progress of our pupils on the edge of care</p>	<p>Young people identified by both Northfield Academy and Lochside Academy staff as being on the edge of care are being supported through the edge of care pilots. Progress is tracked on a weekly basis with team discussion to ensure the correct supports are in place and any issues are highlighted to the team around the child.</p>	
<p>On-going roll out of our Edge of Care pilots to help shape our model of Family Support</p>	<p>Pilot staff posts are to be funded for a further 2 years to support consistency of relationships for young people for both Lochside and Northfield with the view to rolling out to St Machar ASG following a full evaluation of the programme. It is hoped that this approach will help address some of the recruitment challenges experienced given the temporary nature of the posts as the lack of staff in place is hampering progress.</p> <p>The Glasgow Motivation and Wellbeing Profile is being used termly to ensure consistency and robustness when considering SHANARRI.</p>	



Review and implementation of a refreshed Minimising Exclusion Policy	Initial data is being gathered regarding exclusion to help inform the refresh of the policy. Officers are currently eliciting the views of learners, parents and carers and school staff.	
<b>Close the poverty related attainment gap</b>		
Improve access to wider child poverty data at community level	An initial discussion has been undertaken with colleagues in other services as part of the proposed pilot of the LIFT dashboard which would enable the local authority to make best use of data in identifying those families in greatest need. This would enable us to target offers of support through schools and ELC provisions in particular postcode areas.	
Work with HTs to monitor the impact of PEF interventions as part of our Quality Improvement Activity	A review of Pupil Equity Funding has provided the Service with a clear set of priorities to help strengthen our arrangements. Costed school Pupil Equity Plans have been linked to our Power BI tool and this approach will help support the ongoing monitoring of the impact of interventions through common performance measures which will enable analysis at individual school and Local Authority level. These details will help inform discussions between head teachers and officers as part of the QI framework. This will also support schools in improving reporting of progress to stakeholders.	
Work with the Scottish Government to increase provision of ELC to those who are 1 and 2 from low-income households	The Scottish Government have introduced the Data Pipeline which gives Local Authorities access to data identifying possible eligible families. These families have been sent information about the Eligible 2's service and how to apply. The number of applications will be tracked to allow us to gauge impact.	
Work with Head Teachers to review attendance levels and guidance.	Updated 'Guidance on Managing & Promoting Pupil Attendance' was circulated in July 2023. A new, improved, flow chart has been included to ensure a consistent approach is adopted across ACC. Where attendance falls below 90% further action is required. QI visits will be used to monitor compliance. An updated Power Bi BGE Tracking & Monitoring system provides a platform to monitor attendance easily.	
<b>Prevent families from experiencing poverty wherever possible</b>		
Continue to work in collaboration with others to address the root cause of poverty. This will see targeted promotions of support available through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money advisors</li> <li>• Partnership with Cfine</li> </ul>	<p>A culture of collaboration across the organisation continues to support our learners and families well.</p> <p>Schools continue to address child poverty at school level with a range of approaches in place to mitigate the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on families. These include free breakfast provision/clubs, promotion of the uptake of free school meals, clothing grants and other benefits, school uniform and clothing swaps, partnerships with foodbanks and signposting families to financial inclusion team.</p> <p>Financial Inclusion workers provide support and guidance to parents and carers to claim all benefits they are entitled to and maximise family income. As well as maximising the uptake of benefits, the root causes of poverty are beginning to be addressed through the strengthened development of skills for life, learning and work by looking at the needs of young people and their families more holistically.</p>	
<b>Partnership Delivery of the Family Support Model in keeping with the Promise</b>		
Use request for assistance data to align Scottish Attainment Challenge resource to our emerging model of Family Support	Partnership Forums have developed their use of available data to identify the issues being faced across a community to determine priorities, agree how to allocate resources, and identify where gaps in provision remain. Youth Workers and Family Learning Workers have a clear remit for early intervention and continue to target children, young people, and families most at risk of disengaging from education. An Equity Plan and Tracker is now in use in every school	

	Data is routinely gathered to support rigorous evaluation of the impact of interventions and help inform next steps. We are now looking to align this data set more carefully with our work to develop a Family Support model and will carefully consider the role of Partnership Forums within that model.	
Continue to work with community planning partners to shape a model of family support	Work is being planned to consider how best to make clear our offer to families given the varied range of provisions available to families through Pupil Equity Funding resource. We need to ensure that supports already available through established Partnership Forums and targeted Family Support Model all work together to support vulnerable groups and this alignment is being driven through the development of a Family Support Model evaluation framework.	
<b>Review the Anti-bullying policy (suggest altering to review approaches to equality)</b>		
Implement the revised anti bullying policy	The revised Policy and summary documentation has been shared with all stakeholders. Compliance with the policy will be an integral part of supporting wellbeing, equality and inclusion quality assurance visits later in the year.	
Continue to support all secondary schools to establish effective systems to support LGBTQIA+ community in school	<p>Schools continue to engage with LGBTQ Youth Scotland through delivery of the Charter Programme.</p> <p>Central officers are promoting and raising awareness of the LGBT Education Scotland resource which is a one stop platform for teachers to access quality approved materials, resources, and professional learning linked to Scotland's Curriculum to support the implementation of LGBT Inclusive Education.</p> <p>The impact of this resource will be monitored throughout this session.</p>	
<b>High quality professional learning for all</b>		
Maintain an agile programme for all ELC and school staff to include opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Probationers,</li> <li>- Early-stage teachers,</li> <li>- Middle leaders</li> <li>- Senior leaders</li> <li>- Supply staff</li> <li>- ELC Staff at all levels</li> </ul>	<p>Training for all ELC staff is available on ACC Learn. Locality Leads also deliver bespoke training for individual settings.</p> <p>A programme for Managers/SEYPs is underway and will run over 4 sessions. The focus will be on roles and responsibilities and implementation of key policies and guidance. Circle training will take place in November to ensure all settings have begun the implementation of the ELC resource Up, Up and Away</p> <p>A variety of training opportunities delivered by Education Scotland and the Northern Alliance has also been shared with all ELC staff to ensure staff have access to best practice from across Scotland.</p>	
Explore increasing opportunities for collaboration at subject level	The first of a series of sessions providing curriculum development training for PTs and Faculty heads took place in September. This provided opportunities for curriculum leads to collaborate on curriculum frameworks and to consider how to support staff to review and improve courses on offer across the broad general education and senior phase.	
Where possible, support staff to gain qualifications in order to realise career progression and promotion	<p>Funded opportunities are offered annually via Workforce Development and Expansion funding for ELC staff to undertake accredited qualifications. This enables them to meet SSSC registration requirements for their roles and supports aspiring staff who wish to realise career progression and promotion.</p> <p>We currently have 6 middle leaders or staff in acting Head Teacher positions who are undertaking the Into Headship Programme through Education Scotland and Aberdeen University, which provides the relevant Standard for Headship in Scotland and is a requirement for a Head Teacher position.</p>	

<b>Senior and Middle Leadership development</b>		
Continue to deliver a programme for Middle Leaders to enhance leadership skills	<p>Following the successful introduction of Middle Leaders programmes last session, both programmes will be run again. Applications for our most experienced Middle Leaders group, Readiness for Into Headship will begin in October with 9 new Middle Leaders chosen to develop their leadership.</p> <p>There is significant enthusiasm for those at the start of their Middle Leadership journey with over 100 new staff joining the Middle Leaders network. 40 Middle Leaders have enrolled to participate in the first CLPL session.</p>	
<p>Build on the network for Middle Leaders to continue to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share practice,</li> <li>- Learn from and with each other</li> <li>- Engage with professional learning opportunities to improve leadership capacity</li> </ul>	<p>A new programme established by Education Scotland is being piloted by some ACC schools and ASGs. This involves HTs training Middle Leaders to further develop their leadership skills. High quality training will be provided by Education Scotland to HTs who chose to pilot these new workshops.</p> <p>The original cohort of attendees of Readiness for Into Headship are continuing to engage in Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL). Many are also undertaking Into Headship, and a few are undertaking mentoring/coaching to support others' development. It is hoped that the increase in the number engaging in the into headship programme will provide us with our future pool of head teachers.</p>	
<b>Continue to support staff health and wellbeing</b>		
Undertake regular staff wellbeing surveys to understand the needs of staff across the system and support a timely response to this.	Staff wellbeing surveys will be undertaken between October and December to capture the current wellbeing needs of staff and support senior leaders and the central team to respond appropriately.	
<b>Monitor workforce to ensure our capacity to deliver for children and families</b>		
Monitor recruitment to ensure swift identification of any issues to be addressed.	<p>We are working closely with colleagues in P&amp;OD to ensure that requests to recruit to essential posts are made in a timely manner, using the correct process and to fit with internal governance timelines.</p> <p>Quality Improvement Managers are working with P&amp;OD to streamline processes wherever possible and ensure that schools are fully aware of timelines, policy and procedures.</p>	
<b>Continue to develop School Profiles</b>		
Continue to evaluate the use of school profiles and ensure access for all	<p>School profiles continue to provide schools with validated data to allow robust evaluation. The Broad General Education tracking tool provides data at three points during the year allowing schools and central staff to review interventions earlier and be more agile in their approach to identifying pupil needs and supporting them.</p> <p>Feedback is being sought on an ongoing basis to ensure the tool meets the requirements of school leaders.</p>	
<b>Implement improved tracking and reporting</b>		
Improved understanding and accountability of data at all levels	<p>Understanding Data – Tracking, Monitoring and Interventions: Responsibility and Accountability was shared with Head Teachers to disseminate to staff.</p> <p>A data training needs audit was carried out (41 Head Teacher responses). HT self-evaluation indicated that the majority felt less confident in their ability to track attainment and interventions, over time, for individuals and cohorts and in leading data discussions / upskilling staff. The QIO Team will use this information to tailor appropriate support packages for School Leaders. Once this is completed a data</p>	

	training needs analysis will be carried out with class teachers to support their understanding of data.	
Improved tracking and scrutiny of impact data related to the 6 groups identified in the Child Poverty Action Plan and those with protected characteristics	<p>A Multi-agency Child Protection Committee subgroup is currently focusing on neglect and the links to child poverty. A 'Neglect Toolkit' has been created to support practitioners. This work will align with a LOIP project aiming to focus on staff reporting confidence in identifying and taking action on harm.</p> <p>The tracking of those children and young people who are Looked After and educated in another authority continues to be developed alongside the other local authorities with 3 points in the year when information on exclusions / attendance / Curriculum for Excellence data is requested.</p>	
Review current tracking systems for BGE and beyond to ensure accurate tracking of attainment for all children and young people including those on the edge of care	A short life working group has been established with a focus on improving our ACC tracking systems for care experienced learners. A pilot group (Senior leaders from primary and secondary) will use the agreed new tracking format for a period of 3-6 months, evaluations will then take place before further use.	
<b>Collaborate with partners to join data sets when beneficial to do so</b>		
Improve data sharing processes to ensure that all relevant data can be shared to support planning and implementation of interventions e.g., PEPAS, Health	<p>Our counselling services are now part of the request for assistance process, and this will allow us to evidence the use of this intervention alongside our wider data sets.</p> <p>Schools continue to gather their extra-curricular activity data, which is linked to Mysport, a Sport Scotland data portal to allow us to gather an overview of extra-curricular and sporting activity across Aberdeen City.</p>	
<b>Increase central oversight of tracking data and PEF impact measures</b>		
Roll out the Pupil Equity Fund tracker and share best practice	The Equity Planner/Tracker has been issued to all schools and was completed by the end September. The costed school Pupil Equity Plan linked to the Power BI tool will support the ongoing monitoring of the impact of interventions through common performance measures. This will enable analysis at individual school and Local Authority level.	
<b>Clear expectations around the Core Quality Indicators</b>		
Implement the refreshed Quality Improvement Framework to help improve standards against the core Quality Indicators	The Quality Improvement team continue to plan in a responsive way with targeted sessions for individual school settings. This enables a more bespoke package to be developed for each setting.	
<b>Continually improve central Quality Improvement approaches</b>		
Development of a quality improvement calendar which provides well planned, focused quality improvement activity	A digital quality improvement calendar has been developed and shared with all head teachers to ensure clear and consistent messaging of expectations. This is planned in response to the agreed Quality Improvement Framework and support model.	
Evaluate the impact of each programme of quality improvement to determine next steps	Our Quality Improvement Framework was reviewed in May 2023, and we continue to evaluate as we implement Quality Improvement Approaches. Engagement with Education Scotland and the Northern Alliance provides an opportunity to moderate our assessments.	

<b>Maintain approaches to collaborative improvement across the city</b>		
Implement actions associated with the Armed Forces Covenant	<p>The school application process has now been updated to include UK Armed Forces data capture. The service is working with other services to establish armed forces champions within each service to take forward accreditation activities in order to maintain our Gold status.</p> <p>In addition to this we have been working closely with the Northern Alliance in order to promote Armed Forces information for families including signposting to funding via the ACC website</p>	
Review Partnership Forums to maximise their impact	Revised Partnership Forum Guidance will be issued to schools following the October break and the service is currently identifying examples of best practice in how Partnership Forums are operating across the city with a view to sharing this through HT events later this session.	
<b>Delivery of Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan</b>		
Work with the parent forum to improve communication between schools and parents and increase parental engagement	The service has distributed a Citizen Space survey to all Parent Councils from 1 <sup>st</sup> September to 27 <sup>th</sup> October to establish a baseline to build upon. The survey asks for feedback on the current communication levels and how we can work together in the future. Parental Engagement CLPL has been added to probationer programme to support increased engagement. Quality Improvement Managers and Education Support Officers continue to attend the Aberdeen Parent Council Forum to provide local authority updates and support.	
Review and update the Parental involvement & Engagement Plan	In preparation for the updated Parental Involvement and Engagement plan in August 2024 a parent survey has been prepared for distribution as part of the consultation process. This will be distributed between October and Christmas to provide time for analysis.	
<b>Delivery of neurodevelopmental pathway</b>		
This is now being addressed within the Children's Services plan and led by the Children's Services Board	A pilot project to support the delivery of the neurodevelopmental pathway has been initiated at Woodside School and St Machar Academy. This includes professional learning for staff on supporting children with Autism.	
<b>More closely align the universal services of health and education</b>		
Design and capitalise on opportunities for co-location and co-delivery of services for children and families	A pilot project established at Northfield Academy with two focus areas: awareness raising of career opportunities in Health and Social Care (S2/S3 identified); drop-in sessions (after the school day) for young mums, co-delivered by Health and Sheddocksley Baptist Church. The hope is that through developing relationships we can support mums to ensure their children receive the vaccinations and health supports they are entitled to. Progress will be reported here and through the Children's Service Board	
<b>Accessibility Plan Updates</b>		
Augmentative and alternative signage at learner appropriate height Toilets signposted as accessible	A review being undertaken by Corporate Landlord as advised at September committee. This will ensure all signage is at an appropriate height and accessible to all.	
Consider suitability, accessibility and capacity within Victorian schools	A review being undertaken by Corporate Landlord as part of the school estate strategy and updates will be provided as they become available.	

through feasibility study and options appraisal		
CIRCLE framework training delivered with partners across settings including use of Up and Away to support understanding of environments to meet needs.	<p>The overarching CIRCLE (Child Inclusion: Research into Curriculum, Learning and Education) Partnership has branched out into subgroups – to ensure a focused approach, aligning professionals with relevant expertise.</p> <p>CIRCLE contacts specific to ELC settings have been identified and a network via Teams has been established providing all participants with easy access to documentation and a collaboration space in which to share ideas.</p> <p>Training offers, in-person and virtual, are in planned for and will be delivered by ACC and NHS colleagues working in partnership to support all sectors.</p>	
Develop guidance to meet a range of sensory needs	Initial development is underway with EPS service and a group has been formed to consider next steps	
Child's planning format which is accessible for learners	A draft child's plan which is more accessible to young people has been created by the multi-agency group and is currently out for consultation with all partners.	
Empower children and young people to have their voice heard when experiencing child protection processes through effective use of alternative communication systems	A LOIP project charter has commenced. A multi-agency group has been established to develop small tests of change which if successful can be rolled out across all settings. This work will be supported by CALL Scotland and other digital experts.	
Access to information through a single digital source of information for parents, carers and disabled young people	There is ongoing liaison with the Family Information Service and initial data gathering. This work will feed into the digital transformation work being done in partnership with Microsoft.	
Implement "One Good Adult" programme	The One Good Adult job profile is now a feature of our recruitment process. This has also now been carefully considered by HTs during our first collaborative meeting of the year for Senior Leaders to consider how this may also feature within school expectations, annual reviews etc. This resource has also been shared with our customer feedback team to be considered as part of the child friendly complaints process.	
Ensure summary information regarding additional support needs is accessible and available in a variety of formats in accordance with legislation	A parent group has been established and is meeting next term to consider potential barriers and formats to support improved information sharing. Working directly with parents and advocates will allow us to regularly review and update our communication strategy.	

## **Appendix C - Briefing on Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) exam results for August 2023**

### **Introduction**

This briefing covers attainment against Scottish Qualifications Authority data linked to the 2023 examination diet, which was released in August 2023. Attainment in around 1000 courses (the attainment of those undertaking National Progression Awards at L4,5 and 6, Foundation Apprenticeships and HNC Awards for example) are not included. This analysis has not taken account of student appeals.

As a result, this is a partial picture of Senior Phase attainment, pending a full local analysis of enhanced datasets provided through the subsequent release of Insight Tool information, including the courses outlined above. Early assessments of core Local Benchmarking Measures from this latter release are presented within Appendix A of this report.

### **Education Service Context**

In terms of context, the size and characteristics of our Senior Phase school roll are seen as contributing influences on the attainment outcomes of this cohort in 2023. Over the last 2 years, schools have welcomed high numbers of both international students and those seeking refuge in the city. 5.2% of young people in S4, and 4% of those in both S5 and S6 have joined school communities since the school census was taken in mid-September 2022. As a result, these young people have often been placed into available courses rather than benefiting from being able to select from the full range of senior phases courses, some of which may have been areas of academic strength for these pupils.

Language barriers have also presented as an issue for some of these new pupils that have been welcomed to the City, although the Service has been able to apply its extended experience of guiding pupils with less developed English language skills, to assist them to meet their fullest potential.

2022/23 also saw industrial action impact on the delivery of senior phase courses and programmes at various points in the year which, despite school and service level mitigations during and subsequent to these periods of disruption, may be considered to have had some consequences.

### **National Data and Assessment Methodologies**

2023 is the second year where grade boundary mitigation has been applied to a resumed exam diet. As a result, the boundaries for grade C and D in 2023 shifted by 2 percentage points across SCQF Levels 5-7. This has to be taken into account when making direct comparisons with results from 2022.

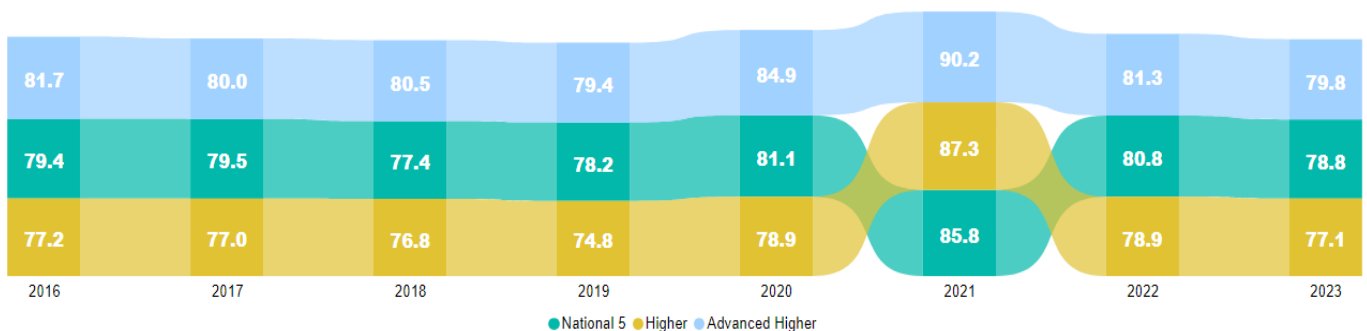
As a result of the changes in assessment methodologies and grade boundaries, the national pass rate across all levels of qualification rose in previous years, The extent of the change is highlighted below in the SQA comparison of 2022 data with that from 2021 and 2019.



Over recent years the Scottish Qualifications Authority have adapted grade boundaries to take account of the impact of the pandemic and ensure the long-term integrity of the qualifications system. This, along with changes in assessment models, has necessitated the need to take an extended view of attainment outcomes in order to gauge the progression of our pupil cohorts, an approach which is reflected in the data captured in Appendix A.

### SCQF Level 5-7 National Pass Rate (A-C)

Scotland: Attainment Rate (A-C)



### High Level Analysis

There were 4,290 young people in the senior phase of our secondary schools at the point of school census in September 2022, this has since risen by a further 202 pupils resulting in a total of **4,492 pupils**. This is 352 more young people than in 2022. The rise in pupil numbers brings a corresponding rise in the number of courses young people were presented for to **23,022 in 2023**. This is an increase of around 3000 from 2022 and is 7000 higher than in 2019.

There has been a steady rise in the number of presentations for SQA awards per pupil from 4.65 per pupil in 2019, to 4.87 per pupil in 2022 to an all-time high of **5.37 per pupil in 2023**. The rise demonstrates increasing ambition for young people and indicates more ambitious and consistently applied presentation policies.

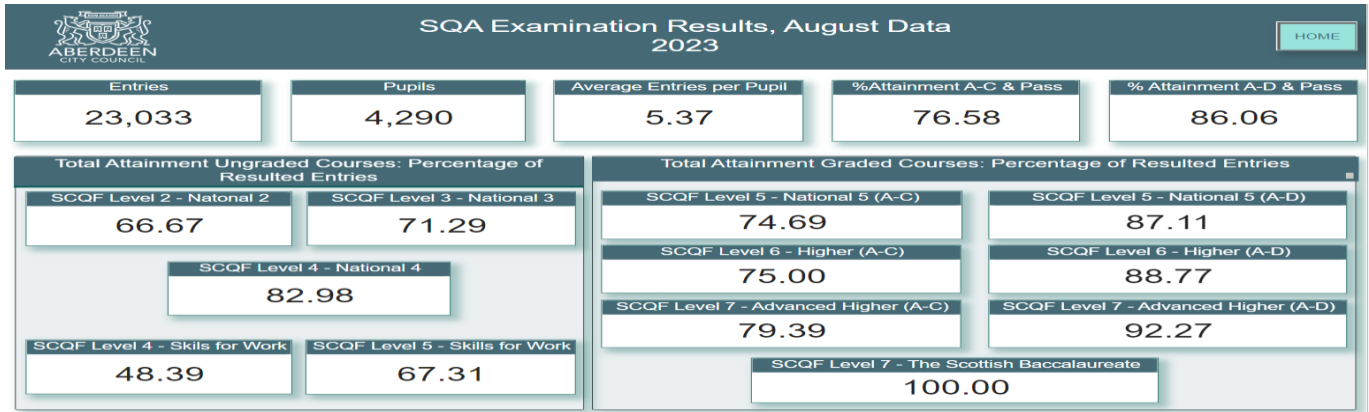
The pre appeal pass rate (A-C) for all (ungraded and graded) courses is **76.58% in 2023**. This is a **decrease of 4.8% on 2022**. Differing trends across different stages and Levels are explored later in this briefing.

There is a slight dip in the quality of overall grades:

- Nearly **36%** of those presented for an SQA course attained A, which is very similar to last year.
- **21.5%** presented for an SQA course attained a B, which is 2 percentage points lower than last year.



- **18%** presented for an SQA course attained a C, a dip of 1 percentage point from last year.
- Nearly **13%** presented attained a D, which is nearly 3 percentage points higher than last year.
- **12%** of pupils presented for an SQA award received no award, this is an increase of 2 percentage points on last year and possibly reflective of the first year of amended curriculum structures in some schools.

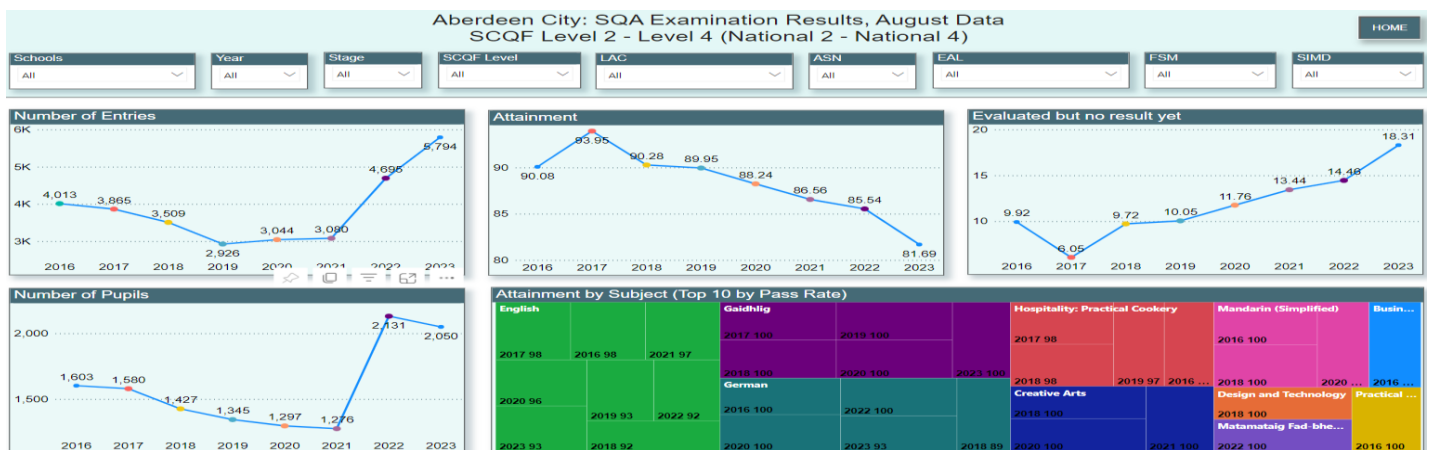


### Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Levels 2 - 4: All Stages

In National 2, National 3 and National 4 courses, learners complete unit assessments throughout the year. National 4 courses also include an end-of-year assessment called an added value unit instead of an exam.

National 2, National 3 and National 4 courses are assessed as 'pass' or 'no result yet' and are quality assured by SQA. Some courses are delivered over more than one academic year.

### **SCQF 2-4 All Year Groups:**



There has been a drop in the attainment rate from 85.5% in 2022 to 81.6% in 2023. The main drivers around this outcome are currently being examined in concert with school leaders, but this could suggest that young people are being coursed more appropriately to their assessed abilities. This analysis will help inform schools and teaching staff judgements on presentation decisions at these levels for the current year.

Young people from S3 to S6 were presented for awards with the highest proportion of young people being in S4.

The steep rise in the number of entries reflects the high number of young people arriving in the city over the last 2 years. This is evidenced, in particular, in increased presentations at Dyce and Bucksburn Academies, both of which support greater numbers/proportions of young people fleeing conflict.

There is, however, a slight drop in the number of children presented for a National 4, which appears to be linked to more young people being guided to maintain their studies at National 5 than previously. Professional judgements at school and teacher levels come into play with this direction of travel but it is important that pupils are encouraged to attain the highest level of qualification that their assessed capabilities can deliver.

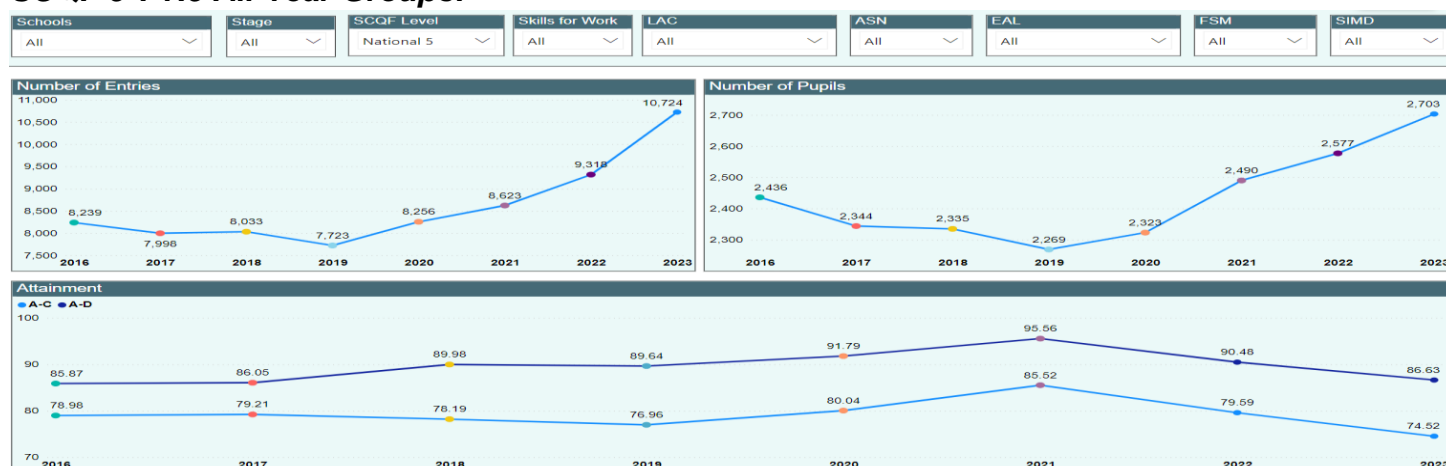
### **Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 5: National Courses - National 5, All Stages**

National 5 courses (SCQF Level 5) were introduced in 2014. National 5 courses require the attainment of a number of SQA quality assured internally assessed units and a course assessment which, in most cases, will be externally assessed through an examination and/or coursework.

National 5 courses are all graded A, B, C or D and 'No Award'; grades A to C indicate a pass and grade D indicates an achievement at SCQF Level 5. Achieving a D in a National 5 courses is more 'valuable' than a pass at National 4.

25% of the entire secondary population were presented for a National 5, 1295 more presentations were made compared than in 2022. This indicates higher aspiration for young people in schools and more consistent application of presentation policies.

#### **SCQF 5-7 N5 All Year Groups:**



Aberdeen City Council Attainment at National 5 in 2022 (79.5%) was in line with the national pass rate of 80.8%. The pre appeal pass rate (A-C) at National 5 in 2023 is sitting at **74.52%**. This constitutes a pre appeal reduction of 5% from 2022.

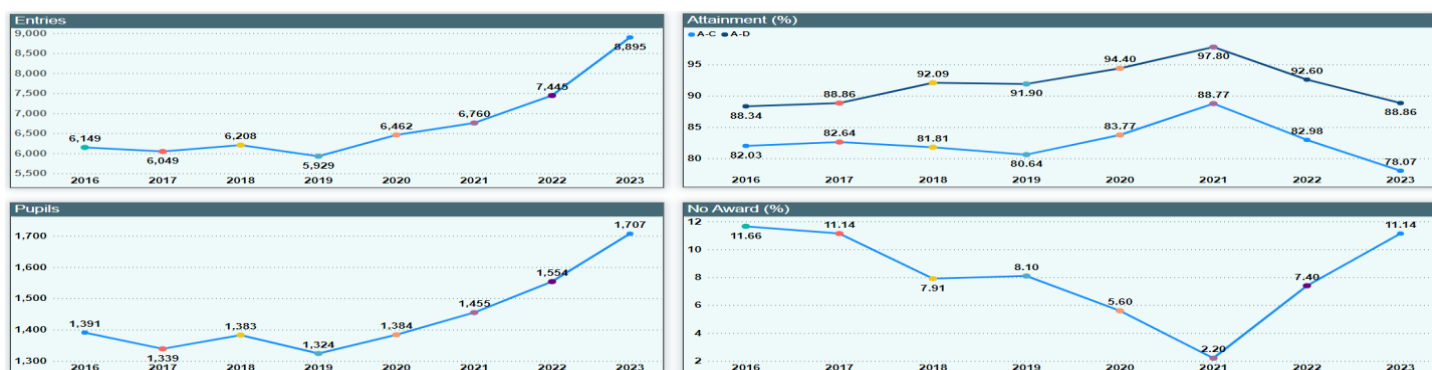
Over 36% of National 5 entries achieved an A, this is around 5 % less than 2022. 21% of National 5 presentations resulted in a B, and 17% a C. B and C grades are in line with 2022.

1,299 pupils presented for a National 5 were awarded a D. This award is of more value than a National 4 and is an increase of nearly 300 from 2022. 99.85% of all pupils on the roll in September were presented for at least one National 5 award.

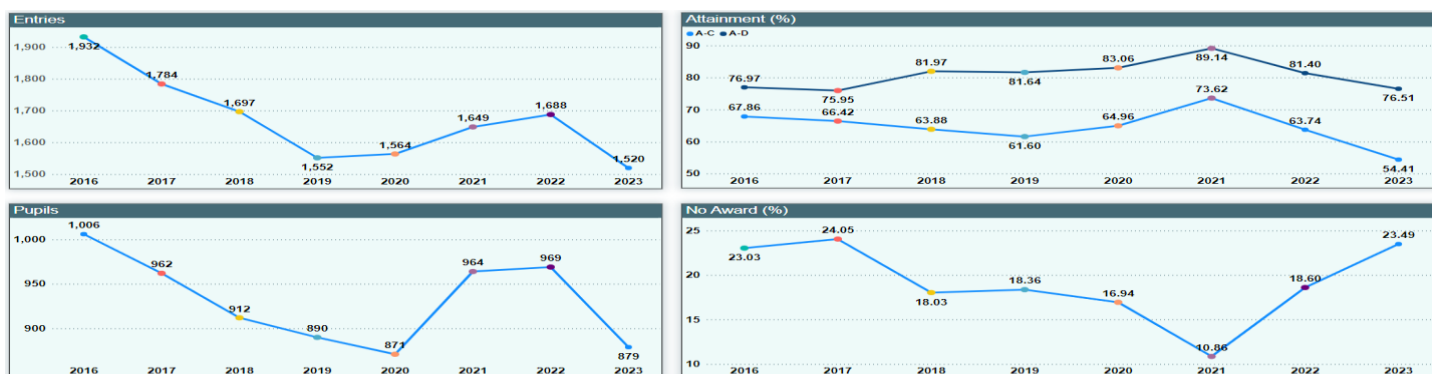
12.4% of National 5 presentations resulted in a No Award (1349 pupils), this is 3% higher than in 2022. This is most likely as a result of schools maintaining the presentation of young people on higher level courses and is variable from school to school. This will be explored more fully when full national comparisons can be made.

Pupils from across S1 to S6 were presented for a National 5 award with the highest number of entries from those in S4. There were more entries from S3 pupils than ever before with 45 presentations made and a pass rate of 93% for S3 pupils.

### SCQF 5-7 National 5 S4:



### SCQF 5-7 National 5 (S5 and S6)



There is clear evidence that those in higher secondary stages (S5 and S6) have prioritised higher level qualifications over National 5 as the level of No Awards increases from 11% in S4 to 22% in S6. This likely indicates that young people are being quite tactical to secure the higher-level qualifications required to access their positive destination of choice.

### National 5 highlights:

- 1582 English presentations (15% of the total secondary school population) with over 39% of those presented achieving an A Pass
- 563 Physical Education presentations (5% of population) with 46.7% of those presented achieving an A Pass
- 732 Biology presentations (7% of the total secondary school population) with 42.5% of those presented achieving an A pass

- 668 Chemistry presentation (6% of the total secondary school population) with 43.7% of those presented achieving an A pass.
- 1067 Mathematics presentations (10% of the total secondary school population) with 33.8% of those presented achieving an A pass
- 111 French presentations (1% of the total secondary school population) with over 70% achieving an A Pass.

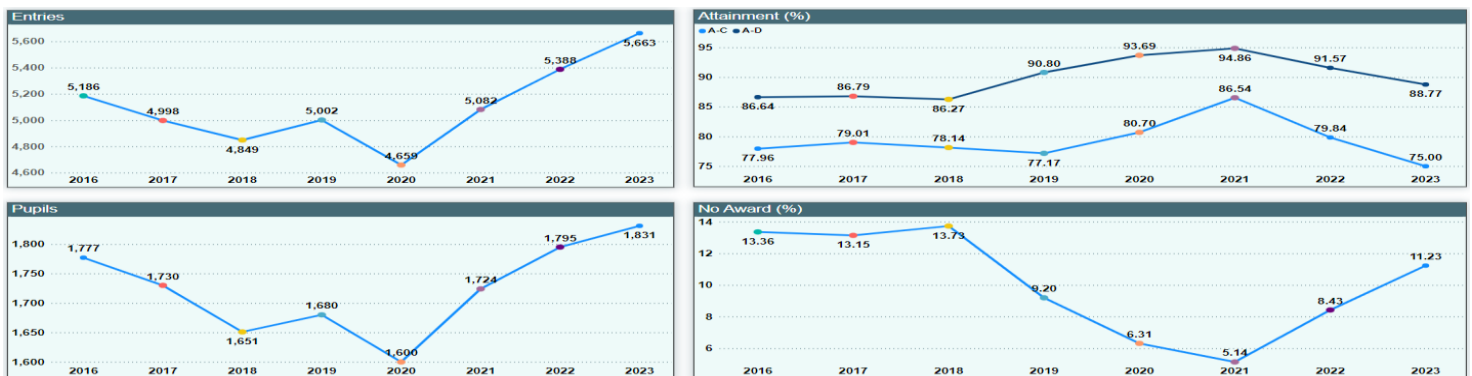
### Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 6 – Higher

The current Higher qualification was first introduced in 2015. The courses require the attainment of a number of SQA quality assured internally assessed units and a course assessment which, in most cases, will be externally assessed through an examination and/or coursework.

17.5% of all secondary school students were presented for at least one Higher.

275 more presentations were made in 2023 than in 2022.

### SCQF 5-7 Higher, All Year Groups:

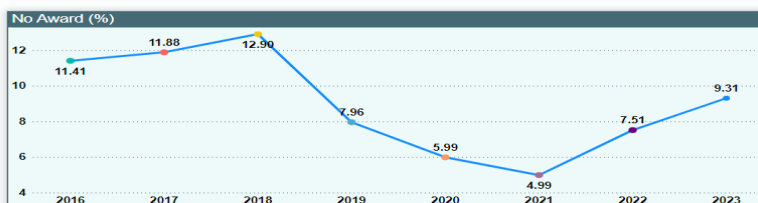
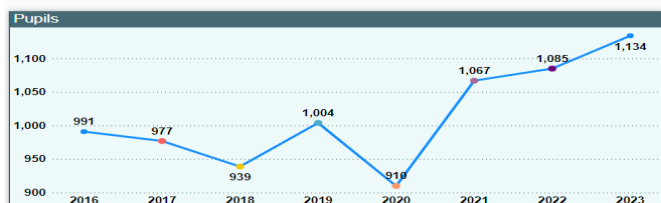
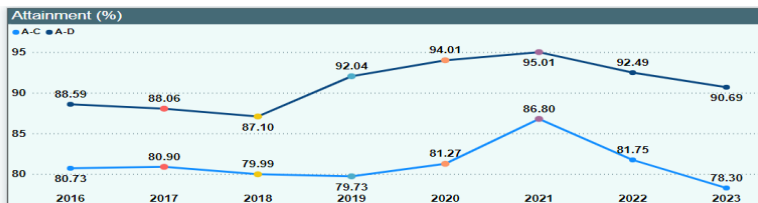
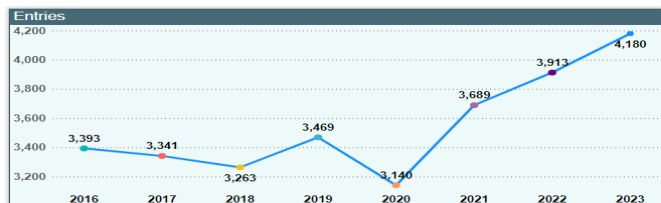


ACC Attainment at Higher in 2022 (80%) was higher than the national pass rate of 79%. The pre appeal pass rate (A-C) at Higher for 2023 is sitting at **75%**. This is 2% below post appeals data for 2019 and nearly 5% less than in 2022.

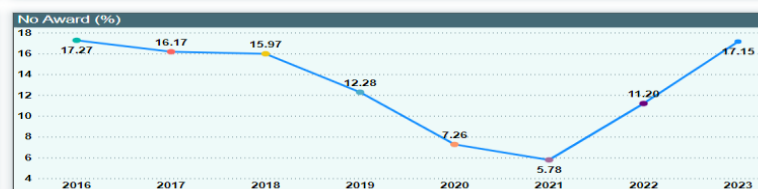
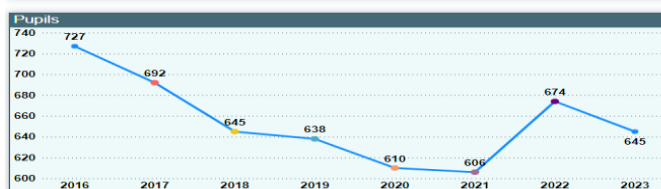
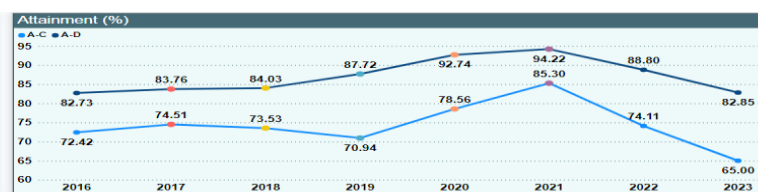
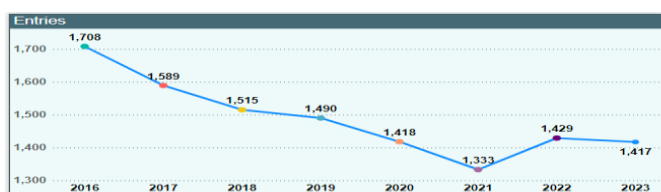
34% of those entered for a higher achieved an A grade and 22% a B (both around 2% lower than in 2022). 19% achieved a C grade which is a slight increase from 2022.

Of the 5,663 presentations, 780 were awarded a D and 636 a No Award. These are both slightly higher than in 2022 where 632 young people were awarded a D and 454 a No Award. The 2023 data is more reflective of pre-pandemic levels. 46 young people in S4 were presented for 54 Highers.

## SCQF 5-7 Higher S5:



## SCQF 5-7 Higher S6:



Pupils from across S3 to S6 were presented for a higher with the highest proportion of young people being in S5. There is clear evidence that those in S6 were more likely to prioritise Advanced Highers required to secure their positive destination of choice over Higher courses with more No Awards in S6 than at other stages.

Highlights include:

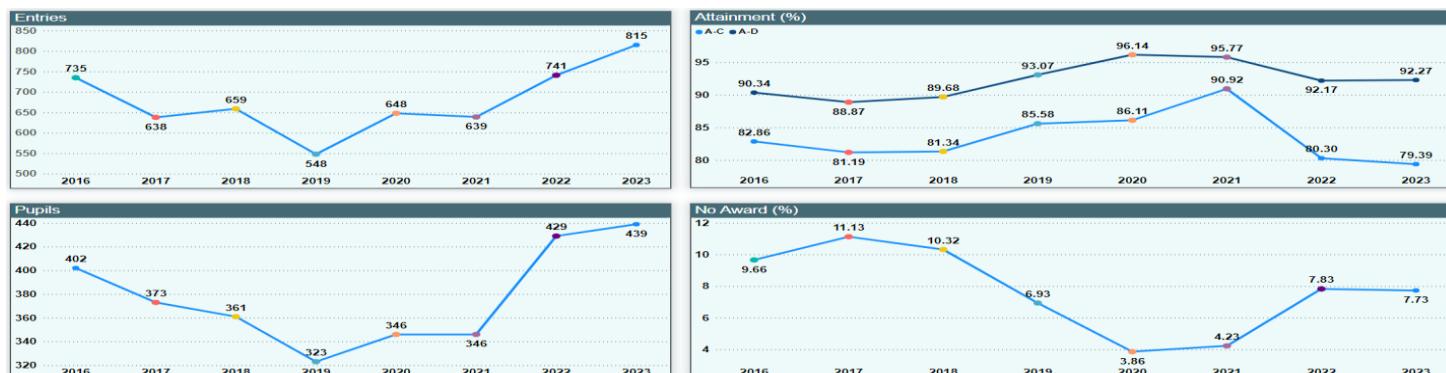
- 333 Modern Studies students presentations (3% of the total secondary school population) with 46% achieving an A grade
- 159 Music presentations (2% of the total secondary school population) with 56% achieving an A grade
- 270 Physical Education presentations (3% of the total secondary school population) with 45% achieving an A grade
- 600 Mathematics presentations (6% of the total secondary school population) with 38% achieving an A grade
- 367 Biology students (4% of the total secondary school population) with 40% achieving an A grade.
- 417 chemistry students (4% of the total secondary school population) with 35% achieving an A grade
- 961 English students (9% of the total secondary school population) with 28% achieving an A grade

## Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 7- Advanced Higher

The current Advanced Higher (SCQF Level 7) qualification was first introduced in 2016. The courses require the attainment of a number of SQA quality assured internally assessed units and a course assessment which, in most cases, will be externally assessed though an examination and/or coursework.

4.3% of all pupils were presented for an Advanced Higher with 74 more presentations than in 2022.

### SCQF 5-7 Advanced Higher All Year Groups:



ACC Attainment at Advanced Higher in 2022 (80.3%) was in line with national pass rate of 81.3% following a considerable rise in entries. The pass rate (A-C) at Advanced Higher is sitting at **79.39%**. This is less than 1% below post appeals data for 2019 and nearly 6% less than in 2022.

32% of those presented for an Advanced Higher achieved an A Pass in line with 2022 data. 26.5% of those presented achieved a B pass (2% higher than 2022) and 21% achieved a C (a reduction of 2% from 2022)

Young people from across S5 to S6 were presented for an Advanced Higher. The 20 young people presented for an Advanced Higher in S5 enjoyed a 100% pass rate (14 at A and 6 at B). The number of No Awards have reduced since 2022 but are slightly higher than in 2019. Highlights include:

- 100% pass rates in some subjects including Spanish and French
- 87% of those who were presented for Advanced Higher Spanish achieved an A

### Breadth and Depth S4-6

There is evidence that young people are being presented for and awarded a greater range of qualifications at a higher level. The full extent of this will only be known with the final publication of Insight in February. The following table outlines the pre-review achievement. outcomes.

Percentage of pupils by National Awards gained and the SCQF Level at which they are achieved by Stage

Year	Awards	S4			S5		S6	
		% SCQF Level 3	% SCQF Level 4	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 5	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 6	% SCQF Level 7
2023	1 or more awards at A - C	98	97	80	65	56	39	20

2 or more awards at A - C	96	93	69	55	45	28	11
3 or more awards at A - C	90	88	58	44	36	16	5
4 or more awards at A - C	83	80	49	34	28	4	0
5 or more awards at A - C	72	70	42	22	17	0	0
6 or more awards at A - C	60	58	33	2	1	0	0

At Stage 4, the outcomes at SCQF Levels 3-5 are generally in line with that in 2022 with increases in the proportion of pupils achieving 6 and 7 or more awards at A-C and gains in the proportion of pupils achieving at least Level 4 by the end of the stage. The 2022 results represent a significant advance on those in 2019.

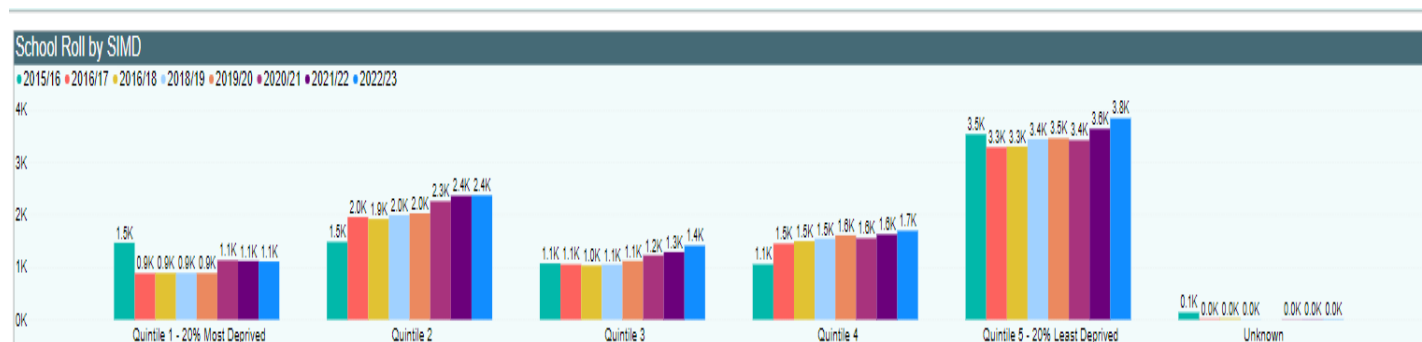
Stage 5 results at SCQF Levels 5 are indicating a slight fall off in achievement on 2022 and with SCQF Level 6 (Higher) attainment being in line with previous year figures Pupils at Stage 6 experienced reductions on 2022 achievement at SCQF Level 6 (Higher) but a stable outcome at SCQF 7 (Advanced Higher). The SCQF Level 7 data shows statistical gains on the 2019 figures.

From this pre-review data, at an aggregated level, the number of pupils across S4-6 gaining a greater number and level of qualifications has increased on both 2022 and the 2019 baseline with those at Stage 4 showing the most improvement,

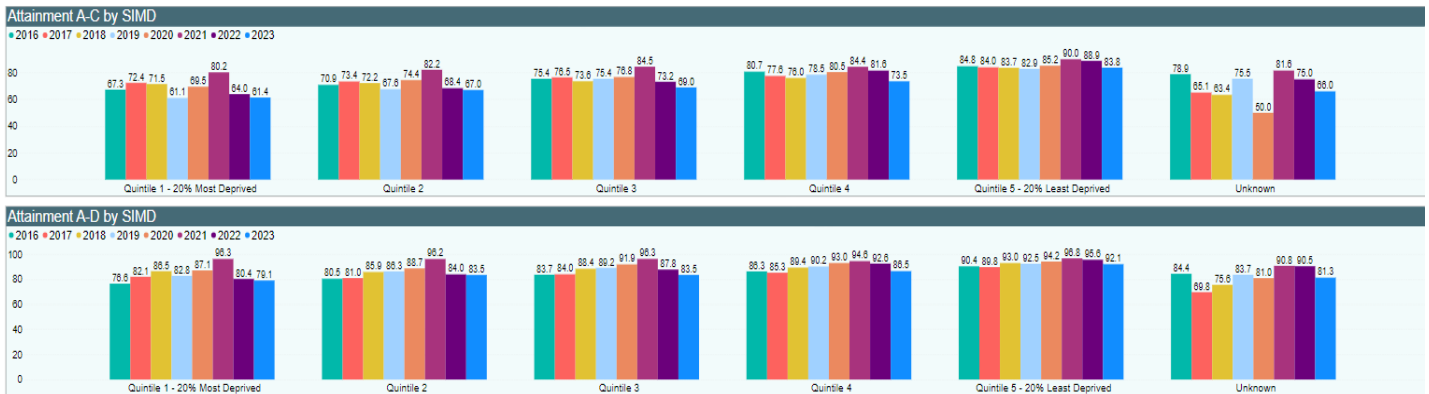
### Closing the Gap

This data needs to be evaluated with some caution and can only be fully interpreted when detailed analysis of the Insight data is completed. The information contained in Appendix A offers some perspectives around SIMD outcomes aligned with Local Benchmarking Measures derived from early analysis of the data from the Insight Tool. These data, although only a snapshot, suggest that the outcomes of the Most Deprived (SIMD 1) pupils are improved over time with a consequential closing of the deprivation related gap.

The spread of young people across SIMD quintiles is uneven as outlined below with the number living in Quintile 2 being almost two and a half times greater than those living in Quintile 1. Up to this point, we had a considerable attainment gap at Quintile 2, an issue that is an express point of focus in delivery of the National Improvement Framework Plan over the course of this academic year.

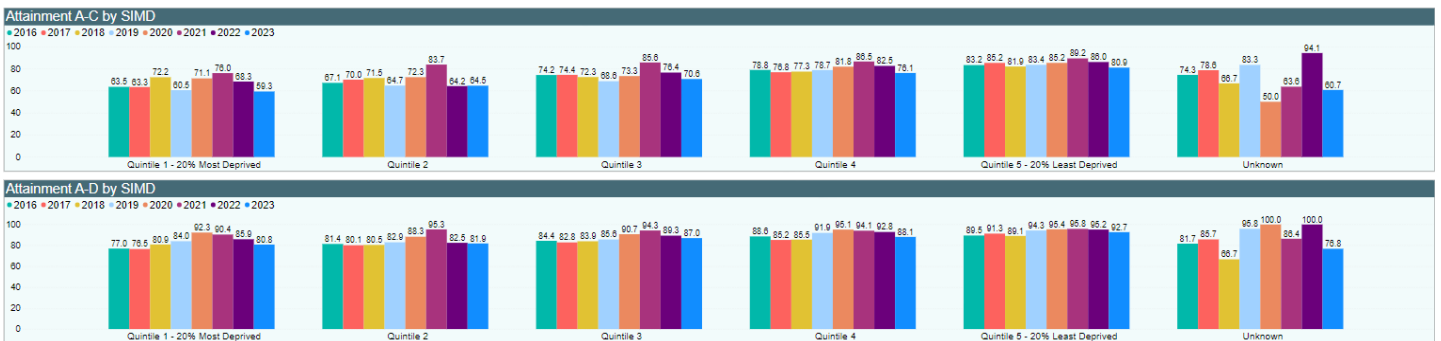


## Attainment at National 5 by SIMD Quintiles:



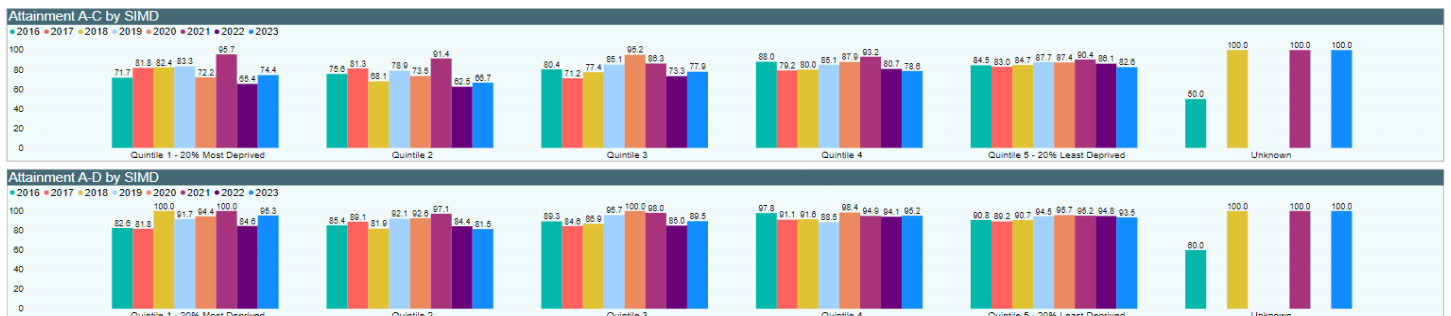
The dip in pass rate appears to have impacted all quintiles, (see comment above under\_National Data and Assessment Methodologies section) although appears to have impacted on higher quintiles more. Quintile 2 is the least impacted by value and year-on-year percentage change, followed by Quintile 1.

## Attainment at Higher by SIMD Quintiles:



With the exception of Quintile 2, which presents very stable year-on-year outcomes at Higher Level, there is a uniform but small reduction in attainment across the SIMD spectrum.

## Attainment at Advanced Higher by SIMD Quintiles:



Attainment is most improved at Quintile 1 with Quintiles 2 and 3 also realising growth. We are, however, unable to draw firm conclusions on this data until final Insight is published in February.



### **Reflections on the data:**

- The increase in pupil presentations is positive
- The dip in pass rate is of concern but will only be fully understood when we have complete published national data.
- There is evidence of young people being quite tactical which will have contributed to the number of No Awards. The higher number of No Awards is worthy of further investigation
- There is evidence of improvement for those who are Looked After and evidence of the impact of the two Edge of Care Pilots
- There are positive signs in Breadth and Depth measures, again, this need to be reviewed fully when Insight is published in February.
- There is evidence of increased ambition for those with additional support needs with over 1000 additional presentations
- Generally, there are signs that those living in lower quintiles have been less impacted by the reduction in passes than their peers in higher Quintiles. This will have to be fully analysed when Insight is published in February.
- There is evidence that there can be a dip with an outgoing HT. This needs to be carefully considered so that we can respond proactively.
- There is a need to continue to focus on tracking and moderation
- The thread of curriculum required to be a continual focus.
- There are some exceptionally strong teachers who have helped young people achieve 100% pass rates. There is a need to continue to utilise their expertise to support others.

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## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children’s Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	21 November 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CFS/23/335
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard, Interim Director, Children’s and Family Services
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Shona Milne, Chief Education Officer and Graeme Simpson, Chief Officer, Integrated Children’s and Family Services/CSWO
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Chief Officers
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.4

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps in accordance with Education and Children’s Services Committee Terms of Reference to provide assurance that risks are being managed effectively within Education and Integrated Children’s Services Clusters.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note the Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps set out in appendices A, B, C and D.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for overseeing the system of risk management and for receiving assurance that the Extended Corporate Management Team (ECMT) are effectively identifying and managing risks. Reviewing the strength and effectiveness of the Council’s system of risk management as a whole is a key role for the Committee.
- 3.2 The Risk Management Policy Framework states that all committees should receive assurance on the risk management arrangements which fall within their terms of reference. This is provided through the risk registers for the relevant Clusters which fall within the remit for this Committee as detailed below:
- Education
  - Integrated Children’s and Family Services

## Risk Registers

- 3.3 The Council's Risks Registers are tools used by Functions and Clusters to capture and manage the risks which could prevent achievement of organisational outcomes and service delivery.
- 3.4 The Council's Corporate Risk Register (CRR) captures the risks which pose the most significant threat to the achievement of the Council's organisational outcomes and have the potential to cause failure of service delivery. The CRR is scrutinised annually by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.5 The Cluster Risk Registers are set out in appendices A and B and reflect the risks which may prevent the Clusters from delivering on organisational outcomes and services, these risks may be escalated to the CRR where deemed necessary.
- 3.6 The risks contained within the Risk Register for each Cluster are grouped by risk category in appendix E and show the Council's corresponding risk appetite for each category as set within the Council's Risk Appetite Statement (RAS) which was approved by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee in March 2023.
- The Clusters are working towards a target risk score which aligns with the risk appetite.
- 3.7 The Cluster Risk Registers provides the organisation with the detailed information and assessment for each risk identified including;
- **Current risk score** – this is current assessment of the risk by the risk owner and reflects the progress percentage of control actions required in order to achieve the target risk score.
  - **Target risk score** – this is the assessment of the risk by the risk owner after the application of the control actions. This is aligned with the risk appetite for this particular category of risk.
  - **Control Actions** – these are the activities and items that will mitigate the effect of the risk event on the organisation.
  - **Risk score** – each risk is assessed using a 4x6 risk matrix as detailed below.

The 4 scale represents the impact of the risk and the 6 scale represents the likelihood of the risk event.

Impact	Score						
Very Serious	4	4	8	12	16	20	24
Serious	3	3	6	9	12	15	18
Material	2	2	4	6	8	10	12
Negligible	1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Score		1	2	3	4	5	6
Likelihood		Impossible	Almost Very Low	Low	Significant	High	Very High

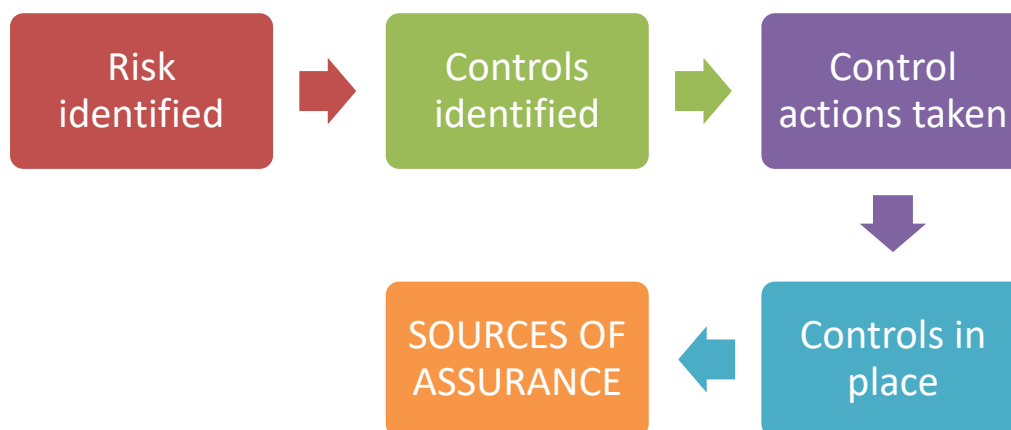
3.8 Development and improvement of the Cluster Risk Registers and associated risk management processes has continued since the Cluster Risk Register was last reported to Committee:

- The Council's Risk Appetite Statement (RAS) was reviewed and updated.
- "Managing Risk" pages were published on the Council's intranet pages which contains information and links for officers and elected members on the Council's RAS, Risk Management Policy, Guidance and Training. This supports the further embedding of our risk management culture and ensures that everyone knows the part they play in managing risks within the wider system.
- Training was provided to officers on the updated Committee report template risk sections that were reviewed and updated to reflect RAS, ensuring that officers fully align their proposals to elected members with the Council's agreed risk appetite statement.
- Risk owners and leads continue to review and update risk registers to improve monitoring and reporting across the organisation. These are mechanisms which reflect the day-to-day business of assessing and mitigating the risks and opportunities inherent in delivering public services.

### **Assurance Maps**

3.9 The risk registers which are reviewed by the Council's Committees detail the risks identified within each of the relevant Functions and Clusters and provide detail of the risk, the potential impact and consequence of the risk materialising and the control actions and activities required to manage and mitigate the risk. Assurance Maps as set out in appendices C and D provide a visual representation of the sources of assurance associated with each Cluster so that the Committee can consider where these are sufficient. Sources of assurance are controls which are fully effective, following the completion of control actions. Presentation of each Cluster's assurance map provides full sight of the

defences we have in place as an organisation to manage the risks facing local government.



