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To: Councillor Greig, Convener; Councillor Mennie, Vice Convener; Councillors Allard, Blake, Bouse, Brooks, Hazel Cameron, Fairfull, Grant, MacGregor, McLeod, Radley and Mrs Stewart and Ms Danielle Barclay (Parent Representative - Nursery / Primary), Mr Doug Haywood (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools), Ms Jacqueline Munro (Teacher Representative - Secondary Schools), Dr Alison Murray (Parent Representative - Secondary), Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative), Mr Madhav Regmi (Third Religious Representative) and Mrs Hilda Smith (Church of Scotland representative).

Town House,
ABERDEEN, 21 April 2025

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, 29 APRIL 2025 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>

ALAN THOMSON
INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER - GOVERNANCE

B U S I N E S S

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 18 February 2025 - for approval (Pages 5 - 10)

COMMITTEE PLANNER

- 6.1 Committee Business Planner (Pages 11 - 18)

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 Performance Management Framework/National Improvement Framework Progress Update - CORS/25/079 (Pages 19 - 62)
- 9.2 Aberdeen City Integrated Children's Services Strategic Plan Annual Report 2023/24 - F&C/25/078 (Pages 63 - 160)
- 9.3 Inspection Reporting - F&C/25/081 (Pages 161 - 232)

EDUCATION

- 10.1 Early Intervention Service - F&C/25/074 (Pages 233 - 286)
- 10.2 International Travel - Music Service Trip to Regensburg - F&C/25/082 (Pages 287 - 292)
- 10.3 Victorian Schools Programme: Outline Business Case - F&C/25/080 (Pages 293 - 302)

EXEMPT BUSINESS - EDUCATION

- 11.1 Victorian Schools Programme: Outline Business Case Exempt Appendix - F&C/25/080 (Pages 303 - 418)

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

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- 12.1 Corporate Parenting Annual Report - F&C/25/083 (Pages 419 - 462)

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

Should you require any further information about this agenda, please contact Steph Dunsmuir, sdunsmuir@aberdeencity.gov.uk

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EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 18 February 2025. Minute of Meeting of the EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Greig, Convener; Councillor Mennie, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Allard, Blake, Bouse, Brooks, Hazel Cameron, Fairfull, Grant, MacGregor, McLeod, Radley and Mrs Stewart. External Members:- Ms Danielle Barclay (Parent Representative - Nursery / Primary), Mr Doug Haywood (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools), Ms Jacqueline Munro (Teacher Representative - Secondary Schools), Dr Alison Murray (Parent Representative - Secondary), Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative) and Mrs Hilda Smith (Church of Scotland representative) (External Members for articles 1 to 7 only).

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.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

1. Ms Munro made a transparency statement in respect of item 9.2 (Inspection Reporting), advising that she was employed at Harlaw Academy which was mentioned in the report but that she did not consider that the content of the report required her to make a declaration of interest. She therefore would remain in the meeting for that item.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 26 November 2024 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

3. The Committee had before it the business planner as prepared by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to item 31 (Northfield Asset Review), to note that the Executive Director Families and Communities would liaise with the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to ensure that the Community Council were included in the engagement;
- (ii) in relation to the School Streets pilot which had been considered at the recent Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee meeting, to note that the Executive Director Families and Communities had undertaken to provide a service update to

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
18 February 2025

- Members of Education and Children's Services Committee on the progress of the pilot; and
(iii) to otherwise note the planner.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK/NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK PROGRESS UPDATE - CORS/25/035

4. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Corporate Services which presented (a) the status of key quarterly and annual performance measures relating to the Education and Lifelong Learning and Children's and Families Clusters, (b) early reflections against the initial release of Curriculum for Excellence data pending further releases through the Broad General Education Benchmarking Tool, and (c) a Progress Update in respect of Aberdeen City Council's National Improvement Framework Plan 2024/25.

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:-

- (i) in relation to page 39 of the report, to note that officers would ascertain where apprenticeships sat within the data and provide this information to Members outwith the meeting;
- (ii) in relation to page 46 of the report and the deep dive being undertaken in relation to the reasons for not bringing cases to a Child Protection Planning meeting within the expected timescales, to note that an update on this work could be provided in the Bairns Hoose report, due to Committee in June 2025; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the report.

INSPECTION REPORTING - F&C/25/029

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which detailed the outcome of inspection reports published by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and The Care Inspectorate since the last meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee.

Members asked a number of questions of officers and the Head Teachers in attendance, particularly in relation to the action plans appended to the report, and the continued liaison between Aberdeen City Council officers and Little Clouds Nursery following a recent incident.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the report;

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
18 February 2025

- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools to implement continuous improvement in keeping with agreed Quality Improvement Frameworks approved at Committee in July 2024; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to utilise learning from the National Thematic Report: Local authority approaches to support school improvement to inform the development of the Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Plan and Quality Improvement Framework for 2025/26.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would circulate the more detailed plan for Dyce Academy to Members outwith the meeting;
- (ii) to note that the Executive Director Families and Communities would liaise with the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord in respect of a briefing for Members in advance of the next Committee meeting to provide an update on the various works being undertaken in schools, such as the work due to commence in Harlaw Academy;
- (iii) to note that there was an error in the report and that recommendation (c) was to be removed; and
- (iv) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

OPTIONS TO RATIONALISE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE SETTINGS - F&C/25/001

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which presented options in respect of rationalising Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings in order to meet demand, maximise resources and achieve best value.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee consider the options presented and approves the amended Early Learning and Childcare delivery models, set out in Appendix 2 of this report, from August 2025, based on demand.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers had undertaken to provide detail to Members outwith the meeting on what the percentage split was between term-time, full day and fully flexible placements across the city; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendation.

UNCRC PLAN - F&C/25/024

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which presented a refreshed Local Authority Plan for implementation of the

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
18 February 2025

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) following publication of Statutory Guidance on Parts 2 and 3 of the Act.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) endorse the UNCRC Plan to support the Council's ongoing compliance with the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to routinely update the Plan based on an ongoing review of legal judgements and advise Committee of any required changes to the Plan through a service update.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning had undertaken to make contact through the ASN network to ascertain if there was good practice available in other areas which could be taken on board in Aberdeen in respect of advocacy for children and young people who were not care experienced/part of the child protection process; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

At this juncture, the External Members left the meeting.

THE CHILDREN (CARE AND JUSTICE) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2024 - F&C/25/011

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which sought to provide assurance that as far as was currently possible the relevant planning and scoping activity was being progressed to fully consider the implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 received Royal assent in June 2024;
- (b) note the implications on systems, processes and resources, as far as they were currently known, of the enactment of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024;
- (c) note the action plan document attached as Appendix 1 to the report;
- (d) note that the ending of placing children in Young Offender Institutions came into effect in August 2024; and
- (e) instruct the Chief Social Work Officer to provide Committee with a service update in the planning for implementation of the Act once the plan for enactment and associated funding was made known by the Scottish Government.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve recommendations (a) to (d);

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
18 February 2025

- (ii) to instruct the Executive Director Families and Communities to write to Natalie Don-Innes, Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise, following consultation with the Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee and the Convener of the Education and Children's Services Committee, requesting an update on the implementation plan and required funding; and
 - (iii) to instruct the Chief Officer – Children's Social Work and Family Support to report to this Committee once the plan for enactment and associated funding was made known by the Scottish Government.
- **COUNCILLOR MARTIN GREIG, Convener**