3.10 The Assurance Map provides a breakdown of the sources of assurance within “three lines of defence”, the different levels at which risk is managed. Within a large and complex organisation like the Council, risk management takes place in many ways. The Assurance Map is a way of capturing the sources of assurance and categorising them, thus ensuring that any gaps in sources of assurance are identifiable and can be addressed:

First Line of Defence “Do-ers”	Second Line of Defence “Helpers”	Third Line of Defence “Checkers”
The control environment; business operations performing day to day risk management activity; owning and managing risk as part of business as usual; these are the business owners, referred to as the “do-ers” of risk management.	Oversight of risk management and ensuring compliance with standards, in our case including ARSC as well as CMT and management teams; setting the policies and procedures against which risk is managed by the do-ers, referred to as the “helpers” of risk management.	Internal and external audit, inspection and regulation, thereby offering independent assurance of the first and second lines of defence, the “do-ers” and “helpers”, referred to as the checkers” of risk management.

### **Risk Overview**

#### **Education**

3.11 Fortnightly assessment and mitigation of risk as part of service manager meetings has supported the education service to address identified risks over the year.

Our Quality Improvement Framework has been updated to mitigate against the risk around Quality. This along with targeted staff development activities will

provide mitigation against risk. We are beginning to see more positive inspection reports in ELC and this will continue to be reviewed over the school session.

Removal of the Scottish Attainment Challenge funding has been included as this will impact the ability of schools to deliver the level of interventions currently in place. To mitigate against this schools are being asked to describe how current interventions will become sustainable in the future.

We are seeing a rise in the number of staff reporting that they have COVID and this is impacting on staffing. This risk increases as we enter the winter term and staff are exposed to other winter illnesses.

There has been a reduction in the number of suitable applicants for HT posts and this risk reflects the requirement for those applying to either have the qualification for headship or undertake the qualification within the first 3 years of taking up post. In order to mitigate against the risk we are encouraging our own middle leaders to engage with the qualification.

Demographic changes continue to present a risk. This risk reflects the number international students arriving with families and settling in the city and the number of families fleeing conflict choosing to settle in the city.

#### Integrated Children's and Family Services

- 3.12 The risk register is routinely considered by the Chief Officer and members of the Senior Management Team. This ensure a regular review of the mitigating actions and their effectiveness but also whether new risks are emerging.

Evaluative activity in relation to Child protection and Corporate Parenting help inform our assessment of risk. In addition we utilise the findings of local and national inspection activity to which we have contributed to. All locally based regulated services continue to be graded as either very good or good.

Locally and nationally there continues to be a challenge in recruiting social workers and attracting suitable skilled staff to work within children's social care services. We continue to recognise the emotional and psychological impact on our staff as a result of the increasing workloads and the more complex needs of those they support. Mitigating the risks associate with ensuring sufficiently numbers of suitably qualified staff remains a priority.

Demographic changes continue to present a risk. The service has seen a significant and growing demand for social work intervention supporting asylum seeking young people relocated to Aberdeen City. This is a complex area of social work activity and one which historically all services have had limited exposure to.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. This report deals with risk management at Cluster level and this

process serves to identify controls and assurances that finances are being properly managed.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The Council's Risk Registers serve to manage many risks with implications for the legal position and statutory responsibilities of the Council.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## 7. RISK

- 7.1 There are no risks arising from the recommendations in this report. The Committee is provided with assurance that the risks presented within the Cluster Risk Register are those that may affect achievement of organisational outcomes and delivery of services for each Cluster are identified, appropriately managed and that the Council's activities are compliant with its statutory duties.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	The council is required to have a management system in place to identify and mitigate its risks.	The council's risk management system requires that risks are identified, listed and managed via Risk Registers.	L	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	As above.	As above.	L	Yes
<b>Operational</b>	As above.	As above.	L	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	As above.	As above.	L	Yes
<b>Reputational</b>	As above.	As above.	L	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	As above.	As above.	L	Yes

## 8. OUTCOMES

- 8.1 The recommendations within this report have no direct impact on the Council Delivery Plan however, the risks contained within the Council's risk registers could impact on the delivery of organisational outcomes.



## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Assessment</b> <b>Impact</b>	It is confirmed by the Chief Officers listed above that an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	Not applicable

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A and B - Cluster Risk Registers for Education and Integrated Children's and Family Services.

11.2 Appendix C and D - Cluster Assurance Maps for Education and Integrated Children's and Family Services.

11.3 Appendix E – Cluster Risks grouped by category

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Name</b>	Shona Milne and Graeme Simpson
<b>Title</b>	Chief Education Officer and Chief Officer, Integrated Children's and Family Services
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<b>Tel</b>	01224-522710 01224-053346

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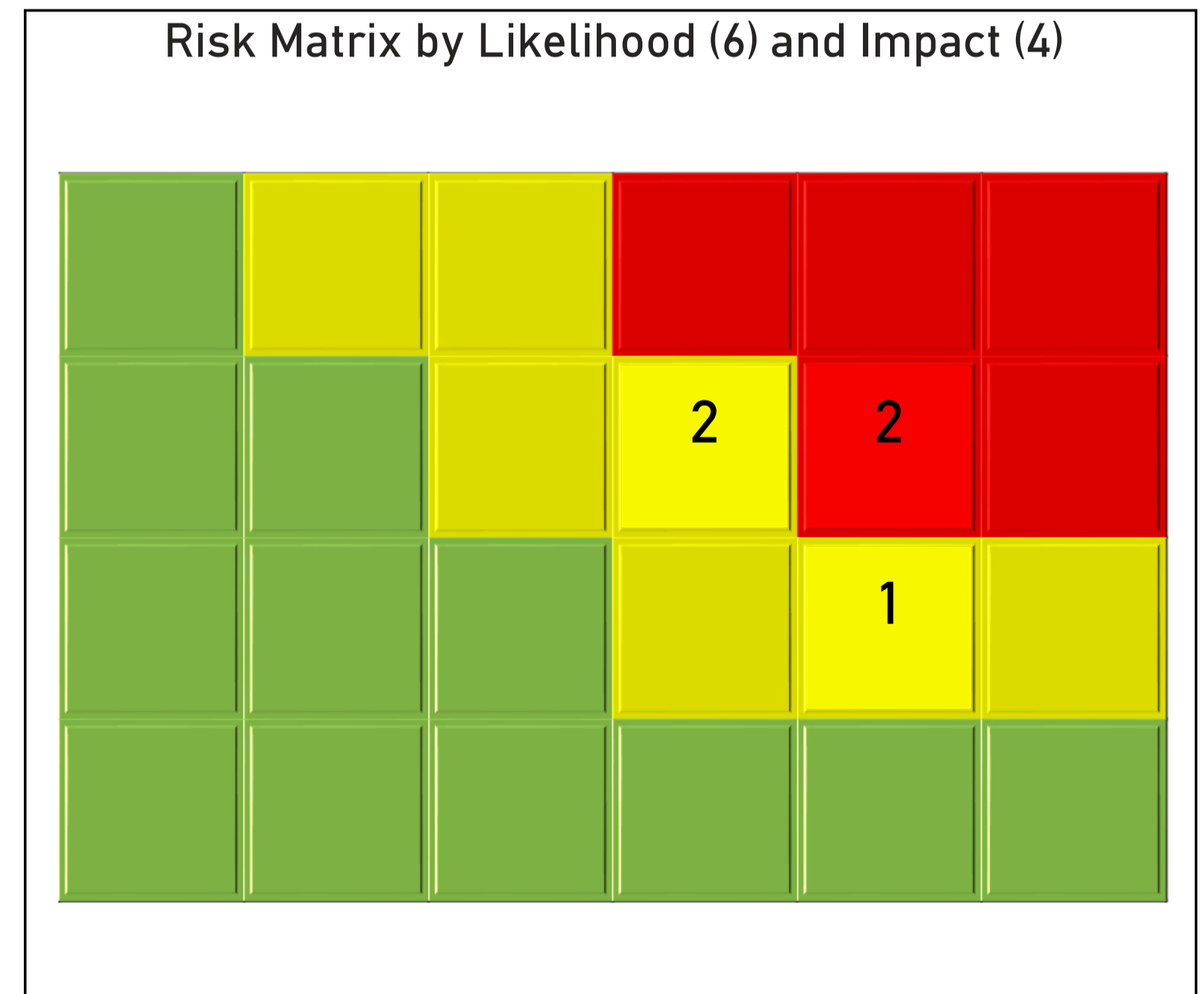


# Education Service Risk Register

CURRENT CLUSTER RISKS	CURRENT RISK SCORE
Education - Demographic demands	10
Removal of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding	12
Risk of poor external inspection by HMIE or Care Inspectorate for schools with self evaluation scores of weak or satisfactory.	15
Risk that rising numbers of COVID infections impact on staffing.	12
Risk that the number of Senior Leadership vacancies leads to staff in posts that are not of required quality	15

Number of Cluster Risks

**5**



FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Operations	Education	Shona Milne	Shona Milne

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Education - Demographic demands	Growing demographic demands result in service delivery pressures	<p>1) Produce annual pupil roll projections against existing school capacity and use to inform school estate plans.</p> <p>2) Monitor school admissions on a monthly basis to ensure changing trends are understood and informing planning</p> <p>3) Maintain accurate records of school places available across the city to help manage school admissions as efficiently as possible and support medium term planning</p> <p>4) Proactively engage with Higher Education Institutions to help determine likely demand for school placements from International Students</p> <p>5) Continue to work closely with Further Education to ensure that post school opportunities are promoted with older young people who arrive in the city</p> <p>6) Continue to work closely with Further and Higher Education partners to ensure that our approach to delivery of the senior phase makes efficient use of shared resource and physical space.</p> <p>7) Maintain regular contact with displaced person lead to ensure availability of provision is shared with Scottish Government to inform decision making.</p>	8	10	5	2	17 March 2024

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Operations	Education	Shona Milne	Caroline Johnstone

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Removal of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding	If the Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding is removed schools will be unable to continue to afford interventions in place to support young people	<p>1) Desktop review of PEF plans with HT to identify risks at school level Greater consideration of sustainability in PEF Plans 24/25.</p> <p>2) Collation of school information on staff employed through PEF funding to determine risks around contracts.</p> <p>3) Working group of HTs and Officers to undertake scenario planning based on the information gleaned.</p>	8	12	4	3	23 February 2024

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Operations	Education	Shona Milne	QIM Team

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Risk of poor external inspection by HMIE or Care Inspectorate for schools with self evaluation scores of weak or satisfactory.	Schools receive a poor inspection from HMIE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) QIMs and QIOs are working with a more proportionate model of school support.</li> <li>2) Review of arrangements to be conducted following each inspection to determine any required changes.</li> <li>3) More intensive review of arrangements to be conducted when inspection outcomes do not match those within school self-evaluation to determine any required changes to central assurance systems.</li> <li>4) Shared standards across the Northern Alliance.</li> <li>5) Scoping preparation to include equal attention to ELC and school provision</li> <li>6) Schools to be asked for fortnightly updates/reflection on evidence of progress.</li> <li>7) All SLT to provide assurance to the central team of the strength of their oversight of ELC provision Consideration of Local Authority thematic review across early level based if variation of inspection outcomes remains in Term 3.</li> <li>8) Clear quality assurance framework in place to support schools to improve.</li> <li>9) Tactical teams have been established to support schools at risk and on-going review of impact of those Tactical teams.</li> </ol>	9	15	5	3	14 January 2024

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Operations	Education	Caroline Johnstone	Shona Milne

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Risk that rising numbers of COVID infections impact on staffing.	Rising numbers of COVID infections – impact on staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Reissue GI guidance – reminder of handwashing routines.</li> <li>2) Consider reintroduction of some Covid risk mitigations such as increased handwashing.</li> <li>3) Monitor numbers within settings and link with public health if concerned.</li> <li>4) Implement staffing escalation procedure if there is a risk that there will be insufficient staffing levels in school in order to maintain business continuity.</li> </ul>	9	12	4	3	29 March 2024

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Operations	Education	Shona Milne	Gael Simpson

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Risk that the number of Senior Leadership vacancies leads to staff in posts that are not of required quality	Very few applications for senior leader posts and the quality is not as high as would be expected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Clear signposting to leadership development programmes at all levels</li> <li>2) Leadership programmes shared regularly with HTs</li> <li>3) Regularly review the quality of programmes</li> </ul>	9	15	5	3	20 June 2024



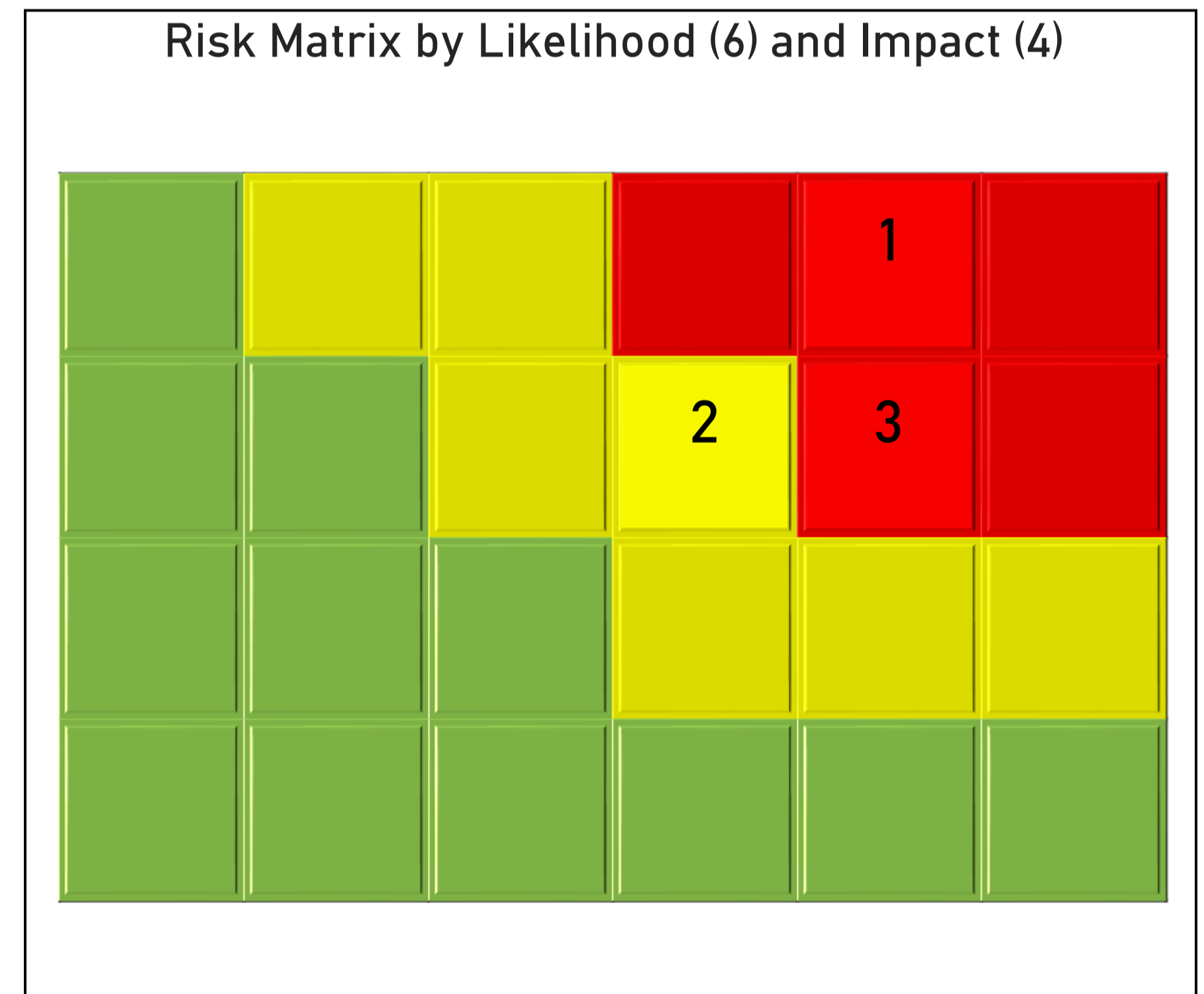


# Children & Family Services Risk Register

CURRENT CLUSTER RISKS	CURRENT RISK SCORE
Budget Constraints/Pressures	15
Child Migration including unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people (UASC) and all families requiring resettlement or with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)	15
External factors – increase in service demand and impact of National Care Service (NCS)	15
Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI)	12
Service Standards/ Performance	20
Workforce – Children’s Services	12

Number of Cluster Risks

**6**



FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Operations	Children's & Family Services	Graeme Simpson	Ali McAlpine

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Budget Constraints/Pressures	Risk that budget reductions and budget allocation within the Cluster for service delivery, staff training and development and CPD impacts capacity of services and income.	<p>Existing control action from Budget/Cost of Care Risk:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prioritisation of critical cases – all Service Managers</li> <li>2) Review of forecasting data for resource deployment – Service Manager oversight</li> <li>3) Develop and design Family Support Model to incorporate learning from Northfield/Lochside pilots in order to identify and maximise early intervention opportunities.</li> <li>4) Co-ordinate intervention with multi-agency partners to avoid duplication of support – oversight by Children’s Services Board (CSB) and Child Protection Committee (CPC)</li> <li>5) Children’s Service Managers will monitor/track budget risk areas to establish corrective actions.</li> <li>6) Identify and create critical/statutory related training requirement plan with L&amp;D coordinator and P&amp;OD</li> </ol>	9	15	5	3	31 March 2024

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Operations	Children's & Family Services	Graeme Simpson	Caroline Johnston & Ali McAlpine

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Child Migration including unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people (UASC) and all families requiring resettlement or with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)	<p>Risk is that there is insufficient resource to meet demand and that this position compromises the care, protection and wellbeing of already vulnerable children and their families including –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UASC</li> <li>• Child Migration</li> <li>• Refugees</li> <li>• Child criminal and sexual exploitation</li> <li>• Children and families of foreign students</li> </ul>	<p>1) Alignment between children’s social work/education and adult services to ensure GIRFEC approach. This will allow for specialist social work services to respond when required.</p> <p>2) Oversight within Strategic Partnership Group.</p>	8	15	5	3	31 March 2024

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Operations	Children's & Family Services	Graeme Simpson	Graeme Simpson

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
External factors – increase in service demand and impact of National Care Service (NCS)	Risk that legislative programmes/initiatives and contraction of public services and agencies increase pressure on service demand and budgets including numbers of children with disabilities, increased asylum and resettled children and families, the impact of covid / cost of living.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Unintended consequences resulting from budget savings across partner and public sector organisations.</li> <li>2) Interagency integration and collaboration to identify opportunities to reduce likelihood of family entering crisis.</li> <li>3) Close alignment with Adult Services to share expertise and workload appropriately.</li> <li>4) Keeping pace with future needs resulting from legislative changes</li> </ul>	9	15	5	3	31 March 2024

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Operations	Children's & Family Services	Graeme Simpson	Ali McAlpine

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI)	<p>Resource and Capacity of Aberdeen City Council to research and respond to statutory notices and requests for information within statutory timescales, the portfolio includes s21 notices, criminal and civil proceedings response to Scotland's Redress Scheme and Right of Access.</p> <p>Resource requirements and potential reputational risk associated with Operation Forseti - (Police Scotland's response to The SCAI)</p>	<p>1. Resource – Ownership of all Care Experienced Right of Access – Subject access Requests (RoA- SAR's) to transfer to Customer with budget and resource aligned from ACC SCAI budget to provide on-going support with a specific focus on requests from people with care experience. SCAI and Customer sides to remain connected on cases due to the interdependencies between the SCAI portfolio and people with care experience seeking their records – Action - Gaynor C &amp; Lucy McK - Target Date 01/10/23.</p> <p>Resource - to fulfil ACC SCAI portfolio statutory obligations using modern technology – Action - Gaynor C.</p> <p>2. Governance - SCAI multi-cluster Programme Board to maintain oversight and scrutiny and mobilisation of resource allocation requirements, monitoring of performance and identification of potential risks and issues in accordance with ToR. Target Date – In place and on-going 6 weekly basis.</p> <p>3. Finance - Monitor financial impacts of on-going Civil litigation and fair and meaningful contribution to Scotland's Redress Scheme. Target Date – In place and on-going within Programme Board. Action – (Gaynor Clarke &amp; Brian Dow)</p> <p>4. Performance Monitoring/Reporting - Data consolidation - Requests from SCAI team and response rates against requirements to provide overview and reporting of performance to SCAI Programme Board. (Gaynor &amp; Caroline Anderson) Target Date – 01/10//23</p> <p>Performance Monitoring/Reporting - Care Experienced Right of Access – Subject access Requests (RoA- SAR's) performance reporting aligned with customer side. ACC SCAI portfolio performance reporting aligned with ACC SCAI side. All performance reporting rates to SCAI Programme Board.</p> <p>5. Records (hard copy original) – Existing process for movement of records to be considered, any gaps, areas for improvement to mitigate risk of records loss during collection, return and use. Action - (GC/TG and CR archivists) Target Date – 01/10/23</p>	6	12	4	3	31 December 2023

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Operations	Children's & Family Services	Graeme Simpson	Ali McAlpine

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Service Standards/ Performance	Risk that service standards and performance are not achieved, and risk of budget overspend on external services and resource.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Review and update service standards to reflect resource available.</li> <li>2) Prioritise statutory work on priority basis.</li> <li>3) Enhancing family support model.</li> <li>4) Continue to review existing processes for efficiency, duplication and wastage.</li> <li>5) Explore and develop new digital solutions to data gathering and recording within new electronic recording system D365.</li> </ul>	12	20	5	4	31 March 2024

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Operations	Children's & Family Services	Graeme Simpson	Ali McAlpine

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Workforce – Children’s Services	Risk that staff recruitment/retention challenges within Social Work and Social Care reduce staff capacity and resilience whilst service demand continues to increase. Staff training requirements increase in complexity and budgets are under pressure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Newly qualified social work training programme in place.</li> <li>2) Realign service priorities and workload on a risk-based basis.</li> <li>3) Grow your own approach implemented and ongoing.</li> <li>4) Close links to Robert Gordon University and participation in recruitment fairs.</li> <li>5) Enhancing, creating and monitoring of “leavers” data to inform learning and support.</li> <li>6) Workforce development plan incorporating career development plan (training, supports, career progression)</li> <li>7) Enhancement of wellbeing supports at corporate and targeted level in recognition of complexity of trauma-laden work across CSW.</li> </ul>	9	12	4	3	31 March 2024

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<b>Assurance Map</b>		
<b>Cluster – Education Service</b>		
<b>Cluster Risk Register Risks:</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Risk of poor external inspection by HMIE or Care Inspectorate for schools with self-evaluation scores of weak or satisfactory.</li> <li>2. Risk that rising numbers of COVID infections impact on staffing.</li> <li>3. Risk that the number of Senior Leadership vacancies leads to staff in posts that are not of required quality</li> <li>4. Education - Demographic demands - Growing demographic demands result in service delivery pressures</li> </ol>		
<b>First Line of Defence (Do-ers)</b>	<b>Second Line of Defence (Helpers)</b>	<b>Third Line of Defence (Checkers)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained and qualified staff</li> <li>• School Leadership Team oversight and quality assurance of day to day operations and finances in school</li> <li>• School health and safety procedures agreed annually</li> <li>• All staff involved in school risk assessment process</li> <li>• Designated school Health and Safety Reps</li> <li>• Risk assessments shared with all staff including Trade Union reps</li> <li>• School risk registers in place in all schools with effective mechanisms in place for review and escalation</li> <li>• School Business Continuity Plans in place</li> <li>• Tracking and monitoring arrangements in place in all schools to track attainment</li> <li>• School positive behaviour management procedure agreed yearly</li> <li>• School child protection and safeguarding procedures agreed yearly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CMT Boards</li> <li>• Council Committees</li> <li>• Health and Safety guidance for schools</li> <li>• Identified health and safety team link for all schools</li> <li>• Child protection and safeguarding guidance and professional learning available to schools</li> <li>• Range of policies/procedures for schools to support consistent practice</li> <li>• Quality Improvement Framework setting expectations around accountability</li> <li>• Quality Improvement Visits to schools and Early Learning and Childcare provision</li> <li>• Quality Improvement Team monitoring of live data</li> <li>• Service Business Continuity Plan</li> <li>• Monitoring of complaints</li> <li>• Improvement groups comprising central Officers and school staff identify and address emerging risks</li> <li>• Weekly Trade Union meetings</li> <li>• Engagement with Parents and Carers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Scotland inspections</li> <li>• Care Inspectorate Inspections</li> <li>• HSE inspections</li> <li>• Health and Safety Team compliance visits to schools</li> <li>• ECMT data reviews</li> <li>• External Audit</li> <li>• Monthly budget print outs</li> <li>• Annual Internal Audit Plan</li> <li>• Audit Scotland and National Audit reports</li> <li>• Internal Audit – School Estate and Pupil Security – March 2022</li> <li>• Internal Audit – Scottish Milk &amp; Healthy Snack Scheme – April 2023</li> </ul>

- Yearly analysis of school community data to inform the school improvement plan
- Regular review of applications for school placements in order to identify emerging trends
- Regular meetings with Higher Education to understand demand for school placements from international students
- Calendar of data gathering around the health and wellbeing needs of pupils
- Monitoring of levels of vacancy in schools and ELC provisions
- In-service days and staff meetings to address any identified vulnerabilities

- Data dashboard and Risk Register discussed fortnightly by Senior Leadership Team
- Regular finance meetings with Senior Leadership Team
- Assurance Team
- Regular contact with ADES and COSLA

<b>Assurance Map</b>		
<b>Cluster – Children &amp; Families Services (Children’s Social Work)</b>		
<b>Cluster Risk Register Risks:</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Child Migration including unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people (UASC) and all families requiring resettlement or with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)</li> <li>2. Service Standards/ Performance - Risk that service standards and performance are not achieved, and risk of budget overspend on external services and resource.</li> <li>3. External factors – increase in service demand and impact of National Care Service (NCS)</li> <li>4. Budget Constraints/Pressures - Risk that budget reductions and budget allocation within the Cluster for service delivery, staff training and development and CPD impacts capacity of services and income.</li> <li>5. Workforce – Children’s Services - Risk that staff recruitment/retention challenges within Social Work and Social Care reduce staff capacity and resilience whilst service demand continues to increase. Staff training requirements increase in complexity and budgets are under pressure.</li> <li>6. Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI)</li> </ol>		
<b>First Line of Defence (Do-ers)</b>	<b>Second Line of Defence (Helpers)</b>	<b>Third Line of Defence (Checkers)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained and qualified staff</li> <li>• Professional Supervision in place for all CSW staff ensuring day to day service delivery.</li> <li>• Team Managers/SM’s oversight of finances for teams</li> <li>• Agreed health and safety procedures – all staff supported to familiarise as part of induction.</li> <li>• All staff involved in risk assessment process</li> <li>• Team Business Continuity Plans in place</li> <li>• Tracking and monitoring arrangements in place in all schools to track performance and delivery of statutory duties.</li> <li>• Learning from case reviews considered on single and multi-agency basis and embedded at practitioner level.</li> <li>• Voice of children and young people at the heart of service planning and improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CMT Boards</li> <li>• Council Committees</li> <li>• Health and Safety guidance for services, including Lone Working</li> <li>• Identified health and safety team link for all teams</li> <li>• Child protection and safeguarding guidance and professional learning available</li> <li>• Range of policies/procedures for schools to support consistent practice</li> <li>• SM QA activity within teams and through professional supervision.</li> <li>• Multi-agency Quality Improvement activity</li> <li>• Service Business Continuity Plan</li> <li>• Improvement groups comprising central Officers and school staff identify and address emerging risks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care Inspectorate Inspections</li> <li>• HSE Covid-19 inspections</li> <li>• Health and Safety Team compliance visits to work settings</li> <li>• ECMT data reviews</li> <li>• Performance reports to Committee</li> <li>• Annual reporting of Risk Registers to Committee</li> <li>• Regular contact with Scottish Government OCSA Team</li> <li>• External Audit</li> <li>• Monthly budget print outs • Annual External Audit and report • Annual Internal Audit Plan approved and overseen by Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>• Audit Scotland and National Audit reports</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular analysis of CSW data to improvement planning on both single and multi-agency basis.</li> <li>• Staff supported to fulfil registration requirements to ensure continuous professional development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data dashboard and Risk Register discussed fortnightly by SMT</li> <li>• Regular finance meetings with Senior Leadership Team</li> <li>• Assurance Team</li> <li>• Committee reports</li> <li>• Regular contact with SWS and COSLA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Audit – Children with Disabilities – September 2022</li> <li>• Internal Audit – Out of Authority Placements – December 2022</li> </ul>
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**Education**

<b>Risk Title</b>	<b>Risk Category</b>	<b>Target Risk Appetite</b>	<b>Aligned with RAS?</b>
• Risk that rising numbers of COVID infections impact on staffing.	Operational	Cautious	Yes
• Risk that the number of Senior Leadership vacancies leads to staff in posts that are not of required quality	Operational	Cautious	Yes
• Education - Demographic demands	Operational	Cautious	Yes
• Risk of poor external inspection by HMIE or Care Inspectorate for schools/ELC with self-evaluation scores of weak or satisfactory.	Reputational	Cautious	Yes

**Integrated Children's and Family Services**

<b>Risk Title</b>	<b>Risk Category</b>	<b>Target Risk Appetite</b>	<b>Aligned with RAS?</b>
• Budget Constraints/Pressures	Operational	Cautious	Yes
• Child Migration including unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people (UASC) and all families requiring resettlement or with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)	Operational	Cautious	Yes
• External factors – increase in service demand and impact of National Care Service (NCS)	Operational	Cautious	Yes
• Service Standards/ Performance	Reputational	Cautious	Yes

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## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children's Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	21 November 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Inspection Reporting
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CFS/23/369
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Shona Milne/ Graeme Simpson
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Shona Milne / Graeme Simpson
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.6

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report details the outcome of inspection reports published by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and The Care Inspectorate on the quality of Aberdeen City schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings since the last meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 notes the content of this report; and
- 2.2 instructs the Chief Education Officer to continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools to implement continuous improvement in keeping with the Quality Framework agreed at Committee in July 2023.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

#### 3.1 Ongoing update on improvements at Northfield Academy

Work continues on the Northfield Academy logic model plans. Since the last update there has been a change in the leadership at the school. Craig McDermott took up the role of acting Head Teacher on Monday 30 October 2023. The update report (Appendix A) provides detail in relation to each of the recommendations from the original Education Scotland report. Northfield Academy will remain in **support category 3** of our agreed Quality Assurance Framework.

### 3.2 **Care Inspectorate Inspections**

The Care Inspectorate continue to inspect on a risk basis, leading to a higher proportion of settings being inspected where complaints or issues have been raised with them.

3.3 Where a setting has been subject to a return visit from the Care Inspectorate, we have included the date of their initial visit and the gradings for reference.

3.4 **Banana Moon** is a Funded Provider. Banana Moon was inspected in September 2023. Inspectors noted that the children were nurtured and supported by caring and responsive staff in an environment which provided a range of quality play and learning experiences. Staff were motivated and worked well as a team creating a strong ethos of improvement which most recently had led to upgrades to the physical environment which were impacting positively on outcomes for children.

Aspect being inspected	Evaluation
How good is our care, play and learning?	Good (4)
How good is our setting?	Good (4)
How good is our leadership?	Good (4)
How good is our staff team?	Good (4)

The staff team are delighted that their hard work around improving the physical environment has been acknowledged and will continue to sit within the **universal** support category of the Quality Improvement Framework.

A link to the full report can be found [here](#)

3.5 **Cummings Park** is a Funded Provider. Cummings Park received an unannounced follow up inspection in September 2023. The team noted considerable positive changes to the outdoor environment allowing the children to play safely outside and this resulted in an uplift to the original inspection grading below.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation July 2023	Recent Evaluation Sept 2023
How good is our setting?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)

Staff were pleased that the work undertaken on the outdoor environment had been recognised and will continue with further planned improvements. The setting will continue to sit within the **targeted** support category of the Quality Improvement Framework.

A link to the full inspection report can be found [here](#)

3.6 **First Class** is a Funded Provider. First Class was inspected in July 2023. Inspectors noted that staff were caring ensuring all children felt loved, safe and secure. Mealtimes for children were positive and provided children with healthy



options. Staff worked well together as a team, and this created a positive atmosphere in all areas. Children and families were provided with opportunities to influence changes within the setting.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation July 2022	Recent Evaluation Sept 2023
How good is our care, play and learning?	Good (4)	Good (4)
How good is our setting?	Good (4)	Good (4)
How good is our leadership?	Adequate (3)	Very Good (5)
How good is our staff team?	Good (4)	Very Good (5)

The inspectors noted that although there had been improvements in the baby room but that further plans require to be developed at a faster pace. Staff were pleased with the report and the setting will continue to be in the **universal** category of the quality improvement framework.

A link to the full inspection report can be found [here](#)

- 3.7 **Hazlehead Park Outdoor Nursery** is a local authority provision. Hazlehead Park Outdoor Nursery was inspected for the first time in September 2023. Inspectors noted staff were nurturing and caring and responsive to the individual need of children. Children were benefitted from a rich outdoor environment which was well thought out and providing exciting and stimulating experiences. Children and family feedback was used effectively to make further improvements to the service. The inspectors recognised the high levels of motivation and commitment demonstrated by the staff team which resulted in high quality engagement with children at all times.

Aspect being inspected	Evaluation
How good is our care, play and learning?	Very Good (5)
How good is our setting?	Very Good (5)
How good is our leadership?	Very Good (5)
How good is our staff team?	Very Good (5)

The staff team were delighted the report acknowledged their hard work and commitment to the setting. Staff from the setting will be given the opportunity to share their practice to support improvement in other settings. The setting will remain in the **universal** category of the Quality Improvement Framework.

The link to the full report can be found [here](#)

- 3.8 **Kingsford ELC** is a local authority provision. Kingsford was inspected in June 2023. Inspectors noted that children were benefitting from the actions undertaken since the previous inspection. They observed improved practice and an increased focus on children's overall wellbeing. Staff were using caring approaches and as a result most children were nurtured and supported throughout their experience. Mealtimes required to be better organised to ensure children's safety at all times. There was an over focus on completing tasks rather than engaging freely with the play and taking opportunities to

extend learning. Inspectors acknowledged that there had been issues with recruitment and retention. Children benefitted from free flow to the outdoors for most of the day and it was noted that this was working well.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation Sept 2022	Recent Evaluation Sept 2023
How good is our care, play and learning?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)
How good is our setting?	Weak (2)	Good (4)
How good is our leadership?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)
How good is our staff team?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)

Staff acknowledge that there are still areas to be developed further but were pleased the progress they had made was recognised within the report. This setting will move from the universal to the **targeted** category of the Quality Improvement Framework

The full report can be found [here](#)

- 3.9 Orchard Brae ELC**, is a local authority provision. Orchard Brae was visited in September 2023. Inspectors noted that there had been significant improvements in the learning environment in Ashgrove resulting in children being provided with experiences which were able to sustain thinking and learning. Most staff had engaged in and were committed to improving their practice and this has led to improved outcomes for children.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation March 2023	Recent Evaluation Sept 2023
How good is our care, play and learning?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)
How good is our setting?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)
How good is our leadership?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)
How good is our staff team?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)

Although quality assurance and evaluation processes were evident inspectors noted that these were in the early stages and required further development to maintain a positive impact on children's experiences. Although there have been some significant improvements in the Ashgrove learning environment the setting will remain in the **intensive** category of the quality improvement framework to ensure sustained improvement.

The full report can be found [here](#)

- 3.10 Ferryhill ELC**, is a local authority provision. Ferryhill ELC was visited in October 2023. Inspectors noted staff worked well together to ensure children benefitted from a variety of positive play and learning opportunities. Inspectors commented on the strong leadership and the commitment of the staff team in ensuring high quality experiences for all learners.

Aspect being inspected	Evaluation October 2023
How good is our care, play and learning?	Very Good (5)
How good is our setting?	Good (4)
How good is our leadership?	Very Good (5)
How good is our staff team?	Good (4)

Staff were delighted that their hard work had been recognised and Ferryhill will remain in the **universal** category of the quality improvement framework to ensure sustained improvement.

The full report can be found [here](#)

3.11 The education service continues to support ELC and School Age Childcare settings to improve quality and have action plans in place to drive improvement where appropriate.

3.12 The variation in inspection outcomes is being addressed through a revision of approaches to quality improvement and an alignment of professional learning opportunities to the core Quality Indicators. The proposed approach was endorsed at the July meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee.

### 3.13 **Children's Social Work**

In June 2023 the Care Inspectorate intimated their intention on behalf of the Scottish Government to undertake a Disabled Children and Young People Thematic Review. The thematic review will involve all 32 local authorities. The reporting on the inspection findings will be on a national basis and the Care Inspectorate intend to publish their report in the summer of 2024.

3.13 As part of the thematic inspection the Care Inspectorate will undertake a 'deeper dive' across four partnership areas. Aberdeen City have agreed to be one of these areas and this will involve a range of inspection activities predominantly over November 2023 – February 2024. It will include a level of file reading; meeting with children, young people, and families in receipt of support/services as well as meeting with relevant staff.

## 4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## 5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report,

## 6. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 No negative environmental impacts have been identified.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve. Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *Taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Risk of not improving outcomes for learners	Positive engagement with Inspection agencies and sharing learning across the system where appropriate.	L	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	Risk of not complying with national guidance	Positive engagement with Inspection agencies and sharing learning across the system where appropriate.	L	Yes
<b>Operational</b>	Risk that schools/ELC settings do not accurately identify the areas for improvement that will make the greatest difference to learners	Quality assurance arrangements in place to validate self-evaluation gradings	L	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	No risks identified			
<b>Reputational</b>	Risk that poor quality of provision will present a reputational risk to the Council	High levels of assurance are taken Quality Improvement and Inspection visits	L	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No risks identified			

## 8. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u></b>	
<b>Impact of Report</b>	
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	

<p>Commit to realising the potential of each individual, by seeking to widen curriculum choice and implement progressive choices.</p> <p>Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners across the city.</p>	<p>External scrutiny provides helpful assurance that there is sufficient focus on helping young people recover from the pandemic and that the school self-evaluation and improvement plan is well positioned to support a closing of the poverty related attainment gap.</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</a></u></b></p>	
<p>Prosperous People - 95% of all our children, including those living in our priority neighbourhoods, will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.</p>	<p>Engagement with inspectors provides an opportunity to learn from national best practice and validate self-evaluation evidence available in schools. The support and challenge received by Inspectors helps to shape improvement plans for the coming sessions in keeping with the LOIP stretch aims.</p>
<p><b>Regional and City Strategies</b></p> <p>Regional Cultural Strategy</p> <p>Prevention Strategy</p> <p>Children’s Services Plan</p> <p>National Improvement Framework Plan</p>	<p>Engagement with the Inspectorate is fully aligned to the city prevention strategy. Work to address poverty and improvement in the Children’s services plan, the Child Poverty Action Plan and the National Improvement Framework Plan is also supported through external scrutiny.</p>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<p><b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b></p>	<p>Stage 1 Assessment has been completed.</p>
<p><b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b></p>	<p>No DPIA is required.</p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## 11. APPENDICES

**Appendix A - Northfield Academy**

**Appendix B - Kingsford ELC Action Plan**

**Appendix C – Orchard Brae ELC Action Plan**

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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## Appendix A

### Inspection of Northfield Academy and update on progress since the Special Education & Children's Services Committee with report on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

Recommendation	Actions taken to date
<p>1. Senior and Middle leaders Improve the strategic leadership of all areas of the school. Review and update the school's vision and values. There should be a clear and shared understanding of the expectations, direction and identity of Northfield Academy. Ensure plans for improvement are agreed with young people, teachers and parents.</p>	<p>The Tactical Team (see Report from 30.03.23) has met weekly with a pattern of fortnightly meetings including the entire Northfield Academy Senior Leadership Team. Consideration is currently being given to how staff can take a greater role in driving the changes required through school-based Plans.</p> <p>Updates are provided below based on the framework of Quality Indicators from <i>How Good is Our School 4</i> (<a href="#">link here</a>). Work is currently underway by the Acting Head Teacher to support staff at all levels to better understand the linkages between all recommendations.</p> <p><b><u>Leadership of Change (Quality Indicator 1.3)</u></b> Building on the work to update the school vision and values (see July 2023 Committee Update) work has continued to embed these values and ensure they form part of policy and procedure. This work remains at an early stage and all stakeholders are currently being engaged to ensure that expectations of all are clear with culture front-and-centre to this work.</p> <p><b><u>Safeguarding and Child Protection (Quality Indicator 2.1)</u></b> The Safeguarding Group continues to meet on a fortnightly basis, with data showing that positive progress is in the early stages.</p>
<p>2. Develop a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment. Build positive relationships across the school. Young people should be central to discussions about behaviour expectations and feeling safe in school.</p>	<p>In a recent student survey, young people reported a 4 percent increase in those who feel that they feel safe at school and a 7 percent increase in those who feel that the school helps them to feel safe. Although this is pleasing, there is clearly much work still to be done and this is an ongoing area of focus.</p> <p>As the use of data is improving, a group of young people who continue to find maintaining attendance in class challenging has been identified. After initial planning work between Officers and school staff, work continues on putting appropriate individual pathways in place with progress on data literacy to support further improvement.</p> <p><b><u>Curriculum (Quality Indicator, 2.2)</u></b> As reported on 30<sup>th</sup> March with an update in July 2023, curriculum has been a focus for significant change for session 2023-24 at Northfield Academy.</p>
<p>3. Agree with staff a shared understanding of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. Develop effective processes to plan, track and monitor</p>	<p><b><u>S1</u></b> Following the plans to redesign the S1 experience at Northfield Academy, this new structure was launched in August 2023. A physical area of the school was adapted to be a 'home' space for S1 young people and a new set of toilet facilities provided as part of this redesign. A set of S1 'Crew' Teachers was recruited with staff having an opportunity for some professional development prior to the end of term in July. The entire cohort was invited to spend the first week of their</p>

<p>young people's progress.</p> <p>4. Ensure the wellbeing needs of all young people are a key part of all school activities. Clarify procedures relating to pupil attendance and time keeping.</p> <p>5. Urgently improve attainment from S1 to S6. Review the number of young people who leave school in S4 and S5, and those who do not go to a positive destination. Make plans to support broader achievements for all young people. The school should demonstrate how young people on reduced timetables are included, educated and safe.</p>	<p>term in August on an outward bound experience getting to know their S1 'Crew' Teacher and their class for three nights (four days). More than 80% of the S1 group (117) attended this outward bound experience and early evidence suggests a really positive start for young people within this new structure. All young people who attended suggested that they had started to build positive relationships with their Crew Teacher and almost all agreed that relationships with their peers had been enhanced. Work to ensure all members of the school community are aware of the rationale and impact of the S1 model is progressing. Improved tracking arrangements are being tested across S1 to ensure appropriate pace and challenge.</p> <p><u>S2</u> Some early discussions have taken place to explore how support can be provided for the middle leadership team at the school to help in their professional development on planning quality experiences for young people in the Broad General Education (S1-S3).</p> <p><u>S4-S6</u> New curriculum experiences have commenced across S4 to S6 with some early signs of success. A consortium arrangement with a neighbouring school for delivery of Higher and Advanced Higher courses is in place which has allowed opportunities for learners to access a broad range of courses and achieve to the best of their ability. New courses have offered increased opportunities for S4 pupils to engage in skills for work courses in the beauty industry via a partnership with Glamcandy, and skills in Automotive and Construction through a partnership offer from Aberdeenshire Council.</p> <p><b><u>Learning Teaching &amp; Assessment (Quality Indicator 2.3)</u></b> The Learning and Teaching Group continue to work towards establishing and embedding good practice to promote a positive physical learning environment in line with practice detailed within the CIRCLE Framework. Middle leaders are keen to support improvement within their respective faculties and this approach is helping to build capacity for improvement.</p> <p><b><u>Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion (Quality Indicator 3.1)</u></b> Work continues in the creation and embedding of a Wellbeing Strategy for Northfield Academy. Concurrently, the creation of an Associated Schools' Group (ASG) wide Equalities Policy has been progressed; learners from across the ASG have been involved in its development. An implementation strategy is currently being developed to ensure that standards outlined are moved forward consistently.</p> <p>Following the professional learning provided to almost all staff in supporting responses to dysregulated behaviour, an enhanced programme has commenced for middle leaders, which will continue during this session.</p> <p>Staff and learners have established shared, core expectations for all. Aligned to the school values of 'Ready, Respectful, Safe', they compliment the work undertaken to refresh the vision of/for Northfield</p>
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Academy. Work is now required to realise greater consistency in applying the school values.

School attendance procedures are currently subject to further review. The impact of changes made will be closely monitored to inform next steps.

**Raising Attainment and Achievement (Quality Indicator 3.2)**

The introduction of better processes during the course of session 2022-23 has had some positive impact on the attainment of young people at Northfield Academy.

The number of young people achieving at least one SCQF Level 4 qualification in S4 at Northfield Academy (2023) improved by approximately 4% compared to 2022.

The number of young people achieving at least one SCQF Level 5 qualification in S4 at Northfield Academy (2023) improved by approximately 8% compared to 2022.

The number of young people achieving at least one SCQF Level 6 qualification in S5 at Northfield Academy (2023) improved by approximately 4% compared to 2023.

Work is on-going to develop and implement more effective tracking arrangements. The implementation of improved tracking, and a refreshed approach to supporting subject choices, will help realise appropriate coursing.

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Appendix B - Kingsford ELC <span style="float: right;">RAG</span>					
Improvement Outcomes	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Resources	
What do we hope to achieve?	How will we know this has been achieved?  <i>What evidence will we have?</i>	What do we need to do?		Who and what is required?  (including cost/fund)	
<b>Children are healthy, cared for and receiving meals.</b>	Mealtimes are effectively planned and carried out to meet health and wellbeing needs of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mealtimes to be served within each play space with designated staff serving and supporting in line with rota.</li> <li>Mealtime guidance note to be updated and shared with all ELC staff</li> <li>Continual evaluation of everyday practice of mealtimes and adapting practice through daily dialogue between staff members</li> </ul>	October 2023	All ELC Staff	
			October 2023	DHT	
			Ongoing	All ELC staff	
<b>Ensure all children are safe within the environment and accounted for at all times</b>	All staff will have a shared understanding of safety policy and procedures and can communicate and respond effectively to follow through on these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Person-centred risk assessments created for individual children and accessible to all staff as required</li> <li>Daily risk assessment to be completed in line with daily staff rota</li> <li>All staff to be aware of individual children’s needs with personal plans being updated as and when appropriate as well as through termly review</li> </ul>	August 2023	SEYPs	
			Ongoing review		
			August 2023	All staff	
			Ongoing review	All staff	
<b>High quality self-evaluation that leads to change and improvement</b>	All staff to be engaged in self-evaluation activities throughout the year and understand the strengths of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fully implement Quality Assurance calendar within the setting to embed self-evaluation practices.</li> </ul>	August 2024	DHT / SEYPs	

	the setting and areas for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly focus on QI through the use of challenge questions to highlight quality practice</li> <li>Consultation with all stakeholders to review key policies, linking in with focus QI</li> <li>Review current vision, values and aims through engagement with children, staff and parents</li> <li>Create updated vision, values and aims that are relevant to the Nursery linked to whole school work</li> </ul>	<p>August 2024</p> <p>August 2024</p> <p>October 2023</p> <p>November 2023</p>	<p>All staff</p> <p>DHT / SEYPs</p> <p>All staff</p> <p>All staff</p>	
<b>High quality experiences and interactions</b>	Adult-child interactions will lead to a more positive learning experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further develop the 'buddy system' to give practitioners areas of responsibility within Literacy Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing to ensure challenge across the provision</li> <li>Gap/strength analysis to be fully utilised to support environment audits ensuring that it is enabling and constantly evolving according to needs and development of skills</li> <li>All staff to access CIRCLE training to support understanding of environment and the impact on children's learning</li> <li>Termly focused learning walks and QA visits to evaluate impact of training on practice within the setting based on Realising the Ambition with initial feedback to SEYPs</li> <li>Senior staff to continue to direct and support to ensure high quality provision for all learners</li> </ul>	<p>August 2024</p> <p>August 2024</p> <p>November 2023</p> <p>August 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All staff</p> <p>All staff</p> <p>All staff</p> <p>SLT / Locality Leads / QIO QIM</p> <p>SEYPs/DHT</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff to be supported to involve themselves in play to extend and personalise learning and to embed training in practice</li> </ul>	Ongoing	SEYPs	
<b>Increased parental engagement</b>	Parents will be actively involved and included in their child's learning journey and with the life and work of the Nursery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent use of rotas to ensure more informed dialogue between staff and families during handover regarding learning and care experience during the session</li> </ul>	Ongoing	All staff	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A nursery specific newsletter / weekly update to be developed to highlight key learning experiences that children have been involved in</li> </ul>	November 2023	SEYPs	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steering group to be established to meet termly to support consultation, policy creation, review and refresh</li> </ul>	November 2023	DHT	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay and play sessions to be embedded termly as a feature of parental engagement</li> </ul>	December 2023	SEYPs	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key workers to ensure Focus Child approach is followed through to conclusion, including consultation with parents during the process using non-class contact time to support with this</li> </ul>	November 2023	All staff	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular review and update of learning journey board and ebook which will then be highlighted to parents to demonstrate improvements and developments within the setting</li> </ul>	Ongoing	All Staff	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refreshed Vision, Values and Aims to be shared with parents through regular weekly communication</li> </ul>	November 2023	DHT	

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Appendix C - Orchard Brae ELC <span style="float: right;">RAG</span>					
Improvement Outcomes	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Resources	
What do we hope to achieve?	How will we know this has been achieved? <i>What evidence will we have?</i>	What do we need to do?		Who and what is required? (including cost/fund)	
<b>Ensure professional support framework is embedded across ELC</b>	Teams in the ELC will feel supported in carrying out their roles and this can be evidence through the priority requirements of the CI.	Quality calendar is shared with all ELC staff	31.08.23	Centre Manager PT ASN All ELC staff	
		Professional Support/1:1 meetings are high quality opportunities to develop meaningful self-reflection/evaluation and impact on outcomes for children.	Termly		
		Professional Support Visits are planned and staff are aware of the QI being "observed".	Termly		
<b>Children will experience high quality play and learning experiences relevant to their age and stage of development.</b>  <b>Develop staff knowledge and understanding around child development</b>	Planning document outcomes will be reflected in the observations during Learning Walks and triangulated through assessment and progression tracking  Improved outcomes for children through decrease in distressed behaviour and increase in progression for individuals/target % increase.  Book Creator book detailing our journey	Evaluation of play experiences and practitioner knowledge	30.11.23	Centre Manager PT ASN All ELC staff ASN Complex Needs Outreach Teacher	
		Leadership Group focused on play to be set up with staff from across rooms – play pedagogy. Challenges/potential solutions	13.10.23		
		Discovery days to promote invitations and provocations	Termly		
		Developing the outdoor space to ensure high quality play experiences outside	Ongoing		
		Contribute to OB LTA framework website contributing play pedagogy/examples of good early years practice	Ongoing		
		Visiting other nurseries	Ongoing		
		Buddy System for staff	13.10.23		
		Embed use of PLODs at Ashgrove	By end term 2		
		Schema training Invitations and Provocations training VIG/ Video Training	All training scheduled based on progress through but		

		Emotional regulation training Up, Up and Away Training	should be completed by April 2024		
<b>Introduce nurture framework across the ELC setting.</b>	Assessment (using Hub resources) Nov 2023 then repeated in June to ensure that staff understanding of nurture approach has improved.  Staff completing quality observations focusing on staff interactions with children across a variety of contexts.  SMART targets written for each child that are individual to each child's developmental stage and needs	Springboard training workshops followed by consolidation time in rooms – focus on observation, interaction, regulation		<a href="#">Applying nurture as a whole school approach - A framework to support self-evaluation   Resources   National Improvement Hub (education.gov.scot)</a>	
		Nurture Training for PTs	ASAP		
		Bespoke training relating to the needs within each room	Scheduled once identified		
		VIG/video training	Ongoing		Centre Manager
		Buddy systems	Ongoing		PT ASN All ELC staff ASN Complex Needs Outreach Teacher



## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children’s Services Finance and Resources
<b>DATE</b>	21 November 2023 22 November 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	The content of the report is public, but it contains an exempt appendix (Paragraph 8 of Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 Schedule 7A Access to Information)
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	St Peter’s RC School – Long Term Education Provision
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	RES/23/365
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Steve Whyte/Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Stephen Booth
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Maria Thies
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	Education and Children’s Services Committee: 1.1.1, 1.1.2  Finance and Resources Committee: 1.1.4

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents an updated Outline Business Case (OBC) for the long term education provision for St Peter’s RC school which includes the outcome of the Old Aberdeen House feasibility study as an alternative option to provide a two stream school.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Education and Children’s Services Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes the recommended option and associated costs to refurbish Old Aberdeen House with the addition of new build provision to deliver a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment for St Peter’ RC school and recommends approval of this option at the meeting of Finance and Resources Committee on 22 November 2023.
- 2.2 Subject to approval of recommendation 2.4 to note that a progress report will be presented to a future meeting of the Education and Children’s Services Committee in 2024 .

### That the Finance and Resources Committee:-

- 2.3 Notes and approves the recommended option to refurbish Old Aberdeen House with the addition of new build provision to deliver a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment for St Peter's RC school.
- 2.4 Approves the use of resources for the implementation of the proposed improvement works to Old Aberdeen House with new build provision.
- 2.5 Instructs the Chief Officer – Capital to refer the proposals for the project to the Budget process in 2024.
- 2.6 Instructs the Chief Officer – Capital to report back to a future meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee in 2024 with a progress update report.

### **3. CURRENT SITUATION**

- 3.1 At its meeting of 12 September 2023, the Education and Children Services Committee instructed the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to assess the feasibility of refurbishing and repurposing Old Aberdeen House to provide a two stream building for St. Peter's school and to report back with an updated Outline Business Case on the outcome of this feasibility study as an additional option. [Decisions 12th-Sep-2023 10.00 Education and Childrens Services Committee.pdf](#)
- 3.2 At this meeting, officers were also instructed to report on interim arrangements and costs that would be required to facilitate the upgrade of Old Aberdeen House and any site costs for the current Riverbank school site post completion of the Old Aberdeen House upgrade.
- 3.3 The updated School Estate Plan was approved at the former Education Operational Delivery Committee on 8 September 2022, when Members instructed the Chief Officer – Capital to put forward to the Scottish Government details of the planned refurbishment of the existing Riverbank School building ahead of the relocation of St Peter's School, for this to be considered as a priority project for funding in Phase 3 of the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP). The LEIP Phase 3 funding announcement on 30 October confirmed that this project has not been included as part of the Phase 3 LEIP.
- 3.4 The updated outline business case, included at appendix A of this report, sets out the findings of the feasibility study and the interim arrangements and costs associated with the recommended option.
- 3.5 The findings from the feasibility study has indicated that option C (Old Aberdeen House with a new build provision) has been evidenced as the most viable, least risk and smarter long term capital investment to meet the vision and project drivers to provide long term school provision for St Peter's RC pupils and staff. The architectural form, ability to reach net zero targets and the historic importance of Old Aberdeen House have been important factors in assessing this option. The Old Aberdeen House location is well positioned to continue to serve this community and provide a learning environment for the 21<sup>st</sup> century which will provide a range of benefits to staff, pupils and the wider community. The upgraded school provision will also enhance the wider place agenda for the city and enable integrated service delivery to support the needs of this school community long term. The new building will be an exemplar green

- building and will contribute to ACC's Net Zero Carbon route map at a cheaper cost and shorter delivery programme compared with option B (Riverbank).
- 3.6 The outline business case has identified the requirement for the Archives Service to be relocated from Old Aberdeen House before the refurbishment works can commence. The assumption is to have the move carried out by the end of 2024. Indicative costs to facilitate this move have been identified based on the temporary storage and retrieval of archives off site for a period of 3 years from 2025. If a permanent solution is not delivered by 2028, this cost will extend beyond the assumption of 2028.
  - 3.7 To allow the refurbishment and provision of the Old Aberdeen House and associated new build, pupils will require to be decanted to the existing Riverbank School building from early 2025 until completion at St Peter's in Summer 2026. Associated decant costs have been included within the project budget at this stage. The pupils from Riverbank School are expected to relocate to the new school building in Tillydrone in 2024. Costs associated with any measures (if required) to secure the Riverbank building during school decants have been costed within the project budget.
  - 3.8 The full business case will review options for future use and/or disposal of the Riverbank building and site once St. Peter's has moved back into the refurbished building in 2026. An indicative cost has been allowed for within the project budget to facilitate the process.
  - 3.9 In tandem with the feasibility study, a stakeholder engagement exercise was undertaken, in which parents, pupils, staff and the wider community associated with the school were invited to share which option they supported for St Peter's long term strategy and why.
  - 3.10 A total of 68 responses were received of which, 60 supported the Old Aberdeen House option and a total of 8 supported the Riverbank option. Responses were received from a range of key stakeholders including parents, residents and school pupils.

Key messages in support of the Old Aberdeen House option included:

- Good sustainable transport links to access current location
- Maintains existing long standing partnerships within the local area which are valuable for wider learning opportunities (e.g. University, St. Machar Cathedral, Sports Village)
- Good investment and retains a heritage building for Old Aberdeen and the City
- Current location and sense of place is important to the St Peter's school community.
- Maintains localised outdoor learning opportunities in close proximity (Seaton Park, Botanical Gardens)

### Key messages in support of the Riverbank option included:

- Opportunity to relocate services located in the Seaton Learning Centre (freeing up space for the community)
- Larger playground at Riverbank

3.11 The feedback from the engagement survey has demonstrated support to progress with the recommended option which will allow St Peter's to remain at its current location long term.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Costs arising from the recommendations of this report (design development cost) will be met from the existing project budget within the Capital programme. The recommended option within the OBC is currently reporting stage one costs above the current indicative budget approved at the budget meeting in March 2020. The project will therefore need to be referred to the Budget Cycle in 2024 for approval.

4.2 If the project could not proceed to construction stage, any capital costs incurred to that point may have to be considered for decapitalisation, with the resulting impact to the Council's General Revenue Account.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5.2 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act") requires education authorities to follow statutory consultation processes in regard to "relevant proposals" as outlined in schedule 1 to the 2010 Act (which includes relocation (in whole or part) of a school). It is not considered that refurbishing and repurposing Old Aberdeen House to provide a building for St. Peter's School would amount to a "relevant proposal" under the 2010 Act as the building occupies the same site and it is not being proposed that the St Peter's address and management will change.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations within this report. The recommended design option will feature reduced operational energy and whole life carbon emissions which will contribute to ACC's Net Zero target for 2035.

6.2 The refurbished school design will feature zero emissions heating/cooling and will maximise the opportunities in good passive design principals, primarily targeted around minimising heating demand and heat losses through thermal performance characteristics, efficient window fenestration detailing and reducing losses associated with thermal bridging and air infiltration rates.

6.3 Embodied carbon targets will feature in the design brief and shall be referenced against the performance targets within Scottish Futures Trust’s LEIP criteria.

## 7. RISK

<b>Category</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level</b>	<b>*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)</b>  <small>*taking into account controls/control actions</small>	<b>*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?</b>
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	No significant risks identified			
<b>Compliance</b>	Failure to plan effectively for St Peter’s leading to the Council being unable to fulfil its duty to make adequate and efficient provision	The School Estate Plan sets out priorities for the school estate and proposals for continually monitoring and updating plans to ensure adequate and efficient provision is maintained	L	Yes
<b>Operational</b>	The recommended option doesn’t meet the aspirations of the Community/ stakeholders	An inclusive communications plan will form part of this next stage. Stakeholders will be kept up to date with progress. The engagement survey reflects support for the recommended option.	L	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	Insufficient Capital funding available with the Capital Plan to deliver the final designed project	Refinement of stage 1 costs following design development stage will allow more accurate costings to be reported within	M	Yes

		the Full Business Case		
<b>Reputational</b>	Risk of damage to Council reputation if the Old Aberdeen House option is not delivered.	Implementing the recommendations in this report will ensure that the project can proceed to the next stage and allow a Full Business Case to be developed .	L	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	None identified			

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><a href="#">COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2023</a></u>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<p><b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b></p> <p><u><a href="#">Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</a></u></p>	<p><i>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement:-</i></p> <p>This report supports the delivery of the following policy statements:</p> <p><u>A City of Opportunity</u></p> <p>Policy Statement 2 - Review and invest in our school estate, ensuring all of Aberdeen's schools are fit for the educational needs and the challenges of the 21st century. The report seeks Committee's approval to proceed with the refurbishment of Old Aberdeen House and new build provision to provide a two stream school for St Peter's.</p> <p><u>A Prosperous City</u></p> <p>Policy Statement 8 - Seek to buy goods, services and food locally whenever possible, subject to complying with the law and public tendering requirements. Opportunities to do this will be considered for all Capital Projects.</p>
<u><a href="#">Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</a></u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The proposals in this report support the delivery of

	<p><b>Stretch Outcome 3</b> – 500 Aberdeen City residents upskilled/reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026. The investment in our estate is interlinked with the investment in our workforce and will contribute to the diversification of the local economy</p>
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p><b>Prosperous People:</b> The project will support <b>Stretch Outcome 8 in the LOIP</b> - <i>Child friendly city where all decisions which impact children and young people will be informed by them by 2026</i>. The engagement survey at feasibility stage provided an opportunity for children and young people to have their say on which option they supported.</p>
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	<p><b>Prosperous Place:</b> The project will support <b>Stretch Outcome 14 - Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as a main mode of travel by 2026</b>.</p> <p>Sustainable routes to school, safety, fitness and the wellbeing of our communities will form part of the design development stage.</p> <p>This project will also support the delivery of <b>LOIP Stretch Outcome 13 – Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen’s carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of changing climate</b>. The project will be exemplar in terms of net zero and green credentials.</p>
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	<p>This project forms part of the School Estate Plan which will support the delivery of the Council’s Property and Estates Strategy and the Net Zero Routemap for Aberdeen City.</p>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	Updated previous Integrated Impact Assessment Stage 1 Assessment

<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	No other assessments required

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Education and Children’s Services, 12 September 2023:

[Decisions 12th-Sep-2023 10.00 Education and Childrens Services Committee.pdf](#)

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A – Outline Business Case and concept designs

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children's Services Finance and Resources
<b>DATE</b>	21 November 2023 22 November 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	The content of the report is public, but it contains an exempt appendix (Paragraph 8 of Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 Schedule 7A Access to Information)
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Outline Business Case: New Secondary School Provision for Hazlehead and Countesswells
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	RES/23/366
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Steve Whyte/Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Stephen Booth
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Maria Thies
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	Education and Children's Services Committee: 1.1.1, 1.1.2  Finance and Resources Committee: 1.1.4

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents an Outline Business Case (OBC), setting out the findings of a recent feasibility study, to identify options for delivering new secondary school provision within the Hazlehead and Countesswells Associated Schools Groups (ASGs)

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Education and Children's Services Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the recommended option within the OBC and Instructs the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out a statutory public consultation on the proposal to establish a new campus on the Hazlehead Academy playing fields and on proposed changes to the existing Countesswells and Hazlehead secondary school catchment areas, to create a new catchment area which would be served by the proposed new school provision; and
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to report back to the Committee on the outcomes of the consultation at its next available meeting following the conclusion of the consultation process, in July 2024

That the Finance and Resources Committee:-

- 2.3 Approves in principle the recommended option within the OBC to construct a new 1600 pupil campus on the current Hazlehead Academy playing fields to

provide secondary school provision for Hazlehead and Countesswells ASGs, subject to the outcome of a statutory consultation;

- 2.4 Instructs the Chief Officer – Capital to refer the proposals for the project to the Budget process in 2024/25; and
- 2.6 Subject to the outcomes of the statutory consultation and any decision taken at the budget meeting of March 2024 approves in principle the use of resources for the implementation of the project from 2024;

### **3. CURRENT SITUATION**

- 3.1 The Council's School Estate Plan was approved by the former Education Operational Delivery Committee on 8 September 2022 when officers were instructed to assess the feasibility of creating new secondary school provision to serve the communities of Hazlehead and Countesswells and to put this forward to the Scottish Government as a priority project for funding in Phase 3 of the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP).
- 3.2 At its budget meeting of 1 March 2023, Council instructed the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to progress the new Hazlehead/Countesswells Secondary School to an Outline Business Case and to report back to the Finance and Resources Committee by the end of the financial year 2023/24; [Decisions 01st-Mar-2023 10.30 Council.pdf](#) An indicative budget was allocated in the Capital Programme for this project.
- 3.3 A proposed new secondary school project to serve the communities of Hazlehead, Countesswells and Kingswells (which is included within the Countesswells secondary school catchment area) was submitted to Scottish Government in October 2022 as a priority for phase 3 LEIP funding. The LEIP Phase 3 funding announcement on 30 October confirmed that this project has met all the qualifying criteria and has been identified by Ministers to be included as part of the Phase 3 of the LEIP.
- 3.4 This project fulfils the instruction to create new school provision for Hazlehead and Countesswells and will support the following vision as outlined in the school estate plan:

Our buildings and grounds are used to deliver highly effective learning experiences and to support pupil, staff and community wellbeing within and out with school hours. Across Aberdeen City, we will make the best use of our facilities to ensure sustainable, transparent and equitable allocation of resources to support the learning needs of all. As a result, our facilities will support our ambition to ensure each and every learner has the opportunity to attain and achieve a wide range of qualifications and develop the skills for life, learning and work

- 3.5 The outline business case, included at appendix A of this report, sets out the findings of the feasibility study, and provides an analysis of the options assessed.
- 3.6 The outline business case identifies the current constraints around building on the school site at Countesswells and the many unknowns around future housing development rates and the timings for this. The details of current and any potential future developer contributions to be received by ACC are also highlighted for each assessed option alongside the risks and potential impact for consideration.
- 3.7 The findings from the feasibility study have indicated that in order to meet future school capacity requirements for these communities and to provide high quality learning environments to support the needs of all pupils, staff and the wider community which are efficient and have least cost to the Council, the most viable option is to develop the new campus on the existing Hazlehead site, whilst allowing the current Hazlehead Academy to operate during the construction phase.
- 3.8 In tandem with the feasibility study, a stakeholder engagement exercise was undertaken, in which parents, pupils, staff and the wider communities associated with the schools in the ASGs were invited to indicate whether they supported the proposal to build a new secondary school at Hazlehead to serve the communities of Hazlehead, Countesswells and Kingswells in advance of a statutory consultation.

**Key Messages in support of this option included:**

- Concerns that the current school building is not fit for purpose and doesn't offer a modern and inspiring learning environment
- The site location is felt to be well positioned and the additional adjacent green space at Hazlehead park is a huge benefit for pupils and staff to enjoy
- Strong emphasis that a new campus would motivate and inspire future pupils and staff leading to better outcomes
- The urgency to increase capacity as the pupil roll grows
- It is felt that a new school is long overdue and the investment will benefit three communities and the city.

**Key Messages unsupportive of this option included:**

- The proposed capacity being too large and preference to have two smaller secondary schools for each ASG (Hazlehead & Countesswells)
- Loss of community identity
- The need to maintain safe walking distances/routes to Hazlehead
- Concerns that joining up three communities could create more social issues in the future

- Countesswells residents were sold houses on the principle that a secondary school would be provided within the development at a future date.
- 3.9 The feedback received from stakeholders unsupportive of the proposed new secondary school at Hazlehead will be reviewed and officers will provide additional information on how these concerns will be addressed and responded to at the statutory consultation stage.
- 3.10 It is therefore recommended that the Education and Children's Services Committee instructs officers to proceed with a statutory consultation on the proposal to build a new secondary school at Hazlehead to serve the communities within the Hazlehead and Countesswells ASGs.

#### Overview of Countesswells Development and current Section 75 Agreement

- 3.11 Pupils living within the new Countesswells development are currently zoned to Hazlehead Academy for secondary school provision. This was intended to be a temporary measure in advance of a new secondary school being constructed within the Countesswells development. A decision was also taken to include the established settlement of Kingswells within the catchment area for the new school at Countesswells. Hazlehead Academy has a capacity of 1127 and has a current roll of 1080 pupils, this includes 47 pupils who live at Countesswells. Future pupil numbers generated at Countesswells will be aligned to housing developers' build rates. A Section 75 Agreement is in place which places a duty on ACC to provide secondary education provision on a pre-selected site within the development upon completion of the 1000th housing unit. It is difficult to predict a timeline for when this will happen due to current market conditions and the impact of the development going into administration last year.
- 3.12 The first 1000 housing units will generate approximately just over 100 pupils that will require secondary school provision at this time. This number of pupils is not viable to sustain a new secondary school both from a curriculum offering and the capital and revenue investment required to deliver it. Within the updated School Estate Plan, a recommendation was approved by members that all new secondary schools are to be designed with a minimum pupil capacity of 1000 in order to support high quality learning and teaching
- 3.13 The Section 75 agreement for the Countesswells development (signed on 21 March 2016) sets out clear triggers for the delivery of the secondary education provision. Any proposed changes will require to be discussed and negotiated accordingly. Due to the fact that there are a number of parties i.e. various 'Current Owners' and 'Developers' (as defined in the S75 agreement) to the Countesswells S75 agreement, it might be quite difficult to get all the parties to negotiate a variation of the S75 agreement. The current Countesswells developer contributions received for secondary school provision currently cannot be used to fund the recommended option within this OBC.
- 3.14 Countesswells Development Limited (CDL) who managed and coordinated delivery of the Countesswells Masterplan development went into administration

in 2021. This has proved challenging for officers to conduct any engagement to date regarding potential options for future secondary school provision for Countesswells pupils. Officers will continue to liaise and seek updates from the administrators as information becomes available.

- 3.15 Build out rates have been a lot slower than anticipated and there are still many unknowns surrounding timings, future receipt of developer contributions and the infrastructure works and costs required to connect and access the allocated secondary school site to the rest of the development.
- 3.16 Due to this current situation and the likely reduced pupil numbers at Countesswells for the foreseeable future, building a school to serve only that community is likely to lead to inefficiencies, in terms of both staffing and building running costs, which over the long term would be substantial.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Costs arising from the recommendations of this report subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation will be met from the existing project budget within the Capital programme. The recommended option within the OBC is currently reporting stage one costs above the current indicative capital budget approved at the budget meeting in March 2023. The project will need to be referred to the Budget Cycle in 2024 for approval subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation.
- 4.2 If the project does not proceed to the construction stage, any capital costs incurred to that point may have to be considered for decapitalisation, with the resulting impact to the Council's General Revenue Account.
- 4.2 A Section 75 Agreement is in place at Countesswells which places a duty on ACC to provide a secondary school on a pre-selected site within the Countesswells development upon completion of the 1,000th housing unit. The S75 agreement currently does not allow for the Council to use the 'Secondary School Contribution' to build the secondary school on a different site – it must be built on the 'Secondary School Land' within the Development Site at Countesswells therefore the developer contributions received for the Countesswells secondary provision cannot be used to fund the new Hazlehead Campus.
- 4.3 The award of LEIP phase 3 funding will be profiled as a future reduced revenue cost within the Full Business Case.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 provides that it shall be the duty of every education authority to secure that there is made for their area adequate and efficient provision of school education
- 5..2 Section 17 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 provides that it shall be the duty of an education authority in the performance of their functions under sections 1 to 6 of the Act, to provide for their area, sufficient accommodation in

public schools and other educational establishments under their management to enable them to perform their said functions. In addition, an education authority shall maintain and keep efficient every public school, and other educational establishment under their management, and shall from time to time provide such additional accommodation as may be necessary to enable them to perform their functions under the Act and may, provide, alter, improve, enlarge, equip and maintain schools and other educational establishments within their area.

5.3 A proposal to close or merge a school and catchment area is a relevant proposal under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The 2010 Act prescribes the procedural steps the Education Authority must take. This includes:

- preparation of a proposal paper;
- giving notice of the proposal;
- ingathering oral and written representations;
- holding a public meeting;
- providing Education Scotland with all relevant documentation;
- reviewing the proposal having regard to the representations received and Education Scotland's report; and
- thereafter publishing a consultation report containing an explanation of how it has reviewed the proposal and responding to the points raised during the consultation.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations within this report. The recommended design option will feature reduced operational energy and whole life carbon emissions which will contribute to ACC's Net Zero target for 2035.

6.2 The school design will feature zero emissions heating/cooling and will maximise the opportunities in good passive design principals, primarily targeted around minimising heating demand and heat losses through thermal performance characteristics, efficient window fenestration detailing and reducing losses associated with thermal bridging and air infiltration rates.

6.3 Embodied carbon targets will feature in the design brief and shall be referenced against the performance targets within Scottish Futures Trust's LEIP criteria.

6.4 Under National Planning Framework (NPF) 4 there will be a process which will need to be presented to demonstrate why demolition is a better option than reuse or refurbishment, which will include whole life carbon assessment.

6.5 Encouraging active and sustainable travel through the provision of an enhanced path network, facilities and infrastructure forms part of this project scope. The Hazlehead site presents a great opportunity to act as a focal point for a series of surrounding paths which are currently underused, improving these to provide safe routes to school which prioritise active travel over cars.

- 6.6 Parking areas will be designed to accommodate future expansion of EV charging points.
- 6.7 The design option will work to enhance the natural capital found in existing settings and provide a range of external spaces which encourage a broad range of uses and enhance biodiversity within the site. This will be achieved through retaining where possible existing trees, shrubs and naturalised areas. The Design Team will work closely with an ecologist to ensure any new areas of soft landscaping maximise biodiversity creation within the site. This will aim to have a positive impact on the site biodiversity and increase the current benchmarking in line with NPF4 and current best practice.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Failure to deliver on priority actions within the approved School Estate Plan	Implementing the recommendations in this report will ensure that the project can proceed to the next stage.	L	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	Failure to plan effectively for future school capacity requirements for Hazlehead and Countesswells ASGs leading to the Council being unable to fulfil its duty to make adequate and efficient provision  Non-compliance of Section 75 Agreement	The School Estate Plan sets out priorities for the school estate and proposals for continually monitoring and updating plans to ensure adequate and efficient provision is maintained. Implementing the recommendations in this report will ensure that the project can proceed to the next stage.  Officers will continue to seek updates and continue to engage with the CDL Administrator to ensure any opportunity is taken to hold future negotiations/discussions/	L	Yes

		variation to the Section 75 Agreement		
<b>Operational</b>	The recommended option doesn't meet the aspirations of the Community/ stakeholders	A statutory consultation will be carried out detailing the proposals and inviting comment and feedback from all stakeholders. The outcome of this consultation will be reported back to Education and Children's Services Committee before any decision to proceed is approved.	L	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	Insufficient Capital funding available with the Capital Plan to deliver the final designed project	Refinement of stage 1 costs following design development stage will allow a more accurate costings to be reported within the Full Business Case	M	Yes
<b>Reputational</b>	<p>Risk of damage to Council reputation if the new Hazlehead Campus option is not delivered.</p> <p>The emerging communities of Countesswells may disagree should ACC decide not to provide a new secondary school at Countesswells</p>	<p>Implementing the recommendations in this report will ensure that the project can proceed to the next stage.</p> <p>ACC will need to demonstrate the benefits of the recommended option to the residents of Countesswells during the consultation stage and address the feedback from the engagement survey.</p>	L	Yes



Environment / Climate	Non identified			
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## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><a href="#">COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</a></u>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<p><b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b></p> <p><u><a href="#">Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</a></u></p>	<p>This report supports the delivery of the following policy statements:</p> <p><u>A City of Opportunity</u></p> <p>Policy Statement 2 - Review and invest in our school estate, ensuring all of Aberdeen’s schools are fit for the educational needs and the challenges of the 21st century. The report seeks Committee's approval to proceed with new secondary school provision for Hazlehead and Countesswells ASGs</p> <p><u>A Prosperous City</u></p> <p>Policy Statement 8 - Seek to buy goods, services and food locally whenever possible, subject to complying with the law and public tendering requirements. Opportunities to do this will be considered for all Capital Projects.</p>
<u><a href="#">Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</a></u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The proposals in this report support the delivery of <b>Stretch Outcome 3</b> – 500 Aberdeen City residents upskilled/reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026. The investment in our estate is interlinked with the investment in our workforce and will contribute to the diversification of the local economy
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Prosperous People: The project will support <b>Stretch Outcome 8 in the LOIP</b> - <i>Child friendly city where all decisions which impact children and young people will be informed by them by 2026</i> . The engagement survey at feasibility stage provided an opportunity for children and young people to have their say on which option they supported.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	<b>Prosperous Place: The project will support Stretch Outcome 14 - Increase sustainable</b>

	<p><b>travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as a main mode of travel by 2026.</b></p> <p>Sustainable routes to school, safety, fitness and the well being of our communities will form part of the design development stage.</p> <p>This project will also support the delivery of <b>LOIP Stretch Outcome 13 – Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen’s carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of changing climate.</b> The project will be exemplar in terms of net zero and green credentials.</p>
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	This project forms part of the School Estate Plan which will support the delivery of the Council’s Property and Estates Strategy and the Net Zero Routemap for Aberdeen City.

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	A Stage 1 Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	No other assessments required

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Budget Meeting, Council 1 March 2023  
[Decisions 01st-Mar-2023 10.30 Council.pdf](#)

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A – Outline Business Case and concept designs

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children’s Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	21 November 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Report on Options to Rationalise Early Learning and Childcare settings to match the Scottish Government Grant
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CFS/23/301
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Shona Milne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Louise Beaton
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.1 & 1.2

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present options to the Education and Children’s Services Committee on rationalising Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings to match the Scottish Government Grant, as instructed by Council at Budget meeting on 1 March 2023.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Considers the options presented and approves the amended Early Learning and Childcare delivery models, based on demand.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

#### **Context**

- 3.1 As part of our statutory duties under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, we are required to consult with parents and carers every two years on the provision of ELC. The Early Years team consulted with parents and carers again in June 2023. The consultation received a total of 664 responses after 3 weeks (+210 (46%) from 2021).

- 3.2 Key headline data is below and the full report can be found at Appendix A.

- 79.4% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the range of ELC providers and models within their local area (Associated School Group (ASG)) (+7.4% from 2021).
- 75.8% have been able to secure a funded ELC place in their local area/ASG.
- 80.6% of respondents were able to secure their first choice of ELC provision.
- 88.4% of respondents were satisfied with the location of their ELC provision. (+5.4% from 2021).

- 76.8% of respondents were satisfied with the times ELC services are available (+9% from 2021).
- 87.1% of respondents stated that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their child's experience of ELC to date (+ 4.7% from 2021).
- 73.6% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the snacks and meals their child is offered whilst attending ELC (+4.8% from 2021)
- The majority of respondents, at over 95%, identified Early Learning and Childcare as having a positive impact on their child's development with:
  - 87% identifying improved social skills;
  - 81% seeing an improvement in their child's communication skills;
  - 71% identifying improved creativity;
  - 68% identifying improved fine motor skills;
  - 64% identifying improved emotional development;
  - 63% identifying improved physical development;
  - 62% identifying improved listening skills;
  - 60% identifying improved literacy development; and
  - 60% identifying improved numeracy development.
- 39.8% of respondents stated that they had more time for other responsibilities as a result of the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (-11.4% from 2021).
- 29.2% of respondents indicated that they had more money/disposable income as a positive impact on their family (-9.5% from 2021).
- 24.1% are now considering a return to work or study (-4.4% from 2021).
- 24.1% stated improved wellbeing/respite as a positive impact from the expansion of ELC (-2% from 2021), with 18.9% of respondents finding they now have more time to themselves (-5.4% from 2021).
- 73.3% of respondents stated that they are aware that Aberdeen City Council offers Eligible 2's ELC placements.

3.3 The full analysis of the responses will be used to inform the refresh of the ELC Delivery Plan in 2024. Critically, responses do not indicate a need to amend our approach to the provision of a mixed model of ELC across the city. On that basis, the review of delivery models to rationalise our offer has sought to maintain a mixed model of ELC across Associated School Groups (ASGs) to ensure families continue to have choice.

#### **Review of Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Models**

3.4 One of the key actions in our current ELC Delivery Plan 2022-24 is to continue to monitor demand across the city and in individual ASGs. This is in order to meet the needs of families and to achieve best value. Recent detailed work on capacities shows that, similar to last year, we continue to have an oversupply of 'afternoon' places available and Officers have taken this learning into account in planning proposed delivery models for 2024/25. The team continue to receive applications for ELC placements on a daily basis as families move into the city and care has been taken to factor this into proposals.

3.5 We know from parent and carer feedback that while a large majority of respondents (79.4%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the range of ELC providers and models within their local area/Associated Schools Group (ASG);

and (75.8%) were able to secure a funded ELC place in their local area/ ASG, some delivery models are more popular than others and there are slight changes in demand across each ASG.

- 3.6 We also know that the number of ELC age children (age two to five years) in Scotland is seven per cent lower in 2022 than was projected at the beginning of ELC expansion, and is expected to continue to fall over the next 10 years (*National Records of Scotland (NRS) population projections*). This may have an impact on demand for ELC places in the longer term although the number of children attending currently is remaining stable due to the number of new families making Aberdeen their home.
- 3.7 At the time of the ELC Parent and Carer Consultation in 2023, term-time, full-day and fully flexible placements were most popular. For half day placements, morning places continue to be more highly sought after than afternoon places, with afternoon placements the least popular out of all the delivery models. This has been triangulated through recent work on ELC capacities (Appendix 2).
- 3.8 As a result of this analysis, we have identified three ELC settings across three ASGs which could change from an 8am-6pm all year round model (which offers either full day or 5 long mornings and 5 long afternoon placements), to a fully 9am-3pm term time model. These are:
- Fernielea School ELC (Hazlehead ASG) – 20 places
  - Muirfield School ELC (Northfield ASG) – 40 places
  - Riverbank School ELC (St Machar ASG) – 40 places (60 places from August 2024 at new school)
- 3.9 We also propose to remove the ELC provision at Bramble Brae School ELC setting (currently 600 hours x 20 places – morning or afternoon term time). The physical environment in this setting is poor and does not afford sufficient flexibility to offer alternative delivery models. Uptake is limited, with 13 children attending in the mornings and only 7 in the afternoons. There are six other Local Authority ELC settings across the wider ASG offering a mix of delivery models. There is also a new Funded Provider setting at Cummings Park, offering a fully flexible wrap around model.
- 3.10 A number of other Local Authority settings are also operating under capacity, particularly in the afternoon sessions of the 8am-6pm all year round model:
- Cults – currently operating at between 25-55% capacity in afternoons. And 53% or less in summer holidays.
  - Forehill – currently operating at between 25-60% capacity in afternoons. And 60% or less in summer holidays.
  - Greenbrae – currently operating at between 42-75% capacity in afternoons. And 62% or less in summer holidays.
  - Heathryburn – currently operating at between 30-35% capacity in afternoons. And 50% or less in summer holidays.
  - Kingsford – currently operating at between 16-30% capacity in afternoons and 60-75% in mornings. And 47% or less in summer holidays.

- Loirston – currently operating at between 24-42% capacity in afternoons. And 60% or less in summer holidays.
  - Tullos – currently operating at between 35-42% capacity in afternoons. And 50% or less in summer holidays.
- 3.11 Within these ELC settings, we do not propose to change delivery models, as we would not have enough places to move to a fully 9am-3pm term-time model. It would also remove some of the ELC options delivered across each of our ASGs. We therefore propose to reduce the numbers at each of these settings and realign the number of places offered in the mornings and afternoons to balance attendance. Based on current uptake, this would have minimal impact on our service delivery. We would maximise resources and achieve best value by reducing the staffing allocation accordingly, in most cases by 1 x FTE member of staff per setting identified above.
- 3.12 Holiday uptake has increased in 2022-23, compared to in 2021-22, however attendance remains significantly lower than during term time weeks. In order to accurately demonstrate and quantify this, officers monitor attendance numbers during holiday periods. 34 ELC settings were open during the 2023 summer holiday period and were requested to submit their attendance figures on a daily basis. In the majority of cases, the actual numbers were lower than the estimated numbers, which were based on ELC settings speaking to parents and carers in advance of holiday period about their intentions.
- 3.13 In putting forward these proposals, based on current supply and demand data, Officers have considered the full ELC offer across each ASG with all areas still having a good mix of 8am-6pm all year round ELC provision and 9am-3pm term time provision (Appendix 3). Our ELC Funded Providers also offer fully flexible funded ELC across the city and can meet the needs of families who require wrap around care and additional hours.
- 3.14 It is proposed that the amended delivery models outlined are implemented from August 2024 and that applications for ELC placements be opened before the end of January 2024, in keeping with established practice and enabling effective forward planning by families.
- 3.15 There will be no staffing changes in the remainder of the current 2023/24 session. Officers will work with People & Organisational Development and Trade Union colleagues to consider any impacts on ELC staff contracts, as a result of the proposed changes to some of the ELC models, in advance of the new ELC session commencing in August 2024. Any necessary reductions in staffing, as a result of reduced staffing allocations, will be achieved by natural wastage in the first instance, e.g. through staff turnover and by not filling vacancies.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Aberdeen City Council, as primary guarantor of quality and key enabler of flexibility and choice, is currently funded by a specific grant from the Scottish Government to deliver ELC.

- 4.2 Officers continue to work with finance colleagues to ensure that our plans work towards realisation of a sustainable ELC provision. The options presented in this report will achieve the required budget targets identified and approved at Council Budget meeting on 1 March 2023 in relation to rationalising ELC settings to match the Scottish Government Grant from August 2024, if approved. (£516,000).
- 4.3 Reciprocal arrangements are in place via a Cross Boundary Agreement with Aberdeenshire Council. This means that an equal number of ELC places will be provided by each neighbouring Local Authority. For example, if Aberdeen City Council provide more funded ELC places than Aberdeenshire Council, the additional places will be recharged to Aberdeenshire Council in line with the Reconciliation and Payments part of the Cross Boundary Agreement on a quarterly basis. This ensures equity and Best Value for both Authorities, whilst offering flexibility and choice to families from both Authorities.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The expansion of ELC has brought a number of duties on the Local Authority under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014:
- The provision of 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare for eligible two year olds and all three and four year olds.
  - Aberdeen City Council will retain the statutory responsibility for ensuring that funded ELC entitlement is available to all eligible children in the city.
  - Aberdeen City Council will continue to be the primary guarantor of quality and key enabler of flexibility and choice, ensuring that there is a range of options for all families in the city.
  - Aberdeen City Council is responsible for engaging and consulting with parents and carers on a regular basis (minimum of every 2 years) on the provision of ELC delivered locally.
  - Aberdeen City Council is responsible for preparing and publishing an Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan every 2 years.
- 5.2 The proposed amended Early Learning and Childcare delivery models, based on demand, will assist the Education Authority to continue to develop and deliver high quality ELC in the city.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 No negative environmental impacts have been identified. A cornerstone of the ELC expansion programme was the investment in outdoor learning, and this is keenly reflected in the establishment of two new outdoor nurseries at Duthie Park and at Hazlehead. Both have an outdoor focus in their education and provision, but each will offer unique and varied experiences for children, families, staff and the wider communities. The establishment of the two new outdoor nurseries is a first for Aberdeen city and a pioneering provision for the Early Years sector. Across all ELC settings, good use is also made of outdoor and green spaces where practicable and feasible to do so.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	No risks identified	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Compliance</b>	Risk of not meeting statutory obligations around 1140 hours.	Mitigated through delivery of the Expansion Programme and subsequent monitoring of supply and demand of ELC places.	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Operational</b>	Risk of not attracting enough new practitioners into the workforce.	Mitigated through the ongoing activities being undertaken to support workforce development, as outlined in ELC Delivery Plan 2022-24.	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Financial</b>	Risk of building a financially unsustainable model.	Care has been taken to redesign ELC around improving quality rather than simply doubling to reflect the additional hours and a more sustainable staffing model has been put in place.  Officers are monitoring supply and demand on an annual basis in order to maximise resources and achieve best value.	M	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Reputational</b>	Risk of not delivering on legal obligations	Mitigated through delivery of the Expansion Programme and subsequent monitoring of supply	L	<b>Yes</b>



		and demand of ELC places.		
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No risks identified	N/A	N/A	N/A

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><b>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</b></u>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the policy statement “Work with the Scottish Government to expand free early learning and childcare to one and two year-olds from low-income households.”</p> <p>The provision of funded Early Learning and Childcare has the potential to be transformational for many families, but especially for those with the lowest incomes in the city.</p>
<u><b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b></u>	
<p>Prosperous Economy - 500 Aberdeen City residents upskilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026 (Stretch Outcome 3)</p>	<p>The Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2022-24 will continue to have a positive impact on this priority theme and will help to deliver the LOIP.</p> <p>The workforce has increased significantly in order to deliver the increase in ELC provision and will not be detrimentally impacted by the proposals contained within this report.</p> <p>63 Aberdeen City Council employees retrained as Early Years Practitioners over 3 cohorts of a Retraining Programme, gaining an SVQ Level 3 qualification. We have also recruited 110 Early Learning and Childcare Support Workers.</p> <p>In addition, we have introduced a Modern Apprenticeship position into our ELC staffing structure. This involves training young people to become Early Years Practitioners as part of our ‘Grow Our Own’ workforce strategy. This is a new role in our Local Authority ELC settings and provides a positive destination and career pathway for our young people as well as strengthening our workforce. We currently have 37 Modern Apprenticeships working across the city.</p>

	<p>There will be ongoing opportunities to join the Early Learning and Childcare workforce in Aberdeen and to retrain, to upskill and for career progression.</p>
<p>Prosperous People - 95% of all our children, including those living in our priority neighbourhoods, will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026 (Stretch Outcome 7)</p> <p>95% of children (0-5 years) will reach their expected developmental milestones by the time of their child health reviews by 2026 (Stretch Outcome 4)</p>	<p>The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare has contributed positively to supporting positive destinations.</p> <p>We have introduced a Modern Apprenticeship (MA) position into our ELC staffing structure. This involves training young people to become Early Years Practitioners as part of our 'Grow Our Own' workforce strategy. This is a new role in our Local Authority ELC settings and provides a positive destination and career pathway for our young people as well as strengthening our workforce. We currently have 25 Modern Apprenticeships working across the city and are in the process of recruiting 8 new MA's</p> <p>Our work in partnership with families and communities including through a Peep offer in all settings as part of a partnership Family Support offer will support children to reach their expected milestones. It will also increase the number of parents and carers who have awareness of how to support their children's learning and development at home.</p> <p>Furthermore, every child who attends Early Learning and Childcare over a lunchtime period receives a minimum of one free meal per session attended as part of their statutory entitlement, as well as a portion of milk and fruit or vegetables daily via the Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme.</p> <p>Early Learning and Childcare can improve long term outcomes for children and families.</p>
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The provision of high quality Early Learning and Childcare will help to deliver the LOIP.</p> <p>The increase in funded ELC will enable more families to take up employment and training opportunities, thus reducing poverty. More hours are now available in Local Authority ELC settings and Funded Provider ELC settings are now an option for many families who could not afford this previously.</p> <p>Furthermore, every child who attends Early Learning and Childcare receives a minimum of one free meal per session attended as part of their statutory</p>

	entitlement, as well as a portion of milk and fruit or vegetables daily via the Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme.
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b> Strategic Development Plan Children’s Services Plan National Improvement Framework Plan	The proposals within this report support the Strategic Development Plan by supporting the workforce. The provision of high quality Early Learning and Childcare will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support families to take up employment and training opportunities;</li> <li>2. Develop the Young Workforce; and</li> <li>3. Support business to recruit and retain staff.</li> </ol> The Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2022-24 is aligned to the Children’s Services Plan and the National Improvement Framework Plan and work to address poverty in the Child Poverty Action Plan.

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	Previous Integrated Impact Assessment (stage 1 / stage 1 and 2) relating to Early Learning and Childcare has been reviewed and submitted.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	None

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Best Start: Strategic Early Learning and School Age Childcare Plan for Scotland 2022-26 (Scottish Government: October 2022)

## 11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – Early Learning and Childcare Parent and Carer Consultation 2023
- 11.2 Appendix 2 – Analysis of uptake of ELC Placements – October 2023
- 11.3 Appendix 3 – Early Learning and Childcare Models Proposed from August 2024

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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## **Early Learning and Childcare Consultation with Parents and Carers 2023**

### **Report**

#### **Background**

Aberdeen City Council is committed to offering high quality Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) to all three to five year old children and eligible two-year olds. ELC is about learning and development through play, exploring and having fun! ELC can make a significant positive contribution to a child's development. We believe that all children deserve the best start to life so they can grow into healthy, happy and confident adults who, in turn, achieve great things.

From August 2021, all three and four-year-old children and eligible 2-year olds, have been entitled to 1140 funded hours of ELC per year. This has almost doubled from the previous entitlement of up to 600 hours of ELC per year. Families can access up to 1140 funded hours of ELC at a local authority ELC / nursery setting and from private nurseries, playgroups and childminders working in partnership with Aberdeen City Council to deliver high quality ELC.

ELC also has economic benefits for families and for the city. ELC can give parents and carers more time for work, training or study and can benefit families by reducing the costs of childcare.

The purpose of the consultation was to seek the views of parents and carers, and future parents and carers, in order to:

- Review uptake and models of delivery across the city;
- Contribute to a review of the impact of the implementation of the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to date;
- Inform the development of our Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan which is published every two years and sets out the strategic direction for the delivery of Early Learning and Childcare in the city, responding to local need and reflecting the diversity of communities in Aberdeen; and
- Meet our statutory consultation duties under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

The consultation was open from Monday 5 June to Sunday 25 June 2023 inclusive.

The consultation received a total of **664 responses** after 3 weeks (+210 (46%) from 2021). Key headline points from the returns include:

- 79.4% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the range of ELC providers and models within their local area (ASG) (+7.4% from 2021).
- 75.8% have been able to secure a funded ELC place in their local area/ASG.
- 80.6% of respondents were able to secure their first choice of ELC provision.
- 88.4% of respondents were satisfied with the location of their ELC provision. (+5.4% from 2021).
- 76.8% of respondents were satisfied with the times ELC services are available (+9% from 2021).
- 87.1% of respondents stated that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their child's experience of ELC to date (+4.7% from 2021).
- 73.6% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the snacks and meals their child is offered whilst attending ELC (+4.8% from 2021)
- The majority of respondents, at over 95%, identified Early Learning and Childcare as having a positive impact on their child's development with:
  - ✓ 87% identifying improved social skills;
  - ✓ 81% seeing an improvement in their child's communication skills;
  - ✓ 71% identifying improved creativity;
  - ✓ 68% identifying improved fine motor skills;
  - ✓ 64% identifying improved emotional development;
  - ✓ 63% identifying improved physical development;
  - ✓ 62% identifying improved listening skills;
  - ✓ 60% identifying improved literacy development; and
  - ✓ 60% identifying improved numeracy development.
- 39.8% of respondents stated that they had more time for other responsibilities as a result of the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (-11.4% from 2021).
- 29.2% of respondents indicated that they had more money/disposable income as a positive impact on their family (-9.5% from 2021).
- 24.1% are now considering a return to work or study (-4.4% from 2021).
- 24.1% stated improved wellbeing/respice as a positive impact from the expansion of ELC (-2% from 2021), with 18.9% of respondents finding they now have more time to themselves (-5.4% from 2021).
- 73.3% of respondents stated that they are aware that Aberdeen City Council offers Eligible 2's ELC placements.

Responses to each question are detailed in the following pages.

**Question 1: What area of Aberdeen do you live in? (These are listed by Associated School Groups (ASGs) for Aberdeen City Council Secondary School zones).**

We received responses from all eleven of the Aberdeen City's Associated School Groups (ASGs).

Associated School Group	Responses	Percentages
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Aberdeen Grammar School	50	7.5%
Bridge of Don	41	6.2%
Bucksburn	90	13.6%
Cults	57	8.6%
Dyce	13	2%
Harlaw	73	11%
Hazlehead	72	10.8%
Lochside	69	10.4%
Northfield	54	8.1%
Oldmachar	49	7.4%
St Machar	96	14.5%

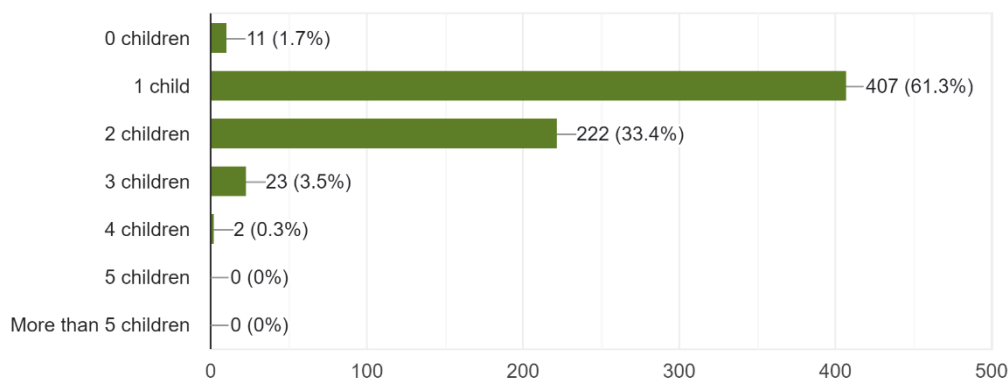
There was engagement from parents and carers across the city with most responses from the St Machar and Bucksburn ASGs, followed by Harlaw, Hazlehead and Lochside ASGs respectively. We should take into consideration that Dyce ASG is a very small ASG compared to others and that the consultation may have been better promoted and shared in some ASGs than others.

**Question 2: How many children do you have aged between 0-5 in your care?**

Number of Children	Respondents	Percentage
0	11	1.7%
1	407	61.3%
2	222	33.4%
3	23	3.5%
4	2	0.3%
5	0	0%
More than 5 children	0	0%

2. How many children do you have aged between 0 - 5 in your care?

664 responses



We asked this question to determine a demographic regarding the household composition of each respondent. Responses to this question indicate that the majority

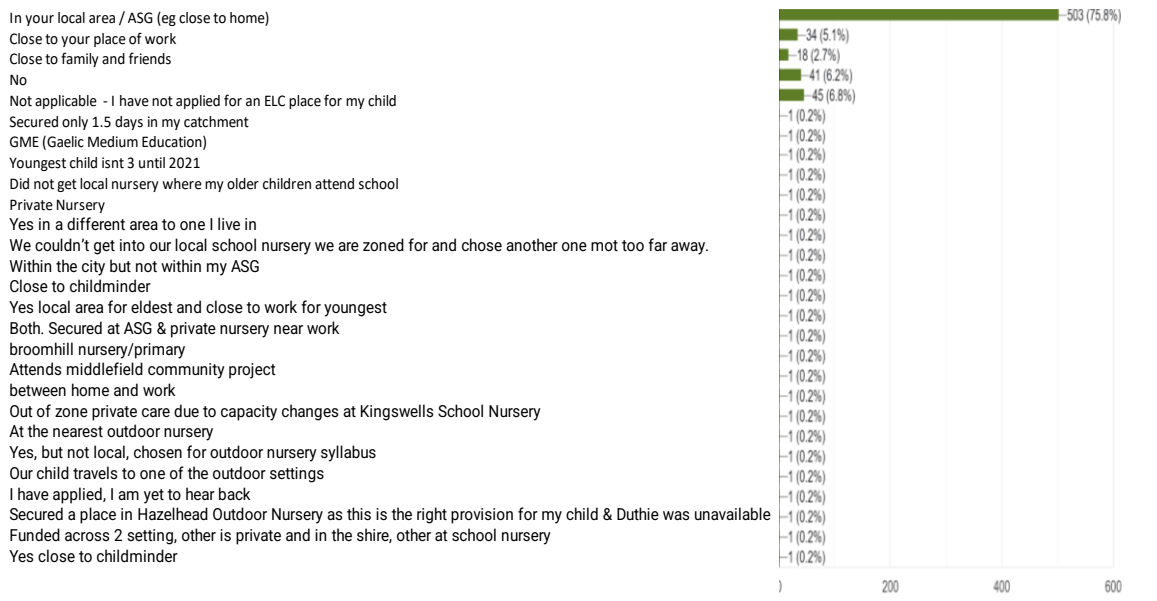
of respondents (61.3%) have one child, whilst a further 33.4% of respondents have 2 children. Less than 4% of respondents said they have 3 or more children.

This has changed quite significantly from 2021, when responses to this question indicated that the majority of respondents (55%) had 2 children, with just under 25% having one child and 15% having 3 children.

### Question 3: Have you secured funded Early Learning and Childcare in your local area / Associated School Group (ASG)?

- 503 respondents (75.8%) have been able to secure a funded ELC place in their local area / ASG.
- With 41 respondents (6.2%) unable to secure a local ELC placement.
- 34 respondents (5.1%) indicated that they had secured ELC close to their place of work.
- 18 respondents (2.7%) reported that they had secured ELC close to their family and friends.
- 45 respondents (6.8%) have either not yet applied or found the question not applicable.

3. Have you secured Funded Early Learning and Childcare for your child(ren)?  
664 responses



The vast majority of respondents, over three-quarters, have been able to secure a funded ELC place in their local area / ASG. This is exactly the same % as reported two years ago in our 2021 consultation – 75.8%, so it is reassuring to see this figure remain high, particularly with an increase in the number of responses received overall (+46% from 2021).

The feedback suggests that the majority of respondents have been able to secure a funded ELC place locally and a breadth of opinion that suggests there is a good mix of



ELC provision in Aberdeen to suit the needs of families, for example with some families preferring to access ELC closer their place of work or family and friends.

The following are a selection of comments from parents and carers:

*We got what we wanted as we had an older son in the school.*

*My child was already in a nursery setting and the nursery applied for ELC funding for my child.*

*I was able to secure the desired ELC for my child.*

*My eldest attends local school nursery and a private nursery not within our area. My youngest only attends the private nursery.*

*First choice for the present academic year was not secured, however my first choice for the next session has been secured (2023-24).*

*First choice of setting but not first choice of hours.*

*I didn't manage to secure my first choice but I'm happy with the 2nd one where my child is currently in.*

*Technically I did get my first choice, but we moved house so couldn't get into the new catchment nursery.*

*I moved to Aberdeen midway through the term and so I didn't initially secure a place close to home, but was able to at a later date.*

*We applied for 2 options and we got 2nd one, no worries about that.*

*Love how flexible Middlefield Community Project are with accommodating hours for working parents-amazing!*

*One of my children has always had his place secured, however my other child is on the waiting list and is due to start in January. It would be good to receive updates as to where we are on the waiting list and how likely it is that he will get a place when he's due to start.*

*Was unable to access same school nursery at the school her siblings attends.*

*Nursery hours at one of my local schools could be better.*

*I would've preferred Mon to Fri 9-3 as have older children in school at these times.*

*I would have liked Mon-Fri 9-3 term time at Culter school nursery for 2023/24. So instead I've done 2 & 1/2 days but will put him in 9-3 for 2 of the days.*

*Childcare split over 2 providers – 2 days at school nursery in local area + 2 days at private nursery close to work from Aug 2023.*

*First choice was a private nursery, as school nurseries cannot cater for parents working more than 2.5 days per week.*

*Son has only ever been in private nursery and will be until school.*

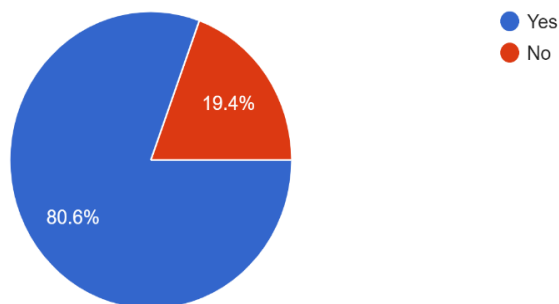
*All very simple and easy to apply for. Very happy with the options available.*

### Question 3a: Did you manage to secure your first choice of ELC provision?

- 80.6% of respondents were able to secure their first choice of ELC provision.
- 19.4% of respondents were unable to secure their first choice of ELC provision.

3a Did you manage to secure your first choice of ELC provision?

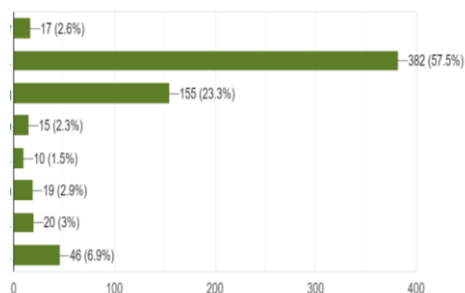
639 responses



### Question 4: We asked parents and carers which type of ELC provision their child currently attends?

4. Does your child currently attend?

- Childminder
- Local Authority ELC/Nursery setting
- Private ELC/Nursery setting
- Playgroup
- Third Sector ELC/Nursery setting e.g. Local Community Project
- Outdoor ELC/Nursery provision
- Blended placement (eg Childminder and Local Authority or Funded)
- My child(ren) do not currently attend ELC



This tells us that the majority of respondents to the consultation use a Local Authority ELC / Nursery setting (57.5%), followed by a Private ELC / Nursery setting (23.3%). A smaller number of parents and carers who use childminders, playgroups, local community projects, outdoor ELC and blended placements also responded to the consultation.

### Question 5: Which Early Learning and Childcare setting does your child currently attend?

We received responses from parents and carers across all ASGs whose children attend Early Learning and Childcare at Local Authority and Funded Provider settings including private, third sector and outdoor nurseries, playgroups and childminders.

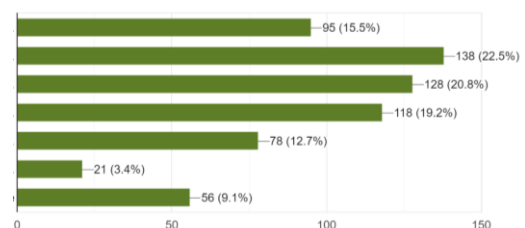
**Question 6: We were interested to find out if parents and carers use their full statutory ELC entitlement and asked them to select which models they currently use for their child(ren).**

- The majority of respondents (22.5%) use a 9am-3pm term-time model.
- This was followed by 20.8% of respondents using a local authority 46-weeks model x 5 morning sessions.
- 19.2% of respondents utilise the local authority 46-weeks model x 2.5 days.
- 12.7% of respondents use the local authority 46-weeks model x 5 afternoons.
- 15.5% of respondents use a fully flexible model of ELC delivered by a Funded Provider (private ELC / childminder or playgroup setting working in partnership with the Local Authority).
- Only 3.1% of respondents currently use a blended placement.
- 9.1% of respondents were not sure which model of ELC provision they currently use.

6. We are interested to find out if you use your full statutory Early Learning and Childcare entitlement (1140 hours per year).

Please select the Early Learning Childcare models you currently use for your child(ren). 614 Responses

Fully flexible Funded Provider, e.g. Childminder, Playgroup or Private Nursery  
 9am – 3pm term-time at a Local Authority school ELC / Nursery setting  
 46 weeks provision at a Local Authority school ELC / Nursery setting - Mornings  
 46 weeks provision at a Local Authority school ELC / Nursery setting – Afternoons  
 46 weeks provision at a Local Authority school ELC / Nursery setting – 2.5 Full days  
 A combination of two (Blended model)  
 Not sure



The following are a selection of comments from parents and carers:

*Anything you can do to reduce the burden on parents of young children under school age is amazing. Especially single parents.*

*Child is under 3 right now so we pay private currently.*

*Her hours are 9-3 term time but I can pay for her to attend additional hours and in the school holidays which is great for working parents.*

*9-3 is the better option so I can return to work.*

*ELC's should all become 9-3 term time.*

*I don't use the settings in the school holidays.*

*Perhaps some settings should go back to offering shorter sessions such as 2.5-3 hours and perhaps there should be less children in each nursery class.*

*Although we have a place for 5 mornings we only use 3 morning sessions.*

*My child goes 3 days per week 9-3 although has funding for 5 days.*

*Have never left my daughter full session, seems too long for me.*

*I cannot fully utilise my funded hours as school nursery and private nursery have different models. It would really benefit my daughter and myself from utilising the full entitlement but of course accept our situation. I do wish our school nursery could have a term time only model so that my daughter can have a more fully rounded educational programme during term time and have the holidays off. I understand the school cannot facilitate 2 different models but would rather it*

*provided term time only over the 46 week model. It would mean I could work more hours and my child has more opportunity to make friends with school nursery children who she will be going to school with which is the whole reason I have split her funding to both nurseries so she can make friends. The current model makes that difficult but I appreciate the funded hours that I do get to use. Other mums in different catchment areas can fully utilise their hours because it's term time and this seems much more preferable/sense than to waste all the hours I could be using but can't.*

*With the introduction of children now being able to defer school entry when they turn 5 after August, how will current nursery provision manage with this potential increase in demand?*

*The amount of hours is still insufficient.*

*If I could pay for extra hours at school nursery to get 3 full days at school nursery, this would be my preferred option rather than using a private nursery. I feel my child will find it harder going on to primary one being unfamiliar with the school and knowing very few children from school, than a child who has attended school nursery. However private nursery works much better for working parents.*

*More than 2.5 days needed but no option to increase hours at council facilities.*

*The council should consider a 07:30 drop off and 17:30 pick up.*

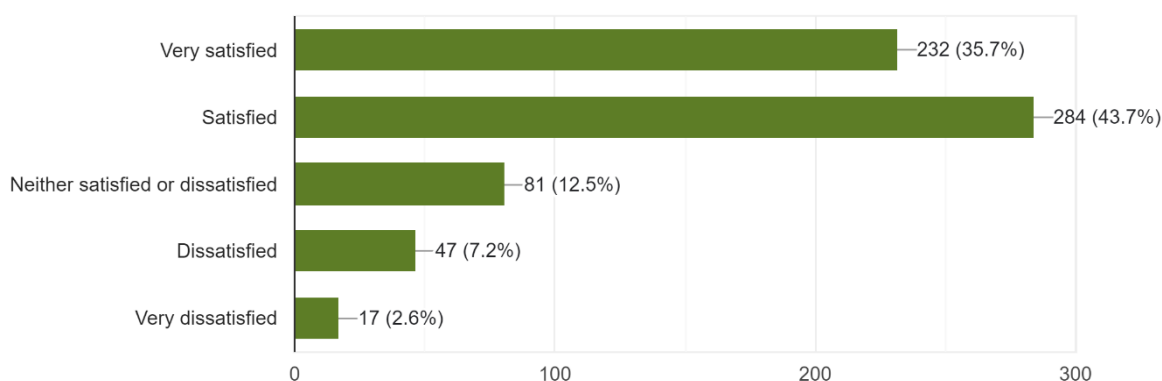
*Why do you have two nurseries in the 'Lochside' catchment running the exact same model? Giving no choice of Term Time, which could be suitable for parents who have other children who are already in primary or secondary school.*

*Not yet applicable, applying for funding when the youngest turns 3.*

**Question 7a: We asked how satisfied parents and carers are with the range of providers and models of Early Learning and Childcare offered in their local area / ASG.**

7a. How satisfied are you with the range of providers and models of Early Learning and Childcare offered in your local area / ASG?

650 responses

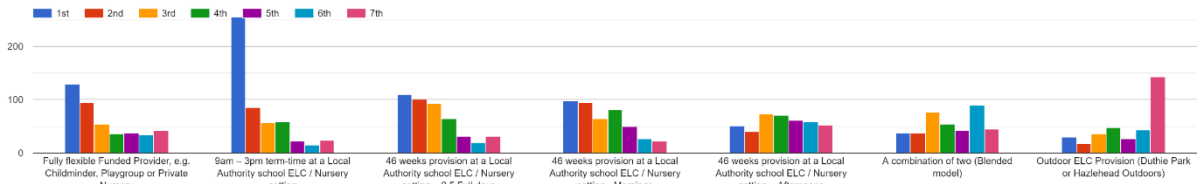


As can be seen from the responses in the table above, the majority of parents and carers who responded to the consultation (79.4%) are either satisfied or very satisfied with the range of providers and models of ELC offered in their local area / ASG. Less than 10%

of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. This demonstrates we have a good mix of delivery models across the city.

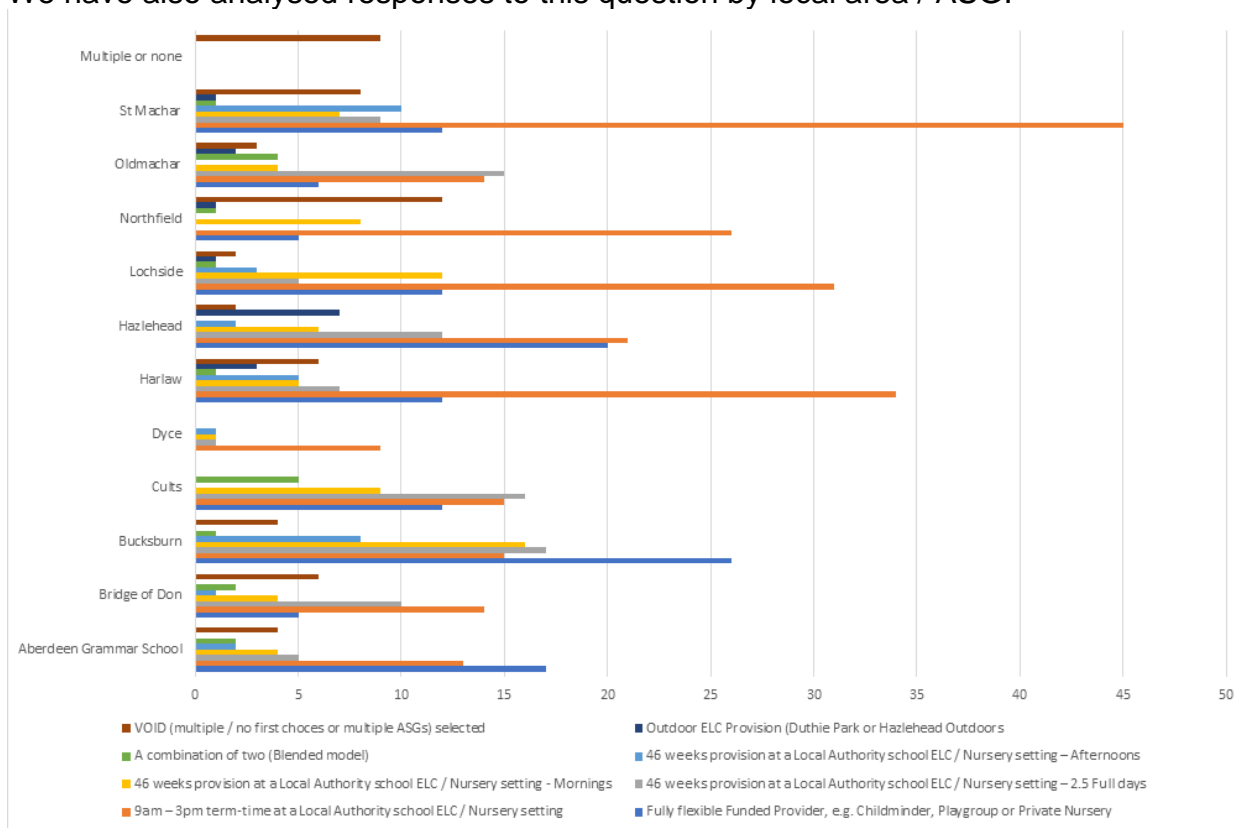
**Question 7b: We asked which models of Early Learning and Childcare best meet the needs of their family and asked parents and carers to rank each model in order of preference.**

7b. Which models of Early Learning and Childcare best meets the needs of your family? Rank in order 1-7



Responses to this question are shown in the graphs above and are very similar to the responses in Question 6 about current use of ELC. The first choice of model for the majority of respondents is the 9-3 term time model. This is followed by fully flexible funded provider model, then 2.5 days x 46 weeks, closely followed by 5 mornings x 46 weeks. Afternoons x 46 weeks, blended model and outdoor provision were least favoured options, though these models are popular with some families, with outdoor ELC highly sought after. This shows it is important to have a mix of options available, in each local area / ASG in order to meet all families' needs and circumstances across the city.

We have also analysed responses to this question by local area / ASG:



The following comments were made by some parents and carers show a mix of opinion in relation to this question, dependent on individual circumstances:

*Selected what I have and had been offered.*

*2.5 days, or just mornings, or just afternoons, are no use to anyone who works normal hours.*

*9-3 is not helpful for working hours.*

*Full day care essential for working parents.*

*I work full time so I rely heavily on the private nursery*

*I have family who can help with childcare. I am on maternity leave now, but when I worked, my son went to nursery in the mornings, and his grandparents collected him three afternoons a week.*

*9-3 I feel would have been a better option for my family and would have prepared my child for school hours when she transitions to P1. It's also easier when you have older children and can pick up and drop off at the same time.*

*I don't think there are enough 9-3 or morning sessions available. Some children are given afternoon spaces even though this doesn't work for the families.*

*It would be good to have the option of 9-3. Especially if you have an older child at school. Don't understand why somewhere who offers the 46 week models can't offer the 9-3 option.*

*Would be good see most nursery offer 9-3 places*

*It's hard to use the full allocation in afternoons as the kids are exhausted (most pick up at 5.15 which ends up losing a couple of hours a week).*

*Preference is local nursery open during school holidays*

*It would be great to have a system where we could pay for additional hours in the same setting even if it's council run.*

*Also it would be great to have some connection between council and private nurseries so that it would be easier to coordinate time in both (eg 2.5 days in each), possibly with other existing nursery friends.*

*Only fully flexible works for us, I work 8-4 for the NHS, I would have very little work options available to us if nursery time was reduced. We have no family or alternate childcare options available to us.*

*The schools and nurseries in our local area are very oversubscribed and more houses are getting put up every day. It concerns me that I may struggle to get my son into Primary 1 and my daughter into nursery next august.*

*I feel it would help parents more if the city changed the hours to what the Shire do. i.e. pick and choose sessions that they need and not set 5 mornings/afternoons*

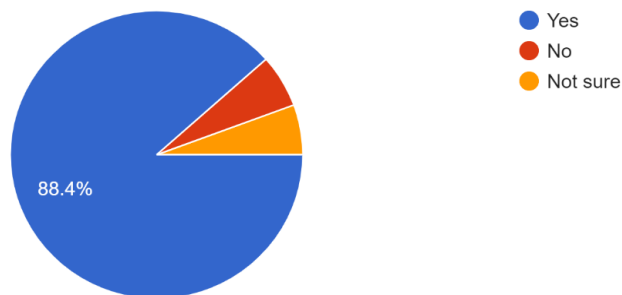
*Can't rank properly as only 1 options is possible for me.*

**Question 8: We asked parents and carers if they are satisfied with the current location of Early Learning and Childcare services? When we previously consulted with parents and carers in 2021, 83% of parents and carers were satisfied with the location of Early Learning and Childcare services, 6% were unsatisfied and 11% were unsure.**

8. When we previously consulted with parents and carers in 2021, 83% of parents and carers were satisfied with the location of Early Learning and Childcare services, 6% were unsatisfied and 11% were unsure.

Are you satisfied with the current location of Early Learning and Childcare services?

658 responses



As can be seen from the chart above, 88.4% of respondents are satisfied with the current location of ELC (+5.4%), with 6% unsatisfied and 6% unsure. This demonstrates that ELC is well located for the vast majority of respondents.

The following comments were made by some parents and carers in relation to this question:

*There are a range of options available, particularly if this is your first child, there is likely to be an ELC place which meets your needs or can be blended with private provision. With our second child we are more tied and may be less satisfied as it would be more helpful for us, for a range of models to be provided at Milltimber rather than just the 9-3 model.*

*Significant roadworks in multiple locations have made it more difficult to access. There is no direct public transport available between Torry and Duthie Park.*

*The walking distance is too long for the child.*

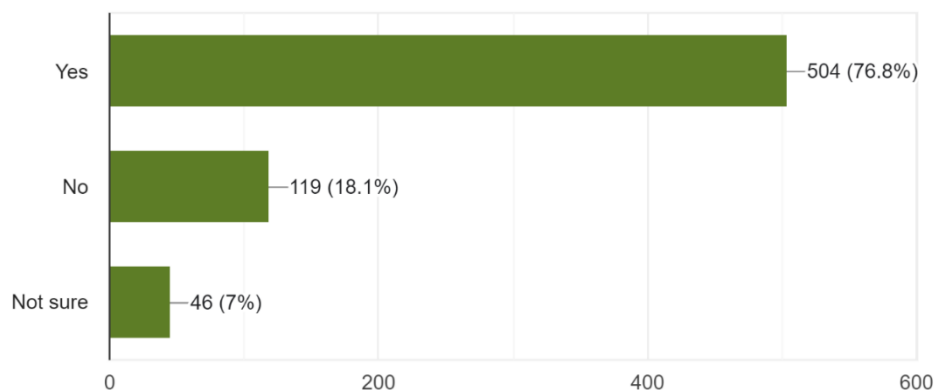
*Too far from home.*

**Question 9: We asked parents and carers if they are satisfied with the times ELC is currently available.**

- The majority of parents and carers (76.8%) indicated that they are satisfied with the times.
- 18.1% responded that they were not satisfied.
- 7% of respondents were unsure if they were satisfied or not.

9. Are you satisfied with the times Early Learning and Childcare services are currently available?

656 responses



The following are a selection of comments from parents and carers:

*Great services.*

*It provides good flexibility for people's differing needs.*

*46 weeks at Local Authority school ELC works extremely well for us as working parents.*

*I am very happy with the times my private provider offers.*

*8am-6pm opening is necessary for working parents.*

*7.30am drop off would be beneficial for working parents.*

*1-6 just does not work for children under 5.*

*Afternoon wasn't first choice of times. 6pm finish is a little late.*

*For the most part 8-8.45 is a waste of resources for most. Likewise after school hours also seem to be under utilised.*

*3 full days would be great.*

*Full day care essential for working parents.*

*Ideally we'd want fully funded throughout the year rather than just school term time.*

*As part of a family who both start work before 9am, it makes some provision completely impractical.*

*9-3 is a great time as it sets nursery children up for school.*

*9-3 model would be more beneficial to parents already with children at school.*

*I think a 9-3 option going forward would be beneficial. This isn't offered at all in Cove and would be far more beneficial for parents who have older children in school.*

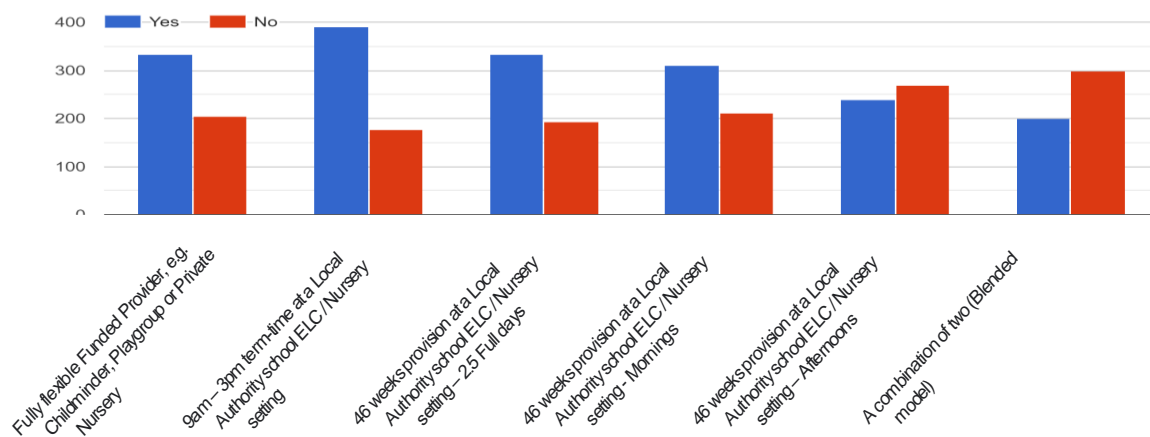


*It's a struggle finding childcare for under 3s if you're not on benefits but can't afford to pay for a private nursery if you work.*

*I feel the private sector is more flexible and adaptable to families lives, but the location of my local authority ELC is a bonus but the hours are long for full days.*

**Question 10: We asked parents and carers if they had considered all available options. We were keen to ascertain that parents and carers were aware of the range of different ELC options which were available to them.**

10. Did you consider all the available options?



As can be seen from the chart above, parents and carers have considered all available options and have chosen the ones which best meet their needs, according to their family circumstances. This again demonstrates the importance of having a mix of options available in each local area / ASG, including Funded Providers.