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER 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		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	29 April 2025								
4	Children's Services Plan - Annual Update	E&CS 21/03/23 - to instruct the 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. E&CS 04/07/23 - to instruct the 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. E&CS 20/02/24 - to note the current plans to provide appropriate accommodation, support and intervention to meet the needs of this vulnerable group of children and young people; and instruct the Chief Social Work Officer to provide an annual update through the Children's Services Plan Annual Report. E&CS 20/02/24 - to request that the Chief Social Work Officer provides Members with an update on progress to deliver a Bairns Hoose within the Annual Child Protection Committee Report and within the annual update to Aberdeen City's Children's Services Plan. E&CS 30/04/24 - to instruct the Director Families and Communities to consider the findings of the health & wellbeing annual report and plan next steps as part of work being taken forward through the Children's Services Plan and associated National Improvement Framework Plan		Eleanor Sheppard	Families and Communities	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
5	Corporate Parenting Annual Report / Keeping the Promise Delivery Plan	To present the Corporate Parenting Annual Report for assurance E&CS 26/11/24 - (i) to instruct the Chief Officer - Children's Social Work & Family Support to provide a report to Committee on the delivery plan for Plan 24-30 when it was published and on the proposed reporting arrangements for delivery of the plan; and (ii) to instruct the Chief Officer - Children's Social Work and Family Support to provide a report to Committee updating the partnership's Corporate Parenting Plan to take account of the delivery plan for Plan 24-30 and for this to include the voice and views of Aberdeen City's care experienced children and young people		Graeme Simpson	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	2.1		
6	International Travel – Music Service Trip to Regensburg	To seek approval for attendance		Beth Edwards	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	2.1.1 and GD 5		
7	School Estate Plan: Victorian School Building Improvements - Outline Business Case	To seek approval in principle of an outline business case for making improvements to the condition and suitability of Victorian school buildings, as detailed in the School Estate Plan		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
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2									
8	Early Intervention Provision - Riverbank School	E&CS 26/11/24 - (i) to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to develop a proposed operating model for a cost neutral time limited Early Intervention provision, to be based at Riverbank School, for up to 10 primary children, and bring a firmer proposal to Committee for approval within two cycles; and (ii) to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to append a summary of progress against the Additional Support for Learning Review recommendations and a summary of the Parliamentary Inquiry into ASL to the report being presented within two cycles		Emma Powell / Shona Milne	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
9	Inspection Reporting	A standing item (if required) to report on the outcome of inspections and any changes in the approach of inspection agencies To include update on Northfield Academy / Harlaw Academy		Shona Milne	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.6		
10	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Framework	To present the regular performance update		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		
11	24 June 2025								
12	ABZCampus	E&CS 30/04/2024 - (i) to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to report back on progress including a full review of the impact of Pathways Advocates within one calendar year; and to note that officers would however investigate the possibility of bringing an interim evaluation of the impact of Pathways Advocates to Committee, or potentially bringing the full evaluation at an earlier stage than 2025; and (ii) to instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to report back with a method for providing an overview of participation and achievements in ABZCampus		Mark Jones	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
13	Bucksburn & Dyce Secondary Provision - Outline Business Case (NA2)	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 long term secondary school provision for Bucksburn and Dyce, and report back with an outline business case for consideration by the Education and Children's Services Committee. E&CS 20/02/24 - Approval of revised School Estate timeline E&CS 17/09/24 - the Committee agreed a revised programme for implementing projects within the School Estate Plan. The revised programme includes an updated timescale for the submission of an outline business case for secondary school provision at Dyce and Bucksburn, which would be expected to be submitted to the Committee for approval on 24/06/25		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		
14	Review of Spaces - Support for Pupils with Additional Support Needs	E&CS 17/09/24 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to carry out a review of spaces currently available within schools for supporting pupils with additional support needs, and in consultation with the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning, to report back to the Committee with recommendations for improving such spaces where this is required		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		
15	Inspection Reporting	A standing item (if required) to report on the outcome of inspections and any changes in the approach of inspection agencies		Shona Milne	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.6		

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
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2	Health and Wellbeing	E&CS 30/04/24 - to instruct the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to report the findings of the next Health and Wellbeing surveys to Committee within one calendar year; and to note with concern evidence that indicated that the current cohort of S4 girls were generally outliers in the improvement journey; and, therefore, instruct the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to give this issue special focus and undertake further targeted work on supportive solutions; with information on actions and outcomes reported back in the agreed report		Emma Powell	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
23									
24	16 September 2025								
25	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Framework	To present the regular performance update EOD Committee 19/04/18 - to instruct the Chief Operating Officer to track progress against the proposed KPIs in order to report progress to the Education Operational Delivery Committee. Reporting will comprise (a) a yearly progress report based on validated data and (b) a six monthly update to provide an indication of progress to that point.		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		
26	Review of Adoption Allowance Scheme	To present the update of the Adoption Allowance Scheme for agreement		Isabel McDonnell	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	GD 8.1		
27	Learning outcomes from Care Inspectorate Thematic Review – Disabled Children and Young People's experiences of Social Work Services	E&CS 26/11/24 -to approve the action plan at appendix A of the report developed to address findings and to instruct the Chief Social Work Officer to report progress on delivering on the key findings in Autumn 2025		Carol Davie	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	2.1		
28	Northfield Asset Review	E&CS 17/09/24 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to proceed with a review of all public building assets in Northfield, which will include an assessment of options for the future of the primary schools. it is anticipated that the findings of this review will be presented to the Committee on 16 September 2025 E&CS 18/02/25 - to note that officers would ensure that the Community Council was included in the engagement		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 1.1.5		
29	Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan (NIF)	To present the plan This report will cover the instruction from EODC 25/11/21 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Education to present an annual report on the progress of care experienced children and young people to the Committee, commencing in September 2022, and will also cover the yearly self evaluation. E&CS 26/11/24 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Education & Lifelong Learning to report progress on the Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan through the regular updates on progress towards delivery of the NIF		Eleanor Sheppard	Families and Communities	Families and Communities	1.1.1		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
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2	School Estate Plan Annual Update	<p>EODC 08/09/22 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to present an annual update to the School Estate Plan to the Education and Children's Services Committee, commencing from September 2023, to report on progress with the agreed actions and to update these as appropriate, in light of the most recently available data.</p> <p>Council 02/10/24 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to continue to monitor forecast pupil numbers for the three denominational primary schools, and to include recommendations in next year's annual school estate plan update report, on any required actions to be taken to ensure that the city's denominational primary school provision continues to be appropriate to meet the expected demand for pupil places</p> <p>E&CS 26/11/24 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to continue to monitor pupil numbers at Riverbank and the adjacent primary schools Sunnybank and St Peter's, the use of space at the new Riverbank building, and to provide updates on any further action required in the future through the annual School Estate Plan update report</p>		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 1.1.5		
30									
31	Northfield Academy, Northfield Primary Schools and Wider Asset Review - approval of Outline Business Case and consultation proposal	E&CS 17/09/24 - (i) to agree the intended scope of the proposed asset review in Northfield to include all public assets, and to instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to proceed with the review and to commence engagement with all partners working in the wider Northfield area; (ii) to instruct the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to work closely with the Northfield Community throughout this process to ensure community empowerment and resilience was prioritised in all stages of planning; to instruct the Chief Officer to work with the Northfield Advisory Group to invite and support their guidance in shaping improvements and outcomes		Andrew Jones/Shona Milne	Corporate Landlord / Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
32	Music Service Update	E&CS 17/09/24 - (i) to note that officers would include data about tuition at primary school level broken down by school in the next report; and (ii) to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to report back on progress in one calendar year		Beth Edwards / Shona Milne	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
33	Community Learning and Development Plan	E&CS 17/09/24 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to present an updated 2 year CLD Plan to Committee in September 2025		Margaret Stewart	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
34	School Age Childcare Policy	E&CS 17/09/24 - to approve the School Age Childcare Policy. Policy to be reviewed on an annual basis - report may not be required, show no changes be needed to policy		Louise Beaton	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1 and 1.1.5		
35	Children's Social Work Statistics	ODC 31/08/22 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Integrated Children's and Family Services, to report annually to the relevant Committee, sharing the published Children's Social Work Statistics, Scotland and providing a comparison with performance in Aberdeen City.		Graeme Simpson	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	2.3		
36	Inspection Reporting	<p>A standing item (if required) to report on the outcome of inspections and any changes in the approach of inspection agencies</p> <p>To include update on Northfield Academy / Harlaw Academy</p>		Shona Milne	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.6		

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2 37	25 November 2025								
38	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Framework	To present the regular performance update		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		
39	Minimising Exclusion Policy	To present the revised exclusion policy for approval	Officers anticipate updated national guidance by summer 2025 and will look to take a refreshed policy to Committee when they have considered the guidance	Mhairi Shewan	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.5		
40	Corporate Parenting Annual Report	To present the Corporate Parenting Annual Report for assurance		Graeme Simpson	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	2.1		
41	Family Support Model - engagement	E&CS 17/09/24 - to note that the Executive Director had suggested that the report due to be presented to the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee in November on a detailed phased implementation plan reflecting plans for internal zoning of the Central Library and testing of the Library and Information Service as an integral part of the emerging model of Family Support which would incorporate plans for ongoing engagement with communities and groups could also be presented to the November meeting of this Committee if it was felt this would be beneficial		Eleanor Sheppard	Families and Communities	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
42	Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps	To report on the cluster risk registers E&CS 26/11/24 - to note that (a) officers had undertaken to consider the feedback from Members that it would be helpful for the matrix to reflect the previous year's situation to allow for comparison and a clearer understanding of which risks had been effectively mitigated; (b) that some control actions may need to be reviewed to demonstrate the drive in the risk register to resolve the specific issue; and (c) that the phrasing of the risk 'Child Migration including unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people and all families requiring resettlement or with no recourse to public funds' would be reviewed for the next report		Graeme Simpson / Shona Milne	Families and Communities	Families and Communities	1.1.4		
43	Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report	To present the Chief Social Work Officer annual report.		Graeme Simpson	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	2.5		
44	Child Protection Committee Annual Report	E&CS 26/11/24 - (i) to instruct the Chief Social Work Officer to provide Committee with a further report in November 2025 detailing the continuing impact and effectiveness of partnership work in relation to child protection; and (ii) to request that officers ensure that there was less use of acronyms in the next report		Graeme Simpson	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	2.1		