The following comments were made in relation to this question:

*Due to working, term time only isn't great as well as morning and afternoon slots. But the 2.5 days or blended is amazing. Wish something like this was available for school.*

*I am happy with either AM or PM provision and stick to the general school hours for drop off/pick up.*

*Thankfully I was allocated 2.5 days both years which has been consistent and allowed me to work around this.*

*Working full time, only mornings or only afternoons are just not an option for me.*

*Too many options make it complicated.*

*9-3 or am or pm is not suitable for working parents.*

*I work full time and therefore the 46 week models do not meet my childcare needs. Nor do the 9am-3pm models*

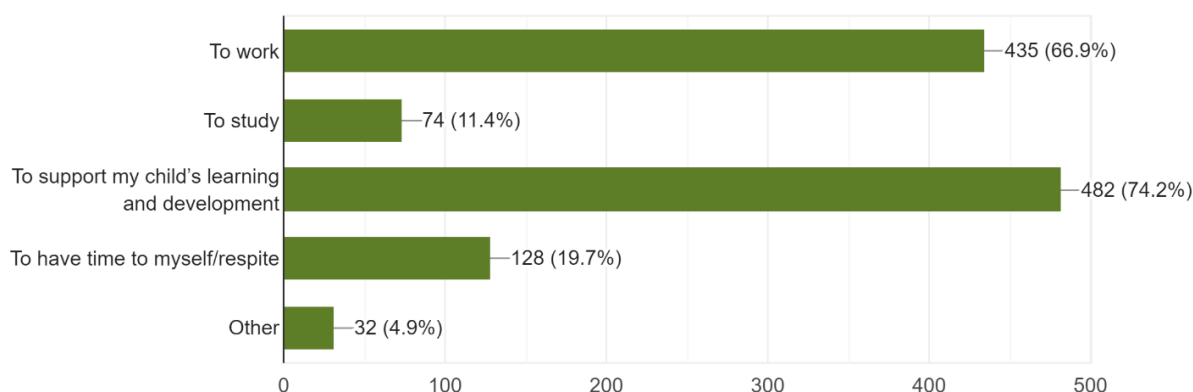
*I would have loved to do the 9-3 term time but our local nursery don't offer this option I considered the 9-3 option at another nursery, which is not my catchment, but it wasn't viable. I couldn't drop off both children at the same time in different places, and I wanted my daughter to make friends with children she would go to her catchment school with.*

*I work different hours each week so private nursery is the best option for me.*

### Question 11: We asked parents and carers what they currently use ELC for.

11. What do you currently use Early Learning and Childcare for? Please select all that apply.

650 responses



- Over two thirds of respondents (66.9%) reported that they currently use ELC for work and 11.4% use it to study.
- A large proportion of respondents (74.2%) highlighted that they used ELC to support their child's learning and development.
- Nearly one fifth (19.7%) indicated that they use ELC to have time to themselves or for respice.

The following are a selection of comments from parents and carers:

*Although a main reason is for work, we love nursery and how much our daughter loves it. It's helped with her social skills and allows her to make great relationships with friends and teachers.*

*I feel like it is a stage of life going to nursery and starting their learning journey but it does also allow me to facilitate a work day and return to study in order to progress my career without having to rely on family.*

*I wanted my daughter to interact more with children her own age. Due to COVID she wasn't able to attend groups for a long time and attending nursery has helped build her confidence.*

*Allow time to focus on development of younger siblings as well.*

*To support my child's development and growth as well as her academics too.*

*For me personally my children going to the nursery that they will go to school at is hugely important. To make transition and relationships easier.*

*To clean, but mostly just to work or catch up on everything. As I'm a single Dad.*

*To volunteer, to care for a disabled friend, to spend time alone with my youngest child and to look for work.*

*Working parents require full day childcare.*

*I also work but still require family to help with childcare due to hours child is in nursery.*

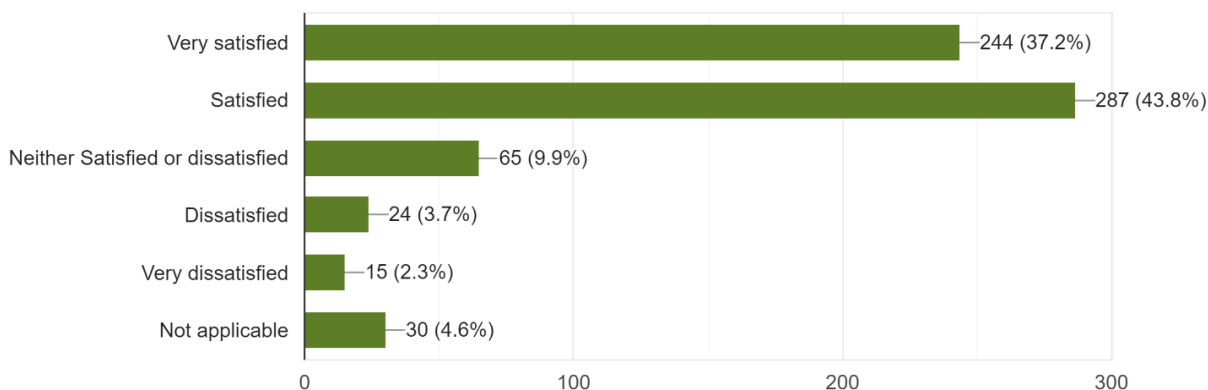
*My child has to go to nursery to learn to socialise and get into that setting before school. But it's a plus that I can work while my child is there.*

**Question 12: We asked parents and carers how satisfied they were with the ELC application process.**

- The vast majority of respondents (81%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with the ELC application process.
- Just under 10% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied.
- A very small number of respondents (6%) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

12. How satisfied were you with the Early Learning and Childcare application process?

656 responses



The following are a selection of comments from parents and carers in relation to the ELC application process:

*Very efficient and easy online process. Quick response.*

*Application easy but needs more questions to help working parents.*

*Online application is easy and straightforward but you need to apply in January for the following year so sometimes I forget to do it on time.*

*Communication could be better during the application process, especially for first time parents who don't have a clue what happens or how it is done.*

once the application is submitted there is no way of tracking / checking status. a simple portal showing basic application details, date submitted etc and current status, waiting list positions etc would make a big difference, particularly with multiple children at different stages.

*It can be a lot better though great job!*

*My child is in the class this year and didn't need to apply again for next year. It was done automatically, which is good.*

*Private nursery did most of this for us so very helpful*

*Our nursery guided us through the application process and kept us informed of dates etc which was most helpful.*

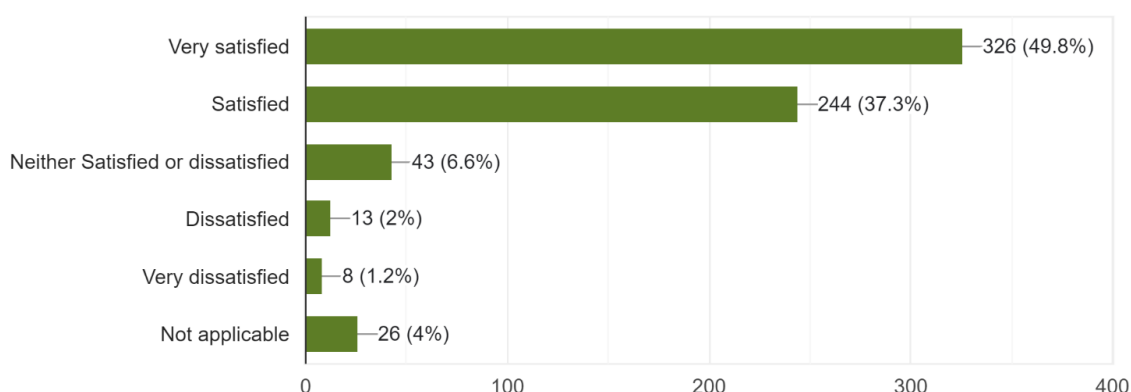
*The ELC team via email were absolutely fantastic - felt very supported after initial panic of missed deadline.*

### **Question 13: We asked how satisfied parents and carers are overall with their child's experience of ELC to date.**

- The vast majority of respondents (87.1%) stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their child's experience of ELC to date.
- 6.6% were neither satisfied or unsatisfied.
- A very small number of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied

13. How satisfied are you overall with your child's experience of Early Learning and Childcare to date?

655 responses



The following are a selection of comments from parents and carers in relation to this question:

*The nursery has had a huge part to play in how my child has developed.*

*My child is not funded yet, but will be at the same nursery.*

*My childminder is fantastic.*

*Our daughter has really benefitted from the ELC at the LA nursery and has developed significantly.*

*Cornhill Nursery is an excellent nursery and provide my child with quality learning experiences.*

*Hazlehead Outdoor Nursery is brilliant! Our child comes home each day having had interesting and stimulating experiences and generally has a positive experience of the staff.*

*Middlefield community project has helped my child progress a lot while providing a lifeline when we couldn't find any childminders and couldn't afford a private nursery with us both working full time*

*Middleton park is a brilliant nursery with really supportive staff.*

*My son was at Woodside Nursery last year and it was an excellent experience for both him and me.*

*Rocking Horse Nursery is excellent, delighted with care.*

*The outdoor nursery my son attends is fantastic. We couldn't be happier with his experience there.*

*The staff and resources at Dyce ELC are excellent. My child has come on leaps and bounds since attending.*

*We love the nursery at Kittybrewster. The staff is loving and the atmosphere warm.*

*Stoneywood nursery and staff have been brilliant for the 2 years my child has attended.*

*We are extremely happy with her private nursery.*

*It's been slightly more difficult due to the class sizes and people coming and going at different time (in comparison to old system) but good on the whole.*

*The nursery has a lot of children can be chaotic more intimate groups would be nice.*

*My child's experience overall has been positive but with attending afternoons she misses out on experiences like visits etc that are only done in the morning when there is more staff.*

*Staff have gone above and beyond to enable my child to safely attend nursery. His care needs are high and the care planning process has been inclusive and thorough.*

*It is a brilliant experience for my son and he has grown so much in his learning and social skills. It is invaluable, especially following the disruption of Covid.*

*I understand that learning through play is the new way of learning. But my child needs more structure. My child isn't actually learning anything at nursery. We play all day at home so what's the point of nursery? I've taught my child to write her name, shapes, numbers.*

*Very satisfied with the service but dissatisfied with the timetable.*

*Extremely limited ASN provision throughout Aberdeen.*

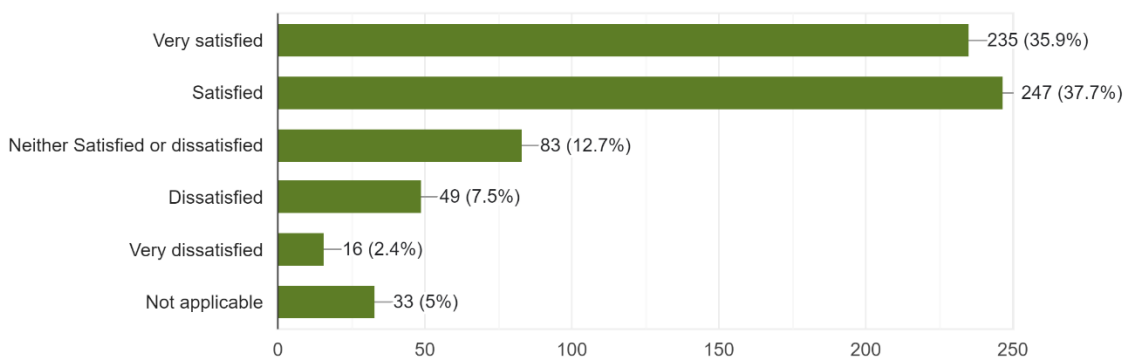
*I cannot begin to express my gratitude to the staff and setting. I will be forever grateful for their amazing dedication and support.*

**Question 14: We asked parents and carers how satisfied they are with the snacks and meals their child is offered whilst attending ELC.**

- 73.6% of parents and carers were satisfied or very satisfied with the snacks and meals their child is offered whilst attending ELC.
- 12.7% of respondents were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and less than 10% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

14. How satisfied are you with the snacks and meals your child is offered whilst attending Early Learning and Childcare to date?

655 responses



The following are a selection of comments from parents and carers in relation to this question:

*Always a variety of options and staff are happy to support fussy eaters.*

*He loves the food provided.*

*My daughter enjoys her lunch options. She usually chooses not to have snack. Maybe because it's optional?*

*Limited options and not much food for a child attending a full day. It equates to a piece of fruit and a small lunch and snack a day. For active children not very much no chance for extra food if hungry, my child comes home hungry a lot*

*Adaptation from school menu removes options available to ELC that primary children have. Menu is not varied enough with only a 3 week rotation & duplicates within that.*

*Better afternoon meals would be great.*

*Do not believe that fruit/vegetables alone are a healthy, fulfilling and nutritionally balanced snack which provides sufficient energy to young children between breakfast and lunch. Should also contain a carbohydrate and protein.*

*Halal meals should be added for Muslims.*

*Very small portions.*

*Menu should be the same as the school menu when you have a child in nursery and others in school and reading out the menu to them on a Sunday for the week ahead and school menu is different to nursery menu and nursery child wants what's on the school menu.*

*The meal options are very limited and in my opinion not child friendly for the age group, this could be improved.*

*The winter menu was better for my child offering more selection of hot meals rather than sandwiches*

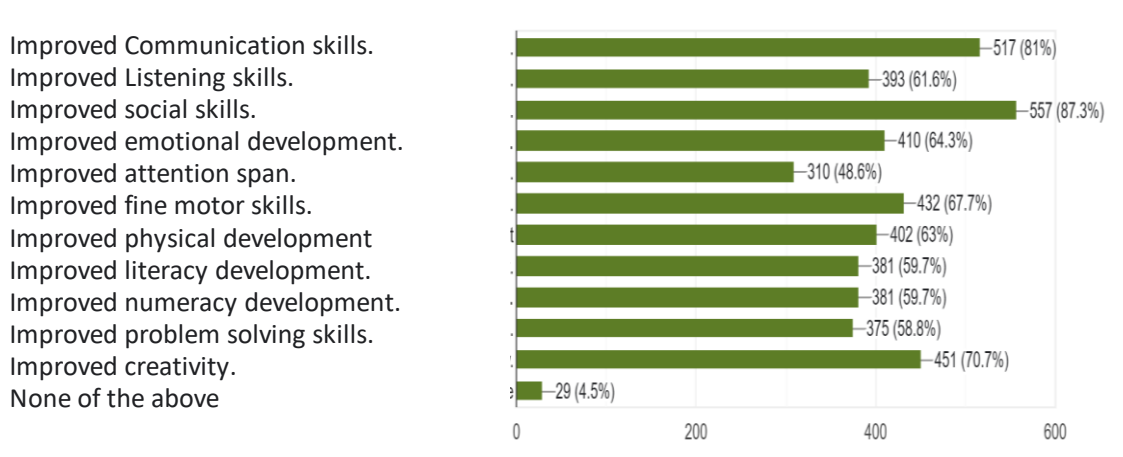
*Not yet in ACC ELC provision, the food my child receives in private nursery is excellent.*

*The meals are obtained from a private catering company. The selections are good and children always have a good choice and portions.*

**Question 15: We asked parents and carers how ELC had influenced their child's development.**

Over 95% of respondents reported that ELC has had a positive influence on their child's development. From improved communication to listening skills, social skills and improved literacy and numeracy development, to emotional and physical development. A very small proportion of parents (4.5%) reported that ELC had had no influence on their child's development.

How has Early Learning and Childcare influenced your child's development? Please tick all that apply.  
638 responses



The following are a selection of comments from parents and carers in relation to this question:

*Having my child in a nursery setting has helped her growth and development a lot, especially interacting with her peers and making friends.*

*Improved enjoyment of nature.*

*Improved speech.*

*Learn English.*

*It's helped my child to interact with other children in school.*

*My child loves her nursery and is very confident in her needs thanks to nursery and the team supporting her.*

*My child is autistic so he picks up at his pace.*

*I would have liked if nursery staff could encourage children to write a bit more, not all children have a passion to do so but I think it should be more encouraged rather than child led.*

*More emphasis needed on learning ie letters, numbers rather than just playing*

*It is hard to say which elements of my child's development are due to the ELC and which are down to growing from 3 to 3.5!*

*My child spoke very well and clearly anyway. I feel there needs to be more learning opportunities for them, more time writing etc.*

*My daughter has come on really well with numbers and letters and can write her own name thanks to the nursery teachers.*

*Our daughter has developed skills in writing/mark making and recognition of letters and numbers which has definitely been promoted during her time at the school nursery.*

*Due to the range of hours and variety of times that children can attend it makes it impossible to follow any form of curriculum as such nursery is now basic childcare. This has been compounded by nursery being overwhelmed with children whom require additional support yet the nursery are not given the additional resources needed. This results in the children who don't have additional needs suffering as staff have no option but to spend their time unequally.*

*I would say my daughters emotional development has taken a dip, probably due to the fact she was a covid baby and I'm not allowed into the peg area so it's very rushed and not every child can process things that quickly.*

*Positive impact on overall wellbeing because my kid is always happy to go to the nursery.*

*My child and us as parents would be lost without the childcare we've received.*

*My two children have both come on massively in ELC.*

**Question 16: We asked parents and carers if their family circumstances had changed as a result of their child receiving funded ELC.**

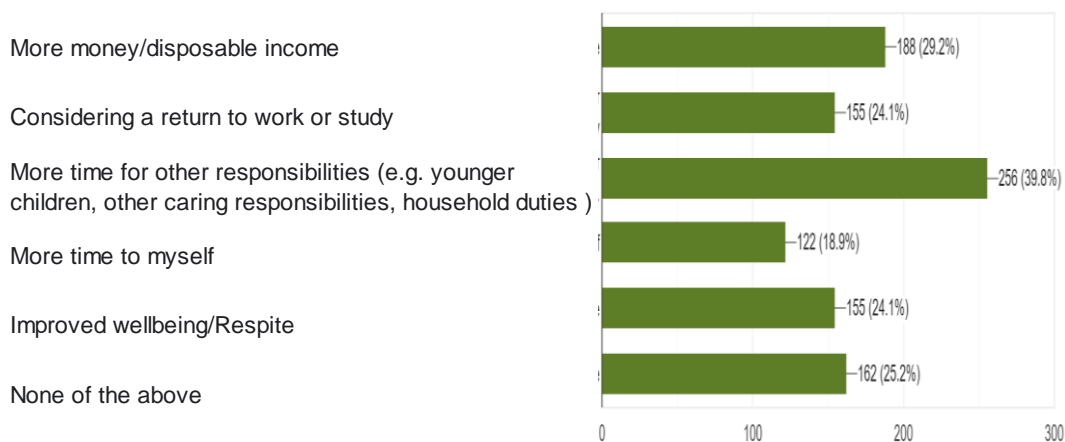
As well as improving outcomes for children, the expansion of ELC aims to support parents into work, study or training. We asked this question to determine what impact the provision of funded ELC had on families in the city. Just under half of all respondents indicated that they had more time for other responsibilities as a result of receiving funded ELC. Nearly one third of respondents reported they had more money/disposable income as a positive impact on their family; and nearly one quarter of respondents are now considering a return to work or study. In addition, a further quarter of respondents stated improved wellbeing / respite as a result of receiving



additional hours of funded ELC, suggesting that the expansion of ELC has had a positive impact on families in Aberdeen overall.

- 29.2% of respondents reported more money / disposable income.
- Nearly one quarter (24.1%) indicated that they were considering a return to work or study.
- Nearly one quarter (24.1%) highlighted improved wellbeing / respite as a result of their child receiving funded ELC.
- Nearly 40% reported more time for other responsibilities, for example younger children, other caring responsibilities and household duties.
- A further 25% of respondents noted no change as a result of their child receiving funded ELC.

16. Have your family circumstances changed as a result of your child receiving funded Early Learning and Childcare? Please select all that apply  
644 responses



The following are a selection of comments from parents and carers in relation to this question:

*Ability to work without stress of childcare.*

*Because my 5 years old little one attends nursery, I've time for house work and activities with my 3 years old son. He is going soon to nursery as well, and last month I've started looking for a work. It's possible because of ELC.*

*I can work full time now as opposed to part time.*

*I actually did return to study, rather than just consider it. Next year the childcare is enabling me to start university to study medicine.*

*I did have more disposable income until energy bills rocketed.*

*I don't know what we would have done without the funded hours my daughter has had. Being able to work has meant I've managed to keep the wolf from the door and it's meant I have kept my skills up to date.*

*I don't have funding yet so nothing has changed. Once received however it will massively help with finances.*

*I had the chance to be able to use an ELC childminder when she was 2 and that was great for my mental health. Nursery is great to get them ready for P1.*

*I have twin boys who are 16 months. We can't afford childcare for both of them so I just hope that ELC will start from 2 years old and I can go back to work.*

*I received treatment for cancer last year so it was such a relief to have the funded hours for our daughter so I could get some proper rest and not have to worry about the cost of something else while I was off work. It would have been nice to have the same for my 1year old and something I think you should consider offering in the future.*

*I went back to work when hours were increased.*

*It has given a grandparent more time to herself.*

*It is an extremely helpful scheme, fantastic to ease the costs of childcare which are so large.*

*Meant we were able to afford to live.*

*We use the Nursery to benefit our child not ourselves.*

*When our funded provision kicks in this will make a huge difference to finances and we very much hope the opportunity will be fantastic for our child's development*

*Would love to be able to pay for more hours at the same setting/have a seamless transition to a connected playgroup or childminder for pickup/drop offs.*

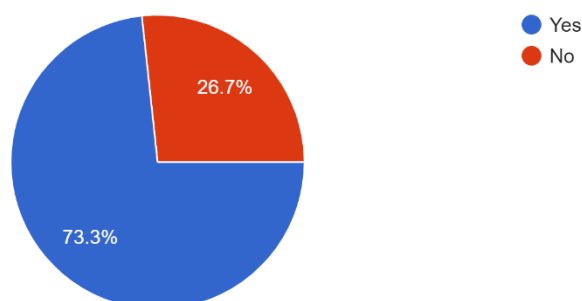
*Paying for his nursery placement would mean that one of us would just be working to cover the cost of the childcare. I can't express how much of a difference it makes to a working household to be able to access funded placements.*

*Thank you!*

**Question 17: We asked parents and carers if they are aware that Aberdeen City Council offer Eligible 2's ELC placements.**

17a. Are you aware that Aberdeen City Council offer ELC eligible 2's placements?

655 responses

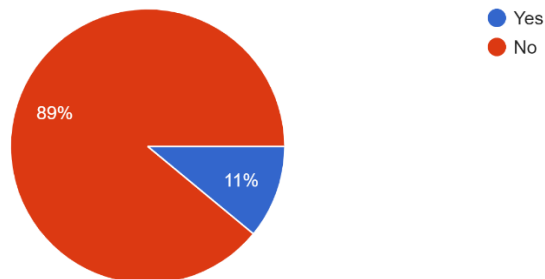


Increasing the uptake of children attending Eligible 2's ELC placements in the city is a key priority for Aberdeen City Council. We are pleased to glean from the consultation

that nearly three quarters of respondents (73.3%) are aware that Aberdeen City Council offer Eligible 2's ELC placements. And 11% of respondents reported that their child has attended an Eligible 2's placement.

17b. Has your child attended an ELC eligible 2's placement?

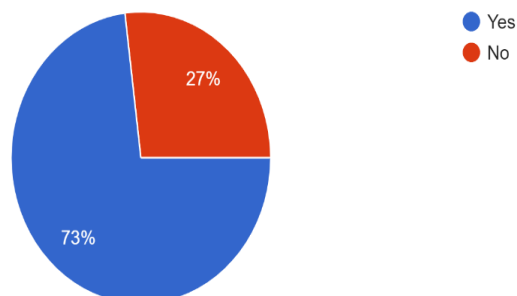
656 responses



**Question 18a: Aberdeen City Council works in partnership with a number of childminders across the city to deliver Early Learning and Childcare. We asked parents and carers if they were aware that they can also use their 1140 funded entitlement at a childminder, either in full or as part of a blended placement?**

18a. Aberdeen City Council works in partnership with a number of childminders across the city to deliver Early Learning and Childcare. Are you are aware that you can also use your 1140 hours funded entitlement at a childminder, either in full or as part of a blended placement?

649 responses

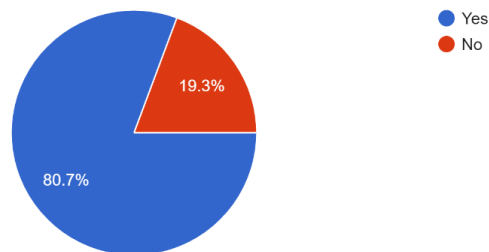


Nearly three quarters of respondents are aware that they can use the 1140 hours of ELC entitlement with a childminder (73%). This is an increase of 2% since 2021. This highlights the ongoing work to promote childminders as a potential ELC option to families across the city. We also need to continue to ensure that we have sufficient childminders across the city to meet demand for this type of ELC provision.

**Question 18b: Aberdeen City Council works in partnership with a number of private nurseries and playgroups across the city to deliver Early Learning and Childcare. We asked parents and carers if they were aware that they can also use their 1140 hours funded entitlement at these ELC settings, either in full or as part of a blended placement?**

18b. Aberdeen City Council works in partnership with a number of private Nurseries and Playgroups across the city to deliver Early Learning and Childcare. Are you aware that you can also use your 1140 funded entitlement at these settings, either in full or as part of a blended placement?

647 responses



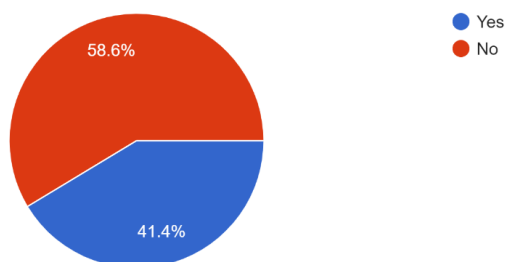
It is very positive and reassuring to see such high awareness that the 1140 hours funded entitlement can be taken in full or part at Funded Provider ELC settings (over 80%).

**Question 19a: We asked if parents and carers were aware that Gaelic Medium Education in Early Learning and Childcare, Sgoil-Araich, is an option at Gilcomstoun School / Bun-sgoil Gilcomstoun. You do not have to be a Gaelic Speaker to send your child to Gaelic Medium Education. Gaelic Medium Education is free and a Council run bilingual education option.**

19a. Gaelic Medium Education in Early Learning and Childcare, Sgoil-Araich, is an option at Gilcomstoun School / Bun-sgoil Gilcomstoun. You do not have to be a Gaelic Speaker to send your child to Gaelic Medium Education. Gaelic Medium Education is free and a Council run fully immersive education option.

Are you aware of this?

648 responses



- 380 respondents (58.6%) are aware that Gaelic Medium Education is an option at Gilcomstoun school.
- 268 respondents (41.4%) indicated that they were unaware.

The response to this question tells us that slightly more than half of respondents are aware that Gaelic Medium Education is an option. This was very similar across all ASGs and therefore indicates that we need to keep promoting Gaelic Medium Education in ELC.

These figures are up 7% and down 7% respectively which shows there is greater awareness of Gaelic Medium Education in 2023 than in 2021.

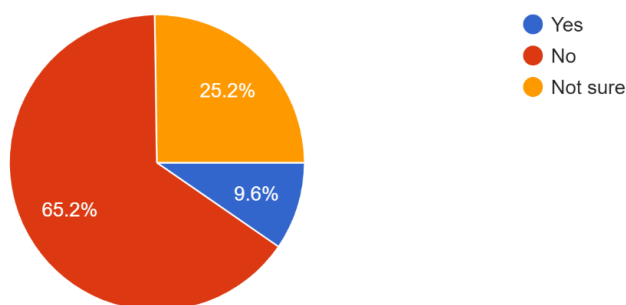
**Question 19b: We asked if Gaelic Medium Education in Early Learning and Childcare, Sgoil-Araich, is something parents and carers would be interested in for their child?**

We have a duty to provide Gaelic Medium Education in ELC for families who would like this for their child. This is provided at Gilcomstoun School. Aberdeen is not a traditional Gaelic speaking city and this may be reflected in the overwhelming majority of responses from parents and carers who said they would not be interested in Gaelic Medium Education in ELC for their child. The consultation highlighted that:

- The vast majority (421 respondents (65.2%)) would not be interested in a Gaelic medium education in ELC. (- 4.6% from 2021).
- 62 respondents (9.6%) indicated their interest in a Gaelic medium education in Early Learning Childcare (down 3.2% from 2021), while 163 respondents (25.2%) were unsure (up 12.4% from 2021).

19b. Is Gaelic Medium Education in Early Learning and Childcare, Sgoil-Araich, something you would be interested in for your child?

646 responses



The following are a selection of comments from parents and carers:

*I believe other languages would be of use to young children. Things like Spanish, French and even Makaton would be useful at a young age!*

*I have Gaelic qualifications, which I have from living in the highlands, but I don't know how Gaelic applies in Aberdeen so not fussed about child attending Gaelic primary school.*

*I understand that a small number of the population do speak Gaelic but, realistically, I don't understand what benefit this would have to the majority of the population. It would be more beneficial to offer another modern language such as French or Spanish which are MUCH more widely used than Gaelic.*

*I would be interested in another language provision but not Gaelic.*

*The language is not widely used. Why is it even offered?*

*I sent my child there. Publicise this more!*

*We'd have been happy for her to receive this if it was closer to our home or a better nursery than one we were zoned for.*

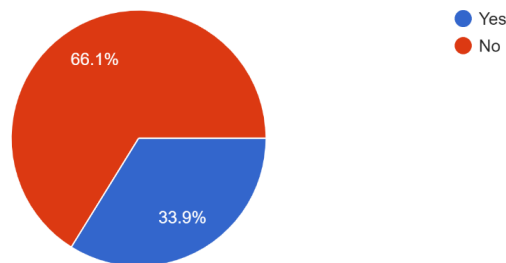
**Question 20: Aberdeen City Council works in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council to offer cross-boundary placements, (e.g. living in the City but requiring Early Learning and Childcare in the Shire.) We asked parents and carers if they were aware this is an option for families?**

We are aware that many parents/carers regularly commute to work between the city and the Shire and were interested to see how many parents are aware of cross-boundary placements. Cross-boundary placements can be invaluable when supporting households to work full time hours while including extended travel to and from work.

- The majority of respondents, 427 (66.4%), were unaware that they could apply for cross-boundary placements. (+4.7% from 2021)
- With approximately one third of respondents, 218 (33.9%) being aware of the cross-boundary ELC option.
- Less than 10% of respondents (8.4%) expressed an interest in a cross-boundary ELC placement for their child, whilst 72.6% were not interested and 19% were unsure.

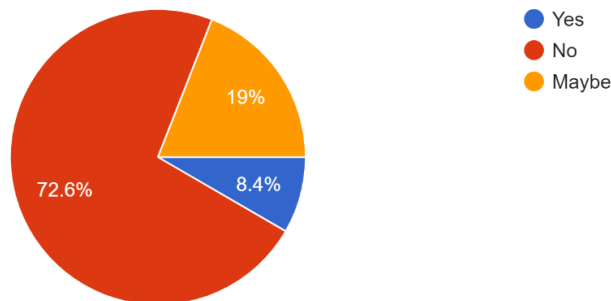
20a. Aberdeen City Council works in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council to offer cross-boundary placements, (e.g. living in the City but requiring Early Learning and Childcare in Aberdeenshire.) Are you aware of this?

644 responses



20b. Is a Cross Boundary Early Learning and Childcare placement something you would be interested in for your child?

646 responses



The following are a selection of comments from parents and carers:

*I am already cross boundary placement set for my child and it's brilliant so we can make a choice to attend an outdoor nursery in a woodland setting which wouldn't be possible otherwise.*

*We are considering moving to Shire but would want my son to stay on at the same nursery as it's next to my work.*

*Wouldn't be interested in a cross boundary placement now but did consider it previously for my son.*

*I don't know what Cross Boundary Early Learning and Childcare placement means.*

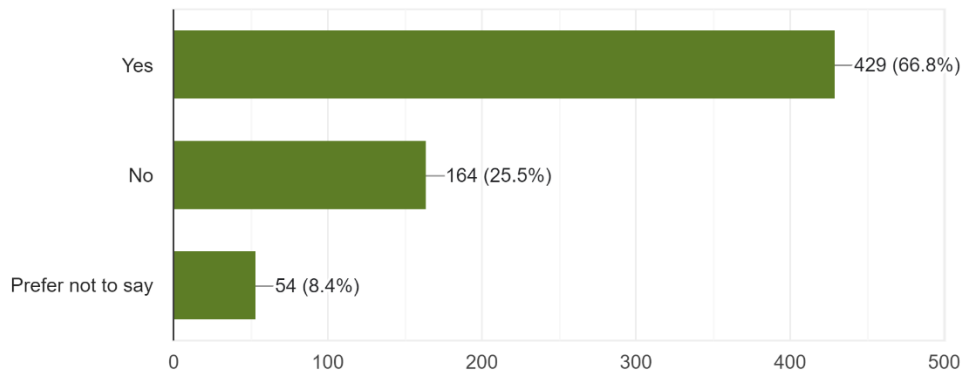
**Question 21 – We asked if parents and carers were able to access their ELC entitlement without additional support. This could include family and friends support and / or other professional agencies.**

We asked this question to determine if parents and carers could access their ELC entitlement without additional support.

- The majority of respondents (66.8%) said they accessed their ELC entitlement without requiring extra support.
- Just over one quarter (25.5%) indicated that they weren't able to access their ELC entitlement without additional support.
- 8.4% of respondents preferred not to say.

21. Are you able to access your ELC entitlement without additional support? This could include family and friends support and/or other professional agencies.

642 responses



The majority of respondents to this question indicated that they did not require additional support to access their ELC entitlement. On further analysis of the 25.5% of respondents who required additional support, in the majority of cases this was via family and friends who supported with drop offs, pick ups or supported with childcare for short periods outwith ELC sessions to fulfil working hours.

The following are a selection of comments from parents and carers:

*Family assisting with drop off/pick up.*

*We have no relatives/family in the country so the ELC is a huge help and enables us to work.*

*Not enough hours to allow for both parents full time work.*

*I rely on family to drop my daughter at nursery at 8am because I start work at that time. A 0730 drop off would be ideal.*

*Half day sessions don't leave much flexibility for dropping children off due to work commitments.*

*I require half a day support from family for childcare while I'm working to take it up to 3 days.*

*My parents help out daily.*

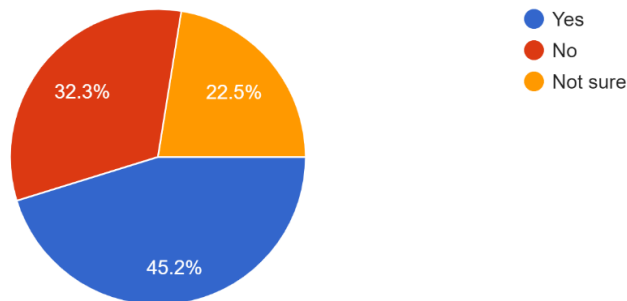
**Question 22 – We asked parents and carers if they think they will require wraparound care (School Age Childcare / Out of School Care) once their child starts to attend Primary School?**

- 45.2% of respondents indicated that they will require School Age Childcare when their child starts to attend Primary School.
- Just under one third of respondents (32.3%) said they would not require School Age Childcare.
- 22.5% were unsure if they would require School Age Childcare.



22. Thinking ahead, do you think you will require wraparound care (School Age Childcare/ Out of School Care) once your child starts to attend Primary School?

650 responses



The following are a selection of comments from parents and carers:

*Always required for typical working 8-6 parents.*

*This is an absolute must for most parents! School hours of 9-3 don't fit in most people's work schedules.*

*I will require after school club - minimal family support with after school childcare.*

*Our other daughter started school this year and uses Breakfast and after school club, with our daughter starting school in 2024 she will also require both options 3 days per week.*

*More after-school and holiday club provision would be very useful. It would be nice to go back to work full time now that my daughter started school.*

*The city needs more afterschool clubs, the one in Bridge of Don has an enormous waiting list. Out of School Club care will be essential for all holidays.*

*We are getting by with flexible working hours but this eats into family time significantly. Breakfast and after school clubs are prohibitively expensive when you have multiple kids.*

*Family to help with wraparound care.*

*Both sets of grandparents have offered to help if needed.*

## Analysis

664 parents and carers responded to the recent survey on our provision of Early Learning and Childcare in the city. This was an increase in 210 (46%) from the previous consultation undertaken in 2021. Responses were gleaned from all 11 of the Aberdeen City's ASGs with responses from those accessing provision through the Local Authority as well as from Funded Providers.

The consultation findings demonstrate that the majority of parents and carers who responded are satisfied or very satisfied with the location of their ELC provision (88.4%

+5.5% from 2021); and with their child's experience of ELC to date (87.1% +4.7% from 2021).

Reassuringly, 80.6% of respondents were able to secure their first choice of ELC provision with 75.8% of parents and carers able to secure a funded ELC place in their local area/ASG. 79.4% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the range of ELC providers and models within their local area (ASG) (+7.4% from 2021).

Importantly, the majority of respondents, at over 95%, identified Early Learning and Childcare as having a positive impact on their child's development

There is clear evidence of a range of choices across all ASGs. Some parents are very satisfied with the longer hours available whilst many parents indicated they would prefer more 9-3 places. Indeed some parents indicated shorter sessions and smaller classes would be their preference. Understandably, the views and needs of parents and carers are very much dependent on their individual family circumstances. However, the feedback overall is very balanced with no feedback on gaps in provision.

A number of respondents indicated that they were not aware of their full ELC entitlement, of Gaelic Medium Provision or the option to have a blended place. A large number of respondents indicated that they were not aware of the option to have a cross-boundary ELC placement. We have addressed this in ELC publicity and via Aberdeen City Council website and social media communications. However, there is clearly a need to continue to promote this information to ensure that families have all the information available to them in order to make an informed choice on options available to them.

Feedback received from parents and carers in relation to the ELC application process will be taken on board to ensure we make the process clearer and smoother for everyone making applications.

In terms of transition into Primary School, we need to ensure we have sufficient School Age Childcare to meet demand when children transition from ELC into Primary School. Work is ongoing to monitor supply and demand and to develop new services where feasible.

The ELC Consultation with Parents and Carers 2023 will contribute to a future evaluation of the impact of the implementation of the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to date and the next Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan. Both reports will be presented to Aberdeen City Council Education and Children's Services Committee in June 2024.

## **Focus Groups**

As part of the ELC Consultation 2023 we invited parents and carers to indicate their interest in participating in a Focus Group. We have subsequently written to all 133 parents and carers who initially expressed an interest in being involved (23 August 2023), proposing to hold a termly Focus Group. Of these, 18 have confirmed their involvement.

We held our first Focus Group meeting with representatives of the Parent Voice group at Links Nursery and Hub on 2 October 2023 and have two city-wide meetings scheduled for 7 November – one in person and one online.

## **Future Engagement and Consultation**

- The 2023 consultation follows on from our 2021 consultation with parents and carers and provides a positive platform from which to further engage as we continue to deliver statutory Early Learning and Childcare for all 3 and 4-year olds and eligible 2-year olds in the city.
- It is also essential that all Early Learning and Childcare providers continue to engage and consult with children, parents and carers on a regular basis as part of their ongoing self-evaluation and planning for service development and improvement. It is vital that we give children the opportunity to express their views and experiences in ELC.
- The report from the Early Learning and Childcare Parent and Carer Consultation 2023 will be shared/published in a future Education Parent and Carer Newsletter, on Aberdeen City Council website and shared with our colleagues working across the ELC sector including our Childminders and Funded Providers.

## **Next Steps**

- A termly Parent and Carer Focus Group will be established so we have regular input from parents and carers. The next Focus Group will be held on 7 November, with both in person and online meetings scheduled.
- A new Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2024-26 will be developed and presented to Education and Children's Service Committee for approval in June 2024. This will be informed by our ELC Consultation with Parents and Carers 2023 and Parent and Carer Focus Group meetings.
- Through our ongoing engagement and communication with parents and carers, we will regularly promote all ELC options available in the city to help parents and carers make informed choices to best meet the needs of their child and family. In particular we will further promote:
  1. Gaelic Medium Education in Early Learning and Childcare;
  2. Blended placements where parents and carers can choose more than one registered ELC provider; and
  3. Cross Boundary ELC placements.
- In order to meet our ongoing statutory obligations and our commitment to engaging with children, parents and carers, another city-wide Early Learning and Childcare

consultation will be undertaken in Spring/Summer 2025. Meanwhile we will continue to monitor our current models of provision across the city in line with supply and demand on an annual basis.

- Any changes to our current models of provision will be communicated with parents, carers and ELC providers in advance of the ELC Admissions process for 2024-25. Online applications for ELC / School session 2024-25 will open in January 2024.

## **Thanks**

Thank you very much to all the parents and carers who participated in this consultation. We strive to deliver a range of high quality Early Learning and Childcare provision in Aberdeen which meets the needs of all children, families and local communities. Your input and views are invaluable in supporting us to achieve this.

Early Years Team  
Education Service  
Aberdeen City Council

October 2023

## Appendix 2 - Analysis of uptake of ELC Placements September 2023

Associated Schools Group	High level analysis
<b>Aberdeen Grammar</b>	There is a slight overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 20 afternoon placements not being utilised on average per day. All other demands are being met. No changes are proposed.
<b>Bridge of Don</b>	Provision matches demand. There are currently 10 available spaces still to be utilised and this is thought to be sufficient flexibility. No changes are proposed.
<b>Bucksburn</b>	Provision matches demand. A small number of afternoon places are available and these are thought to offer sufficient flexibility. No changes are proposed.
<b>Cults</b>	<p>There is overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 50 placements not being utilised on average per day.</p> <p>We do not propose to change delivery models at this time but propose to address overprovision of afternoon spaces by reducing the numbers at spaces available at Cults by a minimum of 16 places and realigning the number of places offered in the mornings and afternoons to balance attendance.</p>
<b>Dyce</b>	Provision matches demand. No changes are proposed.
<b>Harlaw</b>	There is a slight overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 20 afternoon placements not being utilised on average per day. This is thought to offer sufficient flexibility. No changes are proposed.
<b>Hazlehead</b>	Some overprovision of 8-6pm provision across the ASG, particularly in afternoons. It is proposed that Fernielea moves to delivering a 9-3pm offer to address this overprovision.
<b>Lochside</b>	<p>There is an overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 100 afternoon placements not being utilised on average per day.</p> <p>We do not propose to change delivery models at this time but propose to address overprovision of afternoon spaces by reducing the numbers of spaces available at both Loirston and Tullos by a minimum of 8 places and realigning the number of places offered in the mornings and afternoons to balance attendance.</p>

<b>Northfield</b>	<p>There is an overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 90 afternoon placements not being utilised on average per day. There is high demand for full day (9-3pm) placements.</p> <p>It is proposed that Muirfield moves to delivering a 9-3pm offer.</p> <p>It is proposed that the 600 hours provision at Bramble Brae is removed.</p> <p>We also propose to reduce the numbers at Heathryburn by a minimum of 8 places and realign the number of places offered in the mornings and afternoons to balance attendance.</p>
<b>Oldmachar</b>	<p>There is an overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 40 afternoon placements not being fully utilised on average per day.</p> <p>We propose to reduce the numbers at Forehill and Greenbrae by a minimum of 8 places and realign the number of places offered in the mornings and afternoons to balance attendance.</p>
<b>St Machar</b>	<p>Provision closely matches demand, with the exception of Riverbank, which has a surplus of afternoon places. Demand for 9-3 placements is high. It is proposed that Riverbank moves to delivering a 9-3pm offer.</p>

**Appendix 3 – Early Learning and Childcare Models Proposed from August 2024**  
**(DRAFT)**

ELC SETTING	ELC MODELS 2024/2025
<b>Aberdeen Grammar ASG</b>	
Ashley Road School	9am-3pm Term Time
Gilcomstoun G.U.	9am-3pm Term Time
Gilcomstoun	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Mile End School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Skene Square	9am-3pm Term Time
St Joseph's RC School	600 hours - 3 hour 10 minutes AM or PM Term Time
<b>Bridge of Don ASG</b>	
Braehead School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Scotstown	9am-3pm x Term Time
<b>Bucksburn ASG</b>	
Brimmond School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Kingswells School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Stoneywood School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
<b>Cults ASG</b>	
Culter School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Cults School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Milltimber School	9am-3pm x term time
<b>Dyce ASG</b>	
Dyce School	Mixed Model. 8am -6pm x 46 week and 9am-3pm x term time
<b>Harlaw ASG</b>	
Broomhill School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Ferryhill School	9am-3pm x term time
Hanover Street School	9am-3pm x term time
Kaimhill School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
<b>Hazlehead ASG</b>	
Airyhall School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Countesswells	9am-3pm x term time
Fernielea School	9am-3pm x term time
Hazlehead School	8am -6pm x 46 week (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Kingsford School	Mixed Model. 8am -6pm x 46 week (AM or PM only) & 9am-3pm x Term Time

<b>Lochside ASG</b>	
Abbotswell School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Charleston School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Kirkhill School	Mixed Model. 8am -6pm x 46 week (AM or PM only) & 9am-3pm x Term Time
Loirston School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Tullos School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Greyhope School	Mixed Model. 8am -6pm x 46 week (AM or PM only) & 9am-3pm x Term Time
<b>Northfield ASG</b>	
Heathryburn	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Muirfield School	9am-3pm x term time
Quarryhill School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Manor Park School	9am-3pm x Term Time
West Park School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Holy Family School	9am-3pm x Term Time
<b>Old Machar ASG</b>	
Danestone School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Forehill School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Glashieburn School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Greenbrae School	8am x 6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Middleton Park School	9am-3pm Term Time
<b>St Machar ASG</b>	
Cornhill School	Mixed Model. 8am -6pm x 46 week (AM or PM only) & 9am-3pm x Term Time
Kittybrewster School	8am -6pm x 46 week (AM or PM only)
Riverbank School	9am-3pm x term time
Seaton School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Sunnybank School	9am-3pm x Term Time
	600 hours - AM or PM Term Time (3 hour 10 minutes)
Woodside School	Mixed Model. 8am -6pm x 46 week (AM or PM only) & 9am-3pm x Term Time
The Links Nursery, Regent Walk	Mixed Model. 8am -6pm x 46 week (AM or PM only) & 9am-3pm x Term Time
<b>City Wide</b>	
Duthie Park Outdoor Nursery	8am -6pm x 46 week (AM or PM only)
Hazlehead Park Outdoor Nursery	9am-3pm Term Time
<b>Orchard Brae</b>	9am-3pm Term Time



## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children's Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	21 November 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	MCR Pathways update
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CFS/23/260
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Shona Milne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Larissa Gordon
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.1

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on the continuation of the MCR Pathways Programme in Aberdeen City Schools

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

That Committee:

- 2.1 Note that 3 schools (Northfield Academy, Lochside Academy and St Machar Academy) will continue with the MCR Pathways programme for the duration of academic year 2023/24. Lochside Academy and St Machar Academy will fund the programme through their Pupil Equity fund and Northfield Academy will be supported to fund the programme through the Scottish Attainment challenge Care Experienced Fund.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 On the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023 the Education and Children's Services Committee instructed the Interim Director of Children's and Family Services to report back to Committee outlining which of the participating MCR Pathways schools were agreeable to supporting the programme via their respective Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocation.
- 3.2 The Virtual School Head Teacher held discussions with each of the 6 Head Teachers to consider whether or not they were in a position to fund the continuation of the programme in their school. MCR Pathways were notified that these discussions would be taking place and that updates would be provided. The Virtual School Head Teacher liaised with the MCR Pathways Senior programme manager to support robust transition arrangements, including arrangements for MCR Pathways Coordinators who may require to transition to a new school building.
- 3.3 Northfield Academy, Lochside Academy and St Machar Academy will continue with the programme and are currently in discussions with the MCR Pathways

team to consider a more flexible approach to ensure that those learners who would benefit most can be part of the programme. This will be inclusive of those young people with experience of care and also recognises the differences in needs of other cohorts of young people across the city and within different communities.

- 3.4 Where there is not currently a MCR Pathways Co-Ordinator in place, arrangements are being made to support the continuation of the programme in the school until new MCR Pathways Co-ordinators appointments are made. This is being supported by MCR Pathways and school staff.
- 3.5 Individual contracts and Memorandum of understanding will be drawn up with each school and MCR Pathways to reflect the individual needs of each school and their young people. The aim of this is to ensure there is maximum impact in supporting young people to achieve a positive destination.
- 3.6 The Virtual School Head Teacher will continue to have an overview of the data to ensure this is robust and accurate by working in collaboration with the Analytics and Insight Team and MCR pathways to address data issues highlighted in the last committee report (September 2023).
- 3.7 Schools no longer accessing MCR Pathways are currently supporting young people to transition from the programme. Where possible, mentors will continue to support the young people they have been working with. This is dependent on capacity within the school to support for example, the co-ordination of mentor meetings.
- 3.8 Schools are looking at other ways of supporting young people who have been involved in the MCR Pathways programme if they are unable to continue to have external mentors. This includes support accessed through the new Aberdeen City Pathways Advocates who have been appointed in each of the 11 academies in the city.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Recommendations in the plan will make use of existing budgets within schools through Pupil Equity Funds.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Local Authority has many legal duties including those of:
  - The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000
  - The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004
  - The Children (Scotland) Act 1995
  - The Equality Act 2010
  - The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

The Council is mindful of these duties when planning support and looking to improve the long term outcomes for Care Experienced children and young people.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Not delivering on The Promise with particular note of p71 “Mentoring has a significant positive impact on children and young people who receive it, with evidence that it can”	The role of the Aberdeen City Pathways Advocate is being piloted in schools and other approaches to mentoring in schools are being explored	L	<b>No</b> <b>This is below the appetite set as we wish to deliver on the Promise</b>
<b>Compliance</b>	Non-compliance with legislation, and legal challenge (reference to Appeals Committee, Disability Discrimination, reference to ASN Tribunal)	Mitigated by school staff developing a better understanding of how to meet the needs of our Care Experienced Children and Young people in Aberdeen City working in partnership with learners, families and partners.	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Operational</b>	Possible non delivery of programme due to failure to appoint suitable	MCR Pathways team work alongside the schools to provide support to ensure that the programme continues	L	<b>No.</b> This is below the risk appetite. The mitigation ensures the

	pathways co-ordinators			programme can continue
<b>Financial</b>	Risk of not continuing the programme beyond summer 2024 due to allocation of PEF being used to support alternative interventions. Risk of PEF funding not continuing	MCR Pathways programme funded through PEF that is currently available and will be evaluated in 3 schools to determine impact and consider all forms of support that seek to deliver on The Promise. Decisions will be made based on impact and on future funding that is available	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Reputational</b>	Risk of not achieving positive outcomes for Care Experienced children and young people and their parents and carers  Risk of not delivering on The Promise and our duties as Corporate Parents	National Improvement Framework plan outlines other interventions including the Pathways advocate role which is being piloted across all 11 academies so reducing the risk as this role prioritises support for Care Experienced young people	L	<b>No.</b> This is below the risk appetite. The mitigation ensures that the needs of our care experienced young people could be supported through another avenue if required.
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	N/A			<b>N/A</b>

## 7. OUTCOMES

<a href="#"><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u></a>	
<b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	NA
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The information provided in this report outlines the current picture and planned next steps with MCR Pathways to seek to ensure the best use of resource in the system, promoting an understanding of the

	<p>circumstances of individual Care Experienced Children and Young People to ensure they move into a positive destination.</p> <p>This supports stretch outcomes:</p> <p>6. By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.</p> <p>7. 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 &amp; 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.</p>
<p>UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes</p>	<p>This report takes into account the local authority's legal obligations in respect of the legislation below:</p> <p><b>The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duties with regard to meeting the needs of children and young people with additional support needs.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Equality Act 2010</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duty to ensure we are not discriminating disabled learners directly or indirectly.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duty of education authority in improving school education</li> <li>• Raising standards</li> <li>• Requirement that education be provided in mainstream schools</li> </ul> <p><b>The National Improvement Framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Authorities are under a duty to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of education of school education which is provided in the schools managed by them and to carry out the duty with a view to achieving the strategic priorities set out in the National Improvement Framework.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 58: Corporate Parenting Responsibilities</li> </ul>

	<b>The Promise Scotland</b>
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## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Impact Assessment</b>	Stage 1 Assessment has been completed.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required – One in place

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## 10. APPENDICES

None

## 11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children’s Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	21 November 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	School Holidays – Amendment to 2023/2024 pattern
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CFS/23/367
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Shona Milne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.1

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 For the Chief Education Officer to seek authority to make an amendment to the 23/24 holiday pattern to ensure all staff receive the Good Friday public holiday and children receive their statutory entitlement of education.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 2.1 approve an amendment to the 23/24 holiday pattern (set out at Option 1 in the report); and
- 2.2 instruct the Chief Officer Education to inform staff, parents and young people of the change to the holiday pattern

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The existing holiday pattern was approved by the former Education Operational Delivery Committee on 12 November 2019. An error was made in the holiday calculation for session 23/24 resulting in staff not being allocated Good Friday (29<sup>th</sup> March 2024) which is a mandatory public holiday for Council staff. In order to ensure all staff receive Good Friday as a public holiday, there is a need to remove one of the days currently allocated as a school closure day so that the day can be reallocated to Good Friday. Taking this approach will ensure that all children continue to receive the requisite number of days of education.
- 3.2 A survey was issued to staff, young people and parents and carers to seek their views on how best to reconfigure the current holiday pattern. Respondents were asked to consider three potential solutions:

**Option 1:** Schools close one day later for Christmas break on 22nd December 2023, but return on 8th January 2024 as previously intimated.

**Option 2:** Schools close as previously intimated on 21st December 2023 for Christmas break, but return one day earlier on Friday 5th January 2024.

**Option 3:** Schools are closed to pupils on Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th February, with pupils returning to school one day earlier on Wednesday 14th February.

3.3 8906 responses were received. 5612 (63%) selected Option 1: (Schools close one day later for Christmas break on 22nd December 2023, but return on 8th January 2024 as previously intimated) as their preferred option. As a result, it is recommended that an amendment is made to the school holiday pattern and schools close for the holiday period one day later on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2023 and that this additional working day be allocated as a school closure day on Good Friday.

3.4 We are aware that some staff will have booked holidays based on the previous holiday pattern and will honour these provided there is proof of booking prior to the questionnaire being shared.

3.5 Families may also have made arrangements for the 22<sup>nd</sup> December and such arrangements will also be respected. Families who notify schools of their arrangements prior to the 22<sup>nd</sup> December will have absences marked as 'authorised' within the information management system.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations this report.

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Currently, the statutory number of school openings is 190 days for pupils.

#### 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No negative environmental impacts have been identified.

#### 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk			L	Yes
Compliance				
Operational				



<b>Financial</b>	No significant risks identified			
<b>Reputational</b>	No risks identified			
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No risks identified			

## 8. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u></b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b> Delivery of progressive educational policies	The proposals in this report ensure we meet our responsibilities in providing staff with the correct public holiday entitlement.

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	Stage 1 Impact Assessment completed
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required.
<b>Other</b>	No

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 None

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education & Children Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	21 November 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2022/23
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CFS/23/341
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Shepherd
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Graeme Simpson
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Graeme Simpson
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	2.5

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Elected Members with the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for year 2022/23. The report is to inform Members of the role and responsibilities exercised by the Chief Social Work Officer; to provide information on the delivery of statutory social work services and decision making in the period; and to give a progress report on key areas of social work provision within Aberdeen City.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the content of the Annual Report, as attached at Appendix 1.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is a statutory post in accordance with the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, as amended by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994. This requires Local Authorities to appoint a CSWO for the purposes of listed social work functions.
- 3.2 The required qualifications of the CSWO are set out in regulations and the post holder must be able to demonstrate senior strategic and operational experience. National Guidance on the role was published by the Scottish Government in 2009, revised in May 2017. It provides an overview of position, outlining the responsibility for values and standards, complex decision making, particularly in relation to deprivation of liberty decisions and professional leadership. The guidance also covers accountability and reporting arrangements.
- 3.3 The CSWO provides advice to the Council on social work matters; undertakes decision making in respect of statutory functions and provides professional governance, leadership and accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services, whether they are provided by the Council or on behalf of the Council by another agency.

3.4 In its 2016 report on Social Work in Scotland, Audit Scotland outlined the increased complexity of the role: “*With integration and other changes over recent years, the key role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) has become more complex and challenging. Councils need to ensure that CSWOs have the status and capacity to enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively*”.

3.5 This report has been requested by the Scottish Government’s Chief Social Work Advisor to assist with ensuring that, on a national basis key issues are highlighted, and information and learning is shared. This report is consistent with the content and formal guidance laid down by the Chief Social Work Advisor. The annual report cannot provide a complete account of social work activity over the year. It provides an overview of the range of services and initiatives in social work and social care and to highlight key achievements and challenges. On receipt of reports from all 32 CSWO’s, the Chief Social Work Advisor prepares a national overview.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising out of this report.

**6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

**7. RISK**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level</b>	<b>*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)</b>  <i>*taking into account controls/control actions</i>	<b>*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?</b>
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	No significant risks identified			
<b>Compliance</b>	No significant risks identified			
<b>Operational</b>	Required improvements and developments in practice are not identified and actioned.	This report provides assurance on the quality of social work services delivered to those who meet the threshold for social work support and intervention.	L	Yes



		<p>Service users have the opportunity to complain about the quality of social work services directly or via the SPSO. A learning approach is actively taken to all complaints.</p> <p>Service users also contribute to inspections via various feedback opportunities enabling them to know that their views are listened to and considered.</p>		
<b>Financial</b>	No risks identified			
<b>Reputational</b>	Organisational failings in relation to the provision of social work services can bring significant media interest and scrutiny.	The delivery of effective social work and social care services is critical to the protection and care of vulnerable children and adults. Failure to discharge our statutory duties effectively can bring significant media interest and scrutiny.	L	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No risks identified			

## 8. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u></b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	The delivery of social work and social care services is aligned to the Integrated Joint Board's strategic plan and the Partnerships Children's Services Plan/ Child Protection Improvement Plan. There is clear and direct alignment with the Council Delivery Plan 22/23 and the Working in Partnership for Aberdeen Policy Statement.
<b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Aberdeen City Council's social work and social care services are central to supporting and assuring that the multi-agency Children's and Adult Services partnerships deliver on the LOIP – Prosperous People (Children and Young People) Stretch Outcomes 4 to 9 and to Prosperous People (Adults) Stretch Outcomes 10 – 12.

	In addition the work of the Adult & Child Protection Committee's is highly relevant to ensure our children and vulnerable adults are safe from harm. Children, young people and adults families who are adequately protected from threats to their health, safety and economic wellbeing are more likely to prosper than those who are not.
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	The work of Aberdeen City Council's regulatory care services are relevant to Aberdeen City Council Delivery Plan, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, the Children's Services Plan and the IJB Strategic Plan.
<b>UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of The Promise/Plan 21 -24</li> <li>• Whole Family Wellbeing Support</li> </ul>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Impact Assessment</b>	It is confirmed by Chief Officer, Graeme Simpson that an integrated impact assessment is not required for this report
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required for this report.
<b>Other</b>	Not required for this report.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 – Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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# Aberdeen City Council's Chief Social Work Officer's 2022/23 Annual Report

## 1. Foreword

I am delighted to present my fifth Annual Report as Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) for Aberdeen City, covering the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. This report has been requested by the Scottish Government's Chief Social Work Advisor to assist with ensuring that, on a national basis key issues are highlighted, and information and learning is shared. On receipt of reports from all CSWO's, the Chief Social Work Advisor prepares a national overview.

While the shadow of COVID may have diminished during 2022/23 the impact of the cost of living crisis has imposed further pressure on all families, with those living in the most disadvantaged of circumstances being hardest hit. The cost of living crisis has also impacted on the finances of the local authority. Consequently the operating climate within which social work is delivered impacts on its capacity to meet demand.

Social work has always been at its best dealing with uncertainty, ambiguity and indeed a crisis. Our communities have never needed the professional knowledge, skills and experience of social workers more. I am acutely aware of the significant pressures social workers face as a result of increasing workloads and the more complex needs of those they support. These have been exacerbated not just by COVID and the cost-of living crisis but also world events which have contributed to a significant rise in the City's child population.

This operational context occurs at same time as noticeable changes to the legislative and policy context relating to social work. Changes that are occurring at the same time as the overall size of the profession (particularly children's services) has decreased, as services have had to absorb continuing budget pressures.

It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that Aberdeen City, common to other local authority's, has experienced real challenges in the recruitment and retention of social workers. While Justice Social Work frequently reports a low level of vacancies this is not the case for key services (Mental Health and Learning Disability) within Adult Social Work as well as across all of Children's Social Work. Social Work teams often 'carry' vacancies for extended periods which in turn places added demands on the remaining staff who are already carrying full caseloads.

The publication of the Setting the Bar report by Social Work Scotland in June 2022, highlights that to address the recruitment and retention challenges, Scotland faces there is a need to train and employ more social workers, provide enhanced professional and wellbeing support throughout social work careers as well as ensuring the voice of practitioners influences and shapes the design of services. This at a time when there is reduction in the numbers applying to study social work at university.

Despite these challenges, throughout the past year I have been consistently impressed by the capacity and skills colleagues working across all social work areas have demonstrated. Social Work staff, across all aspects of social work in Aberdeen City, have evidenced genuine compassion and empathy as well as resilience to protect and promote opportunities for children, young people and adults to help improve their lives and outcomes.

## 2. Governance, Accountability and Statutory Functions

### **The Role of the Chief Social Work Officer**

There is a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities to appoint a professionally qualified CSWO who is registered with the Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC). The overall role of the CSWO is focused on the provision of effective professional advice and guidance to Local Authorities, Elected Members, and Officers in the provision of Social Work Services, whether directly provided or commissioned. The CSWO also has a responsibility for the overall performance and improvement, as well as the identification and management of corporate risks in so far as these relate to Social Work Services.

The role of the CSWO promotes the values and standards of professional practice, ensuring only registered Social Workers undertake those functions reserved in legislation. The role of the CSWO assists the local authority and its partners in understanding the complexities and cross-cutting nature of social work service delivery. Including but limited to issues such as corporate parenting, child protection, adult protection and the management of high risk offenders, but also the key role social work plays in contributing to the achievement of a wide range of national and local outcomes.

The governance of social work services in Aberdeen City continues to be undertaken across two discreet structures. Children's Social Work (CSW) is delivered within Aberdeen City Council and is part of the Councils Integrated Children & Family Services cluster (incorporating Education and Children's Social Work). Adult Social Work including Criminal Justice, are part of the Aberdeen City's Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and are overseen by the Integration Joint Board (IJB).

Audit Scotland previously noted the establishment of HSCP's made the role of the CSWO increasingly complex. In doing so they identified two primary challenges a) the CSWO must retain oversight, professional leadership and provide assurance on safety and quality of all social work services across two large and complex organisations and b) the CSWO must step back from the role of Chief Officer to provide independent, professional oversight and challenge.

To deliver on this it is critical that whilst the CSWO sits within Education & Children's Services, a close working relationship exists between the HSCP Chief Officer, Chief Officer for Adult Social Work and other managers across Adult Services. The strength of these relationships was recognised during the Care Inspectorate's 2022 inspection of Adult Protection services.

Following publication of the National Care Service (NCS) Bill leaders from across Aberdeen City Council and the City's Health & Social Care Partnership have come together to proactively plan for the anticipated NCS and the associated implications for existing governance arrangements. While we await clarity from the Scottish Government on the shape and timing of a NCS, the Council and HSCP have actively engaged with the Scottish Government to share work it has progressed locally, with a particular not limited focus on the public protection agenda of which the NCS Bill is largely silent. This example is symptomatic of the close working relationship that exists but also a commitment to work collaboratively to plan for this landmark piece of legislation.

### **Adult & Child Protection**

Aberdeen City continues to engage a single Independent Chair for its Adult and Child Protection Committees. Through this we have deliberately sought to better align governance, structures and system oversight as well as our approaches to risk assurance. We intend to extend this approach during 2023 to ensure greater consistency across all public protection forums including our Violence Against Women and Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships.

The activity of the Chief Officer Group is data and risk lead with Risk Registers and data reports consistently being presented to and considered by them. The strength of this activity and our collective leadership in

relation to public protection was very positively evaluated within our Adult Support and Protection Inspection in 2022.

### **Quality Assurance**

Across all aspects of social work we actively promote a culture of continuous learning. We ensure feedback from the people we work with informs our planning and development of staff and services. This includes utilising complaints resolved at stage 1 or those that escalate to Stage 2 or the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

There remains commonality in the areas of complaints across children and adult social work with the most common being in relation to the complainers views on quality of service and staff communication. We have worked hard to address some of the specific challenges we have had in engaging with a very small cohort of our service users by referencing that services are finding it hard to reach them, rather than our previous phraseology of non-engaging family/adult.

Significant progress has been made in the year to 31 March 2023 in relation to the monitoring of service quality and performance across the Service. The extended use of data, risk registers, service standards and the continued use of a quality assurance framework have all supported the identification of what is working well and what needs improved. We have a well-established practice of quality assurance across social work teams, which is supported by service wide quality assurance data reporting and analysis.

A multi-agency Quality Assurance Framework, led by Children's Social Work, continues to operate and provides a multi-agency approach to quality assurance across services to embed a culture of service improvement and learning which is consistent and strong across partner agencies. These audits are commissioned by the CPC and the CSB. They utilise The Care Inspectorate "[A quality framework for children and young people in need of care and protection – November 2022](#)" to support self-evaluation.

Quality assurance and learning activity also includes learning from case reviews whether they be service specific or Significant Learning Reviews undertaken in collaboration with our partners. In 2022/23 we engaged Prof Catriona Matheson from Stirling University to support our learning from drug related deaths. In doing so we examined the circumstance relating to the death of young adult with care experience as a means of learning together. This highlighted single and multi-agency learning but also how we systematically consider learning from all drug related deaths.

Separately learning we have taken learning from Significant Learning Reviews relating to Sudden Unexplained Infant Deaths, where there had also been some common contributing social factors – safe sleep; parental drug use and poverty. This has prompted a North East regional learning event in recognition that our neighbouring authorities were reporting similar tragic deaths.

We have recognised that despite a clear emphasis on 'learning together' that for the staff involved in a Significant Learning Review this provokes anxiety and uncertainty. We have therefore continued to ensure that we are cognisant of this impact in our planning for undertaking reviews and that staff feel supported and have a voice in shaping any learning identified. Feedback from staff on this approach has been positive.

### **Risk Oversight**

Managing risk is an integral element of the social work function and our managers take this responsibility seriously to ensure, as far as is practicable and reasonable, the continued wellbeing and welfare of the individuals with whom we work.

Both adult and children's social work services actively track and report risk via Risk Registers which in turn are reported to Council Committee or the IJB's Clinical and Care Governance Committee.

Cluster risk registers are owned by Chief Officers and reviewed monthly by Directors. Cluster risk registers set out the risks that may prevent the delivery of critical services, commissioning intentions and/or strategic outcomes whereas Operational risk registers are risk registers owned by individual teams working within the Clusters. The risks contained within these registers will be localised to individual teams and are owned by team managers and leaders. Risks contained within Operational risk registers may be escalated to cluster risk register when the level and severity of risk increases.

The IJB has in place a Board Assurance and Escalation Framework to provide the necessary assurance that the partnership has put in place the structures, behaviours and processes necessary for setting risk appetite, for delegating the identification of both significant events and trends, for assessment and mitigation of risk, and for putting in place effective controls and assurances, properly owned and actioned.

The Strategic Risk register is owned primarily by the Chief Officer, with individually identified risks assigned to different members of the Leadership Team as appropriate. The Strategic Risk Register is presented to the Audit and Performance Systems Committee (APS) on a quarterly basis and then presented, with any required revisions, to the following IJB meeting thus ensuring regular and robust scrutiny of the assessed risks and the mitigating activities and interventions. The pandemic has arguably brought a greater intensity to this scrutiny and encouraged a whole-system approach to the management of risk in our social work services.

### **3. Service Quality and Performance**

#### **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK**

As noted above Children's Social Work (along with Education Services) sits within the Councils Children and Family Services cluster. This arrangement enables opportunities to integrate to be maximised particularly in relation to supporting children and families on the edges of care but also how we provide early and preventative support to families that mitigates the need for children to be referred to social work.

Children's Social work provides support from pre-birth through to 26 years of age for our care experienced young people.

Our data tells us that locally the demand for social work assessment and intervention remains high. Work within our Intake Service (comprising our Joint Child Protection Team, Children's Reception Team and our Aberdeen Maternity Hospital team) responds to all new referrals. The largest source of new referrals is submitted by Police Scotland followed by Education. Initial assessment and intervention is offered, aimed at allowing families to exit any statutory social work service at the earliest juncture. This year has seen an increase in new and increasing areas of work including –

- migrant families/UASC who arrive spontaneously or with minimal time for planning which compound the challenge
- increased volume of older children who arrive in the city, often from England having become involved in criminal exploitation,
- high levels of substance misuse amongst young people and parents with an associated high level of drug related deaths.
- Increased numbers of children with additional support needs (ASN), significantly those who have autism or are neurodiverse who are referred to the service when families are in crisis and who may require a s23 assessment of need.

Our conversion rate of referrals assessed as requiring medium to longer term social work intervention has grown. This demonstrates an increased intensity of need which requires long term intervention which our staff tell us can be complex and exhausting. Our commitment to keeping children within their family network, where it is safe to do so requires perseverance, skill and a commitment from multi agency partners.



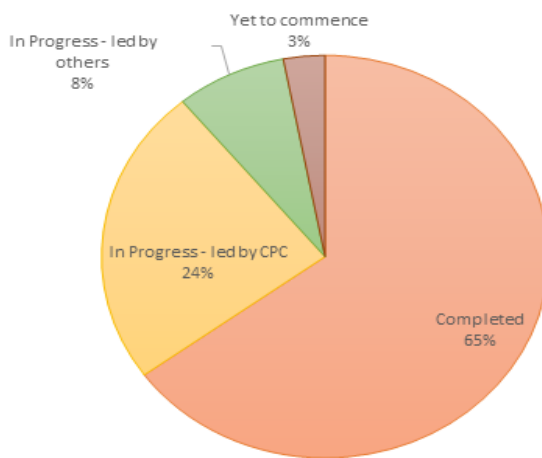
This increased intensity is also evidenced by an increase in the number of Interagency Referral Discussions (IRD), an increase in families requesting s22 financial or practical support, families who are required to access foodbanks and numbers of children accessing mental health supports.

### Child Protection

Child protection processes and administration are well embedded, understood and utilised across all partners in Aberdeen City. Our last Joint Inspection in 2019 noted ***“Recognition of, and responses to, children and young people at immediate risk of harm were very effective and staff were confident in their role, leading to a positive impact on children’s and young people’s safety”***. This standard despite the challenges of COVID, the economic crisis and the associated impact of people and society has continued.

In July 2022, Aberdeen City’s Child Protection Committee (CPC) undertook a review of the partnership’s progress in the implementation of the new National Guidance illustrating that action had been taken to implement 65% of the changes.

Implementation of National Guidance Status % (July 2022)



We continue to make improvements in relation to the identification, collation, reporting and analysing of child protection data both on a single and multi-agency basis. We adhere to, and go beyond, the requirements of the national minimum data set for CPC and have worked with CELCIS on the development of the refreshed national minimum data set which was adopted in November 2022. Detailed consideration of our data takes place at service level and in the multi-agency CPC environment where data reports are scrutinised quarterly. This activity is supported and enhanced by our Data & Insights Team in Aberdeen City Council.

### Child Protection Registration Data

Numbers of children whose names feature on the child protection register in Aberdeen City has remained static when compared to the previous year (244 cf 240 at March 2023). There continues to be an appropriate correlation between the number of initial child protection planning meetings and our registration numbers, aligned to the number of Interagency Referral Discussions (IRD) that have taken place. This strongly indicates that professionals share a common understanding about the threshold of significant harm. Between 91 and 110 children were on the Child Protection Register (CPR) at any one point in time. In March 2023, there was 91 children on Aberdeen’s CPR, representing 2.6 per 1000 children, only slightly higher than the national average rate which at this same period was 2.3.

As in recent years, a significant proportion of registrations relate to children under the age of 4yrs, approximately 50% of all registrations. Whilst this reflect the national picture, work is taking place across the partnership to enhance our collective supports to vulnerable pregnancies in the city. We welcome our Family Nurse Partnership’s extended remit to include care experienced young adults who are expecting their first child.

Analysis of the reasons for registration show that the primary categories of registration have over the past year remained fairly static with Aberdeen City mirroring the most common causes recorded nationally, - neglect, parental mental health, domestic abuse and emotional abuse, the latter often being a factor alongside other concerns.

The data collected and analysed by the CPC's Performance & Quality Assurance Sub Committee plays a pivotal role in continuous improvement of the protection of children and young people in Aberdeen City. These most frequently cited categories also reflect the priorities from our Child Protection Programme for 2021-2024, including working collaboratively with the Aberdeen Violence Against women Partnership in the roll out of the Safe & Together programme across the Partnership.

Re-registration data is an area that Aberdeen City's CPC retains a close eye on. We do this as we strive to ensure that, through relevant interventions, children do not return to being at risk of significant harm. This is in recognition that re-registration may indicate that children's names have been removed from the CPR prematurely, inform about the quality and longevity of support post de-registration, or in decision making at the point of de-registration. Over 2022/23, this is an area of continuing notable improvement within the city.

Previously we had been routinely higher than the national average in relation to re-registrations. During this reporting period, of the 244 children on the child protection register, 50 children had had previous registration history. This represents 20% of children on the register. This is exactly in line with national average. Further, it is noted that 13% of children who had previously been registered, the second registration was within 2 years of the previous one. It is this statistic that can be of greatest significance as it can potentially highlight where registration and post-registration work has not been sufficiently robust to ensure improvement is sustained.

### **Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM)**

In response to Scotland's commitment to implement the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) for children who are victims of, or witness to abuse or neglect, staff in Aberdeen City have worked with colleagues from Aberdeenshire and Moray alongside Police Scotland and NHSG to make improvements within key child protection processes in preparation for a NE roll out of SCIM. This included a refreshed IRD template, which further enhances the way we elicit and record essential preliminary information. This built on the strengths and areas for learning gleaned from IRD quality assurance.

An options appraisal over 2022 determined how one SCIM model could operate across the 3 local authorities, taking account of the differing governance and accountability arrangements but also the diversity of geographical and demographical challenges. The North East SCIM team went live in November 2022 and is coordinated and managed by a SCIM coordinator/manager employed by Aberdeen City but financed equally by the three local authorities.

Since implementation, the SCIM team have undertaken the interviews of 91% of children requiring interview. This greatly exceeds the initial commitment to undertake 60% of all Joint Investigative Interviews that take place. Our work on SCIM will form the backbone to future planning in relation to Aberdeen City's adoption of a Bairns Hoose. The COG committed to this in November 2022 and a Delivery Group established in March 2023, to drive forward our planning and implementation.

### **Trauma informed and strength based practice**

Children's Social Work continues to strive to work in a trauma informed and strength-based manner, with emphasis on working systemically with families and to work alongside partners to aid them in this journey also. A primary driver for this model is to enable staff to articulate the difference between risk and actual harm, and to understand that risk is not static but can be reduced by the skilled intervention of knowledgeable and confident practitioners. Feedback from families and professionals has illustrated that this approach has encouraged a more ethical and empowering collaboration between service users and professionals.

This cultivates identified strength within families, something which in turn helps to keep children safe. Evidence of this work is highlighted within our Annual Child Protection Report which notes 'services finding it hard to engage' as a category of concern in only 16% of registrations, significantly lower than the national average (26%) for this same period.

We welcome the work of the National Trauma Team, which we are actively connected with, to support the development of trauma practice particular to the needs of social work which will start to be rolled out in the coming year.

### **Quality Assurance Activity**

Our CPC and Children's Services Board (CSB) continue to have responsibility for overseeing delivery of our Quality Assurance Framework. In the current year the CPC have had a focus on Child Protection and Children with Disabilities.

The Children with Disabilities audit highlighted evidence of very good multi agency working, high praise for how the child or young person was supported. The audit also highlighted some areas for improvement which were centred around how disability is recorded and the impact on the child and family. The findings from the audit also concluded that communication with children or young people who are recorded as 'non-verbal' or have significant speech disabilities must be improved through practice sharing and training. Activity to deliver on the improvement areas has been underway with the development and introduction of a multi-agency Child Protection Children with Disabilities module. In addition, the implementation of SCIM has further enhanced and improved communication with children with disabilities.

There has been a helpful coordination of our public protection fora which has seen greater interface of child protection with other strategic partnerships such as the adult protection, alcohol & drugs, and violence against women partnerships. The **Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee Annual Report 2021/22** illustrates the multi-agency work across all child protection services and activity to deliver on our Child Protection Programme 2021/24.

### **Corporate Parenting**

In Aberdeen we believe that corporate parenting is not just a responsibility, it is also a privileged opportunity to improve the futures of our children and young people and ensure they have the love, security and chances every child should have.

The last year has seen increasing diversity in our children and young people with care experience, brought about by the implementation of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). We have adapted locally, setting up a best practice group, to ensure the specific cultural, language and trauma needs of our unaccompanied children are recognised and met.

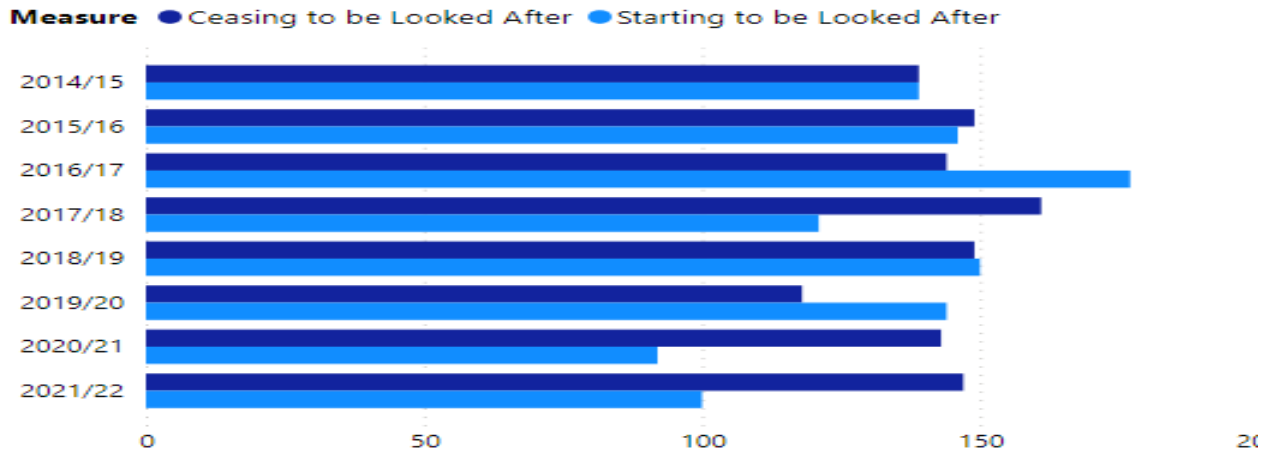
Our use of language continues to evolve. Over the last year we have strived to challenge our use of 'system language' that can have negative effects on our children and young people. Our collective aim is to use language which is easily understood, positive and which does not create or compound stigma. 'Child/ Young person/ Person with Care Experience' is the preferred terminology identified by those with experience of the care system as it is inclusive of those who may no longer be 'looked after' but still require our scaffold of support to thrive. This term includes those currently looked after and those who have been looked after at any time in their life, including adopted children. There are times when the statutory framework in Scotland requires certain terms to be used, such as 'looked-after', however we endeavour to incorporate the preferences and voices of children, young people, and their families into our vocabulary.

Upholding the respective needs and rights of both young parents with care experience and their children whilst realising corporate parenting and safeguarding responsibilities has been a focus of the Corporate Parenting group in 2022/23. Responding to the voices of several of our young parents with care experience, better supporting and preparing our young people with care experience for life beyond care, including parenthood,

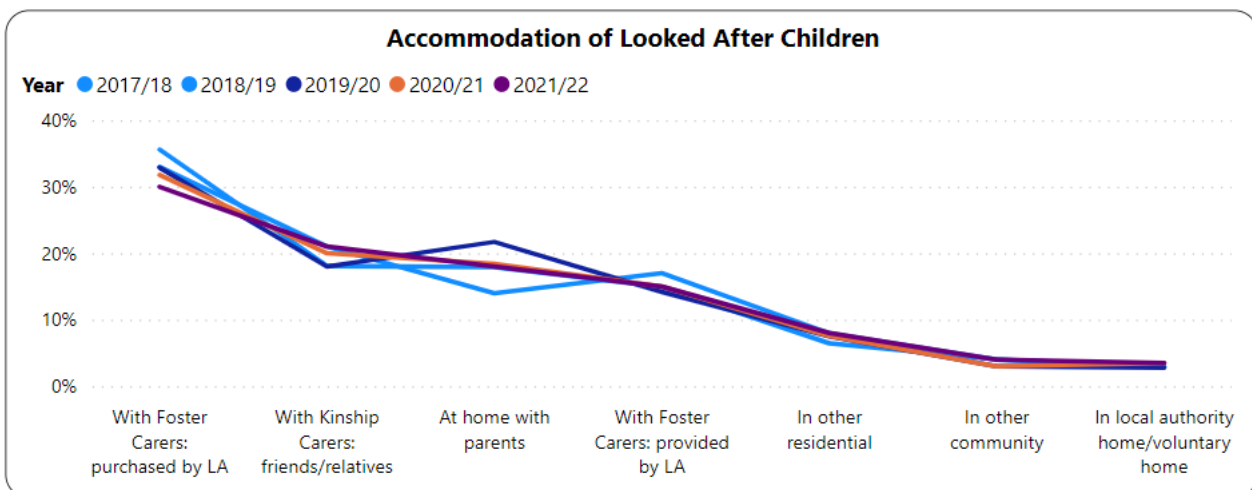
has become a strategic priority in our children's services and corporate parenting planning as we strive to become better Corporate Parents and Grandparents.

Our collective efforts to #KeepthePromise have informed our Corporate Parenting priorities for the next three years with a strategic focus on keeping Brothers and Sisters together and connected, reducing physical restraint and restrictive practices, such as exclusion, across the partnership, and ending the over representation of young people with care experience in the justice system.

### Looked After Status



In 2022, Aberdeen City had an average of 506 infants, children and young people who were ‘looked-after’ in various care settings across the year. We are reducing the number of children and young people coming into the ‘care system’ and are working to support more children and their families to remain together.



Source: Scottish Government/ACC

Aberdeen City’s Corporate Parenting Group has responsibility for:

- delivery of the Corporate Parenting Improvement Plan,
- collation and monitoring of data and quality assurance in relation to children and young people with care experience,
- delivering on identified aims set out in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP)
- driving the implementation of The Promise across the Partnership.

The Corporate Parenting Group engages with children, young people and young adults with care experience and seeks to ensure all improvement activity takes full account of their voice, views and lived experiences.

Specifically, the group has oversight of the refreshed LOIP Improvement Project Stretch Aim 6; *“95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education, health and emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026”* and the following improvement projects:

- Reduce by 5% the number of children entering the care system by 2024.
- 100% of children and young people leaving care are offered a health assessment to identify gaps in their health provision and needs by 2024.
- Increase the number of young people with care experience by 10% receiving multi-agency throughcare/aftercare support by 2023.
- Reduce the number of children being permanently removed from parents with care experience.
- Increase by 100% the number of partners supporting kinship carers by 2023.
- 80% of the identified multi-agency workforce successfully complete Corporate Parenting training aligned to the Promise by 2025.

### **Alternative Family Care**

For those who cannot stay with their parents, the Alternative Family Care service provides children and young people with safe and nurturing home environments. There is a strong focus on improving outcomes for children and young people supporting them to continue to feel a sense of belonging and connectedness, enabling them to remain in their care setting and experience continuity of care. Our staff and carers are trained and supported to understand the impact of early childhood abuse, neglect, trauma and insecurity of attachment. The Alternative Family Care Service ensures our carers are well supported and have access to a range of training to help them meet the needs of the children they care for.

The number of children placed in residential settings out with Aberdeen City has marginally increased. The cost of such placements are prohibitive and the outcomes for young people can be variable. In view of this reducing the number of children we place in out of authority placements remains a service priority, reflected in our CS Plan and LOIP. In addition to the statutory reviewing process, we have a forum where senior management staff in Education and Children’s Social work scrutinise the quality and planning of individual placements. In addition to our in-house resources we have commissioned **Includem** to provide intensive support to prevent children being placed out with the city but also to support young people who return to the city.

### **Secure Care**

During this year we have had no children or young people in secure care reflecting strong local practice aimed at mitigating the risk of secure care unless this is absolutely necessary to safeguard the young person or others. We have participated in the Care Inspectorate’s review of secure care, with one of our young people who had historical experience of being cared for in a secure setting, having an active voice in the review. We will look forward to the publication of the findings of this Review in the Autumn of 2023.

### **Foster care and Kinship care**

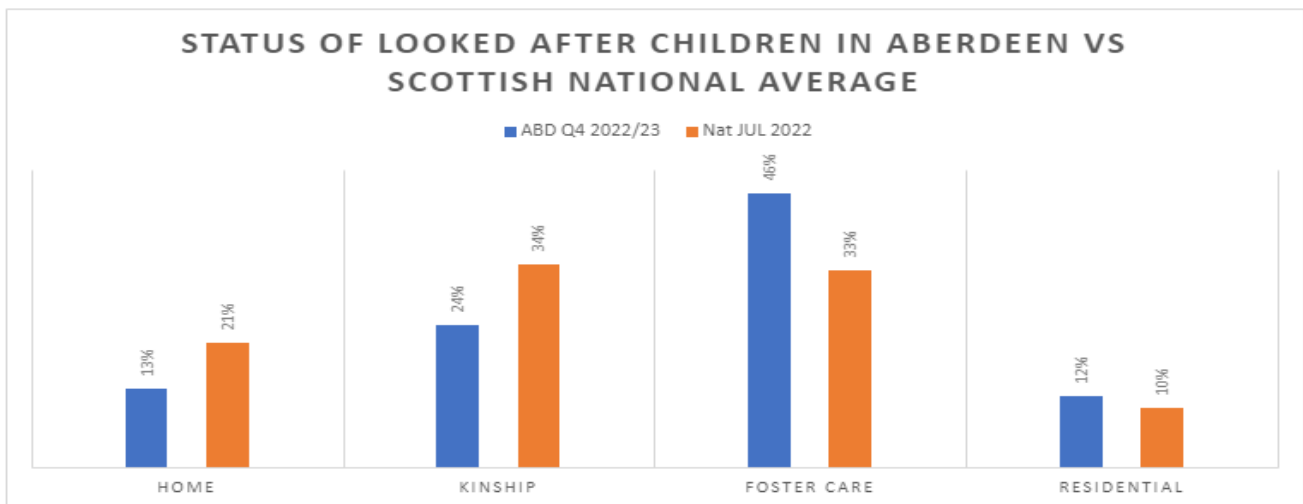
Our embedded new payment for skills scheme in Aberdeen City is proving to be successful, attracting new carers and to provide placements to more than one child or siblings. Although challenging growing our internal capacity remains a continuing focus.

Despite recruitment efforts, the need for foster carers continues to outweigh the number coming forward. Staff have actively engaged in the continuing conversations around a Scottish Recommended Allowance for foster and kinship carers and await the Scottish Government’s decision on this.

Aberdeen City Council foster carers currently care for 100 children in 74 households. There are a further 146 children accommodated with Independent Fostering Agencies. Kinship carers care for 279 children in 224

households. Of this number there are 101 households caring for 124 Looked after children. There are 123 households caring for 155 children who a number have secured Kinship Care orders and are closed to social work.

The Kinship Team has undertaken a range of engagement activities with kinship carers to better understand the support offer and where such could be strengthened. The level of engagement from kinship carers has been very positive and reflects their commitment to the children they care for. In addition, the kinship team has effectively engaged with local partners to broaden and enhance the support offer kinship carers can access. We welcome a partnership with CAMHS to enhance our preventative support offer that can build resilience in kinship placements that supports children to remain within their family network.



Permanence plans over the period were made for 22 children; 14 for adoption (including two sibling groups of two) and 8 children with permanent foster care plans. There have been 12 adoptive matches made (including 3x sibling groups of 2) and 10 permanent foster care matches (includes 3 sibling groups of 2 and one of 3).

**Children’s Residential Care, Care Leavers and Youth Justice**

Our local residential Children’s Homes provision has experienced challenges in 2022/23 with a significant 25% increase in requests for provision, within a challenging context of workforce recruitment. All 5 of our local resources have been operating at full capacity of 31 children in our care, with a need for one home to temporarily exceed registration numbers and request Care Inspectorate agreement for this. The challenging context of matching young people who have complex relational experiences, has tested the resilience of the children’s social work service as a whole, as we attempt to recruit to vacant posts and seek creative means of ensuring safety in our practice.

In January 2023 we had a total of 10 vacant Residential Practitioner posts, with recruitment progressing throughout 2023. As a consequence our smallest residential care home has remained mothballed. Information shared via the Social Work Scotland network reflected a national trend of poor response to vacancies and interest across the children’s residential workforce. Positively our Care Inspection grades have remained Very Good across all five resources.

At 31 March 2023, the NTS had placed 21 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young people in Aberdeen City; five of whom have been 15 years old when placed in our local homes. The over 16 year old age group have been Looked After in Supported Accommodation provision with Aftercare Pathways being developed to support their specific needs. This is an area of demand we anticipate will grow requiring a multi-agency response. This is a national trend which COSLA and the CSWO continue to highlight.

Our residential care service continues to focus on promoting recovery from trauma. [Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy \(DDP\)](#) remains our core reference point. Our residential service has a clear ethos of care that underpins our admissions procedure, including robust systemically based matching consideration. Young people are supported to Stay Put and remain in local provision, reflected in their Continuing Care Status. At 31 March 2023, 30% of our young people were aged 18 years or older. It is normative that young people will be claimed in our provision with average periods of care exceeding 24 months. We have supported high levels of sustainment and associated low level of disruption. We operate a systemic planning approach to avoid a cliff edge experiences of moving on from our provision. The creation of our Residential Aftercare support team provides enhanced level of relationally driven Throughcare and Aftercare support.

### **Youth Justice**

Positive outcomes have been recorded following practice development in the partnership approach between Police Scotland and local Children's Homes. This has evidenced progress to avoid the criminalisation of looked after young people, recognising that early trauma has a direct impact on development. The outcomes attained are demonstrated in data shared by Police Scotland Youth Justice Management Unit; *The Comparative Report on Juvenile Offenders 2022/23*, was especially significant, as there were no crime reports concerning our local children's homes. Previous years had indicated the reduction in crime files recorded against local children's homes reducing from a high of 122 in 2014/15; 10 in 2018/19 ;3 in 2019/20; 2 in 2020/21; 13 in 2021/22; 0 in 2022/23.

We continue our collaborative commitment to support the number of care experienced young people who are in conflict with the law by agreeing the following improvements stretch outcome 8 of our LOIP; *83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.*

- Reduce by 15% the number of care experienced young people reported missing from Children's homes to Police Scotland by 2024.
- 90% of 16/17 year olds appearing at Sherriff Court in relation to Lord Advocate's guidance will have had an assessment of their community support needs by 2025.
- Increase by 5% the no. of 16/17 year olds who are diverted from prosecution by 2025.
- Reduce by 15% the number of instances of youth anti-social behaviour calls to Police Scotland by 2025.

### **Throughcare & Aftercare**

Supports for Care Leavers have been enhanced with the addition of two additional social worker posts in 2022/23, reflecting the growth of NTS young people and their need for bespoke support. This area will require further strategic and operational development as the dual aspects of young people transferred via the NTS and those who are classified as 'Spontaneous Arrivals' impact on team resources. The local experience in Aberdeen City has been replicated across Scotland, seeking to offer safety and contained connection for a wide range of young people.

In 2022/23 we had approx. 165 young people who had an Aftercare status. The impact of poverty, health and social inequality, inequitable access and social exclusion, continues to be a feature for many care leavers. As mitigation, a Warm Space group was established across the months December 2022 until March 2023. In December we scoped care leavers interest in utilising the space using two themed Christmas Warm Spaces. These sessions were welcomed by young people offering feedback' *I like to come for the company*' and *'More of this please'* and *'safe place to talk'*.

The rate of tenancy sustainment amongst care leavers remains high at over 97% in the first year of allocation, an improvement which can be partly linked to the Housing Support post located in the Youth Team. In 2022/23 there were only 3 tenancies which could not be sustained and where alternative options were sought. An area of innovation has been the Youth Team collaboration with Assertive Outreach preventative interventions which were developed, as a early identifier of those with care experience who were at risk of overdose. The lead worker identified a Substance Use tool to identify with those who engaged how their supports could be arranged while assuming a harm reduction and life preservation approach. This is an area where additional

funding will be pursued from Alcohol and Drugs Partnership to continue to research and consider intervention methodology for those whose trauma experiences have been experienced as over whelming.

### **Children with Disabilities**

Improvement work continues between Children's Social Work and Adult Social Work in recognition that the transition from childhood to young adulthood is cited by many families of children with disabilities as a time of great anxiety as they try to navigate different systems of support. Our collaboration has seen improvements in how we support and recognise the role of unpaid parent carers. This was reflected in our carers strategy which was approved by the IJB in early 2023. We have continued to link in with ARC – the Association for Real Change to embed the principles of good transition.

A Complex Care Programme Board was established in January 2023, with membership across Children and Adult services as well as NHS colleagues, allowing a forecasting of need whilst identifying gaps and considering creative solutions to improve statutory services for those with the most complex of health and disability needs. The motivation for this improvement is unwavering across both Children and Adult social work services however lack of resource financial and staffing, often mean that individuals (adults, children or their unpaid carers) can have protracted delay before their care needs can be met.

Our practice reflects growing appreciation that autism and neurodiversity are incorporated within the spectrum of disability. To support these children and their families, many of whom have extended periods of time on a waiting list for CAMHS, our local partnership secured Scottish Government funding in relation to the implementation of the National Neurodevelopmental Specification. A Test of Change has been developed to implement aspects of the Standards and Principles of Care and has focussed on engaging with children and families alongside key stakeholders who have a role to play in referral, assessment, diagnosis and support.

### **Rights, Voice & Participation**

Our Children's Social Work, Aberdeen Young Person's Rights Service provides independent, relational, trauma-informed advocacy, guidance, and support children, young people and young adults, aged 0-26 years old, who are care experienced or are or have been involved in child protection processes, wherever they live.

The [Aberdeen Young Person's Rights Service Annual Report 2022](#) sets out the main data and themes related to what our children, young people and young adults said matters to them. The report highlights two priority improvement areas:

- Further develop inclusive ways of observing and communicating with, and/or on behalf of children, young people, and young adults which support their rights, participation, and voice.
- Further raise awareness and promote rights through the provision of learning opportunities that translates rights into practice.

Underpinning the report is the criticality of a whole workforce approach which has participation and voice at its centre. During the coming year I intend to engage further with the workforce to identify related improvement actions and which take account of the preparation required for incorporation of the UNCRC into domestic law.

In Aberdeen, we have used a broad range of participative opportunities to engage with and listen to our children, young people and young adults with care experience. We use their voices to inform the work of the Corporate Parenting Group and Champions Board to bring about change. In 2023 we plan to develop a robust means of feeding back to them more routinely on what we have done with what they have told us matters to them.

In 2022, quarterly Champions Boards took place and after adapting to virtual meetings during lockdowns face to face meetings resumed in April 2022. Examples of participation have included:

- Monthly Supper Clubs where young people with care experience, and at times their families, have come along to relax, chat and have some food cooked by various Corporate Parents.



- Monthly walks supported by the Rights Team, providing a social opportunity to be active, share experiences, and enjoy a sense of connection and belonging.
- Aberdeen Care Experienced (ACE) network group and individual support provision.
- Themed engagement events e.g., Advent countdown for Christmas and Christmas Day event, distributing 80 Christmas Meals to young people with care experience and their families.
- Mind of My Own app continues to be utilised across the Children’s Social Work workforce and young people on 31 March 2023 demonstrated a 7% increase on use of the Express app.

## ADULT & JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK

It has been another busy year for our adult and justice social work services as we have juggled increased demand, complexity of client need, and operational challenges. Our [Strategic/ Delivery Plan](#) sets out how we intend to respond to these challenges setting out our aspirations and many new initiatives .We are engaging well with the individuals and their families who need assistance, fulfilling our statutory obligations, delivering positive outcomes and supporting the recruitment and ongoing development of our capable, effective and professional workforce.

Current demand for social care can be expressed in terms of the care that we provide and those waiting to be assessed. Due to increasing complexity of need, we can see a significant increase in both the number of people and the hours of care that are required. There has however been an effective response to this increased demand for social care. We have sought to understand the impact of this increased demand for social care and our ability to respond to this within the wider health and social care system.

Self-directed Support (SDS) underpins operational social work activity across a significant proportion of our children’s and adult services. We are very aware of the fundamental aim of giving individuals greater choice and control over their social care support and strongly believe that a pragmatic, person-centred approach is key to fulfilling this outcome. Our SDS option take-up at the beginning and end of 2022-23 was:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
April 2022	162	389	1145
March 2023	167	459	1148

Table 1: SDS Option Volumes 2022-23

A redesign of the Older People/Physical Disability service resulted in the enhancement of the Care Management Response Team to provide individuals and their families with a consistent entry point for screening, assessment, and care planning. There has been a strong and sustained emphasis on addressing the waiting times for an assessment and the subsequent levels of unmet need. Staff are being encouraged to take an enablement-focused approach which involves a consideration of technological support and the appropriateness of risk assessed care. Through targeted screening and intervention our goal is to complete assessments within 4 weeks of referral.

The flow pressures across the hospital system have been significant and sustained over the past year and this has been an area of priority for the hospital social work team We are committed to maintaining the balance between hospital flow and meeting the needs of vulnerable individuals within the community by continuing to explore all potentially new activities and initiatives to assist with our admission avoidance/hospital discharge challenges such as a new Discharge to Assess project, utilising sheltered housing units for interim provision, and liaising with Care at Home Providers to identify those who could leave hospital for reablement focussed care at home, rather than remain in hospital longer than required.

The HSCP’s Delayed discharge numbers have significantly decreased this past year to the extent that Aberdeen has the second lowest partnership figures in Scotland. . It is worth noting that when health and care integration

went live in 2016, we were amongst the partnerships with the highest delayed discharge volumes, so it is heartening to see the considerable and sustained progress that has been - and continues to be – made in this area

The HSCP commissioned five interim beds within a local Care Home to provide specialist end of life care. The management and care of each individual is person specific, focusing on the needs and wishes of the individual and their families, and concentrations on delivering high quality, rights-based approach to care and support. The overall ambition for the Service is to provide high-quality, person-centred care and support in a homely setting for people reaching the end of their lives. The service is also dedicated to supporting their next of kin and carers during a stressful and challenging time.

We are very aware of the particular importance of social care provision because firstly it has the potential to embrace a strong and effective early intervention and preventative approach and keep people at home for longer, but we are also aware of the impact should care not be in place at the right time. From a study undertaken in Aberdeen we saw that 30% of those waiting for their assessed care to commence had at least one hospital admission. To address delays we have commissioned additional (SDS) Option 3 capacity to enable us to reduce our unmet need.

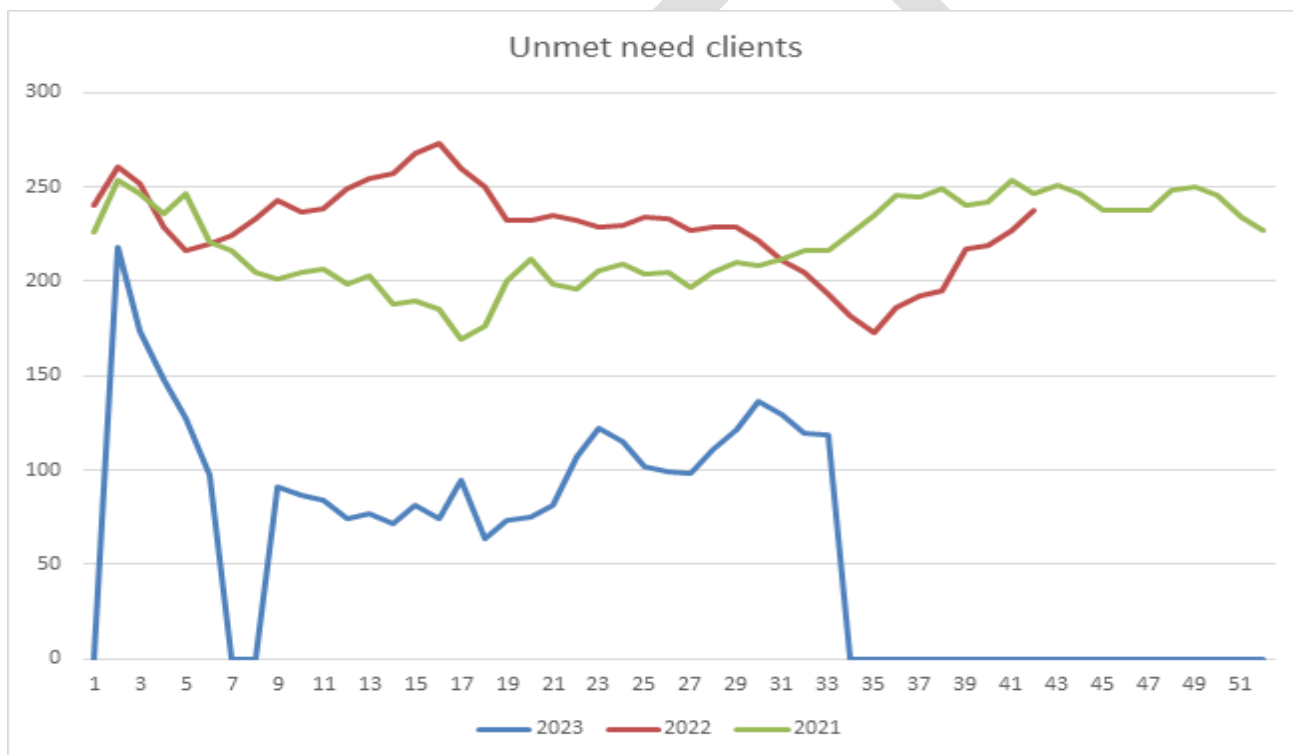


Table 2: Unmet Need Clients 2021-2023

To ensure that appropriate levels of care are being provided we have initiated a strong focus on reablement. This involves working with Granite Care Consortium (GCC) in respect of an Enablement test of change - and digital solutions through the creation of a Community TEC Connector to support individuals at the point of referral to help them access and connect with non-care alternatives.

Taking a collaborative approach to engaging with care homes and setting out broad terms of reference and high-level priorities have enabled our Care Home Oversight team to improve our relationships with care home providers and has at the same time, improved our internal capacity and capability to intervene and support providers when required. There are regular conversations between care homes and the Oversight team to understand their current capacity and to ensure beds are fully utilised. Where this cannot be achieved, we identify the reasons, what support is needed to release the capacity and the timescales for this. We have

also worked through individual care home waiting lists to ensure that these are accurate to enable admissions to occur as quickly as possible. As a consequence of these developments, care home occupancy levels are high (>90%) with individuals being moved swiftly into identified vacancies and the number of enforcement actions initiated by ourselves in the past year very low.

In addition, a Review team was re-established to undertake statutory reviews across our Older People and Physical Disability (OP/PD) Care Management service. These reviews initially focussed on care home individuals before progressing to care at home individuals including the 6-week review following discharge from our Rosewell facility enabling capacity within our hospital social work team to be freed up. Reviews actively consider the greater use of community resources and technological solutions to complement or substitute existing levels of care to create additional capacity within the system. A significant number of reviews have taken place, and the team is on course to achieve its objective of ensuring all individuals open to the OP/PD team have an annual review by the end of 2023.

### Carers Support

The [ACHSCP Carers Strategy 2023-26](#) was developed in partnership with unpaid carers and aims to help them identify and ensure that the right advice and support is available to them when they need it. Prior to the pandemic, carers had access to a dedicated respite facility however because this transitioned to an integrated, Intermediate Care Facility different respite resources were needed, as our provision was not diverse enough or substantive enough to meet demand. A survey was undertaken to establish carer’s priorities when seeking respite and the key theme that emerged from this was access and availability to local respite provision.

Under the strategic umbrella of “Staying Well, Staying Connected”, we subsequently reviewed and then commissioned residential respite and day opportunities in line with those identified carer priorities and to address a long-standing gap in the city’s provision of respite for those aged under 65 and dementia specialist services.

### Mental Health

There has been a continuing increase in the overall workload of our Mental Health Officer (MHO) service which is very much in keeping with the national picture. Due to sustained investment in our MHO capacity we have been able to continue to fulfil our statutory obligations to the required standards and within the required timescales.

Detention in hospital intervention	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Community Treatment Order (CTO)	56	52	62	82	53	70	57	106	113	119
Emergency Detention in Hospital	36	36	28	40	50	53	42	34	31	28
Short-Term	180	157	170	241	203	209	245	222	228	218

Table 3: MH Hospital Detentions 2013-2023

We have an MHO aligned to the Hospital Social Work Team to maintain oversight of all Guardianship applications that are impacting on discharge. Having Social Work involved from the point of admission allows the earliest possible collaborative approach to discharge planning for those who lack capacity; having the aligned MHO enables this process to be as streamlined and effective as possible.

### Adult Support and Protection

A multi-agency inspection of Adult Support and Protection (ASP) took place last year, with the resulting [inspection report](#) highlighting significant positive outcomes; our key processes were found to be effective with

clear strengths supporting positive experiences and outcomes for individuals, and our strategic leadership was found to be very effective with major strengths in evidence. The report commented favourably on our engagement with adults at risk of harm, recognising a ‘golden thread’ that flowed from strategic decision-making to hands-on activity. Positive feedback was also received in relation to the Stakeholder Engagement Sub Committee of the Adult Protection Committee (APC) and the APC’s Lived Experience Forum which evidenced important steps to strengthen the voice of adults and unpaid carers. Key data relating to Adult Protection referrals received, and the outcome of those, can be found in the table below.

			Case Conferences			Investigation Outcomes			
	Referrals	Investigations	Initial	Review	LSI	AP-Action	Non-AP Action	NFA	N/K
<b>20-21</b>	1377	227	34	25	1	51	119	51	6
<b>21-22</b>	1548	248	66	63	1	63	132	51	2
<b>22-23</b>	2226	311	45	25	4	163	54	94	0

Table 4: ASP Referrals and Outcomes

The number of referrals has increased year on year over the three years. The number of Investigations has also increased, however the % of referrals proceeding to Investigation has reduced - from 16% in the first two years, to 14% in 2022-23 - which is likely to reflect the enhanced screening and earlier intervention work undertaken by the dedicated Adult Protection Social Work Team that was formed in October 2021.

Faced with increasing referrals and investigations, we are committed to continue to develop appropriate mechanisms for effective communication:

- i. recognising how diverse our communities are, to ensure the ‘voice’ of all those we aim to support and protect is at the centre of all we do,
- ii. to raise awareness about ASP, so that staff and public recognise the risks of harm to vulnerable adults and know how to respond, report and connect to appropriate supports,
- iii. to ensure we understand each other’s roles, responsibilities and aims.

### Local Learning

We are very keen to showcase our initiatives and developments such as risk-assessed care, ‘discharge to assess’ and locality analysis of unmet need to local and national partners. We recognise the value of these collaborations given the common challenges that we all face.

Our outcomes-focussed Granite Care Consortium was established in 2020 but we still receive regular requests to speak to others about the GCC journey and its achievements to-date, the essence of which has been building relationships, sharing trust and a fundamental reshaping of the ‘traditional’ commissioner/provider relationship.

Our Learning Disability service participated in a pilot project to co-design a Dynamic Support Register which was a requirement of the ‘Coming Home’ report which seeks to address challenges such as out-of-area placements and delayed discharges and improved care for people with complex needs. This register will hold appropriate information about all relevant individuals and what is being done to support them.

### New ways of working

Our Care at Home commissioning model is a consortium of around 10 providers working together to meet the care at home need across the city. This collaborative commissioning model was built on strong integrated principles with its specification co-produced with providers to improve individual outcomes, build a trained and skilled workforce and create enduring market stability. This new model has been part of a wider Frailty Pathway Redesign which envisages even more closely aligned social work, social care and health services - our

intermediate care provision at Rosewell House is a particularly good example of health and social work services being co-located and jointly delivering good outcomes for individuals and their families.

More specifically, we undertook a review of our hospital social work activities and aligned staff to specific high referring wards and at the 'front door' to encourage early intervention and discharge planning. We also identified a social worker to be 'dedicated' to the co-ordination of interim beds to ensure they are utilised as efficiently as possible and introduced a fast-track assessment system for timely flow to these beds. This has proved beneficial, and consideration will be given to further developments such as splitting the team into smaller groups with a particular focus i.e., Frailty and Rehab.

Our Learning Disability service has made changes to its care management structure to enable it to have a greater focus on early intervention. Support Worker roles have been established to provide 'early linkage' between services; to meet with families, build relationships, attend meetings at school, and begin to inform/influence the transition discussion. It is envisaged that these Support Workers will take on all early intervention supports leaving our Social Workers with more capacity to address their statutory responsibilities re Adults with incapacity (AWI), reviewing guardianship, ASP concerns etc.

### **Outcomes**

There is significant evidence of positive collaborations, effective interventions and good outcomes across adult social work. We recognise the need to harness all possible opportunities and use them to our advantage – for example our review of the end-of-life pathway and our subsequent improvements was initiated following a complaint that we received.

It is sometimes difficult to measure satisfaction levels in mental health services as our professional interventions can result in outcomes which individuals do not necessarily agree with, e.g. hospital detention. That said, feedback from our recent Mental Welfare Commission themed visit has been very positive with individuals speaking very highly of how well they have been treated.

Our MH services are fairly responsive to user feedback; they get a lot of queries, concerns and complaints channelled through local Councillors/MSPs but there is robust governance around these issues and weekly learning events are held to take on board all feedback – good and bad – that has been received. For example, 'poor discharges' that lead to subsequent re-admissions are now being recorded as 'adverse event' reports and discussed weekly. It is too early to evaluate this new process, but common themes seem to include poor communication and poor discharge plans. We acknowledge increasing ward pressures – lack of beds/waiting lists – but this leads to the challenge of unwell people in the community needing to be supported/treated by community teams when they should be in hospital.

Our Learning Disability service has worked with ACC housing colleagues and providers to review the properties from which commissioned services were delivered and to consider whether these resources were 'fit for purpose'. The resulting co-produced decommissioning plan has seen five building-based services decommissioned over the past four years with new homes being found for all affected individuals. Crucially, not one complaint has been received in respect of the plan, the process or the outcomes. Identified savings are to be used to provide care at home/housing support for young people who lead chaotic lifestyles and perhaps do not engage with providers as well as we would wish. A provider has been commissioned to deliver innovative, creative and productive ways of supporting these individuals.

In addition, in the past year, two individuals from our Learning Disability service who have been categorized as delayed discharge for more than ten years have been supported to make a successful transition to live in a supported service – one with the in-house service and one with a commissioned provider. Both transitions have went very well and both persons are thriving. A third individual has been in hospital for 15 years and the 'getting to know you' process has commenced with his identified provider and the current hospital-based staff. It is hoped that this person can be discharged at the end of 2023.

From an Oversight and Review perspective, we have been able to deliver better outcomes for individuals because we have more informed insights into provider strengths and weaknesses and a better understanding of service delivery risks. We are confident that people are getting the appropriate level of care for their needs and that there is a greater focus on enablement and TEC. Facilitating provider forums for both care home and care at home provision has meant that our relationships are better and our collaborations more effective, with more open and honest conversations taking place and issues being discussed and resolved more quickly than previously. These forums are also enabling better provider and market intelligence to be shared and facilitating more appropriate and effective contingency planning.

### **Data**

We are striving to be a better data-informed service so that our analysis can drive appropriate service improvement activity and deliver better and more consistent outcomes for the individuals and their families. We also recognise our statutory and regulatory partners are looking for more regular data reporting. Our data collation has been impacted by the introduction of D365 (our new data system for social work). We are committed to using data to identify those operational areas which require to be improved or supported/resourced differently, plan our short-term or long-term mitigating actions, efficiently allocate our resources and address the emerging pressures.

From an Oversight and Review perspective, there is now more significant and current data available in respect of number of reviews undertaken and outcomes achieved etc. that can now be taken with confidence into other discussions about the impact of our social work activity for example, do 6-week reviews show individual's need for step-up/step-down or has care been set at the required level.

### **Challenges**

The implementation of D365 has been a challenge as would any transition of this scale. Supporting and training an entire workforce on the functions and capabilities of a new system was undertaken and completed. . Compared to the our previous system, D365 is a comprehensive and co-ordinated platform which evidences the nature and extent of our multi-layered professional interventions to meet assessed need and fulfil outcomes.

Winter pressures and the demands that were placed on the workforce in terms of crisis management were challenging. Staff have worked hard to prevent individuals being admitted to hospital, , support timely discharges, and keep people safe in the community.

There are still evident pressures and challenges with respect to the sustainability and resilience of our local care provision primarily due to staffing and recruitment difficulties. There have been examples of 'provider failure' with care being discontinued, sometimes at short notice which then leads to additional demands being placed on the remaining providers. Lack of resources in the community impacts on our hospital discharge activities with MH delayed discharges noticeably increasing. Future commissioning needs and these will be incorporated into our Market Facilitation Statement later in the year. .

There is an increased number of individuals needing care with increased complexity of need and levels of care required. These challenges are not only the preserve of an older demographic who are living longer with multiple chronic health issues but also many younger individuals with extreme, complex physical and mental health conditions coming into adult services and for whom significant planning requires to be undertaken so that their needs can be met safely and appropriately.

We acknowledge that these challenges are not unique to Aberdeen. We recognise the need for everyone to think differently about social work and social care. We recognise we need to do things differently by having a stronger preventative emphasis and supporting earlier interventions as well as putting in place alternatives such as self-management, Tec enabled care, , extended family support networks etc. Our improvement and

innovation projects shows how committed we are to finding appropriate and effective solutions to these challenges.

### **Improvement activities**

We are keen to be recognised as an innovative, high-performing, high-quality social work service that consistently delivers better experiences and outcomes for individuals and their families.

- Our portfolio of improvement initiatives and activities in the past year includes:
- Promotion of the 'Home First' model of care where possible, ensuring patients are discharged home or to an interim placement as soon as it is appropriate to do so.
- End of Life Care Home Beds – five beds were commissioned as a test of concept and following a very positive evaluation the IJB approved 5-year funding to enable this provision to continue.
- Increased Capacity in Interim Care Home Beds – negotiations with a new Care Home enabled us to secure up to 49 additional Interim Beds and maintain flow across the system.
- Interim Accommodation in Sheltered Housing – in response to the system pressures, we utilised 12 Sheltered Housing flats as interim accommodation to enable prompt discharge; we are currently expanding this provision to include another 5 units.
- Increased Capacity in Care at Home Provision - four additional providers were commissioned to enhance our Option 3 capacity and target the unmet need list; this additional provision has had a significant positive impact.
- Social Care Sustainability – in conjunction with Aberdeenshire and Moray HSCPs we are working on three approaches to increase capacity using existing resources: Risk Assessed Care, Discharge to Assess and Increased TEC usage.
- Increased Rehabilitation and Enablement Options – the Bon Accord Care Interim Care at Home service is an enablement-focussed project which provides an effective alternative to bed-based rehabilitation within a hospital setting by getting the individual back to their home environment and helping reduce the amount of care they will require.
- Hospital Homecoming – this 3rd sector project connects patients who are due to be discharged and who have no immediate support network with volunteers who can provide appropriate low-level supports. Knowing this support is available provides additional confidence for decisions around discharge to be made.

Further improvement activities that are now underway or in the pipeline include:

As part of a wider Mental Health Modernisation Plan, our Mental Health social work service is implementing a four-locality model each with their own multi-disciplinary team. All open cases are being reviewed to determine which locality they will be aligned with and there is ongoing consultation with staff to determine similar outcomes.

The wide-ranging engagement undertaken by the Oversight and Review team have given care home and care at home providers access to resources, services and intelligence that they might not otherwise have known about so that they can reflect on the possible benefits and collaborations that are open to them. Oversight assurance visits have a strong improvement emphasis, and these have broadened in scope post-pandemic to help the care homes meet the needs of their residents and provide the evidence that they are also meeting the required standards of care.

### **JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK**

Our [JSW Delivery Plan 2021-2024](#) sets out our Justice Social Work (JSW) vision: “Every client achieves the best possible outcome because we respond to the needs and risks of our clients in a trauma-informed way; intervene early where possible; are a professional, highly motivated team, and work in collaboration with partners”.

Delivery of statutory supervision was a huge challenge during the pandemic. There is still a Covid-related backlog in cases coming to Court and we saw a continuing increase in Diversion, Bail Assessments, Bail Supervision as well as an increase in supervised release orders all of which means an increased level of demand for the service.

The continued increase in Diversion from Prosecution is very positive as it enables individuals who have committed offences and have significant underlying needs to be diverted into support and, ideally out of Court involvement and further offending at an early stage. It is very noticeable that Diversion cases are becoming increasingly complex. The number of Structured Deferred sentences (including those imposed in the Problem-Solving Court) are also increasing, albeit slowly, having paused while the courts were closed during Covid. Structured Deferred Sentences are similarly intended to be a lower level, albeit intensive diversion from custody and the volume of these is increasing.

There has previously been an increasingly high percentage of remand prisoners, with the Government and the Scottish Prison Service taking steps to reduce this by promoting Supervised Bail as an appropriate alternative. The pre-disposal team workload has increased because of this and so we have appointed a Senior Support Worker and two Support Workers in the Court specifically for supervised bail. There is evidence that the use of Bail Supervision, while not reducing the number of Aberdeen prisoners, is preventing an increase. It is anticipated that, as the court backlog decreases so will prison numbers.

There remain issues around the high number of Bail/ Electronic Monitoring Order assessments completed by comparison to Orders imposed. This is a national issue which is hoped will be resolved in due course. There has continued to be an increase in the volume of Caledonian assessments undertaken – the Court does not always request these, but the service completes them for most cases of domestic offending and victims are referred to the Domestic Abuse Team for support from a Women's Worker. We are continuing to provide the Moving Forward Making Changes programme for sex offenders. Numbers on this programme have reduced but we are seeing more individuals on the lower-level programme.

The Women Service offers a safe and supportive environment in which appropriate support can be provided to women both in the community and in prison. This also includes support with the Begonia project for those involved in on-street prostitution where police can refer directly to the service and cuckooing links to County lines.

New revised MAPPa Guidance on what partner agencies responsibilities are when individuals are being released from prison was issued in May 2022. This has had an impact on our inter-agency collaborations and resulted in more defensible positions. The Scottish Government has commended the responsiveness and effectiveness of our multi-agency collaborations with colleagues from housing and health that are put in place for individuals coming out of prison. These collaborations are initiated at an early stage when individuals go to prison to ensure that appropriate housing and access to appropriate primary care services are in place when they are released. The ADP/JSW Development Worker has been working closely with the commissioned Assertive Outreach service to support individuals who leave prison and to reduce the risk of drug related deaths. This colleague has also facilitated regular and mandatory Naloxone training for staff.

The JSW service has been one of four areas from across the country involved in a pilot for a new Court Report template that is shorter and more concise. The pilot received very positive feedback from JSW and the Courts, it has been judged to be very successful and is now being rolled out nationally.

It is heartening to see that although there have been many initial notifications of potentially serious incidents, only one case has proceeded to a Serious Case Review from MAPPa. This is an indication of the appropriateness of our interventions as we have sought a balance between our statutory obligations, public protection and the needs of the individuals that we work with.



## Challenges

Last year was a difficult year for the Justice workforce as the post-pandemic recovery meant that they had to work through Covid-related backlogs and manage the increasing demand for services. Morale was also impacted by the national risk management tool (LS/CMI) being off-line since March 2022, although it is now reinstated entirely with national agreement for a staged uploading of current risk/needs assessments. The introduction of D365 impacted on the service in respect of workload, training and data although the very good support that JSW received from its own in-house 'product owner' is recognised.

. The introduction of Bail Supervision has resulted in a requirement for new guidance, templates and additional staff. . Release from custody through virtual Courts has been a good innovation however it has presented some difficulties for our CPOs in respect of engaging with and inducting individuals.

The Unpaid Work Team responded very well to pandemic challenges by developing blended learning packs to enable unpaid workers to undertake their orders at home. This, together with the Covid legislation allowing some unpaid hours to be written off in certain circumstances and for orders to be extended beyond initial completion dates meant that we had a reduced backlog of Unpaid Work Requirements.

## 4. Resources

Aberdeen is the third largest city in Scotland with an estimated population of circa 230K.

Over recent years the City's population has appreciably grown. As a result of world events, Aberdeen City has welcomed significant numbers of displaced persons from war affected countries. Aberdeen being a city with two universities, our population has been impacted by a high volume of international families coming to the city to study. This has seen a 12% increase to the school roll since 2019 with a 6.7% increase since September 2022.

The gross expenditure on social work and social care services in Aberdeen City during 2022 - 23 was £182.6m on adult services (inclusive of Justice social work) and £46.7m on children's services.

Rising expectations and demand for our services, in both children and adult services, coupled with rising costs and reduced funding presents a significant challenge to our ambitions to deliver effective interventions that lead to improved outcomes. Evidence also suggests that the impact of the pandemic will continue to be felt by all aspects of social work over the coming years. This includes but not limited to increased levels of family fragility and associated poor mental wellbeing/health; delays in the Court system and pressures across the health system all of which directly impact on the demand and delivery of social work services.

The welcome advances in medical treatments and medicines is seeing individuals living for longer with more complex needs. The complexity of need consequently requires greater levels of care and support. This comes with increased costs. Services are also seeing greater levels of expectations from clients and this, along with expectations from our other stakeholders, continues to drive performance on targets such as waiting times. The cost of living crisis in 2022/23 has reinforced the correlation between the impact of poverty and the demand for social work intervention. This can be seen from increased levels of referrals, particularly from the City's most deprived areas. Those accessing money advice services and emergency food provision tell us of the struggles they experience surviving on a daily basis, of the impact on their confidence and mental wellbeing the cost of living is inflicting.

Council budgets continue to face significant pressure and children's social work has had to collaborate on a cross council basis to ensure a balance budget. The Council's medium term financial plan indicates that the pressure on budgets will continue to be considerable over the coming years. This will continue to impact on

our capacity to meet current and future need. It is therefore critical that all new national policy initiatives and legislative duties are fully funded.

Ensuring there are sufficient staffing across all service areas to undertake statutory social work tasks remains key. In doing so a focus on delivering person centred interventions that aim to keep children and vulnerable adults in their own home for as long as it is safe to do so remains critical.

Work to refresh our [Childrens-Services-Plan-2023 - 26](#) reinforces the continuing need to ensure families have access to early and preventative support that mitigates the need for social work intervention. We recognise the partnerships shared responsibility to develop a robust and effective Family Support Model is critical to achieving this. The disparate and multi-faceted funding of Tier 2 family support services presents challenges and opportunities. Our families have told us that they want support earlier and to be able to access support independently of professionals. As we continue to develop our Family Support Model and take forward planning in relation to the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund these principles will remain key.

Our Children's Service Plan has strong alignment with the HSCP's Strategic Plan. More broadly as a partnership we have worked hard to align many of our strategic plans – Local Outcome Improvement Plan; Child Poverty Plan; Carers Plan; Corporate Parenting Plan. This effort seeks to strengthen our strategic coherence but also looks to maximise our resources to deliver on key shared priorities.

We continue to recognise the interconnected nature of social work. The vast majority of children known to Children's Social Work are known as a result of care and protection concerns resulting from challenges in their parents lives. The value of integrated planning, and wherever possible services that support vulnerable parents and their children is a priority. There is a particular focus on supporting families where parental addiction and mental health/wellbeing impact on their children.

Working with partners to deliver early and preventative support that negates the need for crisis and high-cost intervention is a priority across all parts of social work. Improved early intervention is essential to not only to improve outcomes but critical and delivering a sustainable budget position.

The single biggest cost pressure for Children's Social Work continues to be the cost of care, particularly placements out with the authority. In 2022/23 this contributed to an overspend of circa £1.8m. While there was circa a £1.5m underspend in staffing costs.