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2									
56	Grandhome / Oldmachar / Bridge of Don Secondary Provision - Outline Business Case (NA1) / Oldmachar ASG primary school provision	<p>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.</p> <p>E&CS 12/09/23 - to 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.</p> <p>E&CS 20/02/24 - Approval of revised School Estate timeline</p> <p>E&CS 19/09/24 - Annual School Estate Plan update advised project had not yet commenced. Reporting dates to be confirmed</p>		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		Not yet commenced, as per decision at E&CS on 17/09/24 (School Estate Plan Annual Update)
57	Consultation on proposed new school at Bucksburn / Newhills	<p>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.</p> <p>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. To note in the School Estate Plan that the Committee would consider consultation feedback & confirm decision on implementing proposals in July 2024</p> <p>E&CS 20/02/24 - approval of revised School Estate timeline - dates for carrying out the consultation to be confirmed</p> <p>E&CS 17/09/24 - approval of School Estate Plan</p>		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		It remains officers' assessment that there is no immediate requirement to undertake a consultation on a proposed new school at Newhills, and so no specific dates for this have been included in the latest approved update to the School Estate Plan implementation timeline. Officers will continue to monitor pupil numbers and the likely requirement for a new school, and will bring forward recommendations to the Committee as and when required
58	Loirston Loch Additional Primary Provision - Outline Business Case (L1)	<p>E&CS 12/09/23 - Instructs 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.(Recommendation L1)</p> <p>E&CS 20/02/24 - Revised school estate timeline approved. No immediate requirement for this, revisit post 2024</p> <p>E&CS 17/09/24 - Project currently on hold (as per annual School Estate Plan update)</p>		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.3, 1.5		On hold as per decision at E&CS on 17/09/24 (School Estate Plan Annual Update)

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	29 April 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Performance Management Framework/National Improvement Framework Progress Update
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/25/079
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS	Andy MacDonald/Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICERS	Martin Murchie/Shona Milne/Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR(S)	Alex Paterson/Shona Milne
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Committee with (a) the status of key quarterly and annual performance measures relating to the Education and Lifelong Learning and Children's and Families Clusters, and (b) a Progress Update around Aberdeen City Council's National Improvement Framework Plan 2024/25.

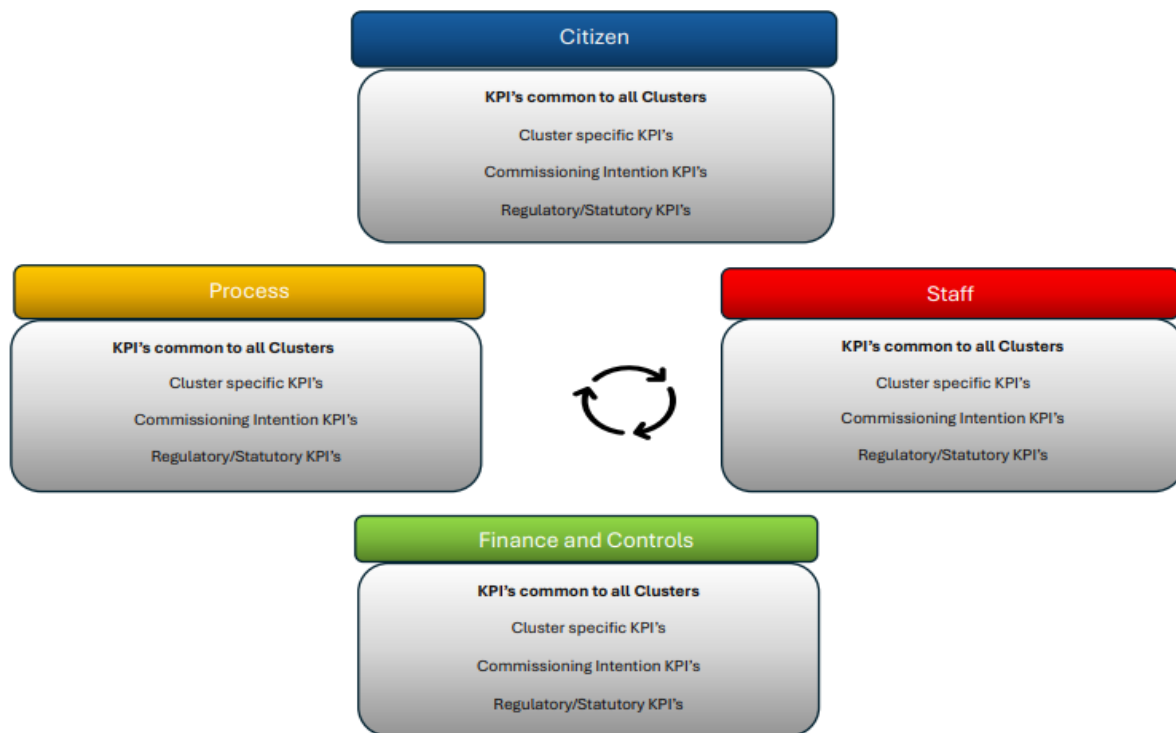
2. RECOMMENDATION

- 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 Structure

- 3.1 The Council's refreshed Performance Management Framework for 2024/25 was agreed at the meeting of Council on 21st August 2024
- 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 [2024-25.Council Delivery Plan](#) (the Plan) that was agreed by Council on the 6th of March 2024.
- 3.3 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.



Report Content

3.4 Appendix A reflects the in-year performance against the Plan, including corporate and service level measures, alongside a number of nationally benchmarked datasets from more recent publications. It also incorporates commentary and reflection against, and metrics aligned to, Service Standards set for the 2024/25 financial year.

3.5 Within the Summary Dashboard the following symbols are used:

Performance Measures

Traffic Light Icon



On target or within 5% of target or benchmarked outcome.



Within 5% and 20% of target or benchmarked outcome and being monitored



More than 20% out with target or benchmarked outcome and being actively pursued



Data only – target not appropriate or benchmarked outcome not available

3.6 An interim progress update against Aberdeen City Council's 2024/25 National Improvement Framework Plan is made available through Appendix B

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) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic	None	NA	NA	NA
Compliance	No significant legal risks.	Publication of service performance information in the public domain ensures that the Council is meeting its legal obligations in the context of Best value reporting.	L	Yes
Operational	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
Financial	No significant financial risks.	Overview data on specific limited aspects of the cluster's financial performance is provided within this report	L	Yes
Reputational	No significant reputational risks.	Reporting of service performance to Members and in the public domain serves to enhance the Council's reputation	L	Yes

		for transparency and accountability.		
Environment / Climate	None	NA	NA	NA

8. OUTCOMES

<u>Council Delivery Plan</u>	
	Impact of Report
<u>Aberdeen City Council Partnership Agreement</u>	This report supports the following key Council priorities:
Improving Educational Choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commit to realising the potential of each individual, by seeking to widen curriculum choice and implement progressive choices. - 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. - Promote the number of apprenticeships on offer through the council.
Creating Better Learning Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work to ensure that every school community provides a safe and respectful environment for young people and staff.
Caring for Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. - Work with the Scottish Government to expand free early learning and childcare to one- and two-year-olds from low-income households. - 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 - 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.

Aberdeen City Local Outcomes Plan April 2024 Refresh

<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes (Children and Young People)</p>	<p>The detail within Performance Management reporting to this Committee evidences how Families and Communities delivery leads, contributes to, or influences, each of the Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes in the refreshed LOIP. This includes the following Outcomes:</p> <p>3. 95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27–30-month review by 2026.</p> <p>4. 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026.</p> <p>5. 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>6. 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.</p> <p>7. 83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026</p> <p>8. 100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/disabilities will experience a positive destination</p>
<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes (Adults)</p>	<p>Families and Communities services, through the Improvement Project Aims below contribute to achievement of Outcome 11 - Reduce the rate of both alcohol related deaths and drug related deaths by 10% by 2026</p> <p><i>Reduce the average age from 14 to 12 at which children are identified as requiring preventative support to mitigate the risk of future harm in relation to drug and alcohol use by 2026 and ;</i></p> <p><i>Reduce the % of 13–15-year-olds reported as using each sub group of drug by 50% and cannabis by 20% by 2026.</i></p>
<p>Community Empowerment Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The detail within Performance Management reporting to this Committee evidences how Families and Community service delivery leads, though the Improvement Project Aim; <i>100% of decisions which impact on children and young people are informed by them by 2026</i> contributes to, or influences Outcome 16:</p>

	50% of people report they feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026.
Regional and City Strategies	<p>The detail within Performance Management reporting to this Committee evidences how Families and Communities delivery leads, contributes to, or influences outcomes aligned to the City's National Improvement Framework Plan.</p> <p>Data contained in the report also offers contextual evidence of Education & Lifelong Learning and Children's Social Work Service's contributions to the City's Children's Services Plan, along with both regional Economic and Skills strategies.</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	It was confirmed by Chief Officer, Martin Murchie, on 28 th March 2025 that no Integrated Impact Assessment is required for this report
Data Protection Impact Assessment	A Data Protection Impact Assessment is not required for this report.
Other	No additional impact assessments have been completed for this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Performance Management Framework Update 2024-25 -CORS/24/232
Council Delivery Plan 2024-25 – COM/24/060

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Education & Children's Services Committee Corporate Performance Summary Dashboard
Appendix B - Aberdeen City Council's 2024/25 National Improvement Framework Plan Interim Progress Update

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix A – Corporate Performance Management Framework Report – Education and Children’s Services Committee, April 2025

Education and Lifelong Learning

1. Citizen

Table 1. Service Level Measures – 2024-25 Service Standards (Education)

Performance Measure	Year to Date Value	2024/25 Target	Status	Long Trend - Annual
% of all eligible requests for early learning and childcare placements met within one month of request receipt	100%	100%		
% of all mainstream requests for a primary and secondary school placement within one month of request receipt	100%	100%		
% of ACC managed/funded Early Learning and Childcare settings achieving an average evaluation of ‘Good’ (the National Standard) in formal inspections of core Quality Indicators by the Care Inspectorate ^	98.3%	100%		
% of Primary, secondary, and special schools achieving an average evaluation of ‘Good’ in formal inspections of core Quality Indicators by Education Scotland ^	96.8%	100%		
% school attendance levels (in comparison with national attendance levels)	92.3%	> 90.3%*		
% of requests for additional support to meet the wellbeing needs of children and young people which are processed within 40 days	100%	100%		

^ 12 month rolling figure *Based on official national data release for 2023/24 (see below at Table 8)






Service Commentary - Table 1

Education Scotland Inspections – Primary and Secondary Schools

There have been a single publication of Education Scotland inspection activity in the current academic year since the previous report to February Committee.