Our care population has reduced by circa 15% over recent years. This reduction is welcomed and is apparent across all care types particularly foster care and those looked after at home. As a service we are committed to supporting more children to remain within their family, where it is safe to do so, without the need for compulsory measures. However to do this on a sustained basis will require different and in some instances more local multi-agency resource to scaffold around families.

While the level of protection afforded by the Scottish Government to the funding of adult social work services is welcomed, there are recognised and significant cost pressures within the system as a result of service demand and inflationary pressures. One such pressure relates to the placement of adults with complex learning disabilities. Planning is now at an advanced stage to develop local resources that will enable several adults living out of the authority to return to be near family members and their local community whilst also mitigating budget pressures.

Aligned to this is our work in relation to being a Pathfinder for 'GIRFE' (Getting it right for everyone) on the Families with multiple and/or complex needs; and young people in transitions from GIRFEC to GIRFE Pathway. The focus of this pathfinder is ensuring early multi-agency planning for young people where the professional assessment is that they will require care and support throughout their lives. This, we hope will lead to greater integrated planning, supporting those individuals to experience improved transitions while simultaneously allowing resources to be managed more effectively.

Using the Scottish approach to service design, the Aberdeen City Pathfinder team have been working through the design process via a series of design days focusing on four phases, discovery, define, develop and deliver. The intention is to co-design workable prototypes which can be tested with Pathfinder and Partner areas across Scotland. This approach aims to ensure that the voices of the people with lived experiences and their families help to develop and design functional, workable and realistic resources to support them and deliver the care they need in the right place and at the right time.

In October 2022, in partnership with Microsoft, Aberdeen City Council launched 'D365' - its own data system across social work. This system replaced Carefirst which we had been using for over 20 years and was seen to no longer effectively or efficiently serve our needs. The 'D365' system was designed by social workers for social workers. It utilises the existing suite of Microsoft tools but has added functionality and capacity to support real time data reporting.

While the commitment from staff across all parts of social work to support the development of D365 was considerable there are identified aspects post going live that require further development/improvement. The responsiveness and improvement of the inhouse capacity along with our partnership with Microsoft is enabling the workforce to take growing ownership of their D365 system.

One of the key benefits of D365 is its capability to deliver on the Scottish Government's aspiration, as outlined in the NCS Bill, that there is a single health and social care record. The realisation of this for frontline practitioners cannot be understated. At a time when we all need to do more with less resources the integration of key client data in real time will improve planning and decision making. In some cases I believe it has the potential to save lives.

## 5. Workforce

The Setting the Bar Report, June 2022, whilst welcomed, brought no surprises emphasising that effective social work provision is going to need an increase in staffing levels, all who are suitably skilled and trained to undertake the complex roles they fill. Whilst retention of staff is good, we have been aware of the increasing pressures on our social work staff, as they strive to offer high quality service to our most vulnerable groups of children and adults. This recognition has prompted us to begin exploring with our People and Organisation colleagues how to build increasing psychological resilience in a workforce who are at risk of vicarious trauma on a day to day basis.

### Children's Social Work Services

#### **Recruitment**

Staffing pressures across CSW continue to pose challenges to effective service delivery. This issue has become particularly challenging given the impact of COVID and new demand. Vacant posts are not stagnant, some can be predicted, i.e. maternity cover, long term sick leave, families relocating with others less so. Exit interviews ensure we capture any learning from our staff who chose to leave. This continues to highlight that for some, working within statutory children's social work is not something they feel able to sustain in the longer term due to the psychological impact and work-life balance. Many have chosen to leave and join other parts of the social work so are not lost to the profession.

We are continuing to develop a workforce recruitment and succession planning strategy which aims to enhance, develop and retain leaders within our service. We have adapted our interviewing strategies to ensure that values and resilience are prioritised over subject expertise and knowledge. Our biggest challenge is the loss of experienced and confident workers given that recruitment is in the main, drawn from a pool of newly qualified workers, many of whom over this period, have experienced a 'covid' placement experience which unfortunately has resulted in a less robust social work experience.

Not unexpectedly, where there are vacancies, increased workload pressures exist for peers and line managers who remain in post, therefore a strong and persistent focus on health and wellbeing remains paramount.

In response, this year, we dedicated our annual practice improvement day in March 2023 on “**Wellbeing and Resilience**”. The event, falling on National Social Work Day, allowed a focus on staff’s own personal wellbeing in recognition that it is only possible to support others when you have acknowledged your own needs. Feedback from staff about the impact of the day was hugely positive and has led to increased awareness of Council supports available as well as the creation of enhanced targeted internal and external supports.



### **Professional Learning & Development**

We have a well-established multi agency child protection learning and development (L&D) programme covering 14 GIRFEC and Child Protection topics. These are consistently quality assured which helps to measure the impact training has had on practitioners’ confidence and capabilities in supporting and improving outcomes for the children and young people they work with. The [CPC Learning & Development Annual Report 2022](#) provides an overview of L&D activity throughout the year.

Work to enhance our learning and development offer within children’s social work services has continued over 2022/23 with a focus on delivering L&D opportunities for all staff, arranging and supporting student placements, embedding a programme of learning for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW), and leading on improvement work around whole service induction, supervision and early implementation of the NQSW Supported Year.

A training needs analysis undertaken with service managers, identified key learning and development priorities for the year as:

- Risk assessment and management of harmful sexual behaviour
- Recommencement of the Post Graduate Certificate in Child Welfare and Protection
- Trauma awareness and recovery principles
- Supervision skills
- Leadership and Management

The development of the Children’s Social Work [Events and Training Calendar](#) on the Intranet and [Learning and Development site](#) makes it simpler for staff to see available L&D opportunities and to book a place.

In 2022, Children’s Social Work hosted 22 social workers in training (SWIT) placements across the service. An increase in the number of staff undertaking the Practice Learning Qualification has enabled us to increase the number of placements offered.

The L&D lead monitors which individuals/service areas have accessed training to ensure equitable access. As part of ongoing monitoring of internal and commissioned L&D opportunities, those who attend training events are asked to complete feedback and identify how they intend to apply learning to practice. Whilst this informs our monitoring activities, it also allows us to make sure we are providing quality L&D opportunities to enable social work staff to meet their registration requirement and to meet the future needs of the social work service. The [CSW L&D Annual Report](#) provides a full overview of learning and development in 2022.

### **Workforce Strategies**

Within Children’s Social Work we have been developing the following strategies:

- Maximise the opportunities to provide placements for SWIT within Children’s Services. We continue to explore with Robert Gordon’s University (RGU) how we maximise the opportunities to convert those who undertake a placement with us into new workers.

- Continuing to prioritise how NQSW's are supported into the profession. Our NQSW's programme fully aligns with the new standards. We are looking to extend this to include 'early career social workers'. Feedback from those who have joined us indicates they feel valued and supported.
- Growing our own – we continue to provide opportunities to support our para-professionals undertake social work training, whilst being paid as social work trainees. Having had some success we are keen to ensure pathways into social work posts.
- Succession planning - We are mindful of the significant loss we will experience by the 'aging out' of a number of leaders over the coming years. Within our residential services, to ensure we have key skills to match posts our succession planning has included realigning job roles and the qualification pathway, allowing progression to promoted posts which recognise the most relevant qualifications, skills and knowledge. We currently have 5 staff members undertaking the PG/MSc Advanced Child Care qualification.
- We are reviewing our approach to supervision to ensure managers feel more confident in delivering supervision that is trauma informed.

### **Adult & Justice Social Work**

In November last year, the IJB approved the [HSCP Workforce Plan 2022 – 2025 - Aberdeen](#) with its key priorities of: recruitment and retention, mental health and wellbeing, and growth and development opportunities. We have recognised the need to ensure that our social work-specific workforce-related activities are aligned to this plan and that the voice, experience and needs of social work are considered in wider HSCP workforce discussions.

The significant impact of COVID on the personal wellbeing and resilience of our workforce has not been forgotten and staff burnout continues to be an ongoing risk. Use of the resilience hub has continued post-pandemic and informal catch-ups, coffee mornings, a buddy system, lunch dates for all staff to attend, Yoga classes etc have been arranged by different services at different times.

A hybrid model that combines office-based and home working arrangements has been adopted with the value of office-based days in terms of face-to-face professional discussions, management and peer support, team meetings and social chat with colleagues emphasised to everyone although it is fair to say that different colleagues and different services are at different stages of their post-pandemic recovery journey.

A member of the Senior Management Team was asked to co-ordinate significant recruitment activity across all services using the available Scottish Government funding to increase adult social work capacity. This resulted in an effective recruitment campaign which succeeded with support from colleagues from across adult services in filling vacant and new posts at all levels using generic social work adverts and aligning staff dependant on skills and experience. This resulted in increased head count/reduced vacancy levels and had a significant impact on staff morale and wellbeing, workloads and our ability to address demands in our services.

To address local recruitment challenges, we have developed our 'Grow your Own' initiative and recruited two colleagues to Trainee Social Worker posts and are supporting them with their professional social work training. Our Learning Disability service has also supported student placements from the Kickstart Programme, Career Ready, Foundation and Modern-Day apprenticeships as well as supporting staff to undertake their Social Work qualification through distance learning. In addition, a core 'Back to Basics' induction training programme has been developed for all new starts.

Retention is an ongoing challenge with some services such as Substance Use, affected more than others. Some staff retired but most have transferred to other services within either children's or adult social work. Secondments have been increasingly offered to give staff the opportunity to sample other services so their experience and skills remains within the Council.

As welcome as these developments have been, we are mindful that a great many colleagues are still holding large caseloads with increasing complexity of need and significant statutory obligations that require appropriate decisions and effective interventions to ensure that needs are met and associated risks are reduced. . We have attempted to support staff with their wellbeing in different ways including, Organisational Development facilitated team building days and sign posting to psychological resilience supports. The recent development of our new Staff Supervision procedure which is due to be rolled out soon has been heavily influenced by trauma-informed and staff wellbeing perspectives. It is noticeable that better absence management has led to a reduction in absence rates which in turn has eased work-based pressures on staff.

The weekly online staff Forum, together with the weekly staff bulletin, has evolved to include all adult Social Work staff and become a real strength; it has provided an opportunity for directed learning as well as creating a culture of peer support and advice. The success of this has been evident through positive feedback from staff and the cross-service support via the Forum chat which provides opportunities for education, communication, networking and peer support. In addition, we have utilised available Scottish Government funding to enter a partnership with our local further education college to enable them to offer access to appropriate training courses, for example, pre-MHO development training, well-being treatments and meals/snacks from their cookery/hospitality students.

### **Professional Learning and Development**

Our Chief Officer for Adult Social Work has been undertaking a review of our services as part of a wider HSCP post-pandemic recovery to fully embed early intervention and prevention across services and maintain the improved relationships and effective collaborations that have been forged in the face of the pandemic. Key elements of this review resulted in the establishment of the Adult Protection Social Work team, the Oversight and Review team and the enhancement of the Care Management Response Team.

Core skills training for our practitioners is linked to their legislative obligations so that there is a greater understanding of the nature and impact of their practice. For the most part, ongoing staff development is guided primarily by supervision and appraisal feedback. Our MH service has created a whole-service training plan in respect of AWI matters as this cuts across all services and all client groups.

Our MH colleagues are very aware of need to monitor their MHO resource to ensure that staff turnover can be mitigated as we know that 25% of the current MHO team are likely to retire in the next 5 years. Three colleagues are just about to finish their MHO training and four colleagues will commence this in September. The LD service has its own designated MHO and as well as progressing the relevant statutory responsibilities has also provided significant peer support to LD care managers in respect of caseload complexities and report-writing and to the wider MHO team in respect of LD matters.

The JSW workforce have completed their statutory training and trauma-informed, Caledonian, MFMC and 'Children in conflict with the law' training. Risk of Serious Harm (ROSH) training delivered by the national Risk Management Agency has also been undertaken.

## **6. Looking ahead**

As noted in my foreword, the policy and legislative landscape as it relates to social work has and continues to change significantly in recent years. As I look ahead this reality is likely to persist:

### **a. National Care Service**

The Scottish Governments intention to establish a National Care Service is potentially the most significant change to directly impact on social work for many years. Whilst a National Care Service has the potential to offer new opportunities, it will also significantly change the social work and social care landscape. The Scottish Government has announced an Independent Review to support the decision making in relation to the inclusion

of Children's and Justice social work within a National Care Service. We await with interest the outcome of these reviews in 2023.

As CSWO it is reassuring that both Reviews will seek to engage directly with the workforce to ensure the workforce has an opportunity to contribute to and help shape decision making. Local social work practitioners are keen for their voice to be heard within this review. However my engagement with frontline staff reflects that social workers do are unsettled by the uncertainty in the planning to the National Care Service.

#### **b. Workforce**

Staff from Aberdeen City have welcomed the opportunity to engage in events to help frame the role and remit of the proposed National Social Work Agency (NSWA). The creation of a NSWA provides opportunities to promote the role of social work and consider what kind of social work service we want for Scotland going forward. To do this well, real investment is required in the service and a move away from non-recurring funding offers which place unsustainable burdens on services.

The NSWA's intention to develop a national approach to workforce development is welcomed. Having a consistency of direction as well as enhanced learning and development opportunities will enable us to have a social work workforce that can continue to deliver on meeting the needs of the Scotland's most vulnerable individuals and families.

It must be hoped that the above will mitigate the current challenges of workforce recruitment, retention, and wellbeing. Social Work leaders in Aberdeen City have and will continue to prioritise and focus on supporting the needs of our workforce. We recognising the interconnected nature of social work. Developing a trauma enhanced workforce that has access to L&D and wellbeing support is critical. In doing so we will continue to engage with and listen to our workforce to help shape our support offer in a way that is deemed authentic ensuring colleagues feel valued and supported.

#### **Social Care resilience**

Significant work has been progressed to support and strengthen the resilience of the social care market in Aberdeen City, however we continue to recognise its vulnerability. Demand for care at home support and personal assistants outstrips capacity. The national spotlight on how we value carers reflects remuneration as well as the societal status given the caring roles.

We have responded proactively to respond to the system challenges of hospital discharge delays. However we are acutely mindful of overly focusing on one area at the expense of attention to focus on other equally important areas but don't demand the same level of Government scrutiny. Working through this over the forthcoming Winter and beyond will be an ongoing challenge.

#### **c. Legislative and Policy Landscape**

##### **Rights Based legislation**

*"Human rights and social justice serve as the motivation and justification for social work action. In solidarity with those who are disadvantaged, the profession strives to alleviate poverty and to work with vulnerable and oppressed people in order to promote social inclusion."* (BASW Code of Ethics)

The incorporation of UNCRC and the proposed Human Rights legislation will strengthen a rights based approach to how public services are delivered. The well published challenges around this legislation reflects the complexity of this work. In many instances intervening to support and protect one individual can often have a corresponding negative impact on another person's rights. This tight rope is not new for social workers to navigate.

While recognising the Scottish Government is committed to enacting the UNCRC principles as far as possible they also recognise that in doing so the "provisions become more complex, uncertain and challenging for

children and young people and their representatives and for public authorities to work with.” It is therefore important that ‘rights’ legislation is both workable for practitioners and affordable by public bodies.

#### **Other Significant Legislative Change**

Social Work can never and should never stand still. In addition to the proposed ‘rights’ legislation there are other significant legislative changes and policy initiatives on the horizon that will directly impact on social work practitioners: Children’s Care & Justice Bill; the anticipated Review of the Children’s Hearing System; Bairns Hoose; Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill; Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Bill to note but a few. All of these will continue to require social work services to shift evolve and for the workforce to be enabled to grow to take account of the new and additional duties.

#### **d. Financial Constraints**

With the complexity of care and need increasing, budget pressures are likely to escalate compounded by an increasing deficit in local government funding. A disparity in additional funding streams being provided to HSCP as part of the winter pressures funding has been felt keenly by Children’s Social Work who have equally been impacted by increased demand, complexity and capacity issues but have not had the opportunity to increase the workforce to mitigate the risk this brings.

Whilst there is no easy fix, the Council and the HSCP have in place a Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Programmes of work are focused on delivering early and preventative support to children, young people, vulnerable adults and families that mitigates the need for social work intervention. It will take time to fully deliver on this aspiration. Consequently the fiscal pressures on social work are likely to continue over the coming years. As such retaining a clear focus on our strategic priorities is vital.

I have highlighted throughout this report many examples of effective, innovative, and creative new ways of working and service evolution which are delivering high quality care and support to Aberdeen City’s most vulnerable citizens. The success of these is down to the commitment and determination of social work colleagues delivering social work and social care, despite the challenges, on a day-to-day basis. Their passion to empower and support others to improve their lives of others and improve our communities inspires me as their Chief Social Work Officer.

**Graeme Simpson**  
**CSWO**  
**25 September 2023**



## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children's Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	21 November 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Aberdeen City's Child Protection Committee Annual Report 2022-23
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CFS/23/270
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Graeme Simpson
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Amy Anderson
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	2.1, 2.2, 2.3

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To share Aberdeen City's Child Protection Committee (CPC) Annual Report 2022-23 to provide assurance that the work of the CPC is effectively helping reduce risks to children and young people.

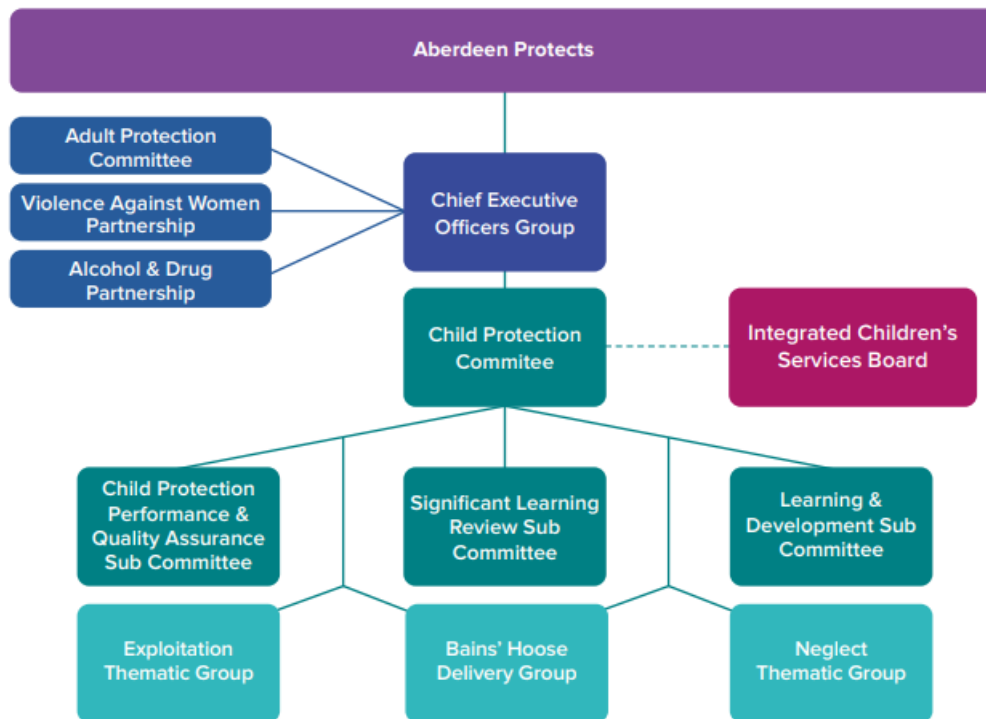
### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the content of the CPC's Annual Report 2022-23, including the Child Protection Programme 2021-2024; and
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Social Work Officer to provide Committee with a further report in November 2024 detailing the continuing impact and effectiveness of partnership work in relation to child protection.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Aberdeen City's Child Protection Committee (CPC) is a multi-agency strategic partnership governed by the Chief Executive Officers of Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian and the Police Commander for the area. It is committed to providing individual and collective leadership and direction for the management of child protection services in the Aberdeen City area. Areas for improvement which are identified through self-evaluation are driven through the Child Protection Programme.
- 3.2 The CPC works collaboratively with other strategic partnerships in the City such as the Children's Services Board, Aberdeen Violence Against Women Partnership (particularly in relation to child protection and domestic abuse), Adult Protection Committee, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership under the banner of Aberdeen Protects as is outlined in the visual below.



- 3.3 The CPC routinely analyses and evaluates the impact of our collaborative work to keep children safe. Areas for improvement are detailed in the CPC Child Protection Programme which aims to improve the safety, wellbeing and life chances of vulnerable children and young people. Improvement activity is reported to and monitored by the CPC through its connected sub committees which are; the Significant Learning Review, the Performance & Quality Assurance, and the Learning & Development sub committees. Improvement activity set out in the Child Protection Programme 2021-2024, is and will be subject to the inspection scrutiny of the Care Inspectorate.
- 3.4 The CPC produces a statutory Annual Report to demonstrate the work of the CPC over a full year in both leading and improving child protection arrangements. The report is informed by the now well embedded Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) and audit programme.
- 3.5 The Annual Report highlights many achievements including the implementation of the Scottish Child Interview Model, a Neglect Resource toolkit, Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation Guidance, and the continuous implementation of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021.
- 3.6 The CPC continues to work to ensure that the Child Protection Programme Plan is informed by and aligned to national expectations flowing from the independent care review and as set out in The Promise. The CPC priorities set out in the Child Protection Programme are:
- To increase workforce confidence and knowledge to respond to child protection issues arising among children with disabilities

- To improve multi-agency recognition and response to indicators of cumulative neglect
  - To raise awareness and develop a multi-agency understanding of, and response to, all forms of child exploitation and children who go missing
  - To implement a whole system approach across the City in relation to child protection and domestic abuse, and support the delivery and embedding of the Safe and Together model alongside the Violence Against Women Partnership
  - To consider the revised National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland and ensure the required changes are implemented to help support and improve practice
  - To build on our trauma informed and strength based practice approaches ensuring children and their families are engaged with appropriately, and that their voices are heard when they are involved in child protection processes
  - To improve the multi-agency recognition and response to equality, diversity and inclusion from a child protection perspective. This includes Female Genital Mutilation, Gender Identity, Prevent, Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage in the field of Child Protection.
- 3.7 The CPC's Child Protection Programme 2021 – 2024 will come to an end in July 2024 and a new programme will be established for 2024 – 2026. The priorities for the new programme will be agreed in the coming months and will be based on the already identified areas for improvement, along with any other arising areas, locally or nationally, for improvement.
- 3.8 The completion of a national self-evaluation tool for the implementation of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 will be submitted to Scottish Government in October 2023. In anticipation of inspection, the self-evaluation will support the identification of any areas requiring further improvement, and the measures required to address these.
- 3.9 Feedback from our Care Inspectorate Link Inspector, who attends CPC meetings, continues to reflect very positively on the work of the partnership.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	No significant risks identified			
<b>Compliance</b>	No significant risks identified			
<b>Operational</b>	Required improvements and developments in practice are not identified and actioned.	Children, young people, their families and the professional workforce can be assured that services in Aberdeen City are continually appraised in order to improve the quality of locally delivered services.	M	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	No significant risks identified			
<b>Reputational</b>	Organisational failings in relation to child protection can bring significant media interest and scrutiny of services delivered to children and young people.	The public can be assured that: the Council ensures compliance with legal requirements, national standards and guidance; partners respond to self and external scrutiny; and identified areas for improvement are addressed.	M	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No significant risks identified			

## 8. OUTCOMES

<b>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>

<p><b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></a></p>	<p>The work of the CPC is aligned to other strategic partnerships, namely the Children’s Services Board, Violence Against Women Partnership, Alcohol and Drug Partnership, and the Adult Protection Committee, whose aims are aligned collectively to the Council Delivery Plan 23/24 and the Working in Partnership for Aberdeen Policy Statement.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u></a></p>	
<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The functions of the CPC are central to supporting and assuring that the multi agency Children’s Services partners deliver on the outcomes of the LOIP – Prosperous People (Children and Young People) Stretch Outcomes 4 to 9 and to ensure our children are safe from harm. Children, young people and families who are adequately protected from threats to their health, safety and economic wellbeing are more likely to prosper than those who are not.</p>
<p><b>Regional and City Strategies</b></p>	<p>The work of the CPC is relevant to Aberdeen City Council Delivery Plan, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, the Children’s Services Plan and the Child Protection Improvement Programme.</p>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<p><b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b></p>	<p>It is confirmed by Chief Officer, Graeme Simpson, that no Integrated Impact Assessment is required.</p>
<p><b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b></p>	<p>Not required for this report</p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<p>Not required for this report</p>

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee Annual Report 2022 – 2023

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

<p><b>Name</b></p>	<p>Amy Anderson</p>
<p><b>Title</b></p>	<p>CPC Lead Officer</p>
<p><b>Email Address</b></p>	<p>AmyAnderson@aberdeencity.gov.uk</p>

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# Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee

Annual report 22/23



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## Preface from Chief Officers

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This is the ninth annual report of the Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee providing a progress update and an overview of the child protection improvement activity throughout 2022/2023 ensuring that all children in Aberdeen are safeguarded and protected from harm and abuse is taken very seriously by all involved.

Fundamental to the CPC functions and effectiveness is multi agency working, ensuring the protection and safety of Aberdeen City's children and young people.

Evidence of the strong relationships and collaboration across the partnership are threaded throughout this report, with a significant activity to implement the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM), recognised as good practice by colleagues across Scotland.

The commitment of all agencies' to understand the child protection concerns which arise in our City is commendable along with the appetite to making improvements together to address these.

The CPC achievements highlighted in this report illustrate the positive steps we have taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our vulnerable children and young people.

We are delighted to endorse this report and look forward to a challenging, but rewarding, year ahead.



Angela Scott  
*Chief Executive*  
*Aberdeen City Council*



Caroline Hiscox  
*Chief Executive*  
*NHS Grampian*



Graeme Mackie  
*Divisional Commander*  
*Police Scotland*



## Introduction from Independent Chair

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**I am pleased to bring you the ninth annual report for the Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee.**

The CPC is a key local body for developing, implementing, and improving child protection strategy across the City and beyond. The CPC performs several crucial functions to jointly identify and manage the risk to children and young people. It also ensures the functions are carried out to a high standard and are aligned to national strategies such as Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). Local delivery however can only be provided through strong partnership working right across our communities.

The past year has seen significant challenges, particularly in relation to the economic crisis and the many associated issues, not least child poverty. Notwithstanding these challenges the CPC has remained steadfast in our determination to ensure that all children and young people remain safe across Aberdeen City. This can be evidenced, in part through the key outcomes section of this report which shows our commitment to ongoing continuous improvement to deliver better outcomes for children and young people.

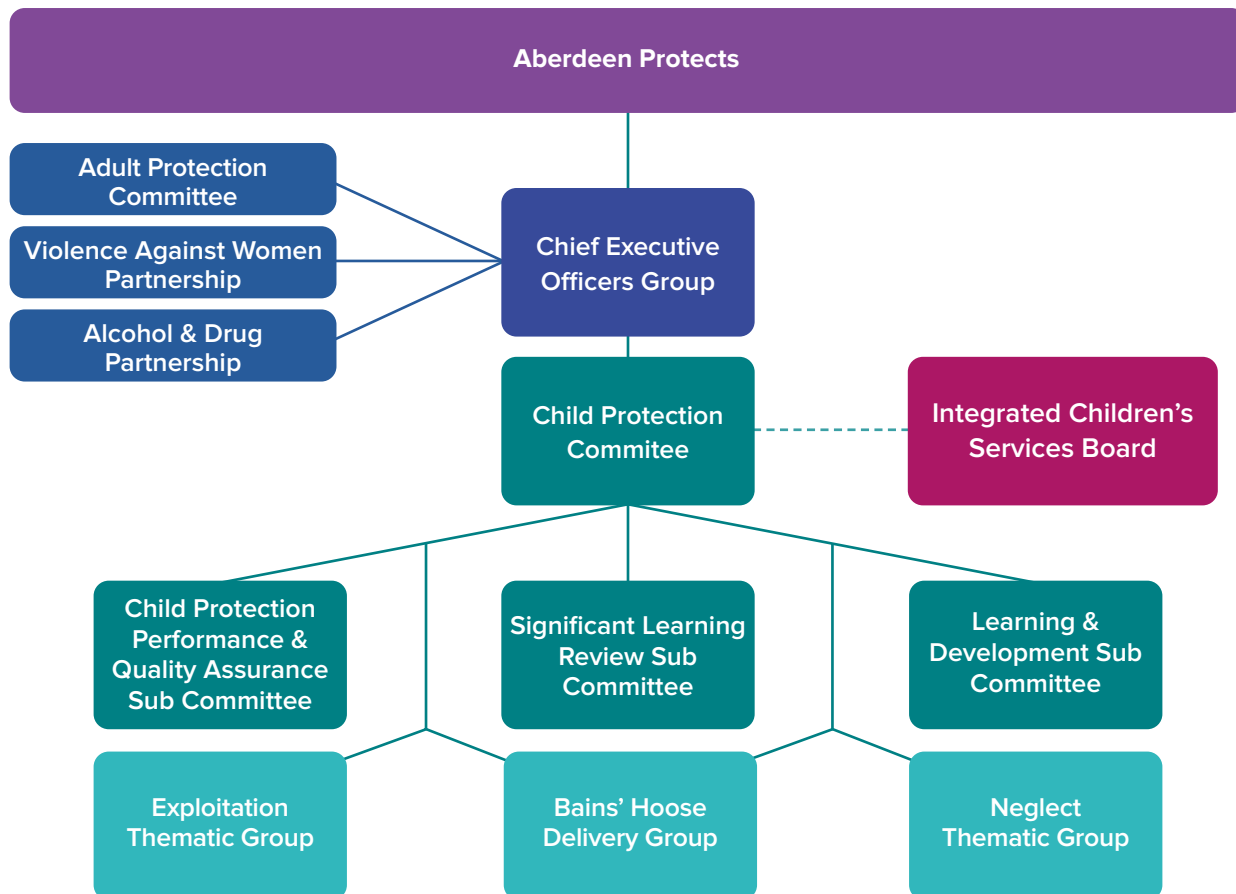
I would wish to take the opportunity to sincerely thank everyone across the partnership, both statutory and voluntary, who amid the challenges faced, strive selflessly to keep children and young people safe. I would also wish to thank Amy Anderson, our CPC Lead Officer for her significant contribution to the work of the CPC over the past year.

Although the report reflects our performance over the past year it is important, we continue to move forward. Ongoing self-evaluation will inform the next iteration of our Child Protection Programme which will take cognisance of many of the national workstreams such as GIRFEC, The Promise and Bairns' Hoose. In addition, local cross cutting work is also ongoing to provide improved alignment between all the strands of Public Protection to ensure we collectively strive to make the City a better place for all.

Campbell Thomson QPM  
*Independent Chair of Child Protection Committee*

# CPC Leadership & Management

The CPC structure for 2022/2023 can be found below



## Leadership

The Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee (CPC) is the key local body responsible for implementing and improving child protection strategy across and between agencies, bodies and the Aberdeen community. The CPC has a crucial role in identifying and managing risk to children and young people, monitoring and improving performance and promoting the ethos that, “It’s everyone’s job to make sure I’m alright.” Its role, local structures and membership, provide leadership and direction for the management of child protection services across Aberdeen City.

As illustrated above, the CPC is governed by the Chief Officers Group (COG) who have clear responsibilities set out in the [Protecting children and young people: Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer responsibilities guidance](#) published by the Scottish Government in February 2019.

The Aberdeen City COG is well established as is the relationship between the COG and CPC. The structure also illustrates the connectedness through the COG of the CPC with the other strategic partnerships in the City, namely APC, VAWP, and ADP, all working together under the banner of Aberdeen Protects to take forward child protection policy and practice across the local area and across Scotland.

## CPC Management and Strategic Links

The CPC adheres to the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#), and progress to full implementation is covered within this report. The CPC fulfils its core functions through this structure and the multi-agency Child Protection Programme 2021-2024, which is covered in this report.

The CPC benefits from an Independent Chair who also chairs the Adult Protection Committee, bringing alignment to processes to systems and processes, along with senior representatives from partnership agencies across Aberdeen.

The CPC meets four times a year to discuss data, learning, national policy and business of continuous improvement. In addition to CPC business meetings, two CPC development sessions are held each year attended by members of the sub committees and thematic groups. In 2022/2023, the development sessions focused on new multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation guidance, a Neglect resource toolkit, input from the Care Inspectorate and the refreshed Quality Framework For Children & Young People in Need of Care and Protection, and learning from national inspection reports.

Aberdeen City COG, comprising the statutory agencies (ACC, NHS and Police Scotland), determine the budget and resource for the ongoing work of the City CPC. This is required to meet staff costs, anticipated local expenditure to carry out the child protection work which includes learning reviews, priorities identified

in this report and the CP Programme 2021-2024, and commissioned Learning and Development training from Aberlour. The staffing complement for Aberdeen City CPC is the Independent Chair, Lead Officer, and multi-agency Learning & Development coordinator.

The Child Protection Partnership (CPP) is a North East partnership consisting of the three Lead Officers from Aberdeen City CPC, Moray CPC, and Aberdeenshire CPC. The primary activity for the CPP is the management of the North East Child Protection Register. Activities and staffing costs are funded by Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Moray Council, NHS Grampian and Police Scotland.

Out with the North East of Scotland, the CPC has broader strategic links with the Care Inspectorate, Central & North Scotland CPC Consortium, Scottish Government, and CPCScotland to help inform our continuous improvement planning.

## Summary of activity in 2022/2023

Over the course of the year the CPC, and all those working across the partnership, have worked towards delivering on the many initiatives and improvements **striving to make sure children and young people are alright.**

[Implementation of the Scottish Child Interview Model](#)

[Implementation of refreshed categories of concern for children whose names are placed on the Child Protection Register](#)

[Implementation of the National Minimum Data Set v2](#)

[Neglect Resource Toolkit](#)

[New Multi-Agency Child Sexual Exploitation Guidance](#)

[Multi-Agency Harmful Sexual Behaviour training](#)

[Implementation of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#)

[Refreshed Multi-Agency Quality Assurance Framework](#)

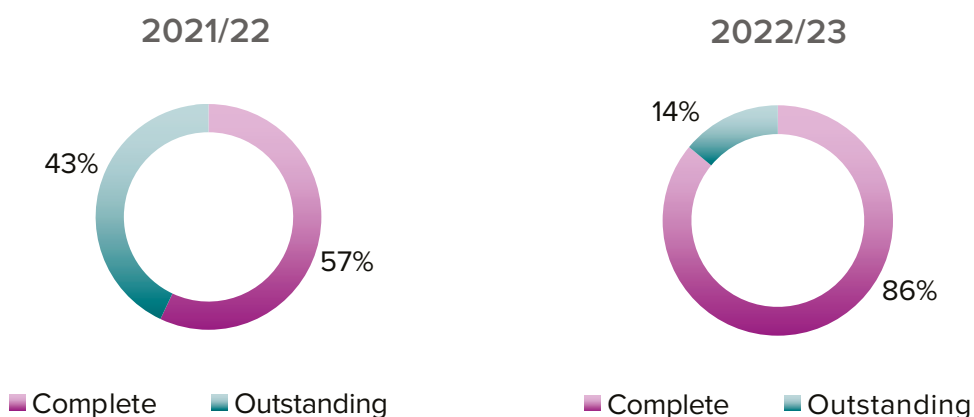
[Reflective Discussions](#)

[Childrens' Services Plan 2023/2026](#)

[Planning for a Bairns' Hoose](#)



## Delivery on Child Protection Improvement Plan 2021/2024 (Appendix 1)



## Sub Committees & Thematic Groups

Sub Committees and Thematic Groups are multi agency in representation and have met regularly through 2022/2023, with each delivering on specific improvement priorities.

### Performance & Quality Assurance Sub Committee (P&QA)

The P&QA Sub Committee provide and present quarterly data and scrutiny reports to the CPC. The reports consist of a number of indicators provided by Celcis to support our analysis. In November 2022, the CPC adopted version 2 of the National Minimum Dataset, in addition to additional indicators that are relevant to Aberdeen City. The data and scrutiny reports help us identify emerging areas of Child Protection that the CPC need to focus on. The data helps illustrate the Child Protection landscape in Aberdeen City (Appendix 2).

Overseen by the P&QA sub-committee, the CPC initiated a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) audit in March 2023. The purpose of this audit was:

**‘To review the circumstances whereby children within Aberdeen City are referred to Services on the grounds of Physical Abuse’.**

The findings and recommendations from this audit will be presented at the Autumn 2023 CPC development session.

### Significant Learning Review Sub Committee (SLR)

The SLR Sub Committee are mandated by the CPC to consider and carry out Learning Reviews on its behalf.

The SLR Sub Committee adhere to the [National Guidance for CPC’s undertaking Learning Reviews](#). Decisions regarding any cases considered for review are reported to the CPC and the COG for final ratification.

Initial notifications for a Learning Review have been considered over the course of the year where the CPC decided not to proceed to a Learning Review, but instructed the L&D Sub Committee to plan and deliver an Learning Event focusing on Parental Substance Use and Safe Sleep. The event is scheduled to take place in Autumn 2023.

The SLR Sub Committee continue to consider national Learning Reviews where learning from other areas in Scotland are considered through a local lens, and any areas identified are taken forward.

Where the criteria is not met for a Learning Review, but learning can still be derived from a case, other [Aberdeen City Review Processes](#) can be utilised.



## Sub Committees & Thematic Groups (Continued)

### Learning & Development Sub Committee (L&D)

The role of the L&D sub committee is to identify and address areas where multi agency child protection learning will benefit professional's practice across Aberdeen City and help improve outcomes for children and young people. The L&D coordinator, in partnership with Aberlour, has designed, developed and is now delivering the fourth annual L&D calendar to the multi agency workforce across Aberdeen City.



# 62

training sessions were  
delivered in 2022/2023



# 770

people attended training  
sessions across the partnership

In March 2023, the L&D Sub Committee held a launch event to introduce the newest module training module, Harmful Sexual Behaviour. The event also showcased the L&D training offer. The event was attended virtually by over 100 professionals across the partnership.

[The CPC's Learning & Development Annual Report](#) fully illustrates the L&D activity over the year.

### Neglect Thematic Group

The Neglect thematic group presented the [Neglect Resource Toolkit](#) at the CPC Development Session in February 2023. The toolkit provides a suite of resources to support practitioners in their work with families where there is neglect. Feedback suggested that the toolkit will be a valuable resource. The Neglect thematic group will continue to develop and raise awareness of the resource, in addition to evaluating the effectiveness of it in practice.

### Exploitation Thematic Group

The Exploitation thematic group developed and introduced the [Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation](#) Guidance in June 2023, the first in Scotland. A video of the launch can be found [here](#). The Exploitation thematic group will monitor the implementation of the guidance and review accordingly.



## Scottish Child Interview Model & Bairns' Hoose

### Implementation of the Scottish Child Interview Model

In response to Scotland's commitment to implementation of a Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) for all children who are victims of, or witness to abuse or neglect, over the year, the partnership have worked alongside colleagues from Aberdeenshire and Moray in preparation for a North East roll out of this model.

The North East SCIM team went live in November 2022.

Since implementation, the SCIM team have undertaken 91% of children who have required to be interviewed, greatly exceeding the initial commitment to undertake 60% of all Joint Investigative Interviews that have taken place.

A disclosure was made where a child had been a victim of physical assault by their father. The child has a disability and is non-verbal and would have found it difficult to engage in a joint interview. It was agreed at IRD, that the child should be interviewed under SCIM. The SCIM interviewers spent 2 days planning and observing the child in school, their speech therapist and teacher created an individual protocol with the interviewers to meet their child's needs.

The child was able to fully participate in the interview over a 2 day period, supported by their PSA. It was clear, from evaluation of the interview, that the interviewers had a sound understanding and the child was able to share their views, something they had never had previously.

### Bairns' Hoose Delivery Group

In October 2022, the CPC provided a multi-agency response to the draft Bairns' Hoose Standards consultation whereby members endorsed the aspirational standards, child centric approach, and believe that the co-location of services through a Bairns' Hoose will be a critical part of our Family Support Model.

The CPC's response to the draft standards was further enhanced by a visit to a potential site for a local Bairns' Hoose allowing members to envisage how the standards could be delivered upon. The consultation phase provided an appetite to continue the conversation of a Bairns' Hoose in Aberdeen City and as a result a Bairns' Hoose Delivery Group was established in March 2023.

This group will have responsibility for the planning, implementation, and delivery of a local Bairns' Hoose to provide children and young people in Aberdeen City, who have been victims or witnesses to abuse or violence, as well as children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused significant harm/abuse access to trauma-informed recovery, support and justice.

Aberdeen City intend to submit an application in Summer 2023 to become a Bairns' Hoose Pathfinder.





## Capacity for Improvement National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021

Since the publication of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021, replacing the 2014 publication, the CPC have been actively evaluating and implementing the changes identified in the new guidance, much of these are threaded throughout this report. Undoubtedly there is still work to be done to implement some of the changes which require a national steer. Areas which are not fully implemented will inform our CPC Child Protection Improvement Plan 2024/2026. It is fully recognised that the changes need time to embed before we can fully evaluate the impact on improving outcomes for children and young people.

### Additional areas of focus over 2023/2024

The CPC will focus on the below areas over the course of 2023/2024 and beyond, informing our improvement plan for 2024/2026:

Planning of a Bairns' Hoose, building upon the learning from the implementation of SCIM and the benefits of integration and co-location.

Adapting to workforce pressures by reviewing and re-designing the way we deliver multi agency child protection training, meeting the needs of practitioners' capacity.

Understanding the full extent of parental substance use, specifically cannabis, on children and young people

Ensuring our workforce understand the impact of children growing up in poverty and the negative outcomes associated with poverty.

Our Corporate Parenting and Children's Services Plans recognise there is more we need to do to enable children and young people to stay with their families where possible. Improvement work, aligned to the CS Plan, is focused on ensuring effective whole family support that mitigates the need for children to escalate into child protection as well as enhancing multi-agency support to kinship carers to mitigate the risk of children being placed out with their family.

Coordination of Aberdeen City's public protection fora for greater interface of child protection with other strategic partnerships such as adult protection and violence against women partnerships.

**#KeepthePromise** by embedding a rights-respecting approach ensuring that rights of the child, their needs and their voice is at the centre of decisions about what is best for them.

## Impact on Children & Young People

### To what extent are we meeting the needs of children & young people in need of care and protection in Aberdeen City?

Aberdeen City's CPC has a mature multi-agency data and performance dashboard. Feedback from the Scottish Government & CELCIS reports very positively on this data suite. Our data enables all partners to identify trends and adjust service provision appropriately.

Aberdeen City along with Police Scotland successfully rolled out SCIM in November 2022. Our approach to rolling this out has been held up as good practice by the National SCIM Team. Currently circa 90% of child protection interviews are undertaken utilising the SCIM approach. We aim to convene an IRD for all children where there are child protection concerns within 2 hours. There is a strong commitment from all partners to deliver this aim and our data tells us the right children are being referred to CPPM's for consideration of registration.

Utilising quantitative and qualitative data, including learning from case reviews, the CPC's Improvement Programme coordinates a range activity to ensure children and young people are safe.

Work developed by the thematic groups and our learning from multi agency audits tells us that our workforce are much more informed and skilled when identifying neglect, working with children with disabilities and spotting the signs of child sexual exploitation.

Early and preventative support is at the heart of Aberdeen City's refreshed [Children's Services Plan 2023–26](#). This reflects the commitment of our partnership, to early, preventative, and sustainable support to scaffold children, young people and families to mitigate the need for child protection registration or statutory intervention. This is in keeping with The Promise and the recommendations of the Children's Hearing System Review.

Our Fit Like, whole family wellbeing service, which has been evaluated positively by the Scottish Governments Mental Health Collaborative, provides early and effective support to families to mitigate the need for social work of CAMHS intervention. Since November 2020 the Fit Like service has supported 1043 families with an increasing percentage of self-referrals (over 10%). There is clear evidence that engagement with the service realises:

- Parents feeling supported to manage their anxieties and worries
- Parents/carers and children feeling listened to and heard
- Strengthened family relationships
- Improved child mental health and wellbeing.

Those accessing the service tell us that it feels like a bespoke service and unlike other supports has 'felt right'. Operating on a 'family first' principle, families set their own priorities and explore with staff how these are to be met. This model of delivery will be at the heart our Family Support Model.

## Calendar of CPC business in 2023/2024

The table below illustrates the CPC events in the calendar (as of August 2023) for the forthcoming year

August 2023	September 2023	October 2023
Bairns' Hoose Pathfinder Application	CPC Development Session Grampian Learning Event – Parental Substance Use & Safe Sleep Grampian Learning Event – Parental Substance Use & Safe Sleep	CPC Business Meeting Self Evaluation of National Guidance submission to Scottish Government Bairns' Hoose Pathfinders announced
November 2023	December 2023	January 2024
	CPC Business Meeting	
February 2024	March 2024	April 2024
CPC Development Session • Draft CP Programme 2024/26 • CPC Risk Register	CPC Business Meeting	
May 2024	June 2024	July 2024
	CPC Business Meeting	End of CP Programme 2021/24

### Report Authour

Amy Anderson

*Aberdeen City CPC Lead Officer*





# Services for Children and Young People in Aberdeen City

## Child Protection Programme August 2021 – July 2024

### Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee

Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee (CPC) is a multi-agency strategic partnership governed by the Chief Executive Officers of Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian and the Police Commander for the area. It is committed to providing individual and collective leadership and direction for the management of child protection services in the Aberdeen City area. Improvements are driven through the Child Protection Programme.

The CPC works alongside Integrated Children's Services in Aberdeen to ensure that improvement areas are aligned. In this way we ensure the best and most effective use of resources. The CPC also aims to work collaboratively with other strategic partnerships in the City such as the Children's Services Board, Aberdeen Violence Against Women Partnership (particularly in relation to child protection and domestic abuse), Adult Protection Committee, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

Improvement activity is reported to and monitored by the CPC through its connected sub committees which are; the Significant Learning Review, the Performance & Quality Assurance, and the Learning & Development sub committees. The CPC produces an Annual Report which is made widely available across agencies and demonstrates the work of the CPC through these connected structures. This programme has been developed taking into account the Promise with the first plan from 2021 – 2024 and the revised national guidance published during 2021.

## Child Protection Programme: 2021 – 2024

### Our Aims

The Child Protection Programme aims to improve the safety, wellbeing and life chances of vulnerable children and young people. As a partnership we achieve this by

- recognising and responding when children and young people need protection
- helping children and young people stay safe, healthy and, for those who have experienced abuse and neglect, to recover from their experiences and
- providing strong and effective collaborative leadership to deliver the Child Protection Programme
- ensuring the CPC is ready to adapt and adjust as required to both local and national developments

### Our Priorities in the Programme 2021 – 2024

- Child Protection and Disability
- Neglect
- Exploitation and Missing Children
- Child Protection and Domestic Abuse
- Revised National Guidance for Child Protection & Learning Reviews 2021
- Listening to Children, Young people, and their families and hearing their voice in our processes and Policy and Guidance
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (including Female Genital Mutilation, Ethnicity, Gender Identity, Prevent, Forced Marriage) in the field of Child Protection

**The Child Protection Programme includes the improvement activity identified by:**

- Local self-evaluation through data analysis, case file auditing and the collaboration of multi agency professionals in the City,
- National initiatives driven by legislation and other Scottish Government priorities and
- Local priorities identified in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

This programme will be delivered on a phased basis, building on the trauma informed and strength based practice approaches used across the City. All improvement priorities are a multi-agency responsibility and sit collectively with the agencies and members of the CPC. This will ensure and support the embedding of improvements in practice as well as realistically enabling the CPC to deliver on the programme with the resources available. It is acknowledged that, whilst this is a comprehensive programme, it requires to be sufficiently flexible to be adjusted as needs arise, such as from the findings of case reviews, audits, joint inspections as well as developing areas identified in the LOIP or by Integrated Children's Services.



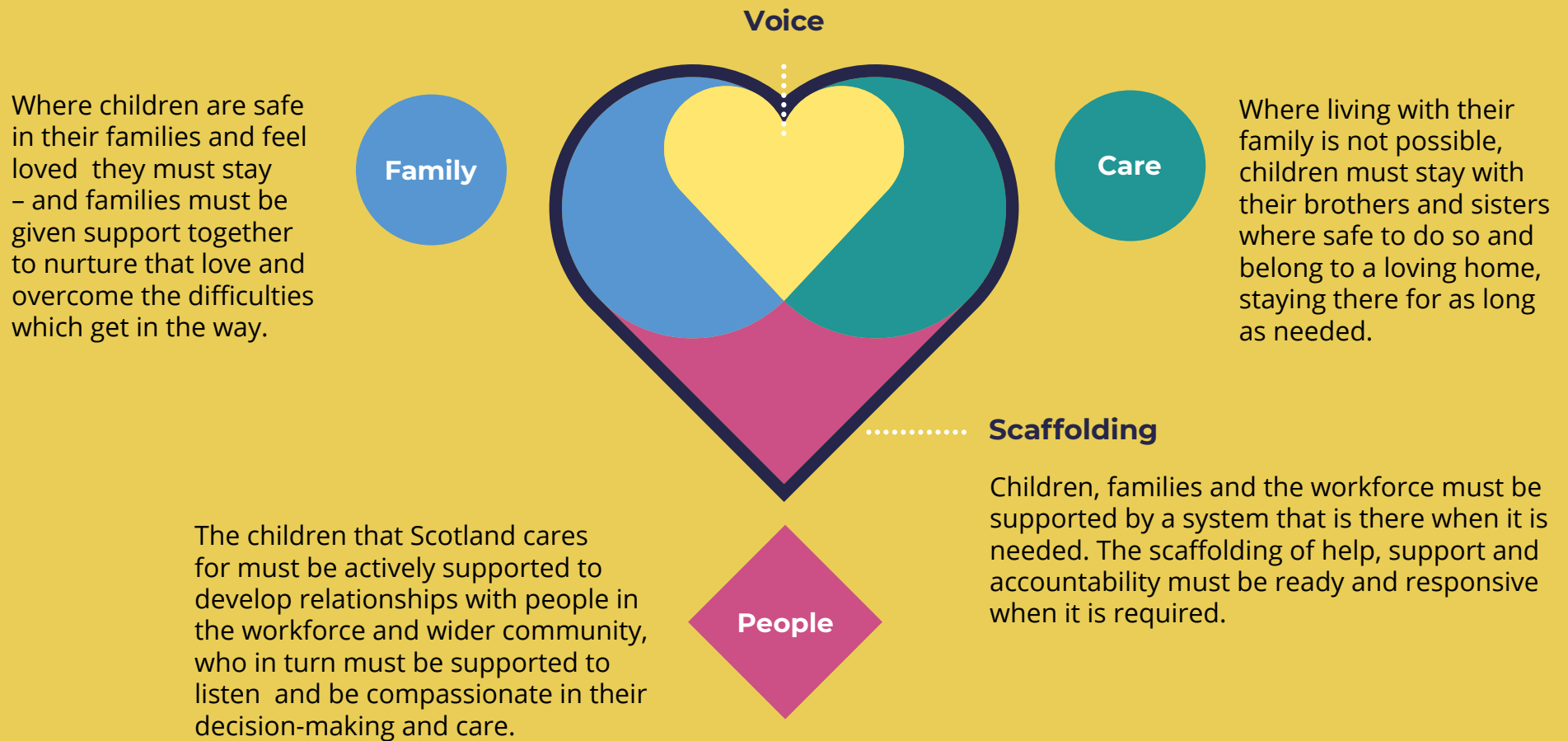
In delivery of this programme the CPC directly supports the LOIP, and in particular stretch outcomes 4, 5, and 8 with the following key drivers:

- 4.1 Ensuring that families receive the parenting and family support they need
- 4.2 Keeping young children safe
- 5.2 Increasing children's knowledge and understanding of their own physical and mental wellbeing and take an early intervention and prevention approach
- 8.2 Ensuring that children and young people receive accessible information and opportunities to engage and participate in decision making

Priorities	2021/22				2022/23				2023/24			
	Q1 <i>Aug-Oct</i>	Q2 <i>Nov-Jan</i>	Q3 <i>Feb-Apr</i>	Q4 <i>May-July</i>	Q1 <i>Aug-Oct</i>	Q2 <i>Nov-Jan</i>	Q3 <i>Feb-Apr</i>	Q4 <i>May-July</i>	Q1 <i>Aug-Oct</i>	Q2 <i>Nov-Jan</i>	Q3 <i>Feb-Apr</i>	Q4 <i>May-July</i>
Child Protection and Disability												
Neglect												
Exploitation and Missing Children												
Child Protection and Domestic Abuse												
Revised National Guidance for Child Protection & Learning Reviews 2021												
Listening to Children, Young people, and their families and hearing their voice in our processes and Policy and Guidance												
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (including Female Genital Mutilation, Ethnicity, Gender Identity, Prevent, Forced Marriage) in the field of Child Protection												

# The five foundations 'the promise' is built on

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





## ABERDEEN CITY CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE PROGRESS TRACKER - CP PROGRAMME 2021-2024

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	How will we know?	To be completed by	Progress RAG July 2022	July 2022 Update	Progress RAG July 2023	July 2023 Update
<b>Child Protection and Disability</b>	Develop and deliver a comprehensive multi agency training package to increase workforce confidence and knowledge	Consult and work with specialist teams and national colleagues to develop this comprehensive package to ensure it meets workforce needs	This package will be benchmarked, quality assured, and reviewed through well established procedures already in place through the L&D sub committee	Jul-23		Child Protection and Disability module launched August 2021		Child Protection and Disability module launched August 2021
			Effective data recording and analysis of IRD and CPPMs through quarterly data and scrutiny reports			Reported quarterly to CPC		Child Protection and Disability module launched August 2021
			QAF audit to investigate how well we engage and support children and families affected by disability			QAF Audit - February 2022		QAF Audit - February 2022
<b>Neglect</b>	Ensure the recommendations from the 2021 joint multi agency neglect audit are embedded in practice	Re-establish the multi agency neglect thematic group to progress the recommendations	Adherence to the multi agency guidance and thorough analysis of the neglect data from quarterly data and scrutiny reports	Jan-23		Reported quarterly to CPC		Reported quarterly to CPC
		Develop and implement the multi agency reflective discussions guidance	Review of the multi agency reflective discussion guidance			Developed and launched in February 2022		Developed and launched in February 2022
		Consider the need for a specific neglect toolkit for the multi agency workforce				In development		Local toolkit developed and published on Aberdeen Protects. Further evaluation required for Neglect assessment tool
<b>Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion</b>	Work in partnership with the VAWP to improve the multi agency recognition and response to equality, diversity and inclusion from a child protection perspective. This includes: FGM, Gender Identity Prevent, Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage the field of child Protection	Ascertain the local statistical picture in comparison to national data in relation to the various issues identified by Supporting the VAWP in the creation and development of a Performance Framework.	Subsequent Data and Scrutiny reports will identify reported cases where FGM, Gender Identity, Prevent, Honour Based Abuse, and Forced Marriage are considered and help identify areas for improvement and good practice.	Jul-24		CPC interfacing with VAWP in relation to the development and reporting of relevant dataset.		Through the Public Protection Leads group, data and scrutiny reports from VAWP will be shared with PGA for consideration.
		Multi agency training to be developed for staff in relation to these themes and quality assurance measures put in place to measure impact on staff confidence and practice				Digital training modules are available as part of the routine CP L&D programme		Digital training modules are available as part of the routine CP L&D programme
		Multi agency policy and guidance is developed, where required, and followed equally and consistently for all children and young people regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion or background				National Guidance has been adopted by CPC and is available on Aberdeen Protects		National Guidance has been adopted by CPC and is available on Aberdeen Protects

## ABERDEEN CITY CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE PROGRESS TRACKER - CP PROGRAMME 2021-2024

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	How will we know?	To be completed by	Progress RAG July 2022	July 2022 Update	Progress RAG July 2023	July 2023 Update
<b>Domestic Abuse</b>	Implement a whole system approach across the City and support the delivery and embedding of the Safe and Together model alongside the Violence Against Women partnership	Delivering the Safe and Together model to multi agency staff and ensuring the CPC multi agency L&D coordinators is supported in the 'train the trainers' approach to ensure consistency	Established quality assurance processes through the QAF and multi agency training calendar	Jul-24	Yellow	Expected March 2023	Yellow	The Safe & Together Train the Trainer course is now expected September 2023, The Multi Agency L&D Coordinator has been accepted on to this course, and once trained will be able to deliver the Safe & Together training to the multi agency workforce.
		Key strategic posts identified and resourced to ensure; that an Equally Safe lens has been applied to policy and guidance; a Whole Family Approach is taken in relation to domestic abuse and a Whole Systems Approach is taken to address the needs of young people involved in offending; and by commissioning Cybersafe Scotland to carry out a needs-based assessment before providing direct support to protect children, young people and families	Equally safe outcomes become a part of our policy and guidance and quarterly updates from the VAWP and Cybersafe in relation to the engagement with children and their families (including perpetrators and survivors) in a consistent, multi-agency approach which demonstrates the support individuals and families receive to make positive, long term changes. As this progresses, it will also be visible and demonstrated through the CPC data and scrutiny reports		Yellow	CPC receives progress updates from VAWP and Cybersafe Scotland	Green	In July 2023, a Development Officer for Public Protection was recruited. The Development Officer will scrutinise key strategies across the public protection landscape, with an Equally Safe lens.
<b>Meaningful and purposeful engagement of children, young people, and their families in our child protection processes</b>	Building on the trauma informed and strength based practice approaches already embedded the CPC will ensure that children and their families have their say in decisions about them and are engaged with appropriately when they are involved in child protection processes	IRDs and CPPMs will make relevant referrals for advocacy and actively engage with the children's rights service to ensure the rights and views of children and their families are kept central and are fundamental to these processes	The referrals for advocacy and to the children's rights service will increase and IRDs and CPPMs will be able to evidence this via their revised documentation	Jul-24	Green	IRD process & documentation revised to prompt appropriate referrals to advocacy and children's rights service. Gathering of data is in development.	Green	IRD process & documentation revised to prompt appropriate referrals to advocacy and children's rights service. Gathering of data is in development.
		The implementation of the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM)	The establishment of a performance framework and quality assurance process of SCIM which will include the experiences of families and children to inform ongoing improvement		Yellow	Expected November 2022	Green	SCIM implemented November 2022
		The creation of a children and families consultation group working in partnership with the APC, VAWP, ADP, CSB, Community and Youth Justice	The views and feedback from children and families will help shape and improve the policy and guidance produced for multi agency staff to ensure it is family friendly and meets the needs of our most vulnerable children and families		Yellow	The expectations of The Promise require the voice of children and families to be at the heart of all processes. CPC and all partners have adopted this approach and will continue to monitor impact.	Green	Bairns' Hoose reference group established in 2023
		The Mind Of My Own app, already an essential component of the approach to supporting digital inclusion and training, will continue to be shared across the partnership for wider support in championing this opportunity for young people as well as for consideration of wider roll-out.	Direct feedback from children via the Mind of My Own app		Green	MOMO app is utilised well across the City. Data from MOMO is reported to CSB.	Green	MOMO app is utilised well across the City. Data from MOMO is reported to CSB.
		Support the Write Right about Me Project to: - ask children and their families to provide feedback about how we represent their voices, in their records - ask children and their families to provide feedback on how they have found accessing their records - create opportunities for collaboration in decision making when planning to meet children's needs	Standards for good recording will be developed that will be widely adhered to across the partnership as evidenced in quality assurance audits		Yellow	This supports the implementation of The Promise and is reported to the CSB. The CPC will expect to see the impact in future QAF audits and case reviews.	Yellow	The WRAM working group continue to develop initiatives to encourage practitioners to re-frame how they write, ensuring the child's voice is heard. An e-module is in development and progress reported to the CSB & CPC accordingly.

## ABERDEEN CITY CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE PROGRESS TRACKER - CP PROGRAMME 2021-2024

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	How will we know?	To be completed by	Progress RAG July 2022	July 2022 Update	Progress RAG July 2023	July 2023 Update
<b>Quality Assurance Framework</b>	Develop and implement the updated QAF in partnership with the CSB. This will comprise of one annual CPC only audit and one annual joint audit with the CSB on relevant and connected priorities	The CPC will identify multi agency staff to carry out and take part in these audits. Auditors will be trained accordingly using the established QAF process. This process will result in the CPC being presented with the final report from each audit with recommendations as required	The CPC will response to, and address, the recommendations from each audit and ensure these recommendations are disseminated and embedded in practice updates as required. This will be carried out through the sub committee and thematic groups structures associated to the CPC	Jul-24		QAF has become well established and the processes around routine audits is well established. Remits are authored by the CPC & CSB. Findings are reported to CPC & CSB and implementation of recommendations are monitored by CPC & CSB.		QAF has become well established and the processes around routine audits is well established. Remits are authored by the CPC & CSB. Findings are reported to CPC & CSB and implementation of recommendations are monitored by CPC & CSB.
<b>National Guidance</b>	Consider the revised national guidance for child protection and learning reviews and ensure any changes that are required are put in place to help support and improve practice	The CPC will consider the revised national guidance for child protection at the appropriate local CPC development day(s) and supporting national forums to provide a summary report to COG in relation to the key changes from the 2014 guidance and how this will be applied locally	Any changes or amendments required to local policy, guidance, or practice will be updated and evidenced accordingly in those areas. These updates will be provided to the CPC and monitored through established quality assurance processes	Sep-23		In depth self-evaluation was undertaken. CPC have commenced implementation of identified changes and expect to have completed within timeframe (September 2023).		Full self-evaluation of implementation due for submission to Scottish Government in October 2023
		The SLR sub committee will ensure that three routes for case reviews are established; multi agency reflective discussions, practice reviews through the CSB, and significant learning reviews. These will be supported by local overarching guidance which explains clearly to multi agency staff when each review process should be used and how to carry out those reviews	The overarching guidance will be provided to the CPC and monitored by the SLR sub committee. Each review and its progress will be reported either through established quality assurance processes, the CSB, or the SLR sub committee. The learning identified from these reviews will continue to support improvements to practice and inform the work of the CPC through the Child Protection Programme, the QAF, the L&D framework and associated sub committee structures			Routes for case reviews is established and outlined on Aberdeen Protects. National Guidance for SLRs has been adopted by the CPC.		
						Local guidance in relation to all 3 case review processes in development.		Reflective Discussions implemented in 2022/23. Local quality assurance of Learning Reviews agreed by SLR subcommittee.
<b>Learning &amp; Development</b>	Ensure all multi agency staff have access to relevant child protection training in line with the priorities identified in the CP Programme: - Child Protection and Disability	Develop and deliver an annual CPC multi agency training calendar, in partnership with Aberlour, which comprises of all priority areas contained in the CP Programme and any learning or improvements identified through the QAF, sub committees or thematic groups	The L&D sub committee will provide an annual multi agency L&D report to the CPC together with evidence provided through their established quality assurance processes. This will demonstrate and provide a bank of evidence which measures the impact of the training on practice and subsequently for children and families	Jul-24		2021 – July 2022 annual report is complete and outlines L&D activity throughout this period.		2021 – July 2022 annual report is complete and outlines L&D activity throughout this period.