The rolling 12-month figure to March 2025 is higher than the figure reported to the previous meeting (93.8%), and significantly in advance of the figure for the same rolling period in 2023-24 (91.2%)

Table 2. Service Level Measures – 2024-25 Service Standards (Lifelong Learning)

Performance Measure	Year to Date Value	Status	Long Trend - Annual
We will provide CLD services to a level that achieves a rating of good or better through external inspection.	100%		
We will ensure library Item Requests are satisfied within 21 days – 12 month rolling value	73.5%		
We will ensure that library premises are publicly accessible during all scheduled opening hours	99.6%		NA

Service Commentary – Table 2

Scheduled Library Opening Hours

A total of 29 opening hours, from a scheduled 8,159 annual hours across library premises were lost during 2024/25 due to a small number of incidents of buildings system failures e.g. heating and alarm system faults, which were subsequently resolved within normal operating hours.

Table 3. Service Level Measure - Quality of Early Learning Centre Provision (Care Inspectorate)

	Care Inspectorate Core Quality Indicators Fiscal Years (12 month rolling period)					
Year	Core Quality Indicator Scope	How good is our care, play and learning?	How good is our setting?	How good is our leadership?	How good is our staff team?	Overall Quality Indicator Outcome
2024-25	Percentage of assessments achieving National Standard (average score of Good)	91.65%	99.3%	101.4%	101.4%	98.3%
2023-24	Percentage of assessments achieving National Standard (average score of Good)	91.3%	97.1%	101.9%	100.0%	97.6%

Metric Descriptor

The grading template from inspection activity above is designed to highlight the capacity for improvement against core areas of evaluation (as described within the Care Inspectorate, and legislative guidance) which supports and informs the wider inspection process.

Each Quality Indicator sub-total, and the overall figure, presents the average gradings from all inspection activity represented as a percentage based on comparison with the benchmark score of Good (which equates to the National Standard.) A percentage figure of 100% indicates that, in aggregate, gradings are equivalent to National Standard expectations and where the figure is above this, it indicates that the average outcome is above that implied by the Standard.

In this latter circumstance, this generally indicates that a greater number of evaluations were graded as Good but also with a higher number of gradings which exceeded the National Standard benchmark with gradings of Very Good or Excellent.

All calculations are based on the most recent inspections of individual settings, which is in line with the recording methodology applied in Care Inspectorate data reporting

Service Commentary - Table 3

As at March 2025, the rolling 12-month average score for Care Inspectorate (CI) evaluations, of 98.3% (equivalent to the 2024-25 fiscal year) was similar to the previously reported rolling period (Q3) when the overall score figure was 97.1%.

Average scoring against the Staff and Leadership indicators evaluations marginally exceeded the National Standard, with assessments of Care, Play and Learning environments remaining below the Service Standard based expectations. The service continues to focus on this area. The scorings for Settings, Leadership and Staff component organisers were slightly above those reported to the previous meeting of this Committee, whilst Care, Play and Learning is unchanged.

Comparisons with the 2023-24 fiscal year, although using a marginally different methodology, shows that the outcomes from each organiser, and the overall scoring of inspections (97.6% in 2023/24) are equal to or marginally better than those in the prior year.

This data encompasses the most recently published inspections against 39 settings with the combined average scoring of local authority settings overall being slightly above the National Standard of Good and Partner Provider evaluations, in aggregate, being slightly below the Standard at 97.0%.





Additional reflection against the separate detail within the Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) measures relating to Early Learning will be offered in the report to the next cycle of this Committee.

Table 4. Service Level Quarterly Measure – Library Item Requests

Performance Measure	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Long Trend - Quarterly
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	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25	
	Value	Value	Value	
% of library Item Requests satisfied within 21 days (Financial YTD)	73.5%	74.3%	74.1%	↑

Table 5. Corporate Measures – 2024-25 Cluster Level Indicators (Quarterly) – Complaint Handling

Performance Measure	Quarter 2 2024/25	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25 *	2024/25 Target	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value			
Total No. complaints received (stage 1 and 2) - Education & Lifelong Learning	16	30	20			↑
% of complaints resolved within timescale (stage 1 and 2) – Education & Lifelong Learning	75.0%	73.3%	75.0%	75.0%		↑
% of complaints with at least one point upheld (stage 1 and 2) – Education & Lifelong Learning	0.0%	6.7%	15%			↓
Total No. of lessons learnt identified (stage 1 and 2) – Education & Lifelong Learning	3	5	0			

* Data as at end of February 2025

Service Commentary – Table 5.

*Provisional period to date information for Quarter 4 excludes data for March and may be subject to change at conclusion of the data collation and validation exercise concluded at the end of April 2025. Full year-end data and narrative will be offered within the report to the next cycle of this Committee.

2. Process

Table 6. Service Level Quarterly Measure - Visits in Person to Library Service Premises



Performance Measure	Quarter 2 2024/25	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	
Number of visits in person to library service premises	140,364	140,027	139,917	

Table 7. Service Level Annual Measure – Library Visits in Person to Library Service Premises

Performance Measure	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Long Trend - Annual
	Value	Value	Value	
Number of visits in person to library services premises	403.320	488,652	556.016	

Service Commentary - Tables 6 and 7

Visits to Libraries in person, on both a quarterly and annual basis, show a sustained improvement trend with Quarter 4, although marginally down on the previous quarter, as would be consistent with seasonal patterns of use, being 7.1% higher than in Quarter 4 of 2023/24 and 13.3% greater than in 2022/23. This is the fifth consecutive quarter in which the long term trend has been upwards.

The annual data for Visits in person has been increasing materially in each post-COVID year, offering both short and long term improvement on a consistent basis. Although full year data around the services Statutory Performance indicator measure – the total number of virtual and in person visits- is incomplete at this point in time, this will be captured in the next cycle of Committee reporting.

Table 8 National School Attendance Measure - Percentage of half day attendance 2020/21 to 2023/24 (Urban Local Authorities)

Local Authority	2020/21	2022/23	2023/24
Aberdeen City	93	91.2	91.6
City of Edinburgh	92.6	91.6	91.6
Dundee City	90.6	88.6	88.9
East Dunbartonshire	94.3	92.7	92.5
Falkirk	92	90.6	90.7
Glasgow City	90.6	88.9	88.9

North Lanarkshire	89.8	88.7	89.1
West Dunbartonshire	90.4	88.4	88.9
Urban Authority Average	92.7	90.6	90.7
Scotland	92	90.2	90.3

Service Commentary – Table 8

In line with the national trends, and that of the Urban Authority Average, pupil attendance in Aberdeen schools had risen slightly year-on-year in 2023/24 with the positive distances to both the majority of comparator local authorities, and aggregate benchmarks, being maintained or improved. The rate of annual improvement (+0.4%) is in the upper half of the eight authorities in this grouping and ahead of the National and Urban Authority Average (+0.1%)

On a three year trend, attendance in Aberdeen schools, as with that experienced nationally, and by each comparator local authority, had fallen with Aberdeen recording a reduction (-1.4%) which was less than all but Edinburgh City and North Lanarkshire and lower than both the National (-1.7%) and Urban Authority Average (-2.0%) benchmarks, respectively.

The most recent data available from the Scottish Government Education Analytical Services (21st March 2025) indicated that Aberdeen was recording a school year to date attendance rate of 92.3%, in contrast to the National level of 91.1%, and the Urban Local Authority Average of 91.2%

Source: National Statistics- Summary Statistics in Schools release March 2025

Table 9. Aberdeen City School Attendance Measure 2024-25 – Academic Year to Date (to end of Term 3)

School Type	% Present Openings	% Authorised Openings	% Unauthorised Openings	% Exclusions Openings	% Total Absence
Primary	93.4	4.7	1.9	0.00	6.6
Secondary	90.4	6.3	3.3	0.05	9.6
Special	89.4	9.2	1.4	0.0	10.6
All Phases	92.1	5.4	2.5	0.02	7.9

Service Commentary - Table 9

The data to the end of Term 3 on attendance across each phase is virtually identical to that reported against Term 2 in the previous report to this Committee, but with small positive changes in the levels of Unauthorised Absence Openings and a marginal reduction in the % of Exclusion Openings in Secondary phase from 0,06% to 0,5%

Recognising that variations in attendance levels between phases/stages and across pupil profiles persist, in March 2025, the Service introduced revised guidance for education establishments around managing and promoting pupil attendance to provide for (a) uniformity of approaches and interventions to attendance management, and (b) an enhanced level of overall attendance driven by addressing the obstacles to consistent attendance that a small proportion of our pupils experience.

Source: SEEMIS

3. Staff

Corporate Measures – 2024/25 Service Level Indicators

Table 10. Establishment (Education and Lifelong Learning)







Performance Measure	Quarter 2 2024/25	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value		
Establishment actual FTE – Education and Lifelong Learning)	3,233	3,258	3,270		

Table 11. Accidents and Incidents (Education and Lifelong Learning)

Performance Measure	Quarter 2 2024/25	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value		
H&S Employee Reportable Accidents/Incidents by Cluster – Education and Lifelong Learning	2	2	4		
H&S Employee Non-Reportable Accidents/Incidents by Cluster – Education and Lifelong Learning	228	403	479		

Service Commentary - Table 11

The data for Quarter 4 is consistent with patterns of variation between quarterly periods from what is understood of accident/incident data within national datasets for frontline public services. This has, traditionally, been attributed to seasonal influences such as increases in the numbers of accidents/incidents involving slips, trips and falls. Detailed analysis of data relating to Quarter 4 for Aberdeen City Council overall, and the Service itself, will be offered within a future report to the Staff Governance Committee.

The Health and Safety Report Appendix attached to the Corporate Quarterly Health and Safety report, considered at the meeting of the Staff Governance Committee on 21st April 2025 offered detailed analysis of accident and near miss data across Clusters and at Primary and Secondary school levels as at Quarter 3 of 2024/25.

Additional detail around Service interventions related to Behaviour Plan actions, and enhancing the Service's Health and Safety management are reflected within the NIF Progress Update at Appendix B of this Report.

Table 12. Absence Due to Illness (Education and Lifelong Learning) 12 month rolling average.

Performance Measure	Quarter 2 2024/25	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25 *	Quarter 4 Corporate Figure *	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE – Education and Lifelong Learning (12-month rolling figure at quarter end)	5.3	5.4	3.6	4.8	✓	↑
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE – Primary and Secondary Schools (12-month rolling figure at quarter end) *	5.9	4.7	3.95	4.8	✓	↑
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE – Early Learning and Childcare (12-month rolling figure at quarter end)	3.1	3.1	3.7	4.8	✓	▬

*Provisional data for March is included within these figures.





Service Commentary - Tables 12

As the corporate level operational and data improvement projects around absence management offer reductions in employee absence levels, and better attributions of data, overall absence trends are becoming more established. With additional distinct datasets linking to individual school establishments and retrospective application of these new parameters, it is now possible to provide for more appropriate quarterly comparisons within Table 11. above.

Resultantly, the information previously reported against Quarters 2 and 3, based on the systemic data structures at those points in time, are not directly relatable to the content of similar tables from PMF reports to prior meetings of this Committee.

4. Finance & Controls

Table 13. Staff Expenditure (Education and Lifelong Learning)

Performance Indicator	Quarter 1 2024/25		Quarter 2 2024/25		Quarter 3 2024/25		Quarter 4 2024/25	
	Value	Status	Value	Status	Value	Status	Value	Status
Staff Expenditure – % spend to YTD budget profile – Education and Lifelong Learning *	26.75%		51.3%		76.2%		93.3%*	

*Validated data to February 2025

Service Commentary - Table 13

As at February 2025, Staff Expenditure to budget profile was marginally above budget expectations, although this was within the Status tolerances set within this report (see legend at the end of this document) Similar to previous quarters, the extent of variance from profile has again been reduced slightly as a result of in-year budget management actions, although this is unlikely to conclude with a fiscal year-end match between expenditure and budget lines.

Management Commentary provided within the Q3 2024/25 budget report to the Finance and Resources Committee on the 12th of February, outlined the financial position of children's services overall. It noted a year-end forecast of a significant overspend against the full year budget for the Cluster, incorporating that related to staff costs, due to demand pressures (e.g., increases in school rolls at session year start and in term registrations)

* 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 Family Support

Corporate Measures – 2023-24 Cluster Level Indicators (Quarterly)

5. Citizen

Table 14. Complaints Handling









Performance Measure	Quarter 2 2024/25	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25 *	Status	2024/25 Target	Long Trend Quarterly
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	Value	Value	Value			
Total No. of Complaints received (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	11	11	9			
% of Complaints resolved within timescale (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	90.9%	81.8%	66.7%		75%	
% of complaints with at least one point upheld (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	0%	0%	11.1%			
Total No. of lessons learnt identified (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	0	0	0			

Service Commentary - Table 14.

*Provisional period to date information for Quarter 4 excludes data for March and may be subject to change at conclusion of the data collation and validation exercise concluded at the end of April 2025. Full year-end data and narrative will be offered within the report to the next cycle of this Committee

Table 15. Service Level Standards 2024/25 (Children's Social Work)

Performance Measure	Quarter 2 2024/25	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25	Status	2024/25 Target	Long Trend Quarterly
	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%	
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%	
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%	
% of children open to Children's Social Work supported to live at home, where safe to do so	75%	74%	75%		75%	

6. Process

Table 16. Service Level Standards 2024/25 (Children's Social Work)

Performance Measure	Quarter 2 2024/25	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25	Status	2024/25 Target	Long Trend Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value			
% of initial screenings undertaken, and action decided, on new referrals within 7 days.	98%	98%	97%	✓	100%	▬
% initial Child Protection Planning Meetings held within timescale	77%	50%	80%	✓	80%	↑
% of Care experienced children and young people with three or more placements in 12 months	5%	4%	4.5%	✓	<7.5%	▬
% Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) with a pathway plan by the age of 15 years	74%	81%	82%	⚠	95%	↑

Service Commentary - Table 16.

Child Protection Meeting Timelines

As described within the commentary offered in the Performance Management Framework report to the previous meeting of this Committee, the % of initial Child Protection meetings held within the operational timescale applied to this metric, are most influenced by the extent to which it is possible to ensure the participation and engagement of family members, and co-ordinate the availability of partner stakeholders/officers within each cycle of activity.

Pathway Plans

Against a background of rising performance, there can be quarterly fluctuations in this measure as a result of CECYP passing the technical age threshold but where the pathway plan, although in place, has yet to be formally recorded against the individual's D365 based profile. The on-going work within the service against this processing aspect continues to deliver an underlying improvement trend against this measure.

All data incorporated within this table is derived from the most recent system refresh on 4th April 2025.

Chart 1. Service Level Measures – Number of Looked After Children and Young People Timeseriesby Placement Type and Continuing Care Placements
(Quarterly Average)

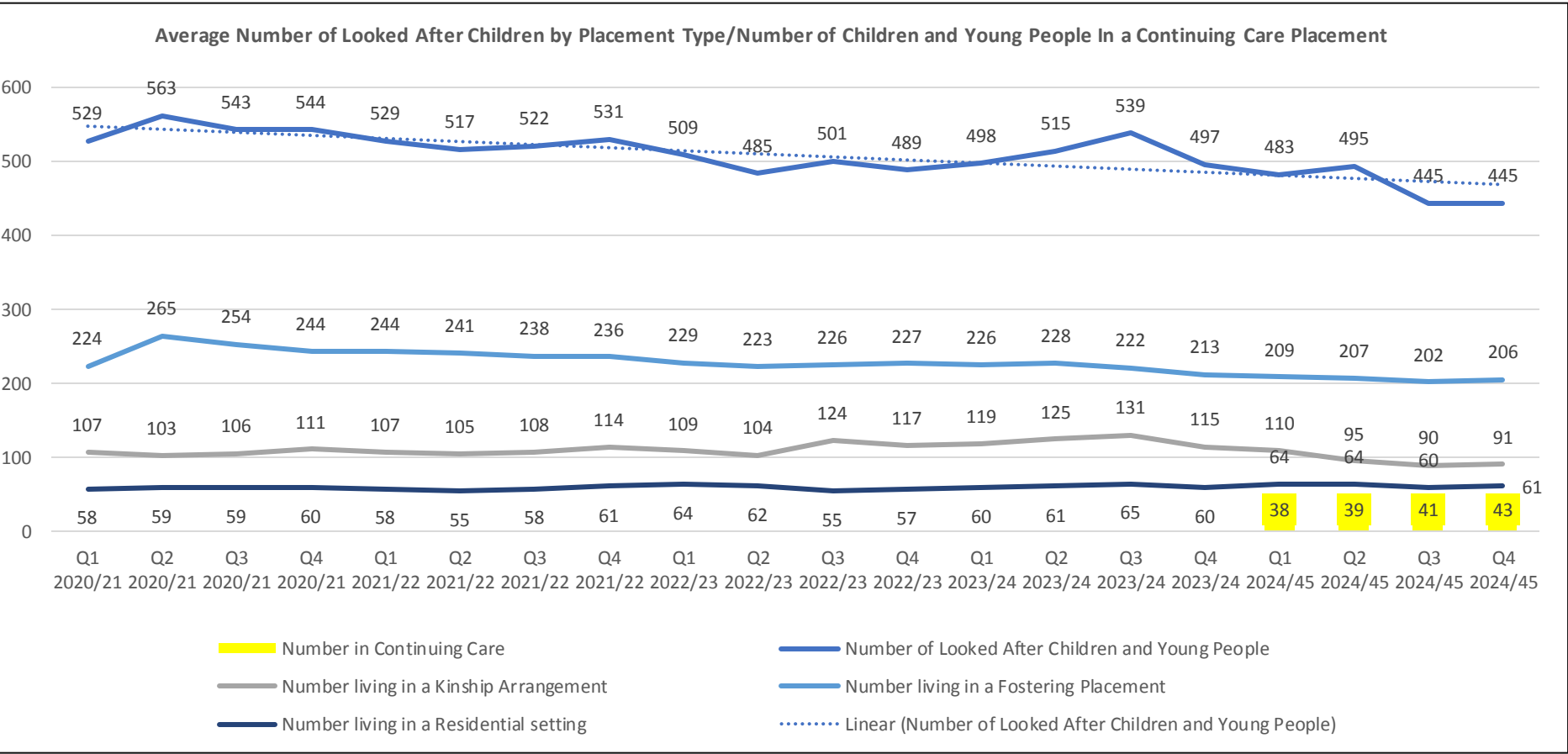


Table 17. Balance of Care -% of Looked After Children by Placement Type (Rolling 12-month average by Quarter)