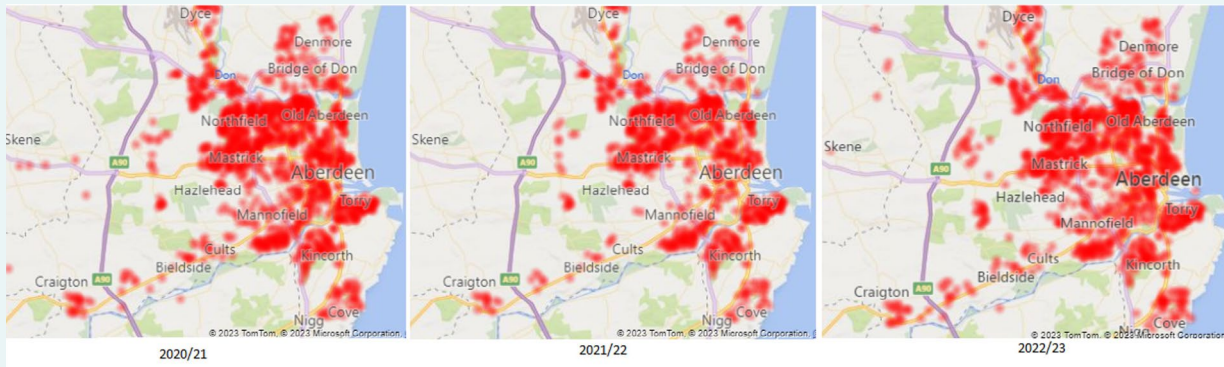
**ABERDEEN CITY CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE PROGRESS TRACKER - CP PROGRAMME 2021-2024**

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	How will we know?	To be completed by	Progress RAG July 2022	July 2022 Update	Progress RAG July 2023	July 2023 Update
<b>Multi agency interface with other strategic partnerships across Aberdeen City</b>	Throughout this programme, 2021 to 2024 (and beyond), to work collaboratively with other strategic partners in order to ensure ongoing strategic development and continuous improvement of our child protection services	Ensuring proactive engagement with national and local priorities (including national guidance, local improvement plans, and core datasets), CPC Scotland and other national groups	The creation and development of a Public Protection website bringing these key areas of business together under the COG	Jul-24	Green	Aberdeen Protects launched January 2022	Green	Aberdeen Protects launched January 2022
		Ensuring this programme is annually reviewed by CPC and approved by COG	Annual CPC development days and the annual CPC report		Green	Development sessions were held on 18/11/21 & 15/02/22. CPC annual report published on Aberdeen Protects	Green	Development sessions were held on 18/11/21 & 15/02/22. CPC annual report published on Aberdeen Protects
		Ensuring effective links with other strategic partnerships including the ADP, APC, VAWP, MAPPA, CSB, Community & Youth Justice	Membership across these strategic partnerships represented by the CPC and a Leads group set up to progress, where relevant, areas of cross over that would benefit from a collaborative approach within each of the strategic partnership priorities		Yellow	Public Protection Leads group established	Green	Public Protection Leads group established and a forum for collaborating and sharing information across the Public Protection landscape.

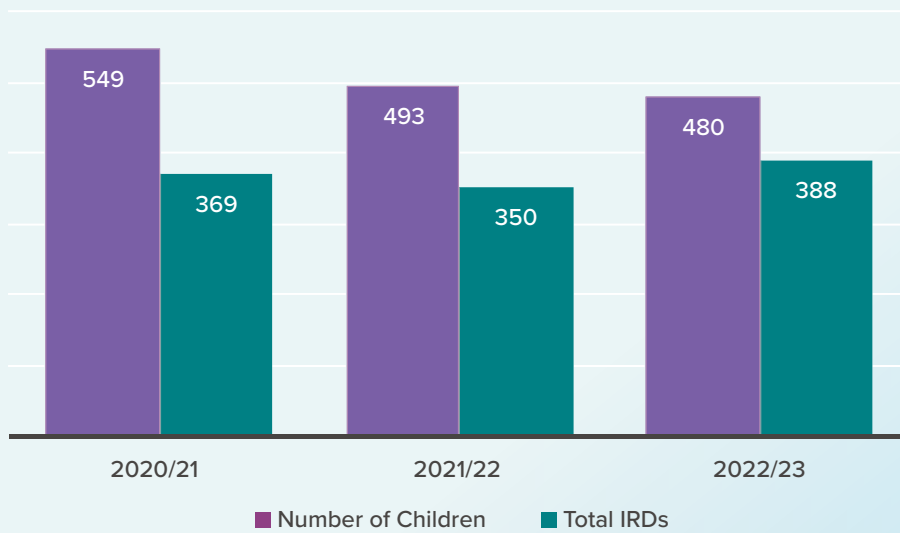
<b>Exploitation and Missing Children</b>	Raise awareness and develop a multi-agency understanding of, and response to, all forms of child exploitation and children who go missing	Develop, review, and disseminate multi agency guidance in relation to all forms of exploitation including child trafficking, sexual exploitation, and county lines	Developed or updated guidance will be presented to the CPC and disseminated on a multi agency basis. The impact of the guidance will be measured through established quality assurance processes	Jan-24	Yellow	Child Sexual Exploitation guidance expected early 2023	Green	Child Sexual Exploitation guidance published June 2023
		Improve single agency gathering and reporting of information, to support the multi-agency analysis of data in relation to all forms of child exploitation	The data and analysis provided to the P&QA sub committee from the Exploitation thematic group will be multi agency, succinct, and demonstrate the prevalence of children and young people at risk of exploitation. This information will identify gaps and highlight areas of good practice		Yellow	Ad-hoc data is received by the P&QA sub committee and reported to the CPC. Routine data reporting is in development.	Yellow	Challenges around capturing data in early stages prior to meeting thresholds for CP. Looking to Education to support this from schools systems.
		In line with the national missing persons framework, work in partnership with the Missing People charity to; improve the quality of return home discussions and their impact on children and young people, and also map the journey of children through our processes when they go missing to help identify areas that can be improved or highlighted as good practice	Journey mapping workshops for staff with the Missing People charity to help identify areas for improvement and also good practice. Specific training will be provided by the Missing People charity in relation to effective return home discussion for all missing person coordinators and champions. This will see an improvement in our engagement with children and families when children go missing and also improve our return home discussions through a supportive lens. This will be evaluated,		Green	Outcome & recommendations from journey mapping workshops reported to CPC in March 2022.	Green	Outcome & recommendations from journey mapping workshops reported to CPC in March 2022.
			monitored and its impact reported directly to the CPC.		Green	E-module (Return Discussions) available on Aberdeen Protects	Green	E-module (Return Discussions) available on Aberdeen Protects
					Yellow	Routine data reporting in relation to missing children is in development.	Green	Routine data reporting in relation to missing children is now captured and analysed in PQA.

## Statistical Information

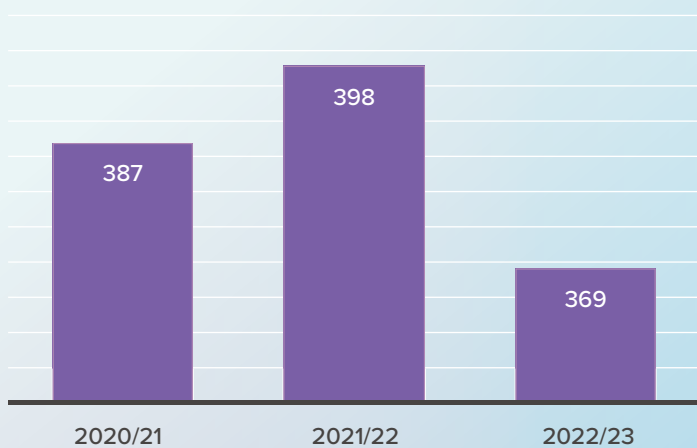
### Location of referrals to Childrens' Social Work



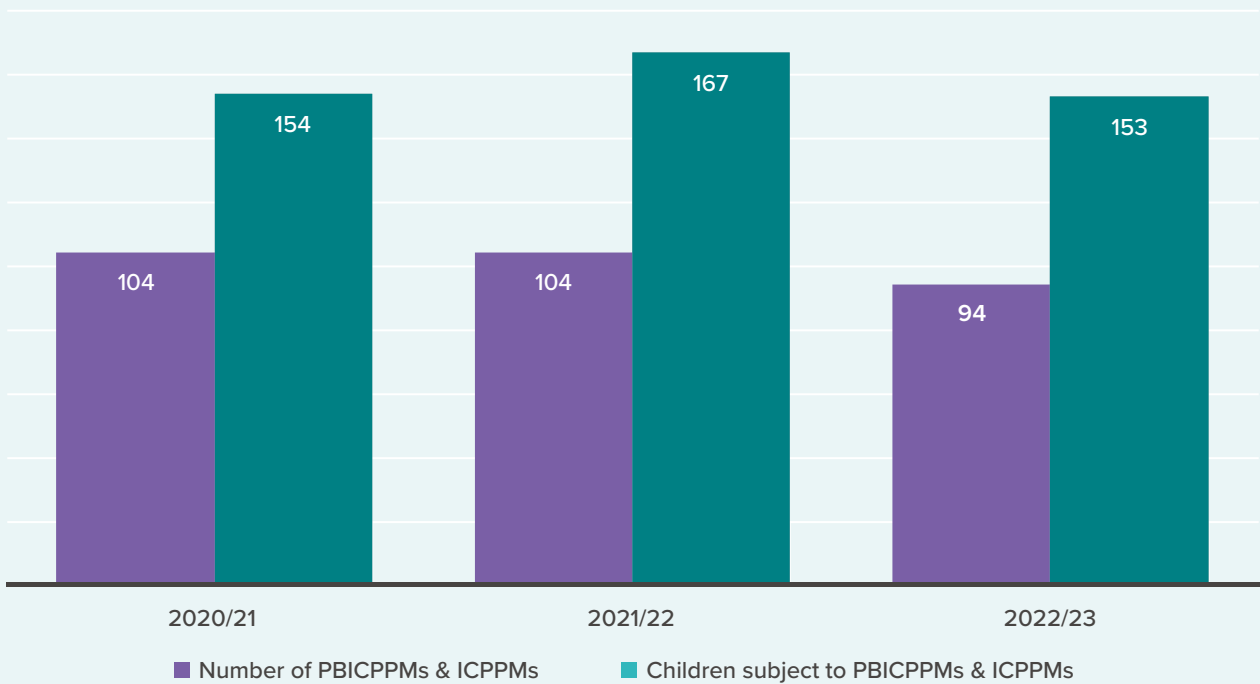
### Number of Interagency Referral Discussions (IRD)



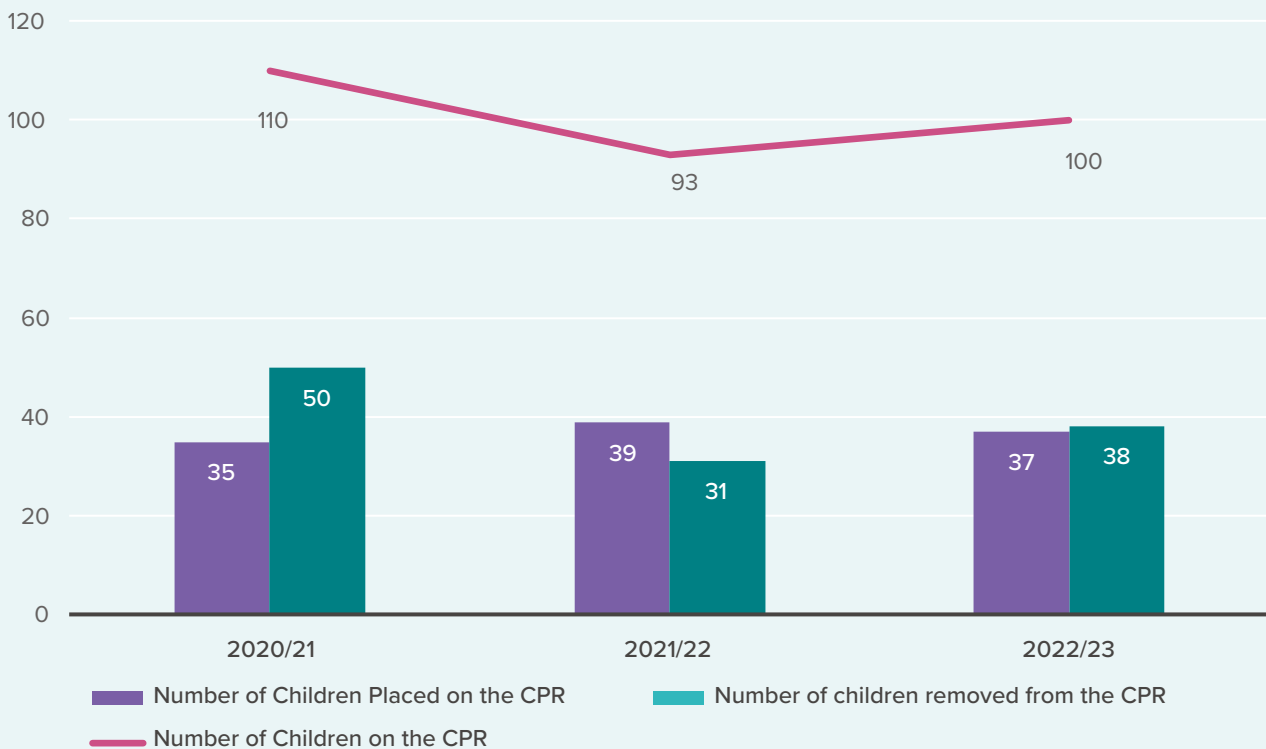
### Joint Investigative Interviews



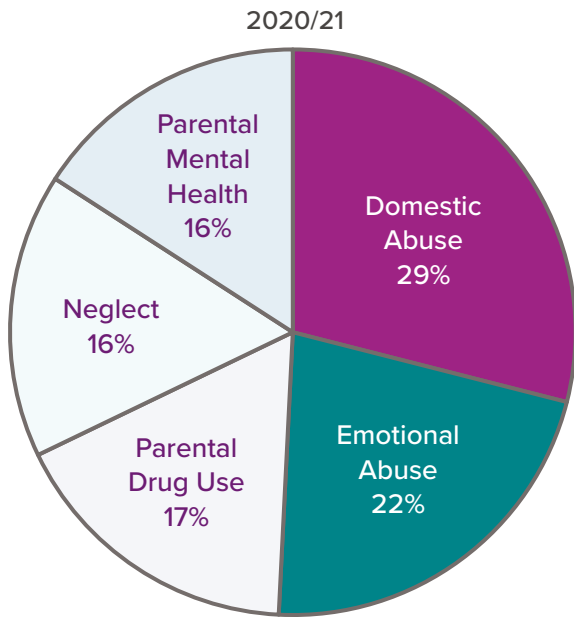
### Number of Pre-Birth Initial Child Protection Planning Meetings & Number of Children



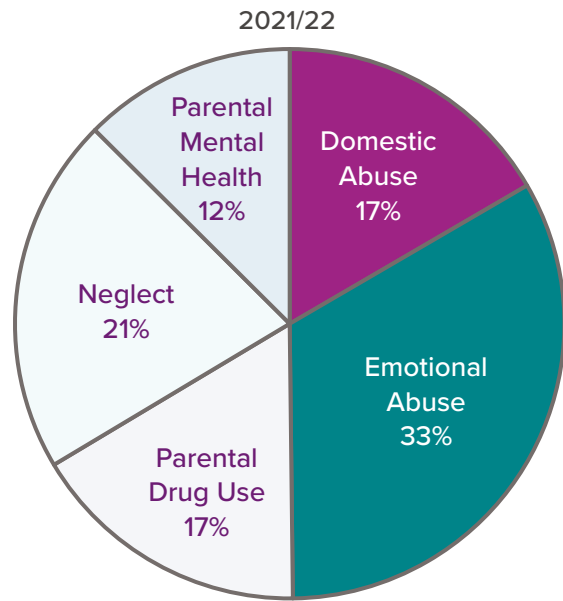
The below graph illustrates the monthly average number of children on, added to and removed from the Child Protection Register over the last 3 years.



**The 5 most common concerns for registration 2020/2021**



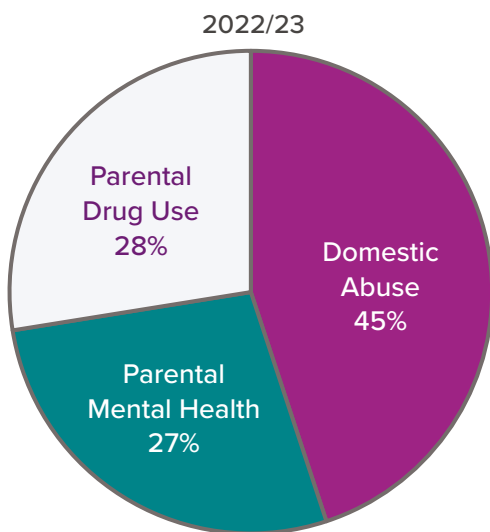
**The 5 most common concerns for registration 2021/2022**



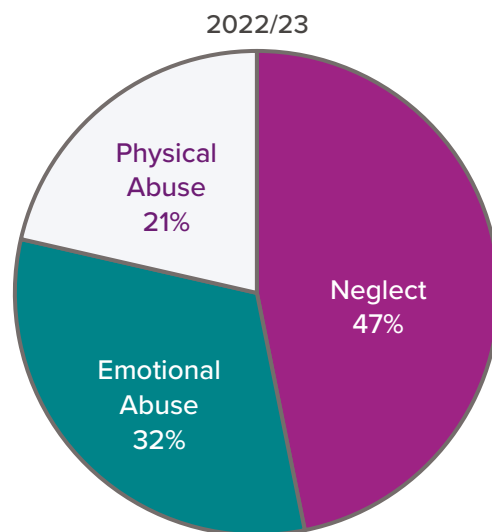
**The 5 most common concerns for registration 2022/2023**

In November 2022, new categories of registration were introduced which are reflected in the below charts.

**Vulnerability Factors**



**Impact on/abuse of the child**



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## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children's Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	21 November 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Keeping The Promise – Year 2 Evaluation Report
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CFS/23/364
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Graeme Simpson
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Amy Evans
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	2.1, 2.1.1

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report progress of our partnership implementation of the Scottish Government's Plan 21-24 to keep [The Promise](#).

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the local progress made in Year Two of Plan 21-24 as outlined in the appendix report (Appendix 1); and
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer of Children and Family Services to provide a progress report in Autumn 2024 in relation to the partnership's implementation of Plan 21-24 and subsequent Promise plans.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 In 2020, The Independent Care Review published 'The Promise' narrating a vision for Scotland, recognising that the whole landscape of systems and services that interact with children and families needed to change.
- 3.2 The Promise is responsible for driving the work of change drawn from the findings of the Independent Care Review and makes clear the extent of change required, however, the outcomes that Scotland needs to achieve are simple and reflect Scotland's existing commitment that all children "grow up loved, safe and respected so they can fulfil their potential."
- 3.3 The Scottish Government's Promise team translated the findings of the Care Review into The Plan for change which will be phased across ten years from 2020-2030. Plan 21-24 is the first Promise plan and was published in April 2021. Plan 21-24 focuses on the period from 1 April 2021 until 31 March 2024 and outlines a series of outcomes.

- 3.4 The five priority areas for Plan 21-24 are:
- The right to a good childhood
  - Whole family support
  - Supporting the workforce
  - Planning
  - Building capacity
- 3.5 A report on year one's progress keeping The Promise was presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee on 8 November 2022. The Committee requested that the Chief Officer of Children and Family Services provide an annual report on the Council's progress in delivering Plan 21-24. Locally our refreshed [Children's Services Plan](#) and [Corporate Parenting Plan](#) (presented to and approved by this Committee earlier in 2023) have been carefully aligned to Plan 21-24.
- 3.6 Led by Aberdeen City Council colleagues, under the auspices of the Children's Services Board, the partnership has now undertaken a further self-evaluation of progress in Year Two of Plan 21-24 (Appendix 1) to examine how children's services in Aberdeen are and need to support the change agenda to keep the Promise. The evaluation presents an overview of activity to date and of our level of confidence that changes will be implemented and embedded by the end of the lifetime of Plan 21-24. The evaluation identifies two areas for change that are not included in currently published local Plans and these areas will be taken into account as we report on our progress in delivering the Children's Services Plan and refresh the Plan in March 2024.
- 3.7 Significant progress has been made in Year Two against the 25 priority actions from Plan 21-24 and we are confident that many of the actions will be completed by 2024. Our evaluation broadly mirrors the findings of the Promise Oversight Board who found that some areas are likely to take longer to embed with some of these areas reliant on changes at Scottish Government level or from the Children's Hearing System. The next national Promise Plan, which is likely to be a six year Plan and due for publication in Spring 2024 will take account of this learning.
- 3.8 The Promise Oversight Board, which reports on the progress made at a national level to keep the Promise, has reported a need to prioritise 3 areas. These priorities are:
- Education
  - Brothers and Sisters
  - Homelessness
- 3.9 Whilst we have made significant progress locally in all three of these areas, we agree that improving the educational outcomes for our looked-after and care experienced children and young people, keeping brothers and sisters together and connected, and ensuring young people leaving care have everything they need, remain local priorities too.

- 3.10 Alongside these priorities, we remain dedicated to developing and embedding our local Family Support Model to deliver on early and preventative support to children, young people and their families. With the aim of increasingly preventing children and young people from coming into our care at all.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report of itself, however, the scale of reform anticipated by the Independent Care Review will trigger a need for finance to be pooled more routinely across the partnership.
- 4.2 The Promise has called for a move away from using resources to deal with the consequences of the current care system towards building a better system, focused on keeping children in their families wherever safe to do so by providing earlier, whole family support.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Promise and Plan 21-24 impact upon a range of statutory duties on the Council in relation to vulnerable and care experienced children, including those contained in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 and the Children (Scotland) Act 2020.
- 5.2 Some aspects of the Independent Care Review, as articulated in The Promise and Plan 21-24, have been or are anticipated to be, enshrined in statute. The Children (Scotland) Act 2020 has implications for local authorities as it brings the law further into line with children's rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), in particular:
- Supporting relationships between brothers and sisters
  - Making sure children have greater opportunity and means to have their voices heard
  - Providing better advocacy and support for children
  - Developing rules for contact centres where children, parents and other people in the child's life can meet.

#### **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

#### **7. RISK**

- 7.1 The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Many of the requirements of Plan 21-24 are already built into a variety of strategic plans. It is expected that gaps will emerge as the Council and partners scrutinise the requirements of Plan 21-24 in detail.	The Children's Services Board and Community Planning Management Group have oversight of the delivery of the relevant strategic plans in this respect. They are ensuring that the terms of Plan 21-24 are incorporated into current and future strategic planning.	M	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Compliance</b>	No significant risks identified.	Services across all multi-agency partners are aware of legislative requirements and ensure compliance	L	<b>No</b>
<b>Operational</b>	The aims of Plan 21-24 are ambitious and will require our people, equipment and buildings to change in order to drive on the plan. This may impact on morale as the change process is undertaken.	Leadership supports participation and planning across the multi-agency partnership in the delivery of Plan 21-24 to best ensure operational support for changes identified.	M	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Financial</b>	No significant risks identified			<b>Yes</b>
<b>Reputational</b>	No significant risks identified	The Council and partners are committed to keeping The Promise and implementing Plan 21-24 .	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No significant risks identified			<b>Yes</b>

## 8. OUTCOMES

<b>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<p><b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></a></p>	<p>Plan 21-24 has direct relevance to the delivery of the following policy statements contained within the Council Delivery Plan for People:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the Council follows best practice as a corporate parent to get the best outcomes for looked-after young people, those in kinship care and those with additional support needs such as autism, developmental disorders or mental health problems.</li> <li>• Continue to seek to support young people to receive care in Aberdeen, through fostering, adoption and other services and seek to reduce “out of authority” placements.</li> <li>• Work with the city’s universities, North East Scotland College and businesses to increase educational and training options and the number of care experienced young people and young people from deprived communities, going onto positive destinations, including further and higher education, vocational training and apprenticeships.</li> </ul>
<b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</b>	
<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>Plan 21-24 has direct relevance to the following stretch outcomes in the LOIP and will help support delivery of these:</p> <p>4. 95% of children (0-5 years) will reach their expected developmental milestones by the time of their 27-30 month review by 2026.</p>

	<p>5. 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all the time by 2026.</p> <p>6. By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of care experienced children and young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.</p>
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	Plan 21-24 is relevant to Aberdeen City Council's Delivery Plan, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, the Children's Services Plan and the Corporate Parenting Plan.

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	It is confirmed by Chief Officer Graeme Simpson that no Integrated Impact Assessment is required.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	N/A

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 [The Promise](#)

10.2 [Plan 21-24](#)

10.3 [Children's Services Plan](#)

10.4 [Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26](#)

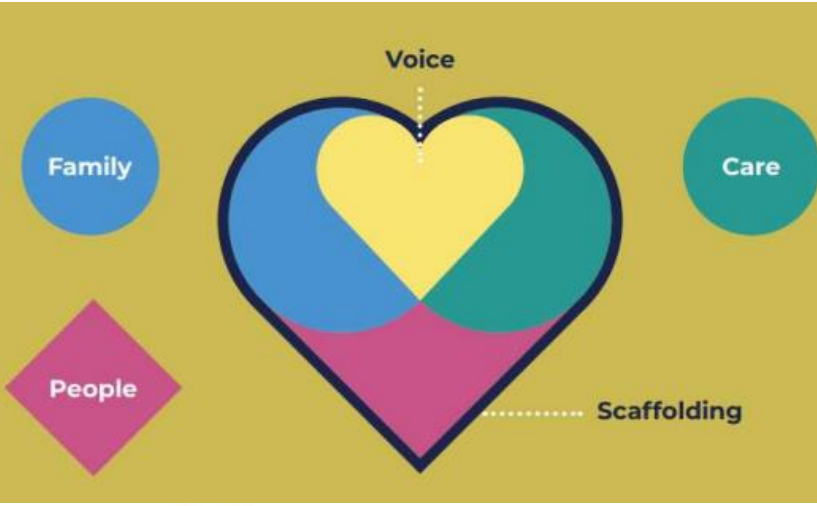
10.5 [Aberdeen City Council Delivery Plan](#)

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1: Keeping The Promise – Year 2 Evaluation Report

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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<b>Tel</b>	01224 045223



Community Planning  
Aberdeen

# Is Aberdeen Keeping The Promise?

Year 2 Evaluation Report



# INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR



[The Promise](#) made following the Independent Care Review made it clear that the current 'care system' in Scotland isn't working and that families need earlier, preventative supports which are easy to access, support children to remain in their communities, and where that is not possible, that support is provided in ways that do not feel stigmatising.

The Promise can only be kept by Community Planning Partners working together. As a result we have organised all of our work to keep the Promise in our partnership Plan for children. Our Children's Services Plan is one of a suite of Statutory Plans supporting delivery of the [Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#) (LOIP).

Our [Children's Services Plan 2023-2026](#) takes full account of the foundations of The Promise and of the Priority Areas in Plan 21-24. All partners represented at the Children's Services Board assume collective responsibility for the delivery of The Promise and routinely monitor progress. Taking this approach helps ensure that we focus our time and resources effectively and that we can demonstrate progress towards delivery.

In evaluating our progress, we have reviewed the impact of work undertaken since Plan 21-24 was first published to get a clear sense of where we are, what we still need to do and any barriers to fully delivering on Plan 21-24.

In June 2023, The Promise Scotland assessed that Scotland was unlikely to fully deliver on the Plan 21 – 24 by March 2024. Within their assessment they acknowledged the impact of COVID on staff and services as well as the impact of the cost of living crisis. The elements of Plan 21 - 24 which are anticipated not to be fully delivered within timescale will be carried forward into the next national plan that will shape how Scotland #keepsthePromise. **Plan 24 – 30** is anticipated to be published in Spring 2024.

We intend to continue to adopt many of the data sets informing this evaluation to help us track on-going progress. This will help ensure that we maintain a focus on the areas for action in Plan 21-24 when subsequent Promise Plans are published. We are proud of the changes we have made but recognise there is more to do.

**Graeme Simpson**

Chief Social Work Officer and Chair of the Corporate Parenting Group

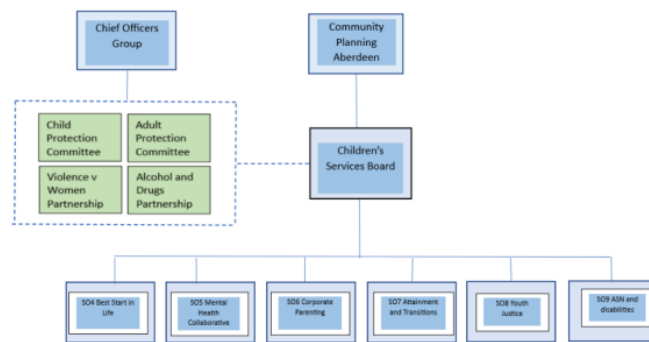


# GOVERNANCE



The Aberdeen City Community Planning Partnership has a range of highly effective governance arrangements in place including our Chief Officers Group (COG), Child Protection Committee (CPC) and Children’s Services Board (CSB). These arrangements, where candor, curiosity and accountability between partners is actively encouraged, has significantly aided more common practice and a shared and ongoing culture of improvement around public protection.

The Children’s Services Board is governed by and accountable to the Community Planning Management Board, which in turn is accountable to Community Planning Aberdeen.



The Children’s Services Board has responsibility for:

- The delivery of the Children’s Services Plan and associated Stretch Outcomes 4-9 of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan
- Working together as a Community Planning Partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people within Aberdeen City
- Leading the implementation of national policy and legislation pertaining to children and young people such as The Promise.

Actions that support delivery of The Promise are embedded within the Action Plans of each of the Sub Groups. As a result, each Sub Group has a direct responsibility in delivering The Promise. We continue to recognise the fundamental and corrosive impact of poverty on the lives of children and families and have deliberately woven actions to address poverty through the work of all Sub Groups. The Children’s Services Board routinely report progress against the [child poverty agenda](#) to ensure that learning from evaluation in associated areas informs our next steps.

## Corporate Parenting Group

Aberdeen City's Corporate Parenting Group is a Sub Group of the Children's Services Board. It has responsibility for delivering on aims set out in the LOIP and associated Children's Services Plan under Stretch Outcome 6 and coordinating our evaluation of progress against The Promise. The Group leads on the delivery of the Corporate Parenting Improvement Plan and quality assurance activity in relation to children and young people with care experience.

The Corporate Parenting Group aims to ensure that; *"95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education, health and emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026"* and has established a number of Improvement Projects to help realise this aim. These include those designed to:

- Reduce by 5% the number of children entering the care system by 2024.
- Ensure that 100% of children and young people leaving care are offered a health assessment to identify gaps in their health provision and needs by 2024.
- Increase the number of young people with care experience by 10% receiving multi-agency throughcare/aftercare support by 2023.
- Reduce the number of children being permanently removed from parents with care experience.
- Increase by 100% the number of partners supporting kinship carers by 2023.
- Ensure that 80% of the identified multi-agency workforce successfully complete Corporate Parenting training aligned to the Promise by 2025.

In preparing this evaluation, the Corporate Parenting Group has worked with Community Planning Partners to evaluate progress against each of the 25 actions listed in Plan 21-24. These 25 actions are organised under the 5 priority areas, A good Childhood, Whole Family Support, Supporting the Workforce, Building Capacity and Planning.



## Our Progress in delivering Priority 1, A Good Childhood

The Promise made a number of commitments to children and young people and Plan 2021-24 highlights 25 priority areas for action over the lifetime of Plan 2021-24. We have listed the policy context and then evaluated our progress against this context to help identify areas to be further progressed over the third year of the Plan 21-24. Next steps that are not yet planned for are included in red, all other next steps listed are already included in currently published Plans. Readers should note that there is some crossover between the 25 priorities for action.

**On a Good Childhood, The Promise says,** ‘Children who have been removed from their family of origin and live in and around the ‘care system’ will have a good, loving childhood. Ensuring that children in Scotland’s ‘care system’ feel loved, their needs are met, and their rights are upheld is a priority for 21-24. This change is urgent, it must be a focus for all organisations that have responsibility towards care experienced children and young people’.

**On support, Plan 2021-24 says,** ‘Every child that is ‘in care’ in Scotland will have access to intensive support that ensures their educational and health needs are fully met. Local Authorities and Health Boards will take active responsibility towards care experienced children and young people, whatever their setting of care, so they have what they need to thrive’.

### Undertaking strategic analysis

As a Community Planning Partnership we have worked together to explore the factors that contribute to children being placed within the care system to help us better work together to prevent family situations escalating to the point of statutory measures requiring to be put in place. Taking this approach has helped shift our focus to prevention and helped us identify particular groups of children and young people currently more at risk. The need to focus on the children and young people on the edges of care, those in conflict with the law, those who experience multiple traumas and children with disabilities has been built into our Children’s Services Plan and a number of tests of change are progressing well.

### Establishing our Edge of Care Pilots

The Education Service and Children’s Social Work collaborated with partners to develop a shared sense of what is meant by the ‘edges of care’ in an attempt to ensure that appropriate supports are in place and targeted to help restrict the number of children who experience the care system. This thinking guided the establishment of two Edge of Care Pilots to explore new ways of partnership working and early evaluation is positive. Staff teams within the pilots were empowered to think creatively and consider the needs of children and families more holistically.

Following the initial identification of young people by senior leaders in Education and Children’s Social Work, the pilot team brought together information to build a more informed understanding of need, this included building relationships with the families to understand their situation more fully. As the pilot has progressed and relationships have been built, plans for young people have

become more bespoke in response to the critical insight gleaned from families and the young people.

From the outset the pilots recognised the criticality of how young people and families were engaged with. Connecting with the learning gained via the Fit Like Service, staff adopted a relational and trauma informed approach. This ensured that the support offer for each young person was based around the barriers they identified to being able to engage in education. Interventions are therefore individualised and have included:

- play-based support and structured work to explore feelings and emotions
- supporting parents to understand the impact of feelings on behaviours, academic input (literacy / numeracy/ASDAN awards/ dynamic youth awards),
- liaising with schools adapting timetables, strategies and other supports,
- activities including sport, working with others and managing relationships.
- families are supported to access weekly community connection sessions, financial support, support to access health

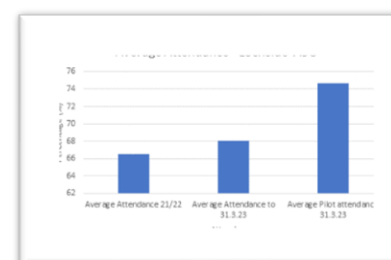
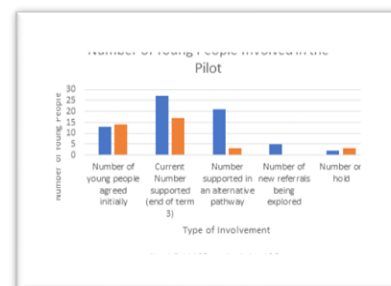
As the pilots progressed, the benefit of a weekly meeting between a key school link and the pilot team became apparent with a notable positive impact on transitions around school where these structures were in place. This practice has been now been replicated across both settings.

Young people engaging in the pilots are keen to share they feel listened to and value having an adult they can trust to talk to. Families tell us they value having someone who is seen to be neutral in terms of school and other agencies. As the pilot has progressed positive relationships have been built up allowing families to be more honest about the issues being experienced at home and allowing staff to target support more successfully.

The core measures identified to measure impact were the number of young people involved in the pilot, attendance at pilot sessions, exclusions and the number of VPD reports (Vulnerable Person Database). Consideration was also given to a number of indicators that would give an indication of progress towards more positive outcomes.

The number of young people engaging with the pilots has varied over time according to assessed need. Since September 2022, 68 young people have been supported across both ASGs.

Where it was agreed in consultation with staff, young people and families that the pilot was not the most appropriate intervention the family have been supported to access alternative supports. This has included more focused support through the Virtual School (8), Fit Like Family Wellbeing Service (8), Reaching Aberdeen Families Together (RAFT) (2), Craigielea (1), Employment (2) or revised supports in school (1). This highlights the need to view the pilots as part of a wider



model (or continuum) of Family Support and accept that no one model will work for all children and families.

Average attendance for young people engaged in the pilot has improved against levels from the previous session across both schools. In most cases this increase in attendance is thought to be due to a key worker being on site and available to the young person should they require support.

The number of exclusions for young people engaged in the pilot has reduced since the pilot began and this can be attributed to the positive relationships developed and resultant changes being made to the offer available in schools.

As young people have engaged with the pilot there has been a reduction in the number of Police Concern reports school has received in connection with their behaviour in the community. This could be related to the increase in attendance at pilot sessions however it is too soon to draw firm conclusions given that the pilots have only been fully operational from December 2022.

Sadly, progress in school session 2023/24 has been hampered by the fixed term nature of the resource supporting the two pilots. The loss of staff with established relationships with families is thought likely to be detrimental to the pilots and requires to be considered fully.

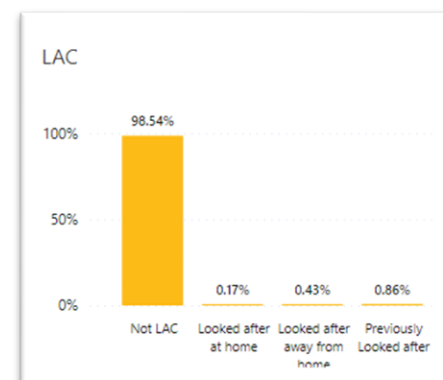
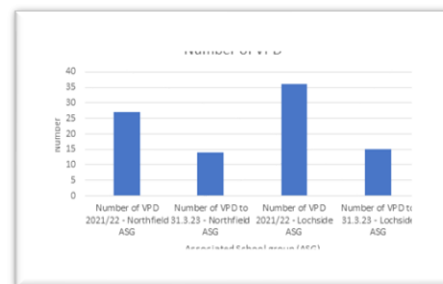
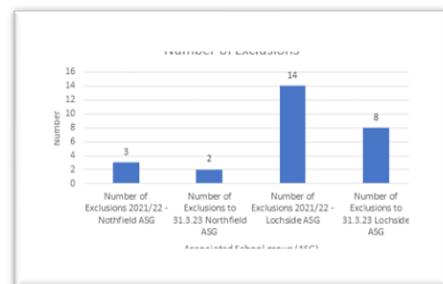
As the full evaluation is concluded consideration will be given to how this model might be scaled up as we continue to develop our preventative Family Support model. Nationally defining 'care experienced' and 'edges of care' in legislation would enable easier identification of those who have experienced care in Management Information Systems and aid the easier extraction of data to monitor trends given the very low numbers of those with a current status of 'Looked After' in our schools. The use of grant funding resulting in the appointment of fixed term posts will be considered fully.

### Family Support through our Fit Like Hubs

The Fit Like Hub, a multi-disciplinary rights based and family first service established in 2022, continues to help ensure that families can access early and preventative support. Our Fit Like Hubs have supported 1043 families with an increasing percentage of self-referrals (currently 10%). In April 2023 401 young people/families were engaging with the service and 146 of the 401 are families who were being supported for the first time.

There is clear evidence that engagement with the service realises:

- Parents feeling supported to manage their anxieties and worries
- Parents/carers and children and young people feeling listened to and heard
- Strengthened family relationships
- Improved child mental health and wellbeing.



Those accessing the service tell us that it feels like a bespoke service and that it is the first time support has 'felt right'. As a result we have the confidence in our ability to deliver high quality, rights based integrated services that adapt based on what children and families tell us. Families tell us that they appreciate this and other more integrated services and this feedback is helping to shape our work to establish a Bairns Hoose.

### **Increasing the provision of universal support**

Schools are working in partnership with Fit Like Aberdeen and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) colleagues to further develop LIAM (Let's Introduce Anxiety Management) supports. This multi-agency collaboration will continue to build on the current supports we have in place across many schools in order to strengthen the universal offer to children and families. All school nurses are currently trained to deliver LIAM, as are some Fit Like staff. 25 schools also have trained staff with 23 further staff currently being trained.

Supporting the prevention and early intervention model has seen Sport Aberdeen commit to increasing the accessibility of sport and physical activity, ensuring that barriers to participation are removed for care experienced children, young people, their families and support networks. This has included a commitment to offering free 'Get Active' memberships to care experienced children, siblings, parents and carers, with over 600 distributed to date. The introduction of an Active Schools Coordinator has also seen improved access to Active Schools extra-curricular and leadership programmes, with work being undertaken with sports clubs and organisations to bridge the gap into universal services. This places emphasis on working in partnership with children, young people and their families to access community-based sport and physical activity, building connections and promoting wider wellbeing, whilst reducing the negative effects of adverse childhood experiences and trauma. The increase of capacity and therefore focus on increasing provision has been made possible through an increased level of resources being provided by Sport Aberdeen, funding from Aberdeen City Council and the successful application in 2022 for additional funding from Sport Scotland to provide additional staffing resource with a focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

### **Integration to provide more targeted support**

Health and education offer targeted Early Learning and Childcare at the Links Hub for those families who seek additional support. The popularity of this model has seen enrolments increase from 40 when the setting was first operational in August 2021, to over 110 now as a result of professional or self-referrals by families. Aberdeen Sports Village are working in partnership with the Links Hub to offer learn to swim programmes to the young learners who attend the Hub.

## Case Study Links Hub

The partnership between health and (early) education sits at the heart of the work undertaken at Links Nursery and Hub. The setting prides themselves on building trusting, therapeutic relationships, which give families the opportunity to voice their needs and the challenges they face. The focus being to reduce referrals to other services out with the Hub and to increase and improve engagement of families within our service.

There is a weekly children's meeting held within the Links Nursery and Hub to promote information sharing and multiagency working. Speech and Language Therapy, Health Visitor, Centre Manager and Excellence and Equity Practitioners are represented. Robust planning support takes place for children and their families who are facing adversity, with Child A providing an example of how this approach is improving outcomes:

Child A's parent was recently diagnosed with a health condition impacting their capacity to parent. The parent was also struggling with Child A's behaviour, which had deteriorated since the onset of their own ill health. Nursery noted this behaviour change, a change of pattern in attendance, and other family member doing almost all pick-ups and drop-offs. These changes prompted a discussion with health visitor, which resulted in a home visit where parent shared her challenges. This information was conveyed at our meeting, which led to structured support from health and education. Parent was offered one-to-one PEEP (Parents as Early Education Partners) sessions with our Excellence and Equity Practitioner (within the hub) alongside behavioural support within the home. Travel support was also offered to increase the child's attendance. The parent disclosed that they felt a support network now surrounded them.

**Outcomes:** there has been an increase in engagement with both health visitor and hub centre manager and an improvement in child A's attendance at nursery and at health-related appointments.

It is important to note that families are involved at all levels of future planning support for their children. This new, collaborative way of working at the Links Nursery and Hub involves children at the heart of decisions made to improve their positive future health and education outcomes.

The centre opened in 2021 with 40 registered children and now has around 110 children supported on a daily basis evidencing the desire of parents to access joined up services.

## Provision of Intensive Support

All children in care have access to a social worker and a multi-agency plan ensuring health and educational needs are actively addressed. There are well-established formal review processes which have been enhanced following the adoption of D365. Every effort is made to retain children and young people in placements within Aberdeen City. Work has been undertaken by children's social work to achieve parity of service across all groups of looked after children.

Craigielea is an intensive, alternative to care provision which provides a holistic package of support to children, young people and their families with an escalating risk profile. A multi-professional team of social workers, teachers, family resource workers and a mental health practitioners wrap around children/young people and their family to support them to remain at home, within their communities and education provision.

Health continue to offer universal and targeted monitoring of health and wellbeing to ensure children and young people reach their optimal development and opportunity to thrive. A specialist nurse for care experienced children and young people monitors health and wellbeing of those aged up to 26 years and links with other multi-agency partners, including when children are placed out of Authority. Work is ongoing to ensure a stronger CAMHS connection to relevant young people with experience of care.

The Children's Services Board are currently working to streamline referrals for health assessments, with improvement projects specifically aiming for 100% of children and young people leaving care being offered a health assessment to identify gaps in their health provision and needs by 2024 (improvement charter 6.2) and 100% of children leaving care are referred to services that can meet assessed mental health needs within 4 weeks of the health assessment being completed by 2024. (improvement charter 5.1). To achieve this, we are co-designing with young people with care experience, a health assessment pathway for care leavers. One part of this will be referral pathways to specific support for health matters identified during the assessment therefore ensuring that support is provided. Training for multi-agency staff is being developed to increase awareness and confidence in identifying the health needs of care experienced young people and to make the appropriate referral.

Single Points of Contact (SPOC) of Police Sergeant Rank have been identified for all Aberdeen City Children's Homes. These Officers are 'Trauma Informed' to support the building of positive relationships. Work between 'Who Cares Scotland' and the Police to establish a participation group to support the on-going building of positive relationships has not progressed as would have been hoped due to staffing issues. This will be a focus for the coming year.

### **Establishment of a Bairns Hoose**

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) identified the need to prioritise those who have experienced multiple trauma and recognise the establishment of a Bairns Hoose will help reform ways of working with and for this group.

Our ambition is that our Bairns Hoose maximises the potential to fully incorporate the Justice element. This will include having distinct space for Age of Criminal Responsibility interviews but also a remote court suite that enables children and young people to give evidence to Court. This builds on our strong response to the change in legislation around the age of criminal responsibility and our contributions to the national guidance. Discussions with the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) have also identified opportunities for Hearings including the reincarnation of these outlined in Hearings for Children: The Redesign Report

The Aberdeen Health Determinants Research Collaboration is led by the Council and extends across NHS Grampian, University of Aberdeen and Robert Gordon University. It will work with our commissioned external research contractor to support evaluation activity around the Bairns Hoose.

**In summary**, work is underway but we now need to clearly define and establish our model of Family Support and continue testing the provision against our identified vulnerabilities through a shared evaluation framework aligned to our soon to be established Bairns Hoose. This will help us measure the impact of our model during a time when we see great changes in the needs of children and families. Greater certainty around the impact of the Verity House agreement will also support planning. As a result, this action may not be fully delivered by 2024.

### **To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we need to continue with plans to:**

- Fully evaluate our Edge of Care Pilots and determine next steps
- Continue to shape our model of Family Support and establish an evaluation framework to test to strength of our model of Family Support



- Increase the number of care experienced young people by 10% receiving multiagency throughcare/aftercare support by 2023.
- Ensure 100% of children and young people leaving care are offered a health assessment to identify gaps in their health provision and needs by 2024.
- Reduce by 5% the number of children entering the care system by 2024.
- Develop our workforce so that at least 80% of the identified multi-agency workforce successfully complete Corporate Parenting training aligned to the Promise by 2025.
- Support care experienced young people prepare for parenthood, with 80% of care experienced parents reporting that they believed they were sufficiently prepared for parenthood by 2026.
- Successfully deliver our Bairns Hoose

### On a right to education, Plan 21-24 says:

- Care experienced children and young people will receive all they need to thrive at school.
- There will be no barriers to their (CEYP) engagement with education and schools will know and cherish their care experienced pupils.
- School improvement plans will value and recognise the needs of their care experienced pupils with robust tracking of attendance and attainment so that support can be given early.
- Care experienced young people will be actively participating in all subjects and extra-curricular activities in schools
- The formal and informal exclusion of care experienced children from education will end.
- Schools will support and ensure care experienced young people go on to genuinely positive destinations, such as further education or employment.

### Planning for care experienced children and young people

A multi-agency Child's Plan is in place for all children in the care system and they are regularly reviewed, Plans outline what the child or young person needs to thrive at school with appropriate plans to address any barriers to access. Plans reflect the current situation faced by children and young people although some could be deemed to lack aspiration. This will be a balance we continue to strive for. Although many children who experience care thrive at school, there is evidence that only considering the needs of the child, in isolation from those of the family, negatively impacts the child. There is a need for us to consistently take a family first approach in all we do.

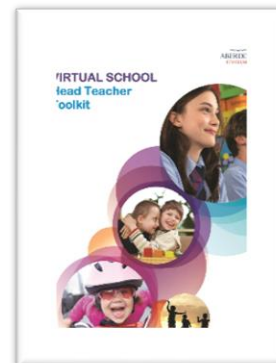


For the second year, School Improvement Plans recognise and plan for the needs of children and young people with care experience. This planning is helping realise more creative approaches to meeting the needs of the group. Schools are being asked to scrutinise the performance of this group during quality improvement visits by central. In session 23/24 there will be an increased

level of scrutiny by the Virtual School through termly visits with the Learner Pathways Advocates and designated managers in secondary schools.

### **Role of the Virtual School**

A Virtual School Head Teacher has been in place for many years and actively contributes to the sharing of national best practice. There is clear evidence that having this post established has improved the consistency of data being held in the School Management Information System and improved the quality of provision for many. However, there is also evidence that as relationships between the Virtual School and partners has strengthened, relationships with school based designated managers for cared for young people have been compromised. We now need to address this through a review of our Toolkit.



### **Understanding what it means to be care experienced**

A programme for schools that supports the school community to have a greater understanding of 'What it means to be Care Experienced' has been developed with the intention of rolling this out in schools in 2023/24. This programme has taken cognisance of Plan 21-24, UNCRC and Angela Morgan's Review. The delivery of the programme will be further informed by resources and training developed and piloted by Who Cares? Scotland as well as input from the Each and Every Child initiative who have established positive relationships with Education in Aberdeen City.

### **Strengthening the universal support available**

All schools have engaged with the CIRCLE framework to look at the environmental factors that can trigger poor attendance in schools. There is emerging evidence that this is helping to increase attendance and engagement from those who find attending school more challenging. As a result, this work is being embedded in our work to further develop Learning, Teaching and Assessment.



All schools in the city continue to engage with Compassionate and Connected Communities with early impact evident in reduced levels of exclusion. Levels of exclusion continue to reduce but the gap between those who are cared for and their peers remains. Children and young people who have experienced trauma are more likely to present dysregulated behaviours which can be challenging to manage in a busy classroom. Systems are in place to manage and mitigate risks but challenges remain. The education reform programme seeks to place learners at the centre more fully, and this may help provide options in the longer term.

As part of the work of the Children & Young People's Mental Health Task & Delivery Board, as a local authority we are currently piloting the 'One Good Adult' project. This allows us to focus on the voice of children and young people at the heart of our recruitment processes. This was an agreed approach at the Health and Wellbeing Summit in October 2022 and is now established within our recruitment processes for all education staff. This is to be extended to other services within the local authority and partner agencies for those supporting children and young people in their daily positions.

## **Supporting mental health and wellbeing**

We continue to commission Mental Health Aberdeen to support all children from age 10+ with counselling support where required. 100% of children who have completed an end of session questionnaire, report an improved wellbeing outcome following this support.

The pilot of DBI (Distress Brief Intervention) has extended to 6 Secondary Schools in partnership with CAMHS and Penumbra focusing on learners aged 14-16. This programme offers more targeted support for young people who have been identified or self-identify the need for support and helps some of our most vulnerable learners to access trained staff and a pathway to support through Penumbra and CAMHS if required. We are beginning to see early signs of improvement through our data report in relation to the Who-5 wellbeing index, which may suggest that earlier responsive intervention is supporting young people previously indicating low mood.

Sport Aberdeen's SPACE (Supported Physical Activity for Care Experienced) programme has continued to work with Aberdeen City Council's Integrated Children and Families Services, the Virtual School and other third sector organisations to improve access to physical education, alongside positively impacting school attendance and skills development. A child-centred, relational and trauma-informed approach has seen 22 children/young people access bespoke 1-2-1 provision as part of their curriculum, with 4 young people achieving Active Schools leadership qualifications with enhanced pathways into positive destinations.

The SPACE programme has taken an evidence-based approach to improve mental wellbeing through the power of sport and physical activity and has seen the following outcomes:

- 100% of young people reporting SPACE has helped them become more active
- 73% of young people reported SPACE to improve their self-confidence a lot.
- 27% of young people reported SPACE to improve their self-confidence a little bit.
- 55% of young people reported SPACE to improve their mental wellbeing a lot.
- 45% of young people reported SPACE to improve their mental wellbeing a little bit.

The Active School Coordinator has also worked collaboratively with other professionals to upskill their understanding and confidence to embed sport and physical activity across their programmes, supporting physical and mental health and wellbeing of those accessing their services.

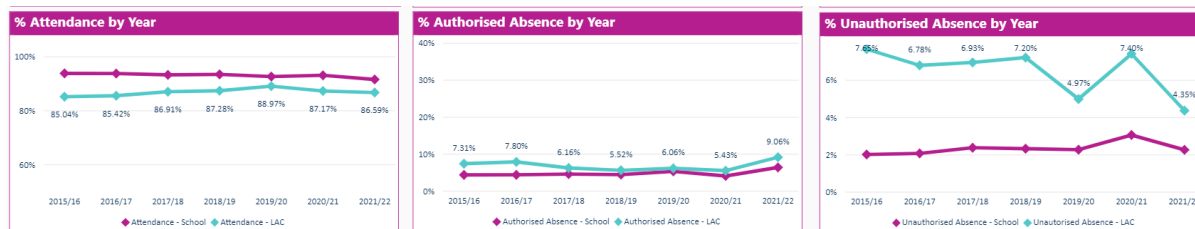
The SPACE programme has won several local and national awards, with it winning the UKActive Award in Supporting Communities. Winning a UK wide award within the sport and leisure sector highlights Aberdeen's place of leading the sport and physical activity sector in supporting Care Experienced Young People and how this is helping to keep The Promise.

## **Improving access to data**

Power BI School profiles continue to be used to help track education outcome trends for care experienced children and young people and further enhancements have been made to Broad General Education trackers in advance of the 2023/24 school year. The trackers enable easy analysis at school and local Authority level based on the status of the child and support school and service level improvement Plans. There is a need to now routinely analyse this data to ensure we take an agile response to improving outcomes as circumstances change.

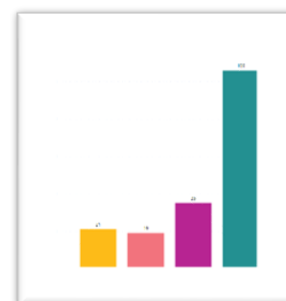
## School attendance

Children and young people who are Looked after away from home enjoy school attendance only two percentage points lower than their peers (91.44%). The attendance of those looked after at home is significantly lower at 82.05%, however, there is a marginal increase from the previous year.



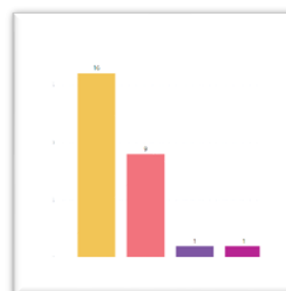
Attendance is tracked monthly and there has been an increased focus on supporting accurate recording of attendance of our Looked After Children, some of whom have a personalised curriculum that involves support by 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partners and commissioned services. There will be a greater focus in 2023/24 on closer tracking of attendance for all those who are both currently and previously Looked After (Care experienced) both in schools and centrally through the Virtual School.

The majority of cared for young people have attendance greater than 95%. There is a need to understand and address the issues faced by those with poorer levels of school attendance through our Edge of Care pilots.



## Exclusion

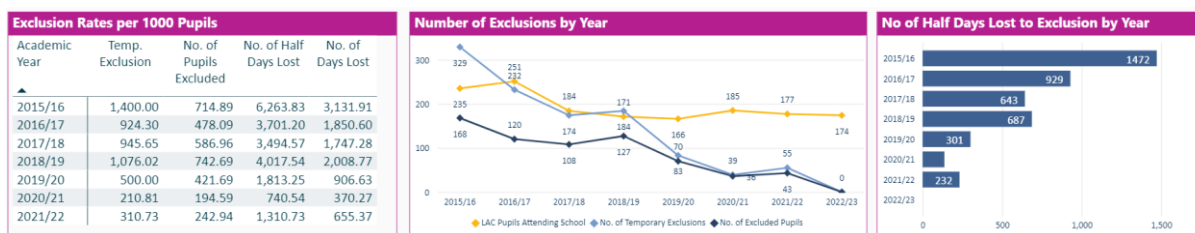
Exclusions have reduced steadily over the past 5 years with a marginal rise in 21/22 which mirrors that of the city population. This was the first full 'in school' academic year following the covid pandemic. Many children and young people found the transition back into a school setting challenging and required a degree of support to adjust. This is especially true for children with experience of care as a result of their lived experiences. Schools were supported to plan for the transitions and gave consideration to the personalised support that would be required. This transition may account for the marginal rise in number of exclusion incidents. The number of days lost to exclusion continues to be carefully monitored.



Validated data shows that children who are Looked After at home continue to be more likely to be excluded than those Looked After away from home.

19 Looked After children have been excluded to date this academic year with 9 of those having repeat exclusions and accounting for 22 of the 32 total incidents. 14 of the children are Looked After away from home and 5 are Looked After at home. Secondary pupils account for 89% of the exclusions. There is a need to offer a wider range of courses to engage young people more fully in their education and this will be driven through Phase 2 of ABZ Campus.

It is also noted that the 2 highest points for exclusion are prior to both the October and Easter holidays. Schools continue to be alert to the holiday build up for our children with care experience in order to better support. It is hoped that a year round model of support as is being piloted in both Northfield and Lochside ASG, will in time help prevent peaks of dysregulation.



### Aligning support from the Edge of Care Pilots to our Family Support Model

Two Associated Schools Groups are supporting our exploration of new ways of working in a family first and rights based way to support those on the edge of care. We now need to consider how best to make clear our offer to families given the varied range of provisions available to families through Pupil Equity Funding resource and consider the potential implications of this resource as the Verity House Agreement becomes embedded.

There is also a need to ensure that supports already available through established Partnership Forums and targeted Family Support Model all work together to support vulnerable groups and this alignment is being driven through the development of a Family Support Model evaluation framework.

### Actively increasing uptake of Early Learning and Childcare

An increase in the uptake of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in the city with 94.74% of our eligible population placed in 2022/23 compared to 91.22% in 2021/22, importantly there has been a 50% increase in the uptake of eligible 2s places. This will be maintained.

### Priority access to after school activities

Sport Aberdeen’s Active Schools programme strives to be inclusive by design, with all extra-curricular activities free for children to access. The Active Schools team work with school staff, social work and third sector organisations to ensure that children who face the greatest barriers to participation are supported to access opportunities including pathways into positive destinations through leadership and volunteering opportunities. Offers are created through a needs-based approach to ensure young people are supported through bespoke timetables to access education and wellbeing opportunities which can be otherwise missed.

### Attainment and destinations data

Curriculum for Excellence data for Looked After Children continues to show a gap in both literacy and numeracy between those children who are looked after and their peers and this will be keenly focussed upon despite the small numbers in the cohort (100 across all primary stages and 70 across secondary schools) which can skew data. There is a need to prioritise our use of resource in this area.

Although a lower percentage of young people who are Looked After move into a positive destination when compared to the virtual comparator, the percentage remains constant. Small numbers in the leavers cohort impacts of the percentage change achieved. There is a need to continue to focus on this area with a range of partners including Further and Higher Education in order to ensure that our looked after children consistently achieve a positive destination. This will be realised through Phase 2 of ABZ Campus and a refresh of the role of the Virtual School.

For the 2021/22 cohort, 5 young people did not move into a positive destination (3 are Looked after at home and 2 are Looked After away from home). All 5 had a high level of complex need and were supported through the Virtual School. 3 have subsequently moved on to college, 1 into employment and 1 on to ABZ works.

From the cohort of leavers, INSIGHT data indicates that 1 young person did not achieve any qualifications and was supported to move on to a college course that did not require qualifications from school. A range of supports were and continue to be in place to support him to succeed but this raises questions around the breadth of the curriculum available to support young people who may be struggling to engage due to family circumstances.

There has been a constancy of attainment at SCQF level 4 for literacy and numeracy over the past 3 years for children who are Looked After. It can be seen that the attainment of those who are Looked After away from home at this level has increased in 2021/22 to close the gap between their peers to 8%.

The attainment levels for children who are Looked After remains relatively unchanged with little year on year fluctuation. The percentage gap between Looked After children and the city population achieving 4 or more qualifications at SCQF level 3 has remained constant in 2021/22. It is anticipated continuing to broaden the range of curriculum pathways available to children and young people through the ABZ Campus alongside focussed work from Pathways Advocates will see an increase in the number of subjects being achieved as well as the level at which they are achieved. This will be an area of considerable focus and impact will be monitored through improvement charter 7.1 which is aiming to increase the % of care experienced learners entering a positive and sustained destination to be ahead of the Virtual Comparator for all groups by 2025. As well as introducing and embedding Pathway Advocates, the project is creating a refreshed programme of termly Pathway Planning meetings for each secondary school, with a robust tracking mechanism and calendar for intervention and partner working.

### **Pathway planning**

A pathway planning process has helped to clarify roles and responsibilities in supporting young people to secure a positive destination. The Virtual School works alongside school staff, the Throughcare and Aftercare Team and ACC employability teams to support the transition onto independent living and a positive destination. Further training is scheduled to take place in September 2023 where there will a concentrated focus on the importance of targeting care experienced young people during any pathway planning process.

Pathways Advocates were introduced in 8 out of the 11 Secondary schools with recruitment to the remaining 3 ongoing. The role of the Pathways Advocate is to provide young people who are care experienced (those currently and previously Looked After) with an opportunity to have an informed advocate based in school to advise and support in the area of choices, vocational pathways and future options. The Advocate is distinct from the Pastoral / Guidance role, and from the expertise offered by SDS, but works alongside these partners.