Period	% Looked After living in a Kinship Arrangement	% Looked After Children living in a Fostering Placement	% Looked After Children living in a Residential setting
Q4 2022/23	22.9%	45.6%	12.0%
Q4 2023/24	23.9%	43.4%	12.0%
Q4 2024/25	21.8%	44.6%	13.1%

Service Commentary.**Chart 1 – Looked After Children**

The long term trends for a reduced number of Looked After Children overall, and the proportions living in both Kinship and Fostering placements respectively are in line with the strategic direction of travel set out for the balance of care for Looked After Children, whilst the proportion and number of those in Residential placements remain largely static.

Table 17 – Looked After Children

Data within this table provides averaged % outcomes for similar quarterly periods over a three-year timeline, enabling tracking of general trends in the provision of care for Looked After Children by the main types of placements.

The number of placements in a residential setting, due to the nature of support required tend to be more extended in nature, are less subject to variation in quarterly and year-on-year cycles, On this basis, the % of Looked After Children is more greatly influenced by changes in the denominator, (the overall number of Looked After Children) which is on a reducing trend.

7. Staff

Corporate Measures – 2024/25 Service Level Indicators

Table 18. Establishment Levels



Performance Measure	Quarter 2 2024/25	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value		
Establishment actual FTE – Children's Social Work	354.77	354.22	351.10		

Table 19. Accidents and Incidents







Performance Measure	Quarter 2 2024/25	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25	Status	Long Trend Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value		
Reportable Accidents/Incidents - Employees (No in Quarter – Children's Social Work	0	0	0		
Non-Reportable Accidents/Incidents - Employees (No in Quarter - Children's Social Work	0	1	1		

Table 20. Absence Due to Illness (Children's Social Work) 12 month rolling average.

Performance Measure	Quarter 2 2024/25	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25*	Quarter 4 2024/25 Corporate Figure*	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value			
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE – Children's Social Work	3.9	3.6	2.6	4.6		





*Provisional data for March is included within these figures.

Service Commentary - Table 20

Levels of employee absence due to illness are showing a further continuous trend period of improvement, which is in line with the direction of travel for the Council as a whole, and at a level which is comparatively positive when contrasted with the corporate value.

The Health and Safety Report Appendix attached to the Corporate Quarterly Health and Safety report, considered at the meeting of the Staff Governance Committee on 21st April 2025 offered detailed analysis of the most recent accident and near miss data across Clusters

8. Finance & Controls**Table 21. Staff Expenditure (Children' Social Work)**

Performance Indicator	Quarter 1 2024/25		Quarter 2 2024/25		Quarter 3 2024/25		Quarter 4 2024/25	
	Value	Status	Value	Status	Value	Status	Value	Status
Staff Expenditure – % spend to YTD budget profile – Children's Social Work	31.4%		54.4%		81.3%		99.5%*	

*Validated data to February 2025

Service Commentary - Table 21

At Quarter 4 to date, Staff Expenditure to budget profile was above the profile target (91.6%) by a similar margin to that noted against the prior quarter




The Management Commentary provided within the Q3 2024/25 budget report to the Finance and Resources Committee on the 12th of February, outlined the financial position of the children's services overall, and for Children's Social Work, It noted a year-end forecast of a significant overspend against the full year budget for the Cluster, incorporating that related to staff costs, due to demand pressures from specific areas of need (e.g. on-going support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, refugee families and young people.)





Separate to this, there is also a general increase in case work arising from the extent of support needed by our children and young people overall, which reflects the legacies around social and other deficits that, from needs based data, have expanded over the course of the recent past.

* 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

- Target Setting: Where no target is applied against Service Standards, the 'Business-as-Usual' objective is that these services will be delivered on a consistent basis within the available resource.
- Data Trend Directions: Unless stated to the contrary, Long-Term Data Trends are based against the average of 3 monthly, quarterly and annual consecutive periods, respectively.
- Staff Costs: Staffing costs referred to throughout this Appendix exclude adjustments for the corporate vacancy factor.

Long Term Data Trends	
	Improving/Increasing
	No or Limited Change/Stable
	Getting Worse/Decreasing

PI Status	
	Alert (figure more than 20% below target and being actively pursued)
	Warning (figure between 5% and 20% out with target and being monitored)
	OK (figure within target or better)
	Data Only

Appendix B National Improvement Framework Progress Update – April 2025

Programme/ project	April update	RAG
Improve Leadership of Change in schools		
<p>Build leadership capacity and capability through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a coordinated professional learning programme • involvement of middle leaders in quality assurance arrangements • analysis of surveys of staff, parents and learners to inform Quality Improvement activity 	<p>Central officers are using the feedback provided through a professional learning audit to shape the professional learning offer for leadership teams next session.</p> <p>Secondary officers and headteachers have planned development days on learning teaching and assessment, raising attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing. These will be aimed at all middle and senior leaders ensuring consistency of approaches across schools and building on the learning gained from recent inspections.</p> <p>Information gathered from surveys issued to category 3 schools is supporting targeted interventions and helping schools to identify incremental progress against identified priorities,</p>	
Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in schools		
<p>Continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment (pace, and challenge) by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborating with the Regional Improvement Collaborative to publish the Toolkit 	<p>The Northern Alliance, Learning Teaching and Assessment (LTA) toolkit has been populated with helpful local resources and supports HTs to access high quality materials to support effective staff development. Funding by Northern Alliance ceases at the end of March 2025 and officers will be given a day a week in order to continue to manage the implementation of the toolkit across our schools.</p> <p>Around 70 school leaders attended a twilight session where the LTA officers shared their learning from using the toolkit in a range of schools. This was a great opportunity for leaders to consider how they would make use of the toolkit, with action plans to support implementation being created. The impact has been very positive with 9 schools making use of the self-evaluation toolkit over the February Inset Days. 41 out of 48 primary schools, 4 secondary schools and Orchard Brae are now engaging with the toolkit. A follow-up session sharing how the toolkit can support LTA improvements will take place in March.</p> <p>The officers also led a session on Leadership of LTA at a recent HT session. Self-evaluation data will be gathered and used to create key leadership action points to support our collective leadership improvement.</p> <p>There has also been a suite of online CLPL (Career Long Professional Learning) courses delivered by Northern Alliance officers which Aberdeen schools are engaging with.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the phased deployment of additional digital tools and a new digital identity 	<p>33 primary schools and 3 secondary schools are now accessing new devices and education identity.</p> <p>Wave 2 has generally progressed as expected. The schedule has been amended to ensure delivery to the original timescale where any technical/operational issues have been encountered. A solution to provide desktop computing for secondary school computing labs is in</p>	

	testing. Planning for secondary school deployments in May and June has begun. A survey will be issued to gather feedback on the deployed solution and the impact on classroom learning and teaching.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continued roll out of the national improvement in writing programme. 	<p>Training has now been delivered to Cohort 5 schools with staff already noting the improvement in their writing data with an added benefit of improved attendance for one learner noted by one of the schools within the cohort.</p> <p>Spread and scale has now been delivered to all Cohort 1-4 schools and an additional series of training is planned for the final term. Support visits have been undertaken with opportunities for professional dialogue alongside some observations of writing sessions. Meetings with senior leaders have afforded opportunities to further interrogate the data and look for patterns.</p> <p>A session has been delivered to all ACC probationers who selected this as a professional learning option. An information session is planned to be delivered to the central education team in term 4.</p> <p>Cohort 6 & 7 schools have now been identified, and training will be offered during session 25/26, this will then see all primary schools engaged in the programme.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing and testing an approach to improve the numeracy curriculum with a focus on transitions 	<p>The online portal is now live internally within ACC and available to all ACC maths staff, Primary and Secondary HTs, Primary Transition Staff and Community Learning and Development staff. Discussions have taken place with External Communications to make the Adult and Family Learning tiles within the portal available to external ACC Customers. This will be progressed in line with the revised ACC website.</p> <p>Maths, Numeracy and Learning and Teaching specialists from across schools and community learning were invited to an event presented by Craig Barton as part of the Multiply Numeracy project on 12 February. 85 participants took part in 3 sessions aimed at raising attainment in Maths and Numeracy through improving learning and teaching. The event was very well received, and feedback will be taken forward through the ACC Multiply Numeracy Portal and through the development of more networking opportunities for subject specialists.</p> <p>The headteacher working on the toolkit will continue to be seconded one day a week to ensure resources remain relevant.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of a city wide literacy offers for children, young people and adult learners 	<p>An online Literacy Hub platform has been created to support teachers in delivering the literacy curriculum. Moving forward, we are planning for this hub to be a central space for all literacy offerings across ACC. Headteachers have had a brief introduction to the platform and it is being piloted in at least 6 primaries and in an English department in one of our secondaries. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive to date.</p> <p>Twice monthly meetings between a group of stakeholders are continuing with representatives from libraries, health, education, social care, adult learning and family learning attending and contributing. A more joined up offering of Literacy support for citizens across the city is being planned which will be shared with groups for feedback and comment.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> working with practitioners to develop an ELC 	Education Scotland completed the 4 sessions of Pedagogical Leadership training with managers from across the Local Authority and Funded Provider settings. 60 practitioners attended and feedback was very	