In schools where advocates are in post, there are early indications of positive relationships being built with young people and school staff, an additional layer of tracking and monitoring being undertaken and information being shared with school staff to help them to better understand the needs of children and young people with experience of care. In some schools the reach of the support has been extended to other young people who may be at risk of becoming care experienced or have other identified needs. This approach will be formally evaluated over school session 2023/4 to determine next steps.

Police Scotland continues to provide avenues of support to CEYP who wish to join the police and provides a commitment to provide a mentor throughout the probationary period.

### **Further Education supports**

NESCoL, in collaboration with the Virtual School, Social Work and Widening Access Partners, work to ensure a smooth transition to and from College takes place. Transition sessions are offered to all young people who identify as care experienced to allow them to familiarise themselves with the College buildings, staff and IT platforms in advance of their course commencing.

The Introduction of NESCoL S.P.A.C.E (Student Platform for All our Care Experience) allows the College to routinely poll students with care experience and find out what is important to them. The insight gleaned continues to shape supports such as enhanced support from Academic Tutors/Curriculum Managers and contact with the Student Advice and Support Team. New applicants with care experience coming to college for the first time are contacted by the Student Advice and Support Team to discuss and support their transition. This allows them to be in control of their transition, establish where they feel they need extra support and allow us implement support measures

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support is available to NESCoL students via the Student Wellbeing Advisers, in-house Counselling Service provided by ACIS Student, via our online platform Spectrum Life and our regional partnerships with organisations such as Aberdeen Foyer.

### **Access to mentoring**

The MCR Pathways programme has been in place for 3 years. There have been a number of challenges throughout the lifetime of the programme including recruitment for both ACC and MCR as well as the impact of Covid-19.

In total 278 young people have engaged with and report benefiting from the MCR Pathways programme. As of February 2023, of those young people who are active or have previously been active with MCR Pathways, 12.59% are care experienced, 16.14% previously care experienced with the remaining 71.25% being identified as vulnerable. This balance is impacting on the extent

to which the programme impacts on our aim to increase the number of care experienced young people achieving a sustained destination. However, the programme may be helping to reduce the likelihood of needs escalating.

The high number of volunteers (144 trained volunteer mentors and 66 progressing through training) committed to delivering one to one mentoring is exceptionally positive and helping us discharge our Corporate Parenting responsibilities. Our young people who choose to engage with the programme tell us that they value and benefit from time with their mentor and qualitative evidence is strong. There is a need to consider a sustainable long term approach to mentoring over school session 2023/24.

### **National reform programme**

The publication of 'All Learners in Scotland Matter' in Late May 2023 presents an opportunity to respond positively to on-going education reforms. The guiding values and Call to Action steer the service to continue to sharpen its focus on high-quality teaching and learning, continue to widen the range of different learner pathways, establish alternative routes to success, and consider the range of appropriate assessments required to reflect the unique talents of each learner, support their ambitions, and meet the needs of a changing world. The service will continue to work on these key themes and has considered the report fully in establishing priorities for 2023/24.

**In summary**, work is underway with considerable testing being undertaken to help deliver on Plan 21-24. There is now a need to drive changes in the senior phase curriculum through Phase 2 of ABZ Campus and evaluate the impact of the pilots underway to help determine the shape of the system in the longer term. This will help inform the best use of available resource. Data will continue to be a focus with individual schools now being asked to monitor groups routinely to help identify and share best practice and address issues timeously. The legislative framework around exclusion does not support delivery of The Promise aspiration and this could compromise full delivery of this action by the end of 2024.

### **To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Implement the new BGE trackers
- Routinely analyse live outcome data for those who are care experienced to enable a more agile response
- Evaluate our Edge of Care pilots, exploring options to scale up
- Evaluate the impact of our Pathways Associates
- Consider a sustainable approach to mentoring
- Broaden the curriculum further through the second phase of ABZ Campus
- **Review our Virtual School Toolkit.**



### **On relationships, Plan 21-24 says:**

- All children living in and around Scotland's 'care system' will be maintaining safe, loving relationships that are important to them.
- There will be no barriers to 'contact' and children will be supported to have time with people they care about.

### **Contact arrangements**

All infants, children and young people who are looked-after away from home have 'contact', also known as family-time, arrangements considered and regularly reviewed within their child's plans. There is evidence of improved compliance with stated contact arrangements. This is an operational requirement.

Children and young people are supported in their understanding and connections with important relationships to them throughout their lives and in a variety of ways considering their individual needs and stage of development. Children's social work aspire to place children within one-hour distance of Aberdeen and are working with parents across the partnership to enhance contact experiences for the child e.g., by offering parents support to recover from their own trauma. Considerable time has been invested in enhancing the skills of workers undertaking supervision of contact between children, young people and their families.

### **Trauma informed relationships**

Trauma informed, relational approaches are well embedded within children's social work and continue to be extending across the partnership. Authority to Accommodate processes have been refreshed to have greater focus on identifying and maintaining family relationships and promoting Kinship options. As a result an increased number of children are now in kinship care arrangements.

Former residents of Children's Homes locally are supported to maintain relationships with staff and other residents after they move out for example by being invited to visit and join for meals. We know many children and young people also maintain contact with and are supported by foster carers they have previously lived with, however, our evidence of this is largely anecdotal and we are considering how we can better capture and evaluate the value of this support.

### **Support for kinship carers**

Our kinship families range from over 75's to early 20's they are great grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles and connected persons. Some have children right from birth to adulthood. Some may have had previous social work involvement and some none at all. The children and young people they care for have all experienced some form of loss and some may also have experienced trauma of varying degrees. All should expect to be loved and nurtured in a family network of carers who are also nurtured and cared for.

In consideration of this our support cannot be a "one size fits all approach", we need a diverse multi agency approach which matches the diverse nature of our carers and that is cohesive and trauma informed.

Recognising the importance of widening the support available, through our improvement project 6.3 we are aiming to increase by 100% the number of partners supporting kinship carers by 2023. Through this have achieved a 900% increase in the number of partners supporting kinship carers, from 2 to 20 from Jan to June 2023. During this period, we have also seen an 89% increase in the number of carers receiving specific support. 36 partners and carers attended the information events, following which we've seen a direct increase in number of partners supporting kinship carers.

**In summary**, work is underway and progress has been made but we continue to rely on a disproportionate provision of external, versus internal, foster carers in comparison to other local authorities which means many of our children and young people are placed far from their existing relationships and communities in Aberdeen. The current challenges in securing placements is likely to compromise our ability to delivery fully on this action by the end of 2024.

**To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Aligned to the Hearings System review, further improve decision making to ensure that maintaining relationships for children and young people is aligned to needs of the child
- **Establish a mechanism to share information on the safe loving relationships important to young people**
- Expand our local foster care provision to readdress the balance of care. The national foster and kinship carers allowance is predicted to have a positive impact on our recruitment of carers, as it will offer equity across the local authorities in Scotland.
- Increase by 100% the number of partners supporting kinship carers by 2023.

**On brothers and sisters, Plan 21-24 says:**

- **Scotland will stop the practice of separating brothers and sisters, unless for reasons of safety.**
- **Relationships between brothers and sisters will be cherished and protected across decision making and through the culture and values of the people who care for them.**

**Developing a position statement**

In recognition of this important and complex area of work, we established a Brothers and Sisters working group which has set out our pledge to brothers and sisters in a [position statement](#). The group have developed local data collection methods to support our understanding of how many siblings are separated, the reasons why and to ensure these decisions are reviewed where appropriate.

An improvement session on best practice for brothers and sisters was delivered to over 100 children's social work staff. There is on-going work with housing providers to agree flexible options for carers to keep brothers and sisters together.

**In summary**, there is a strong commitment to making the necessary changes to our practice, however, availability and flexibility of homes for sibling groups remains a challenge. Whilst recognising the complexity of family life, we are working on improving our collection of brothers and sisters data and developing multi and single agency learning and guidance to support practice rooted in maintaining relationships for brothers and sisters. However, given the considerable challenge in securing placements for siblings, we may not have delivered this action fully by 2024. Where brothers and sisters cannot be cared for together planning will ensure that meaningful relationships are maintained.

**To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Launch and embed multi-agency guidance on maintain relationships for brothers and sisters.
- Respond to learning following a review of foster carers registration
- Continue to develop our data sets

**On youth justice, Plan 21-24 says:**

- The disproportionate criminalisation of care experienced children and young people will end
- 16-and 17-year-olds will no longer be placed in Young Offenders Institutes for sentence or on remand
- There will be sufficient community-based alternatives so that detention is a last resort
- Children who do need to have their liberty restricted will be cared for in small, secure, safe, trauma-informed environments that uphold their rights.

**Diversionsary work**

Considerable multi-agency and diversionsary work is in place across the Partnership. We have consistently reduced the number of children and young people being looked after in secure care by providing intense support services to young people and their families. Local policy has been developed to ensure that where a decision about secure care is made, this will be timeously reviewed by the Chief Social Work Officer. In the last year, no 16 or 17 year old have been placed in a Young Offenders Institution. We have reviewed our processes to ensure an early flag for 16 and 17 year olds appearing from court to custody is made so that support for their needs can be considered prior to court appearance. We have engaged with and contributed to the reimagining secure care work and have sought to understand and prepare locally for the changes associated with the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill.

**Developing a Bairns Hoose**

A key development over the last year has been early planning for the provision of a Bairns Hoose. Our proposed Bairns Hoose will be part of an existing ELC provision, co-delivered by health and education, located within an area of the city well served by public transport and accessible from the Airport and Harbour. The location provides for privacy, anonymity and multiple entry/exit points to ensure that we manage the needs and safety of all who will utilise our Bairns Hoose.

The building has valuable outdoor space to allow children and young people space. The project is committed within the Council Capital Programme as it requires refurbishment and adaption to offer all 4 rooms required. Feedback elicited from children and young people by Children’s 1<sup>st</sup> has informed the outline business case. It is our intention to develop the building in two Phases.

Phase 1 will realise the development of purpose built Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) facilities providing:

- interview facilities;
- space for co-location of SCIM staff (Police and children’s social work);
- location of a 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Trauma Recovery Service;
- space for ‘safe and well’ medicals to be undertaken; and
- exploring viability of locating Police Scotland’s ‘IRD desk’



Phase 2 will help realise full delivery of all 4 rooms through:

- a further interview space for Age of Criminal Responsibility (ACR) interviews which could also be used for vulnerable adults
- Remote court facility
- Medical suite with the capacity to undertake forensic medicals
- Shower facilities.
- Multi-purpose space allowing for direct work with families / staff learning / Children’s Hearings – SCRA court led processes / wellbeing space for staff.

The financial contribution of all partners is being negotiated and not yet agreed.

Our Partnership recognises more needs to be done to prepare and support children giving evidence to Court. A recent practice review highlighted that current arrangements lead to our children and young people feeling they are not believed, distressed and hurt. We appreciate the importance of building the confidence of children and young people as well as the Court system about utilising a remote court facility. As such the development of this will fall within Phase 2 of our project. We recognise that young people can only take part in Court processes remotely if the Court has confidence in the space and supports.

The provision of a Bairns Hoose has the potential to meet the needs of vulnerable adults who need to give evidence to Court. Where appropriate, and through careful timetabling, provision would be made through our Bairns Hoose. The Crown Officer and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPF’s) are an active partner within the Delivery Group and we are engaging with Scottish Courts and Tribunals (SCTS) to fully understand their requirements. We have engaged with a local Sheriff and liaising with the Sheriff Principle to seek their engagement and input.



Our Bairns Hoose Reference group will seek feedback from young people who have given evidence in Court both as witnesses and those accused of harming others to fully inform our plans.

**In summary**, work is underway and good progress has been made but we now await the recommendations from the secure care redesign and the government's response to the financial memorandum associated with the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill. This could compromise our ability to fully deliver on the action by the end of 2024 although local work remains on track.

**To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Prepare the partnership's workforce for the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill and scope readiness for the changes being introduced to inform commissioning processes which intersect with this group
- Move forward with our plans for a local Bairns Hoose

**On advocacy, Plan 21-24 says:**

- All care experienced children and their families will have access to independent advocacy at all stages of their experience of care.
- Advocacy provision will follow the principles set out in the promise.
- Care experienced children and young people will be able to easily access child centred legal advice and representation.

**Preparing for incorporation of the UNCRC**

All policies relating to children take full account of the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child with considerable work undertaken to develop our practice in this area as exemplified in our [children's rights report](#). The Partnership remains poised to undertake a rapid review of our readiness for incorporation following publication of statutory guidance on implementation of the UNCRC over school session 2023/24.

**Access to Advocacy**

Children, young people and their families have access to advocacy beyond the Children's hearing system and we have built in prompts for our workforce to consider the need for advocacy into our multi-agency working, including within Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD) processes.

The Rights Service works closely with the local primary and secondary Advocacy Services providers (Who Cares? Scotland and Advocacy Services Aberdeen), to provide independent advocacy for those children and young people who want it at their Children's Hearing.

The Rights Service provide access to independent advocacy for care experienced children, young people, and young adults in line with its remit. This includes those being cared for or living outside of the city. Those children and young people can also access other independent advocacy

services, aligned to their current care arrangements. All children/young people involved in child protection processes are considered for referral.

### **Champions Board**

Our well established Champions Board is currently testing a range of approaches to ensure greater involvement and influence in the direction and delivery of strategic plans which impact of their rights. As the Partnership works towards incorporation of the UNCRC, we continue to drive the active consideration of children’s rights in all of the work we do including through the development of individual Child’s Plans and through the use of Integrated Impact Assessments to support strategic decision making.

**In summary**, work is underway and supporting access to and provision of advocacy is embedded from a children and young person’s perspective, however, the route map for ensuring care experienced people can access lifelong advocacy is unclear. Locally we have difficulty accessing legal representation for children and young people which has created delays whilst provision is sought from legal services in the central belt.

There is a lack of specialised legal and justice professionals who understand children and young people’s behaviour and developmental needs. Scotland requires legal support which is individual tailored to children and young people and supports them to access their rights. The Scottish Government have recently intimated their intention to begin consulting on what a lifelong advocacy service will look like. This could hamper our ability to fully deliver on this action by the end of 2024, although local work remains on track.

### **To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Fully engage with the Scottish Government’s white paper on development of a lifelong advocacy service when published later in 2023/24.
- Consider the statutory guidance on the UNCRC when published to ensure that our young people are enabled to fully claim their rights

### **On moving on, Plan 21-24 says:**

- Decisions about transitions for young care experienced people who move onto independent living or need to return to a caring environment, will be made based on individual need.
- Each young care experienced adult will experience their transition as consistent, caring, integrated and focussed on their needs, not on ‘age of services’ criteria
- Housing pathways for care experienced young people will include a range of affordable options that are specifically tailored to their needs and preferences.
- Youth homelessness will be eradicated

### **Housing support**

The Throughcare Housing Protocol recognises the statutory duties towards care experienced young people and the requirement to support access to housing resource, reducing the risk of homelessness and associated vulnerabilities which can be lifelong. In April 2021, a Housing Support Officer became co-located with the Youth Team. This post supports our care experienced young people to navigate Housing systems taking a relational approach and aims to make sure that transitions from care into their first tenancy are as coordinated and transparent as possible. For 2022, the focus will be on developing more resources to support young people and staff to manage these transitions and systems. An evaluation of the impact of this role was undertaken in 2023.

The data indicates the growing numbers of looked after young people remaining in placement on a Continuing Care basis, thus promoting their opportunities for successful transition. The Council has taken on properties to support unaccompanied asylum seeking young people move on to independent living with outreach support.

### **Young parents with care experience**

Responding to the voices of several of our young parents with care experience, enhancing the support and preparation of our young people with care experience for life beyond care, including parenthood, has become a strategic priority in our children's services and corporate parenting planning.

### **Support for those with a disability**

Work is ongoing to improve the transition planning for young people with a disability/enduring health needs. How adult services ensure care experienced people can access lifelong advocacy remains unclear.

**In summary**, work is underway and we have undertaken a review of support in relation to 'moving on' alongside several of our young people with care experience, to identify gaps in this area and ensure our priorities align with the ask from our children and young people. Improvements are required and as a partnership we particularly need to better understand and respond to the holistic health needs of young people with care experience. There is a need for us to better align systems for children and adults. We hope that our focussed work on Homelessness will help us achieve this action by the end of 2024.

### **To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Extend access to a specialist care experienced children's nurse up to age 26 years
- Extend access to CAMHS up to age 26
- Continue to expand and develop housing pathways and multi-agency support to care experienced young people, including unaccompanied asylum seeking young people, beyond being 'in care'.
- Continue to strengthen the alignment of planning at transition stages

### **On physical intervention, Plan 21-24 says:**

- All care experienced children, wherever they live, will be protected from violence and experience the safeguard of equal protection legislation. •Restraint will always be pain free, will be used rarely, and only when required to keep a child safe
- There will be well communicated and understood guidance in place that upholds children's rights and reflects equal protection legislation.
- The workforce will feel supported to respond to behaviour in a trauma informed way that reflects a deep understanding of the children in their care\*

### **Clarifying education policy**

Our draft guidance - Supporting learners : A relationship and rights focused approach to physical intervention and seclusion has been issued to schools. Initial feedback has been positive highlighting the importance of shared definitions and the supportive nature of the debrief guides. We will update our local guidance in line with any changes once the finalised national guidance is available.

### **Use of restraint**

Restraint is not utilised within our local children's homes and training is provided for kinship carers and foster carers to ensure that physical restraint is not utilised. Commitment to using alternatives to physical intervention has long been established as part of our fostering contracts. We are working to ensure that external providers of care are aligned to our values by supporting staff to be alert to the impact of restraint and ensure debriefing opportunities. We aim to reduce our use of care providers who use physical restraint and include our position on 'use of restraint' within children and young people's Individual Placement Agreements. The Police continues to engage with national OST (Officer Safety Training) and their Partnerships, Prevention and Community Wellbeing Division (PPCW) to discuss the use of restraint and accessing trauma informed training.

**In summary**, work is underway and we are beginning to develop a means of better understanding use of physical intervention, and other restrictive practices, across the partnership and have ensured that our local policies and guidance promote alternatives and trauma informed care. We are still awaiting the national guidance on the use of restraint and restrictive practices in schools and hope that publication will enable delivery of this action by the end of 2024.

### **To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Implement the education guidance and monitor compliance and emerging trends to inform service delivery
- Develop means of understanding the use of physical restraint and reporting arrangements across every form of care, particularly with external providers and across every setting (including Police, Education, Health etc).





## Our Progress in delivering Priority 2, Whole Family Support

**The Promise says,** 'All families need support at different times of their lives and family support is a crucial emphasis for 21-24. The United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises family as the fundamental group in society and the natural environment for growth and wellbeing. Supporting families is a children's rights imperative. 'Families' means all families including families of origin, kinship, foster and adoptive families. Support will not be predicated on the setting of care. Supporting families to stay together and thrive was an imperative before the pandemic and is of even greater import now.

**On Family Support, Plan 21-24 says:** The 10 principles of intensive family support will be embedded into the practice (planning, commissioning and delivery) of all organisations that support children and their families, directly or indirectly.

- Holistic and relational
- Therapeutic
- Non-stigmatising
- Patient and persistent
- Underpinned by children's rights
- Community Based
- Responsive and timely
- Work with family assets
- Empowerment and agency
- Flexible

The Children's Services Plan provides the direction of travel for working with community planning partners to shape a model of family support based on the 10 principles of Family Support outlined in The Promise. The trauma-informed recovery service aligned to the Bairns Hoose will operate on a whole family basis, deliver on the 10 principles and be closely aligned with our Fit Like Hub to enable a stepping up and down of support.

### Understanding demand and need

Our request for assistance process, which allows us to amend our response in light of live demand data, is being updated to include access for our multiagency partners. Phase 1 is ready for launch and will not only gather information on the number of referrals but will also allow referrals to be tracked from allocation to a worker to the point any agency disengages.

This will allow all services to be more agile, ensure the needs of families are being met and build a stronger picture of the journeys taken by our families. Phase 2, will explore how families can self-refer at the point of need.

### **An aim for a universal provision of PEEP**

A very high proportion of community, health and Early Learning and Childcare staff are now trained to deliver the programme but the number of programmes in place is low due in some cases to confidence and in other cases staffing challenges across Early Learning and Childcare.

Through improvement Charter 4.3, an offer of co-delivery will be tested with the aim of increasing confidence in the delivery of this important intervention in order to further strengthen our universal support offers. As well as ELC staff, to achieve our aim of increasing by 40% the number of PEEP programmes delivered by multi-agency partners by 2025, we are also committed to expanding delivery to a wider set of partners and we are pairing up partners/services that have similar goals to deliver PEEP together, for example ChildSmile health will be delivering PEEP with nurseries). To support partners commit to PEEP delivery and the required training, we are developing a tiered training criteria, including provision of funded training spaces to mitigate barriers.

### **Integrated working at locality level**

Partnership Forums continue to work to identify the issues being faced across a community to determine priorities, agree how to allocate resources, and identify where gaps in provision remain. Support afforded however, can be inconsistent.

Youth Workers, Family Learning Workers and Financial Inclusion workers were first put in place over 2021/22 as part of the Education Recovery Grant, with a clear remit for early intervention and to target those children, young people and families most at risk of disengaging from education. This resource has been maintained through use of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding. There are numerous examples of where this more flexible allocation of resource has successfully improved outcomes for learners and families with examples highlighted later in this report but there is a need to develop an evaluation framework to more effectively track progress across the range of Tier 2 supports. Taking this approach will enable us to see where further support is required.

Further consideration of Locality working is now required to ensure consistency and to maximise the impact of our collective resource.

### **Family Learning funded through Scottish Attainment Challenge funding**

The primary reason for most of the referrals to the Family Learning service is for support with behaviour, low attendance at school or support for families with a child who has additional support needs. When work begins with families and a trusted rapport is built, other areas in need of support are often discovered, such as poverty, poor mental health and the breakdown of family relationships.

Families being referred for 1:1 support generally present with a higher level of need, with 16% of families currently with social work input, on the cusp of social work support or experiencing child protection concerns. Family Learning frequently support the maintenance of de-escalations from social work, the service is recognised by colleagues as an essential role in the support received by families. The team have developed strong relationships with a wide variety of partner agencies with the goal of ensuring that families access the right support at the right time.

## **Family Learning Case Study funded through Scottish Attainment Challenge funding**

### **Working together with home and school**

A child displaying aggressive behaviours at home and in school was referred to Family Learning. The child was only attending school for 2 hours each morning at the time of referral and found it difficult to be in class, spending most of the time in school in the nurture room. The referral outlined the parents' need for support to understand the child's emotions and to establish structured routines and boundaries within the family home. Family Learning began building positive relationships with the parents and supported them to attend an 'Understanding Emotions' group. 1:1 support was offered in the family home, establishing positive routines and encouraging mum and dad to work together to respond appropriately to the distressed behaviours of their child. At the most recent multi-agency meeting for the young person, there has been a marked improvement.

The child is now accessing a full timetable, and most of his timetable is within the classroom with his peers. The child can recognise when he is becoming frustrated, and there is a system in place to allow space for him to deescalate. Mum and dad are noticing that their young person is less heightened at home, and they are seeing a clear reduction in heightened behaviours.

### **Family Learning Case Study - Young Parents Group**

Family Learning have been running a support group for Young Parents under the age of 25 in Seaton Community Centre since September 2022. This is a space for young parents to meet other parents their own age and develop a peer support network. Participants have said that they previously struggled to access regular parent and toddler groups due to the difference in age between them and the other parents who attend. Each week they make lunch together and take part in an activity which is decided by the participants themselves. A core group now attend regularly. The group have worked on a variety of creative projects and participants have been able to take part in activities they otherwise wouldn't have enjoyed. The participants have had speakers in from services like St Machar Credit Union, ABZ Works and CFINE and have since signed up to access these in the community regularly. Visits have been undertaken to Aberdeen Art Gallery and SHMU, which group members have enjoyed. Some of the participants are quite vulnerable and have a limited support network.

Through engaging with the Young Parent Group they have been able to access 1-2-1 support from Family Learning workers, Family Learning courses and Grounded Counselling. Two of the group members have children transitioning to primary school after the summer and are now thinking about volunteering opportunities in the community and potentially returning to work. Family Learning staff continue to signpost them to appropriate support and opportunities.

### **Establishing the Fit Like Service**

The Fit Like Family Wellbeing Team is a collaboration of children's services, health and voluntary sector working together to support the mental health and wellbeing needs of children, young people, and families in Aberdeen City. The Family wellbeing Team is designed to be an integrated whole system approach to change the way in which early help services support families. Delivery of Fit Like family wellbeing is underpinned by embracing a children's rights approach and work to develop Fit Like Hubs has been and continues to be directly informed by the voices of service users. The service provides holistic early intervention support to children, young people and their families mitigating the need for them to access statutory children's social work services or CAMHS and is staffed by a range of agencies and disciplines including:

- ACC - Education; CSW; Community Learning and Development; Youth services

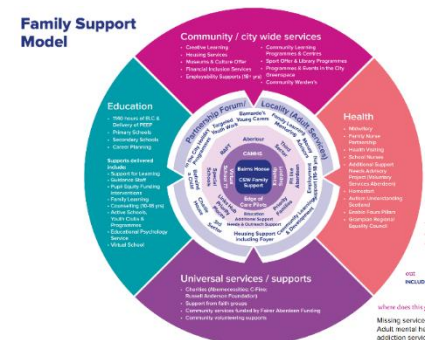
- NHS - CAMHS; Health Visiting; School Nursing
- 3rd Sector – Children’s 1st;
- ACC Group - Sport Aberdeen

Children 1st, who support delivery of our Fit Like Hubs will support delivery of our Trauma Recovery Service. By connecting our Trauma Recovery Service to our wider Family Support Model we will support families to access community based supports but also allow for them to re-access more intensive supports if required.

### Clarifying our offer of Family Support

Work is currently underway to develop a clear information visual of our Family Support Model and associated evaluation framework. Taking this approach will enable us to test our model against identified vulnerable groups and will allow us to fully maximise the support of community based supports around a common purpose by making use of data from our request for assistance system.

Children’s social work have undertaken research with a number of families to better understand their experiences of support and are looking to develop a sustainable feedback loop to ensure that our planning for family support is informed by the voices of those who have accessed it.



**In summary**, work is well underway and our developing family support model is aligned to the 10 principles advocated in The Promise. Going forward we hope to collaborate with partners to better include the contributions of services which address parental support needs. We believe that this area will be fully delivered by the end of 2024.

### To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:

- Develop multi-agency learning and guidance in relation to realising children’s rights when they are in need of care and protection
- Ensure we have early, accessible and aligned support services for parents and carers in place which complement our family support model
- Recommission our family support services, ensuring that services offered are aligned with the 10 principles of Intensive Family Support.
- Develop and deliver on a Bairns Hoose
- Take forward shared learning from use of the whole family wellbeing fund
- Consider how best to empower staff working across localities

**On peer and community support, Plan 21-24 says:** There will be a consistent, national approach to ensure there are places in every community for parents of young children to meet other local parents, to stay and play with their children, and get support and advice

There are a wide range of Third Sector supports available to children, young people and their families in the City. A Promise lead has recently been appointed as a Third Sector interface and the post holder now sits on our Children's Services Board.

### Provision of holiday programmes

The education service continues to work with officers from across the organisation and local partners to plan and deliver holiday programmes during Summer, October and Easter school holidays. The offer consists of a priority programme for those families at greatest risk of poverty and a universal offer. Evaluations from parents and young people continue to be consistently high sitting at 9.7 out of 10. The allocation of £100,000 as part of the council budget 23/24 and allocation of a central Officer to coordinate is enabling provision over school session 23/24.



### Support to manage family finances

Financial inclusion advisors have been attached to schools as part of our approach to education recovery. Over the period April 2022 to March 2023 the enhanced Financial Inclusion Team's advisors helped families achieve the following:

- Financial Gains of £1, 077, 325.24
- Assisted/Assisting 194 households with debt issues
- Helping with total debts of £1, 129, 447.58
- 381 household with given full benefit checks only
- Assisted 57 households to claim benefits
- Assisting 12 household to challenge being turned down for benefits

The service continues to be promoted to ensure all parents have access to advice and support. As well as financial support we are developing pathways to ensure that 100% of urgent requests for first stage infant formula and nutritional support for pre-school children are met by 2024.

Through improvement charter 4.1 we are Establishing a pathway where health professionals & emergency food providers can access a cash first approach for urgent first stage formula, nutritional support for the whole family and income maximisation support. This coincides with a reporting system collating the number of referrals and repeat referrals for emergency first stage formula and nutritional support to ensure demand can be monitored and areas for targeted support identified.

To ensure awareness of available supports, we are adapting the trusted sources of information such as our "Pathways to Support" live document to include an infant feeding early years section where urgent first stage formula support, nutritional support and early years income maximisation.

We are committed to increasing by 10% the no. of parents with children under 5 who are completing a full benefits check by 2024. Through our improvement charter 4.2, we are establishing new direct referral route for staff supporting/engaging with parents with children under 5 to both the Council's Financial Inclusion Team and to the Money Talk Team. In embedding the referrals we are developing and holding staff training sessions to ensure that staff are aware and using the referral routes. Finally, we're also co-designing and testing new ways of promoting how to access support to families with children under 5 & pregnant women, such as social media promotion, via their health professionals and community groups.

### **Parenting Support**

A range of supports are available from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector and it is hoped that the inclusion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector in our Children's Services Board will help map provision across our communities to increase visibility. There is also a need to look at how supports funding by the Council through various grants are contributing to the emerging model of Family Support.

Partnership work with Save the Children was positively received last session and provided key supports to parents in some of our pilot settings. Heathryburn and Woodside schools were trained to embed a Families Connect programme, a facilitated network for parents of pupils aged 3-6.

The Peep Learning Together programme has a peer-led element and supports parents and carers to:

- value and build on the home learning environment by making the most of everyday learning opportunities.
- build and strengthen attachment relationships with their child through listening, talking, playing, singing and sharing books together.
- help babies and children to make the most of their opportunities by becoming confident communicators and active learners, ready for school.
- Community groups are free and available to any parents and carers with children from birth to 5 years. Information on locations and times are available on request.

Peer support groups are also available for families who may need either additional or specific support, such as low mood, young parents, looked after children, English as an additional language. These groups are available by self-request or via a Health Visitor or other professional.

### **Safer schools app**

In June 2021, the Safer Schools app was launched for pupils, parents/carers and staff and provides relevant and current information on a wide range of safeguarding, wellbeing, and online safety subjects. The app has been well received by our parent forum members and our child protection committee, as proving a useful resource for all. All schools have signed up to the app, which was shared with all parents via a range of communication channels – direct email, text message and social media. A focus on the Safer Schools app has been included in the monthly newsletter to parents/carers. A new version of the app, Safer Schools (Scotland), will be launched soon and will provide usage data for adults using the app.

**In summary,** work is underway but there is a need to further join up services delivering targeted supports. The appointment of a Third Sector Promise lead is exceptionally positive and will help us move this recommendation forward more fully. We remain optimistic that this action will be fully delivered by the end of 2024.

**To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Develop our use of communities and volunteers to support preventative activity
- Map Tier 2 provision and include these supports in our evaluation framework to help us measure the strength of our local system
- Encourage the Third Sector to engage with the refreshed Request for Assistance tool and work collaboratively to help mitigate risk

**On service integration, Plan 21-24 says:** Scotland's family support services will feel and be experienced as integrated to those who use them.

**Delivery of SCIM**

Community Planning Partners (CPPs) led the implementation of the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) on behalf of the region in November 2022. Regional co-delivery of SCIM builds on over 20 years of co-located practice with colleagues from the Police and children's social work. Our implementation has been recognised as best practice nationally. As a result of this maturing relationship, feedback from children and young people is directly shaping SCIM practice as well as informing our thinking around our Bairns Hoose.

**Effective multi-agency working**

Our 2019 Joint Inspection of Children's Services highlighted a commitment to multi-agency working. The Joint Inspection noted that 'Joint working was effectively promoted by leaders who collaborated and shared a clear vision, values and aims'.

Since publication of the 2019 Joint Inspection report, and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Community Planning Partners have had considerable success in delivering integrated rights based services. Our multi-agency workforce, who have experienced such integration, speak openly about the transformational nature of integration for those they serve and of the impact on the multiagency workforce.

Recognising that children's needs will move up and down, we continue to actively engage with Children's 1<sup>st</sup> to deliver a trauma recovery service. Children's 1<sup>st</sup> independence will enable honest reflections from children, young people and families and live connections with wider community based services within our Family Support Model to provide effective scaffolding for families. Children 1<sup>st</sup> already support delivery of Tier 2 services in the city and Moray Council enabling seamless transition between services and access to more holistic support through established services.



## **Integrated provisions**

The Partnership has a focus on prevention, Leaders have encouraged the deliberate utilisation of a number of policy levers, such as the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare, to progress opportunities for co-location and integration and more rights based approaches. There is strong local evidence of the impact of integration on staff and those accessing services. Now partners (including Police and Health) are based in the Council Headquarters and this is further strengthening our relationships and shared decision making. The partnership is keen to explore wider alignment across the region to better reflect the geographical reach of Police Scotland and NHSG.

Operationally children's social work already have a Housing Support Officer and Drugs worker embedded within the Youth Team, an integrated Health and Social Work maternity hospital team and have integrated Includem into Intensive Support Services at Craigmyle to improve children, young people and family's experiences of services and support.

We are committed to increasing the delivery of co-located services by health and education by 2024 to improve health and educational outcomes for young people and their families. Through improvement charter 7.2 we are co-designing with young people and partners a Healthy Hub model to be located within Northfield Academy that could then be spread to other areas. The project is working with young people to name the hub and to explore community data in order to help identify target groups and support required to be provided/available through the Healthy Hub and to produce modern child friendly communication plan to launch and to encourage young people to attend the Hub.

The Hub will promote healthy lifestyle choices to support physical and mental wellbeing and help support young people through a (vocational) pathway (in hospitality or care for example) and into a positive and sustained destination.

Two Children's social work teams are in the process of locating to city schools.

## **Shared policies and goals**

The following effective multi-agency partnerships and governance arrangements are already in place:

- Chief Officers Group (COG)
- Child Protection Committee (CPC)
- Children's Services Board (CSB)
- Alcohol & Drugs Partnership (ADP)
- Adult Protection Committee (APC)
- Violence Against Women Partnership (of which the COG has an oversight role).
- Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

## Managing the move from child to adult services

Multi-agency partnership interface across transitional points e.g. from children's to adult's services needs to improve. We aspire to offer family support services which are easily accessible, prevent families from having to re-tell their stories, and are experienced as integrated by all who use them.

**In summary**, work is well underway and considerable progress has been made in ensuring that services are experienced as being more joined up. This will continue to be developed over the lifetime of our Children's Services Plan. 'Moving on' has been identified by The Promise Scotland team as a priority for this year. We are confident that this action will be delivered by the end of 2024.

### To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:

- Learn from the current review of commissioned family support services with a view that they will continue to operate in a collaborative and collegiate bases.
- Continue to explore and maximise opportunities for integration
- Take advantage of the changes coming from legislation and policy e.g. the Care and Justice Bill to work with colleagues in other services to deliver support to children and families
- Further develop our transition planning for young people transitioning to adult services

**On family therapies, Plan 21-24 says:** All families will have direct and clear access to family therapies and specific support across a range of issues, so that accessing support is seen as something that a range of families may need throughout life.

An Aberdeen approach to Family Group Decision Making is being considered as part of our improvement work. There are a range of therapeutic supports within the Third Sector that families can access.

## Bairn's Hoose and SCIM

In Autumn 2022, Aberdeen City's Public Protection Chief Officers Group unanimously committed to delivering an Aberdeen City Bairns Hoose on a collaborative basis. A multi-agency Bairns Hoose Delivery Group was established in early 2023 to drive this work forward on behalf of the CPC and CSB and has responsibility for:

- Planning, implementation, and delivery of a Bairns Hoose to provide trauma-informed recovery, support and justice
- Ensuring that delivery of trauma recovery support aligns to the wider Family Support Model
- Ensuring as a partnership that trauma recovery lens is central to the delivery of IRD's (Interagency Referral Discussions) and SCIM (Scottish Child Interview Model) interviews.
- Developing the capacity of a Bairns Hoose to deliver a trauma-informed remote Court facility for children and young people.

- Engaging with partnerships across the North East of Scotland to explore opportunities for co-delivery and shared learning to improve outcomes for children and young people.

### **Therapeutic care**

Aberdeen City Council has an established therapeutic approach to provision in our residential children's homes that is based on the Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP). DDP is used to help children and young people who have been traumatised by hurt and/or neglected within their families in their early years, making it difficult for them to feel safe and secure. The approach aims to help children and young people address difficulties with attachment (finding it hard to feel safe with parents or in primary relationships) and inter-subjectivity (finding it hard to give and take relationships). Theraplay training is provided to kinship & foster carers with the Family Network Team offering intensive therapeutic family support.

**In summary**, work is well underway and considerable work has been undertaken to shape services around The Promise. We now need to progress plans to develop and implement our Trauma Recovery Services, associated with our Bairns Hoose, and finalise an evaluation framework to help us test the strength of our arrangements. We are hopeful that this area will be fully delivered by the end of 2024.

### **To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Commission a trauma-recovery service aligned to SCIM across the North East
- Learn from the 'Supporting Birth Parents who have had children permanently removed Project' to improve our support offer.
- Wellbeing
- Supervision and support

## Our Progress in delivering Priority 3, Supporting the Workforce

**The Promise says,** Children experience the 'care system' through people. Over Plan 21-24, support for people who care and continue to care if times get tough, will improve. There will be consistency of approach, values and understanding across Scotland's workforce.

**On workforce values, Plan 21-24 says:** There will be a national values-based recruitment and workforce development framework in place and adhered to by all organisations and professions involved in supporting children and their families.

### Multi-agency planning for the workforce

Aberdeen City's Corporate Parenting Group has responsibility for the delivery of the Corporate Parenting Improvement Plan, collation and monitoring of data and quality assurance in relation to children and young people with experience of care, delivering on identified aims set out in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and driving the implementation of The Promise across the Partnership. The Corporate Parenting Group engages with children and young people with experience of care and seeks to ensure all improvement activity takes full account of their views and lived experiences.

Specifically, the group has oversight of the refreshed LOIP Improvement Project Stretch Aim 6; *"95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education, health and emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026"*

In September 2022, training on Corporate Parenting and The Promise was jointly delivered by the Virtual School, Lead Officer Corporate parenting and the Principal Planning development officer to all probationer teachers in Aberdeen City. The session was well attended and received. Feedback from these sessions is informing ongoing work to develop and refresh our Corporate Parenting training, including a reworking of the mandatory e-learning module for all Aberdeen City Council staff and creation of local multi-agency training, to ensure relevant policy and legislative changes are included. The training delivered to probationer teachers has been expanded in 2023/24 to include a more in-depth look at The Promise.

### Children's social work

Children's social work recruitment practices have moved from being overly competency focused to better balancing competency and values. A workforce Wellbeing Event was held in early 2023 where ongoing supports to staff were showcased. A CSW specific induction programme, cognisant of wellbeing and trauma-informed practice, has been developed and trialled with newly qualified social workers.

**In summary,** work is underway and well established systems are in place and these continue to be kept under review to ensure that they reflect national best practice. We welcome the anticipated establishment of a National Social Work Agency. This will ensure a more consistent approach to staff learning and development on a national basis. Although this may not be fully

established by 2024, locally we are confident that this area will be fully delivered by the end of 2024.

**To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Continue planning for and embedding of the SSSC Supported Year
- Continued planning for and embedding of the National Trauma Training Programme

**On trauma informed, Plan 21-24 says:** Organisations that have responsibilities towards care experienced children and families and those on the edge of care will be able to demonstrate that they are embedding trauma informed practice across their work and within their workforce.

Ensuring our multi-agency workforce is trauma informed and where necessary trauma skilled is a priority of our Corporate Parenting Plan. We are embedding the national child protection guidance, which is aligned to trauma-informed principles, and there is ongoing work in relation to building trauma-informed universal workforce development plan, drawing upon existing national tools and applying a local lens.

**Compassionate and Connected Communities**

All schools continue to engage with the Compassionate and Connected Communities (CCC) programme. We have built the capacity of 11 further members of staff to act as trainers for the programme. Taking this approach of on-going training for trainers ensures that we maintain a full 64 trainers across the city with a trainer available in each city school. This ensures an on-going focus on trauma informed practice.

**Emotional Literacy Support Assistants**

ACC Educational Psychology Service have now trained 52 Support Staff in the Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) programme, with cohort 3 just completing their training. ELSA is a programme grounded in Psychology, written by Educational Psychologists and with strong evidence of outcomes from its widespread use in England and Wales. ACC EPS data shows the training was rated very highly, that outcomes were seen for individuals in Schools with trained ELSAs. ELSA is an intensive training programme with the equivalent of 6 full days of training. The training builds capacity in staff to deliver targeted individual programmes of education in relation to developing self-esteem, resilience and the overall emotional literacy and regulation of learners. Following completion of the training ELSAs receive career-long psychological group supervision 6 times a year, a total of 12 hours per year. This intensive and in-depth training for ACC's Support Staff maps onto the aims of the Scottish Government's 'Pupil Support Staff - Professional Learning Framework'.

Other training offered by ACC EPS that support staff have engaged with include Emotion Coaching, Seasons for Growth, Positive Psychology and Mindfulness. Training evaluation returns remain positive. Three new schools did whole school training, including support staff, on Emotion

Coaching this year. Two new cohorts of support staff have been trained as Seasons for Growth *Companions* this year. Seasons Companions lead small groups of learners.

Companions help the group learn the skills to cope with and make sense of significant loss and change, and help the learners create a peer network of support. Once trained as a companion, twice yearly re-connector sessions are offered as ongoing support and development. Seasons for Growth has very positive outcome ratings for the support staff trained.

### **Training for Police Officers**

Police Trauma Informed sessions have been completed in Aberdeen City with plans for the same in Aberdeenshire and Moray. Probationers now receive an hour and a half input on being trauma informed. Police Scotland now have a cadre of 40 plus Trauma Informed Champions covering the North East. Future plan for mandatory training for all currently being progressed with IT.

Police Scotland CYP team is responsible for driving the Promise; with commitment to improve the care system in conjunction with partners, and in accordance with the Corporate Parenting Plan, whilst supporting workforce development in areas such as Trauma Informed approach and upskilling partners in areas such as CCE. All in accordance with UNCRC. This work is carried out by Risk and Harm Reduction Officers who also work primarily with care experienced children and young people, but also any other children and young people following missing episodes, and also conduct their return home discussions, and attend subsequent Interagency Referral Discussions (IRD), Multi-agency Meetings and Care and Risk Management Meetings (CARM), etc.

Police Scotland provides regular updates to guidance documents and inputs to care home staff and foster placement services. Police Scotland participation group work will feed into this. Local workforce will meantime continue with WRAM sessions as part of their ongoing Trauma Informed training

### **Training for Children's Social Work**

All of our local residential staff continued to be trained in trauma-recovery principles (DDP). Children's social work are working towards increasing staff training levels to Trauma skilled and Trauma specialist. A workforce survey was undertaken with staff across children's social work to establish perceived levels of Trauma Knowledge and Skill and was used to inform a local pilot approach to training for social workers.

Children's social work are represented at the Scottish Government's Trauma Responsive Social Work Services Expert Advisory Group which provides advice, informs, shares and discusses the implantation of the national trauma training programme for social work services.

**In summary**, work is well underway and good progress has been made in this area. A Multi-agency training plan is currently being developed for approval by the Children's Services Board. We are confident that this area will be fully delivered by the end of 2024.

### **To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Establish and implement trauma-informed universal workforce development plan

**Of on-going relationships, Plan 21-24 says:** There will be no blanket policies or guidance that prevent the maintenance of relationships between young people and those who care for them. Settings of care will be able to facilitate the protection of relationships that are important to children and young people.

### **Relational approaches**

Relational approaches are well embedded in local residential care with many young people maintaining relationships with staff and others beyond moving on. Relational approaches are embedded across fostering service via increase in continuing care numbers and relationships being sustained beyond formal arrangements. Police Scotland, as Corporate Parents, uphold our NE Divisional Pledge to support any care experienced young person should they seek our advice in respect to personal and home safety when moving into their own home for the first time. This is also extended to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who are new to the area and require extra support.

A review of policies has confirmed that there is no policy framework which prevents the maintenance of relationships between young people and those who care for them. A dedicated Throughcare and Aftercare outreach post has supported the maintenance of relationships and connection and Pathway Planning should account for how relationships are sustained.

Adopters, kinship and foster carers' training has been enhanced to include supporting relationships for children and young people in care and maintaining relationships is emphasised in our current preparation of adopters.

**In summary**, work is well underway and good progress has been made in this area. We are confident that this area will be fully delivered by the end of 2024.

### **To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Develop our understanding of why adopters have been unable to maintain relationships for children and young people to better inform our guidance and support

**On workforce support, Plan 21-24 says:** A new framework of support will be in place to ensure people involved in the care of care experienced children and young people feel valued, encouraged and have supportive relationships for reflection with high quality supervision and environmental conditions.

### **Learning and development**

We have a long established delivery model of shared learning and development which will be maintained. Effective professional supervision will also be maintained with Organisational Development on hand to support team development as required.

We are keen to ensure that we can respect the wishes of the young people wherever possible, particularly in identifying their central point of contact. We have a commitment from the partnership that staff, irrespective of the job role, will be released to support a child or young person wherever possible.

Peer support networks have been established in schools and provided key support to those supporting pupils directly.

Staff across CSW are provided with professional supervision and support recognising the complexity of the role and personal impact working intensively with children, young people and families who have experienced significant trauma has on the workforce. A review of Supervision practices within CSW has been undertaken with staff and managers and a working group has been established to create consistent guidance, skills and resources across the service.

**I summary**, work is well underway and good progress has been made in this area and effective systems are in place. We are confident that this area will be fully delivered by the end of 2024.

**To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Further develop workforce wellbeing supports
- Give consideration to alignment within social work supervision policy across adults and children's social work



## Our Progress in Delivering Priority 4, Planning

**The promise says,** There needs be a different approach to investment and planning. National partners have a significant role to play in ensuring a new context for funding, investment and planning. Children and families live in local communities and use local services. It is important that their experiences and outcomes are not determined simply by which local community they live in or local service they use. Planning and investment should be nationally coordinated to ensure that children and families get what they need. Whilst the majority of the promise relates to matters which are reserved to The Scottish Parliament, the English Independent Review of Children's Social Care has relevance in respect of cross-jurisdiction issues.

**On planning, Plan 21-24 says:** Scotland will have a national, strategic planning process in place that ensures that children who are cared for away from their family of origin 'belong to a loving home.'

The planning process will reflect the needs of Scotland's children and young people whilst operating with the expectation that more children will remain with their families. It will reflect the principles of the promise ensuring:

- Scotland's most vulnerable children are not profited from,
- Standards of care are consistent
- End to the selling of care placements to Local Authorities outside Scotland
- Acute and crisis services are phased out to promote early intervention and prevention

### Reviewing commissioned services

We have undertaken a review of our commissioned services and expanded our development offer to Kinship and Foster Carers emphasising the importance of love and trauma recovery.

### National policy changes

Locally we have welcomed the Hearings System Working Group's recommendation report. As the report recognises, there is significant work already underway, either through existing groups, such as the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership, or through new policy, legislation and practice development. These include, but are not limited to, the introduction of Bairn's Hoose, the updated Child Protection Guidance, GIRFEC refresh, Secure Care Redesign, and the Children's Care and Justice Bill, alongside the proposed National Social Work Agency, amongst others. This individual, and combined, improvement work must be seen in the context of improving systems and practices for and with children, young people, and their families and all will have a positive impact on the children's hearing system, directly or indirectly.

**In summary**, work is underway locally. We welcome the national changes being proposed and continue to reflect the direction of travel advocated in The Promise in our commissioning arrangements. Considerable work is required at a national level and this is likely to compromise our ability to deliver on this action by the end of 2024.

**To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Continue to develop local services which promote early intervention and prevention
- We recognise that there remain differences between the care provided in Aberdeen City versus the external care provision we commissions e.g. we do not use restraint in any of our local care settings, however, further work is required to embed this change nationally
- It remains challenging to set our next steps in the absence of change at a national level. What is required moving forward is a cohesive and joined up approach to improvement, across local and national government and with The Promise Scotland and that existing policy, practice and legislative change do not happen independent from each other, or from the work resulting from the Hearings for Children report.

**On investment, Plan 21-24 says:** Investment in the lives of children and families will be considered strategically and holistically in the context of their experiences. The Human and Economic Cost modelling that underpinned Follow the Money and The Money reports will be embedded into organisational and budgeting processes across Scotland. That process will have involved organisations working together to spread investment and align budgets.

Considerable progress has been made in pooling resource across the universal services with examples of health and education co-designing and delivering services to vulnerable groups and health funding early intervention for mental health support by Place2Be in a local primary school as a test of change.

There is a commitment from all partners to resource the Bairns Hoose in terms of both workforce and the costs of the physical infrastructure. The business case for the physical infrastructure are now at an advanced stage although the final business case has still to be approved

Partnership commissioning principles have been agreed. All grants for children are overseen by the Children's Services Board.

The use of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund continues to be a focus and evaluated. We are one of the 6 local authorities participating in independent evaluation of the fund.

**In summary**, work is underway. We continue to explore opportunities to pool resources and will need to carefully consider next steps in light of the Verity House agreement. Despite this uncertainty, we remain hopefully of fully delivering on this action by the end of 2024.

**To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Continue to review the impact of resource allocations to inform future investment and planning

**On information sharing, Plan 21-24 says:** Organisations with responsibilities towards children and families will be confident about when, where, why and how to share information with partners. Information sharing will not be a barrier to supporting children and families.

### **GIRFEC arrangements**

Well established GIRFEC arrangements are in place and the workforce has a clear understanding of when and how to share information in line with legislation. Operational Guidance reflects updated national guidance.

### **Data sharing arrangements**

The partnership has existing data sharing agreements that enable the routine sharing of appropriate data to produce multi-agency data sets. CELCIS have engaged with the data reporting of our Child Protection Committee to inform national approaches to data reporting. Challenges remain in complex organisational systems which create barriers to identifying and sharing information and data.

### **Data dashboards**

Multi-agency data is frequently scrutinised by a range of partnership groups including the COG, CPC and CSB.

### **IRDs**

Out Interagency Referral Discussion processes have been reviewed over the last year and continue to be fully aligned to the updated National Child Protection Guidance and considered best practice.

**In summary**, there are already well established systems in place across the Community Planning Partnership. It is anticipated that this area will be fully delivered by the end of the lifetime of Plan 21-24.

### **To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Implement the Request for Assistance process to enable us to better analyse the impact of services supporting children and families

## Our Progress in Delivery Priority 5, Building Capacity

**The Promise says:** Over the next 3 years, there will be a focus on work that ensures that the structural underpinning of the 'care system' is orientated to the needs of children and families. This work to build capacity and coherence reflects the planned obsolescence of The Promise Scotland. It will not always be there to provide oversight and accountability and the structures need to move to ensure that the scaffolding around the 'care system' facilitates and upholds children's rights

**On legislation, Plan 21-24 says,** Over the course of the next Parliamentary term, there will be identifiable progress made towards ensuring Scotland's legislative framework around the breadth of the 'care system' is coherent and cohesive, upholds the conclusions of the Independent Care Review and is compliant with the UNCRC.

The Children's Services Board is alert to and looks out for proposed legislative change. A local review of policies and guidance has been undertaken to ensure UNCRC compliance and strategic planning is informed by and aligned to upholding the UNCRC.

Planning, at a local level with steer from the Scottish Government, to consider the implications and requirements of the Care and Justice Bill is ongoing.

We have an established multi-agency group (CSW, SCRA and CHS) to ensure Children's Hearings, held locally, are as effective and child-centred as possible. This forum enable practice issues to be raised adopting a learning approach. It will also be well placed to respond to the findings of the ongoing review of Children's Hearings.

**In summary,** change is required at a national level. It is not anticipated that this area will be fully delivered by the end of the lifetime of Plan 21-24.

### **To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Continue horizon scan for legislative change and work to consider what this will mean and require of us locally.

**On the Children's Hearing system, Plan 21-24 says:** The Children's Hearing System will have gone through a redesign process.

That redesign process will bring together children and families, and organisations that hold the responsibility, to rethink the structures, processes and legislation that underpin the hearing system.

The aim will be to ensure there are coherent, cohesive and collaborative proposals on an operating framework for The Children's Hearings System that has been designed with children and families.

That redesign process will be underpinned by:

- giving effect to the promise;
- ensuring compliance with the UNCRC,
- upholding the original intention of The Kilbrandon Review that children involved in offending need care and protection; and
- ensuring The Children's Hearing System and The Courts can facilitate child friendly justice that upholds children's rights and enables their effective participation.

We have welcomed the [Hearing Systems Working Group's Recommendation report](#) and whilst we await change at a national level we continue to work closely with local and national colleagues from SCRA and CHS. Grampian-wide tests of change are anticipated.

Practice and culture change is being promoted to consider how we will best support 16 and 17 years olds, in line with proposed changes to the Children's Hearings system and legislation anticipated from the Care and Justice Bill.

**In summary**, change is required at national level. It is hoped that this area will be fully delivered by the end of the lifetime of Plan 21-24.

**To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Await the Scottish Government's formal response to the HSWG review
- Explore change at a local level to improve our processes, practice and culture.

**On inspection and regulation, Plan 21-24 says** A new, holistic framework for inspection and regulation that values what children and family's value, will have been scoped and developed. It will understand the necessary legislative change required to focus on children's experiences and will be underpinned by the principles set out in the promise and give full effect to the secure care pathway and standards.

We have a local interface with our Link Inspector and participated in the Secure Care Pathway Review which is anticipated to publish its recommendations report in September 2023.

**In summary**, change is required from the Care Inspectorate and we will take learning from the Secure Care Inspection to inform local change. It is hoped that this area will be fully delivered by the end of the lifetime of Plan 21-24. However we also recognise that work to 'reimagine secure care' will take far longer than the lifetime of Plan 21 – 24.

**To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Conversations with the Care Inspectorate and at a national level to continue
- Reflect on and embed learning from secure care review into local practices and processes

**On policy coherence, Plan 21-24 says:** There will be cohesive alignment in the policy initiatives and frameworks across Scotland. Policy development across Scotland will reflect the realities of people's lives and create a coherent policy environment. The focus of the 21-24 period will be on implementation and alignment not inquiries and reviews.

All policies in place across education and children's services, reflect what is known about incorporation of the UNCRC and The Promise.

Our LOIP, Children's Services Plan, Child Poverty Plan and other local and national strategic plans have been aligned with The Promise and UNCRC.

Locally we have convened a National Care Service (NCS) multi-agency group to ensure early planning and consideration of decisions made in relation to NCS.

**In summary**, work is advanced in this area. We continue to proactively plan for changes in policy and welcome greater coherence nationally. It is anticipated that this area will be fully delivered by the end of the lifetime of Plan 21-24, although recognise that decisions in relation to the proposed NCS and incorporation of UNCRC will have an impact here.

**To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Create a coherent policy environment across the partnership, informed by the findings of the reviews being undertaken to inform NCS planning
- Policy coherence across the partnership will be supported by local development and implementation of the Bairns Hoose model

- We intend to align reporting of the child protection improvement plan to children's services planning to further support coherence

**On data mapping and collection, Plan 21-24 says,** Scotland will have a cohesive central picture of all data on the processes and systems that directly and indirectly impact on children and their families, including wider socio-structural factors. The data picture will have been used to fully align data systems, collection and analysis methodologies to what matters to children and families, and the needs of those who take decisions on how best to support children and their families.

A suite of multi-agency data to support monitoring of children's services activity and tracking of trends for our children and young people across the partnership has continued to develop and mature.

Better consistency of data is required at a national level to support benchmarking and a review of what data is collected and reported upon, and whether this really matters to children and families.

**In summary,** good progress has been locally. It anticipated that this area will be fully delivered by the end of the lifetime of Plan 21-24.

**To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Continue to engage with the Local authority social work services (LASWS) children and families group and Promise Scotland to inform national change
- Our corporate parenting data collected across the partnership relates specifically to looked-after children and we hope to develop routine collection of care experienced data to help us better understand a child/young person's experiences and outcomes beyond care better. Work to improve our workforce's understanding of the language of care is underway to support achievement of this.

**On governance structures, Plan 21-24 says,** All public appointments to any of Scotland's Boards and Public Bodies which have an impact on the 'care system' will ensure that the values of the promise are embedded in recruitment frameworks. The governance landscape around the various Boards, networks and groups that sit around the 'care system' will be rationalised to enable effective and accountable shared working around the lives of children and families.

Principally this is an area of work for the Scottish Government, however, locally the following work is underway and all members of the partnership are represented at the board and all subsidiary groups responsible for multi-agency accountability and implementation of The Promise.

We have established regional approaches, such the North East Leaders of Public Protection Group and our SCIM arrangements, enable the maximisation of our plans for a regional connection.

The Aberdeen City Community Planning partnership has a range of highly effective governance arrangements in place including our Chief Officers Group (COG), Child Protection Committee (CPC) and Children's Services Board (CSB). These arrangements, where candour, curiosity and accountability between partners is actively encouraged, has significantly aided more common practice and a shared and ongoing culture of improvement around public protection. Local Government benchmarking outcome data for children suggests we are the most improved Partnership.

The Children's Services Board is governed by and accountable to the Community Planning Management Board, which in turn is accountable to Community Planning Aberdeen.

**In summary**, sound governance arrangements are in place locally. It not anticipated that national governance arrangements will be fully delivered by the end of the lifetime of Plan 21-24.

**To fully deliver on Plan 21-24 we now need to:**

- Change is required at a national level
- Remain engaged with partners at a national and local level to prepare for timeous implementation of change locally as national direction becomes clearer



# PRIORITIES FOR ACTION



## Local and National Context

We are now 3 years into our journey to #KeepThePromise and Plan 21-24 is coming to an end. Plan 21-24 was the first of three intended plans and began on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Undertaking this evaluation has helped confirm many of the next steps we had already identified and identify further two further areas for action which are to:

- Review our Virtual School Toolkit.
- Establish a mechanism to share information on the safe loving relationships important to young people

In its [second report](#), The Promise Oversight Board, acknowledged the challenging context within which The Promise and Plan 21-24 were launched, referencing the disruptive impact of the Covid pandemic and cost of living crisis on people and organisations. The Board was realistic in stating that due to the worsening circumstances for so many and the current pace of change, they do not believe that delivering the original aims of Plan 21-24 is realistic by 2024. However, they reiterated that The Promise is non-negotiable and must be kept by 2030.



As our self-evaluation reflects, there is a lot of positive work underway that is making a difference to the lives of children and families which must be celebrated and built on.

The Promise Scotland have advised that they now think that the time period left, between now and 2030, would be better served with a single 6-year plan, with proper monitoring and accountability built in, rather than the original three 3-year plans, and we remain engaged with colleagues nationally to support our local response to future Promise plans.

The Promise Oversight Board's second report identified 3 priority areas for change in Scotland based on the national data available:

- Education
- Brothers and Sisters
- Homelessness

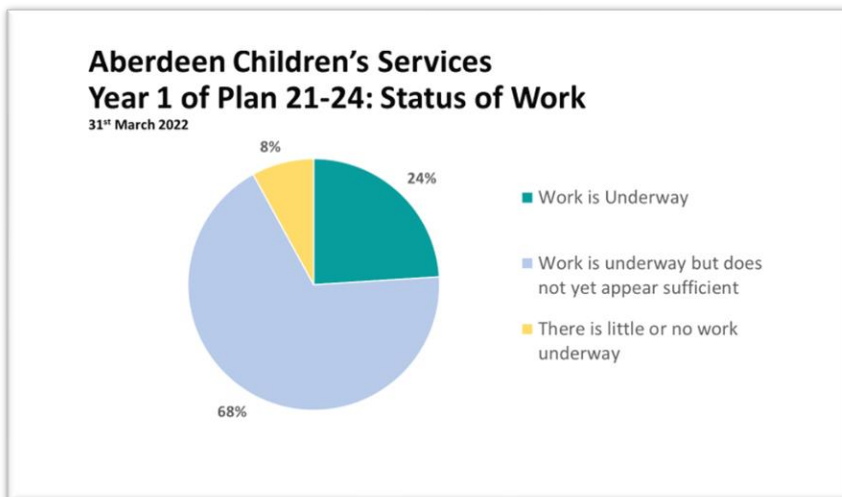
Whilst we have made significant progress locally in all 3 of these areas, we agree that improving the educational outcomes of our looked-after and care experienced children and young people,

keeping brothers and sisters together and connected and ensuring young people leaving care have everything they need should remain local priorities too.

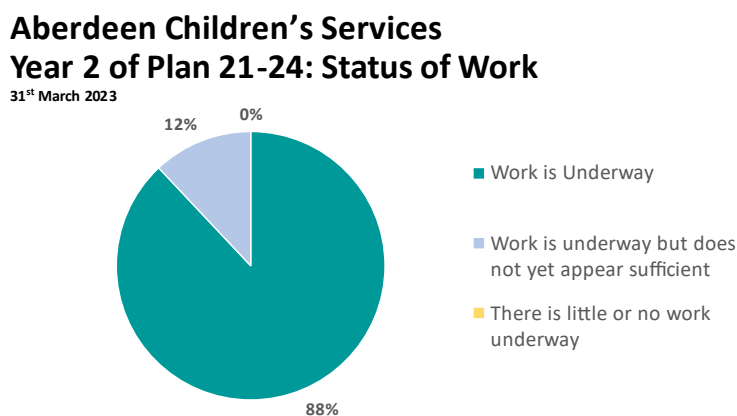
We remain dedicated to developing and embedding our local Family Support Model to deliver on early and preventative support to children, young people and their families with the aim of increasingly preventing them from coming into our care at all.

### Summary of Progress

In 2022, we reported our progress against the 25 priority actions from Plan 21-24 as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.



From this year's self-evaluation against the 25 priority actions from Plan 21-24 we can see that significant progress has been made in the last year and notably we have identified no areas where there is 'little or no work underway'.



The 3 priority actions, planning, legislation and governance structures, where we have identified 'work is underway but does not yet appear sufficient' require change at a national, systems level e.g. by the Scottish Government or Children's Hearings system, before a local response can be made.