<p>standard to support improvement in pedagogical understanding</p>	<p>positive. Most participants strongly agreed that these sessions will have a positive impact on their role as leaders.</p> <p>Following the success of these sessions, Education Scotland have extended their offer to participants of Pedagogical Leadership. 23 leaders are now participating in a coaching programme. The participants have identified a specific area of leadership that they would like to further develop and have been allocated an Education Scotland Associate with expertise in their chosen area to coach and mentor them.</p> <p>Education Scotland are working with the Early Years Team to roll the Pedagogical Leadership course out to Senior Early Years Practitioners and Room Leaders across our settings.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure a robust application of the new tracking system and use of the digital data tools with an increased focus on care experienced children and young people 	<p>Our 11 secondary schools have all now introduced pupil tracking and, with some variation, are able to extract robust tracking summary data from the new system.</p> <p>Schools are now able to include in their own tracking young people who are sitting courses away from their own setting, providing a more complete picture of progress.</p> <p>An export is in development which will allow data from all 11 secondary schools to be extracted for analysis at authority level, allowing central staff to monitor progress of young people in each school and across the authority.</p> <p>This allows us to identify the progress of care experienced, or cohorts in a particular school or across all 11 secondaries.</p>	

Continue to improve the quality of universal health and wellbeing supports		
Continue to encourage children and young people to be more physically active, including those with sensory and other identified needs.	<p>The Physical Education, Physical Activity and School Sports (PEPASS) group will be convening in April to review the progress of our schools in achieving a Sport Scotland Award. The group hopes that all schools will achieve an award over time.</p> <p>To date 27 schools are in the process or have achieved an award (2 in development, 5 achieving Bronze, 12 achieving Silver, 4 in the process of achieving Gold and 4 with Gold complete). Sport Aberdeen are continuing to support.</p>	
Shaping and delivering a whole system approach to the healthy weight of children and young people in partnership with others	The strategic network group (SNG) has been established comprising leaders from various council clusters, Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Grampian, Higher Education and the third sector. The Group met twice in March to system map provision across the city and establish current actions to address obesity. Officers are now analysing this information to establish points of leverage/ gaps in provision, the basis of which will inform city-wide priorities.	

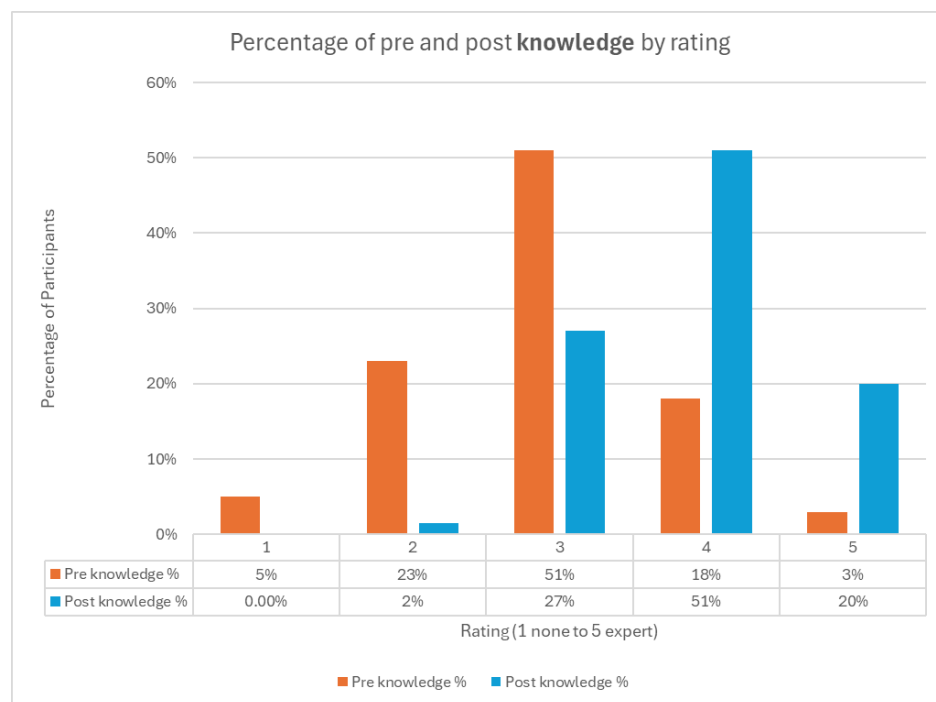
Increase the voice of children and young people in the design and delivery of services		
<p>Ensure children and young people are involved in decision-making and that we respond to what children and young people tell us they want and need including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuing to work in collaboration with the Youth Climate Group to work towards Net Zero 	<p>Following the initial collaborative workshops, co-designed between ETZ Ltd and the Aberdeen Youth Climate Action Group (YCAG), work has continued, facilitated and driven through their online collaborative Google Classroom space. Working alongside an artist team, a decision has been reached for the final artwork to be an animation. Early storyboard concepts and designs have been developed by the artist with feedback invited from the young people. Work is ongoing alongside the Our Union Street (OUS) Team with the projected animation and exhibition expected to take place in April.</p> <p>Requests/spends linked to the funds identified and made available to schools through the Youth Climate Change Group continue to be received. Schools have been advised that all spends must be requested and authorised prior to Summer 2025. Future reporting requirements have been shared with schools as part of future evaluation and reporting processes.</p>	
Continuing to engage with Aberdeen Youth Movement	<p>Both the Young Ambassadors (10-16 yrs) and Aberdeen Youth Movement (AYM) (16-25 yrs) representatives have been involved in progressing the Child and Young People's rights improvement project, they have provided feedback on the annual Children's Services Plan report 24/25, and they continue to promote, develop approaches and empower other children and young people to have a voice and input into matters that affect them across the city. This has included work in prompting, developing and delivering Your Place, Your Plans Your Futures, city wide consultation to capture what's good and what needs to change across the city to inform our many plans, including Community Learning and Development and future Locality and LOIP plans. Both groups have created engaging ways for children and young people to take part in the consultation, with peer engagement at locality events and secondary school roadshows.</p> <p>AYM continue to have representation across local community groups providing a youth lens to groups like the Fairer Aberdeen Board, which required a change in constitution to involve young people. AYM won the</p>	

	Anne Frank Award 2025, from Action for a Fairer World and Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC).	
Deliver a broader range of senior phase learner pathways aligned to growth areas		
<p>Deliver a broader range of learning pathways through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivery of Phase 2 of ABZ Campus 	<p>Phase 2 ABZ Campus courses are progressing towards completion with assessments and examinations (depending on the course type) during April and May 2025.</p> <p>Having completed focus groups and surveys with young people to find out their experiences of ABZ Campus courses this session, plans are in place to commence partner learning walks within both schools and North-East Scotland College, sharing understanding of the learning environments our ABZ Campus young people experience.</p> <p>Course Choice has commenced for Phase 3 of ABZ Campus with an increased range of courses on offer for our young people. For the first time, anytime offers will be extended to include young people from Aberdeenshire and Moray secondary schools with the hope and expectation of reciprocal arrangements in future phases.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue developing pathways to support those with a range of additional support needs 	<p>We are now recruiting for ABZ #WHATif session 25/26. Potential participants have been highlighted by school staff. Central to this are discussions with young people and their families around what potential employment opportunities may be best suited to meet their needs, personal motivators, skills and future aspirations.</p> <p>The ABZ #WHATif session 25/26 is open to all secondary special schools and enhanced provisions. Verbal feedback from participants, supporting staff and employers is extremely positive – measurable data is being gathered, and this will be used to evaluate the pilot and inform the delivery and structure of the upcoming session.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring that the school curriculum is ideally matched to pupil needs 	<p>Broad work around curriculum in the Senior Phase continues through the collective work of ABZ Campus (see above) and through opportunities for professional learning.</p> <p>For ABZ Campus, in addition to information recordings created for families and partner local authorities, a twilight professional learning event was held for pastoral teams on the offer for Phase 3.</p> <p>As part of the <i>Multiply</i> initiative to provide resources and professional learning in aspects of Numeracy, recognised Numeracy expert Craig Barton delivered input to Maths Faculty Heads and class teachers.</p> <p>Last session, staff from all secondary schools were provided with training to qualify them to deliver First Aid training to young people. A further session has been arranged for May 2025 to continue to provide capacity across our secondary sector, ensuring young people are trained in this hugely important life-skill.</p> <p>Further bespoke professional learning opportunities are planned for individual schools and groups of schools during the next term and a half.</p> <p>Work to review the work placements in conjunction with ABZ Works has continued and is reaching conclusion with next steps to be agreed. At this point it is unlikely that a broader work placements system will be in place ready for Phase 3 of ABZ Campus due to staff absence.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> opportunities for CLPL for Computing Science Secondary Staff and staff across BGE 	<p>ACC will be part of a STACS / Scottish Government sponsored pilot with two other local authorities, on addressing support for computing science. This begins with kick off meetings in March 2025 and planning for subsequent work. The programme is to review how local authorities can best support Computing Science, review any barriers and potential supports to overcome these. STACS is funded by Scottish Government and based at the University of Glasgow and has a focus on professional learning and support for Computing Science across Scotland.</p> <p>Canva for Education has been made available at no cost to the authority for all staff and learners. Canva is a tool for digital media creation and AI content generation. A programme of Canva related professional learning is available online.</p> <p>Work continues to establish a digital space at ONE TechHub on Schoolhill as part of the work with Aberdeen Computing Collaborative.</p>	

Improve the quality of environments/supports for those with additional support needs		
<p>Improve the quality of environments and supports by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to implement our accessibility plan 	<p>The Educational Psychology Service 'Spotlight' resource continues to be tested.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing roll out of the Child Inclusion Research into Curriculum Learning Education (CIRCLE) Framework 	<p>Further resources have been developed for both universal and targeted aspects of CIRCLE. These resources were shared at the most recent CIRCLE workshops over the February insets. There were over 200 participants at the workshop consisting of 15 settings/ services – 8 primary, 5 secondary and 2 services. The significant secondary attendance is indicative of a progressive shift to meeting learners' needs in the city's secondary schools.</p> <p>The Central ASN Support Hub (CASH) is now live. This is a portal to log any queries where the school are facing barriers and/or challenges – for example, targeted support needs. There are now two supports hubs (one universal and one targeted) which are open city wide. These hubs offer a safe space to share practice and to adapt and adopt the creative solutions of colleagues and settings across the city.</p> <p>The next phase of the supporting learners offer will focus on the Social Communication Emotional Regulation Transactional Support (SCERTS) approach which schools may find more impactful in supporting learners with more complex needs.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the impact of the Educational Psychology Service on school practice to determine next Educational Psychology Service 	<p>The Educational Psychology Service continue to work to increase their impact data gathered and have a new data gathering plan, which includes a focus on consulting stakeholders in term 4 instead of term 1. This plan also includes new mechanisms of gaining stakeholder feedback regarding the in-depth case working they are now engaged in. Initial data gathering is extremely positive. Especially in relation to parent and carer feedback.</p> <p>The recent Inservice days saw the Educational Psychology Service engage in delivering Education wide training, continuation of the widely successful Emotional Literacy Support Assistants Programme, Coaching implementation follow-up training, and also bespoke Locality Group training offers and support, such as work on Mediated Learning (training that supports the differentiation of support for learners). Education wide training included training at the Additional Support for Learning, Learning Festival. The EPS ran workshops on putting learner's voice front and centre in planning for children in light of UNCRC, Emotion Coaching and Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance. Given the evidence against one-off training sessions, and research base for ongoing training and coaching, all Educational Psychology Service training offers link to longer term support offers from the service. All training that was engaged in by the service over the February Inservice weekend was evaluated highly, and with a high number of follow-up requests regarding implementation.</p> <p>The Educational Psychology Service is currently temporarily down 1.6FTE capacity, due to maternity leave across the team. The number of Early Intervention Consultations carried out this academic year to date is 450. Feedback from school staff gathered on Early Intervention Consultations remains very positive. The average rating out of a scale of 1-7 (7 being the highest) is 7 on all the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do you think your views were heard during the meeting? 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Were the agreed actions from the meeting clearly explained to you?• How satisfied are you with the outcomes of the meeting?• Overall, how would you rate this meeting? <p>The question, “How confident are you that progress will be made following this meeting?” had an average ratio of 6 out of 7 following the Early Intervention Consultation.</p> <p>In exploring how the Educational Psychology Service can contribute to the ACC Plan for Parental Involvement and Engagement (21-27) and increase our universal offer to families, we have made stronger connections with colleagues within the Family Learning team. We had a joint session with them, sharing processes and practice. Feedback showed a measurable increase in the understanding of our service and enthusiasm for exploring the possibilities for working together, including via the Educational Psychology Service Systemic Early Intervention Consultations. The popular Seasons for Growth, bereavement, loss, and change programme for school staff to deliver with groups of pupils in their own schools, has been further developed. The Senior Educational Psychologist accredited Seasons trainer has recently added training for Adults, and a group for Parents to the Educational Psychology Service training offer. In February, the Family Learning team and colleagues from the primary and secondary schools attended the first training to become “Parenting Seasons for Growth Companions.” This means they can deliver Seasons for Growth groups with their parents/carers to help support their children/young people with bereavement, loss, and change. This is just the first step in extending the highly evaluated Seasons offer to positively impact parents and carers, and therefore learners in schools too. The training was very positively evaluated, and follow-up evaluations will be carried out over the coming months.</p> <p>The Educational Psychology service has recently updated the Bereavement and Critical Incident Guidance for school staff. This includes more supporting materials, including videos for adults and learners, and updated information regarding trauma-informed practice. These have been launched at a recent Head Teachers’ meeting and feedback from schools and Officers who have used the updated Guidance has been very positive.</p>																	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery of the Behaviour Plan	<p>Over 250 staff from across the city attended our Supporting Learners inset offer. The first day had input from education staff including ASN practitioners and the Educational Psychology service, with a focus on understanding and supporting dysregulated behaviour.</p> <table><tr><td>• A Fresh Look at Emotion Coaching</td><td>156</td></tr><tr><td>• Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)</td><td>35</td></tr><tr><td>• GIRFEC: Preparing an effective Child's Plan - Do's and Don'ts</td><td>65</td></tr><tr><td>• "Main Character Energy" - Facilitating pupil participation within education planning</td><td>82</td></tr><tr><td>• Sensory Considerations: Understanding the 8 Senses (0915 - 1030)</td><td>145</td></tr><tr><td>• Sensory Considerations: Understanding the 8 Senses (1430 - 1530)</td><td>47</td></tr><tr><td>• Understanding and Supporting Dysregulation (1100 - 1215)</td><td>154</td></tr><tr><td>• Understanding and Supporting Dysregulation (1430 - 1530)</td><td>48</td></tr></table>  <p>Data shows that all staff noted an increase in both knowledge and confidence</p>	• A Fresh Look at Emotion Coaching	156	• Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)	35	• GIRFEC: Preparing an effective Child's Plan - Do's and Don'ts	65	• "Main Character Energy" - Facilitating pupil participation within education planning	82	• Sensory Considerations: Understanding the 8 Senses (0915 - 1030)	145	• Sensory Considerations: Understanding the 8 Senses (1430 - 1530)	47	• Understanding and Supporting Dysregulation (1100 - 1215)	154	• Understanding and Supporting Dysregulation (1430 - 1530)	48	
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- Review the provision for supporting learners need

The Educational Psychology Service undertook the Exploration of Learners Needs survey which was reported at committee in November 2024. A group of professionals has been established to look at the operational model for the test of change proposed for Riverbank. The Educational Psychology Service has consulted with 50% of the learners in the Language Support Provisions. This is to gain a sense of what matters to them in their learning environments to help feed into the operational model. These short-term support provisions provide a blueprint model to help inform plans and approaches for the Test of Change provision at Riverbank. Therefore, this population of learners seemed the most appropriate to learn from in relation to what is important for them in their education experiences when away from their home school. Consultation has also taken place with Head Teachers, Parents and Trade Union representatives.

Training for support staff has been reviewed and has been shared with stakeholders for comment in February 2025. A new learning festival with a focus on Additional Support Needs was delivered in the February Inset. This will be followed up by an Early Learning one on the Inset in May 2025. 2 Local Authority Inservice days have been identified and communicated with schools for the 2025/2026 academic year. The focus of this will be on Learning, Teaching and Assessment. Learning from other Local Authorities is being explored around Pupil Support Assistant Induction programmes. Learning from Aberdeen City's Emotional Literacy Support Assistants programme will also be incorporated.

A new induction programme for support staff has been devised and agreed with Trade Unions. An updated programme of professional learning and training is currently underway with a focus on the areas identified through feedback from schools and staff at all levels. The structure will follow the existing framework of pre-informed/informed/skilled/enhanced. Providing the requirements for each level and possible areas of development and training identified. This alongside the ACC bespoke training and learning, which is being actively developed by professionals, will give identified pathways and high-quality learning for support staff.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted use of TalkBoost 	<p>Talkboost and Early Talkboost continue to be delivered in partnership with NHS Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) as part of our service level agreement.</p> <p>Historically, 45 primary/ELC settings had staff trained in delivering Talkboost/Early Talkboost. Given the movement of staff, trainers from SaLT and ACC are gathering data to identify where gaps are across ASGs to ensure an equity of offer, particularly where the greatest need is known.</p>	

Close the poverty related attainment gap		
<p>Help address the gap and gradient through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with HTs to monitor the impact of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) interventions 	<p>Updated school profiles and a new PowerBi Broad General Education tracking tool, help school leaders drill down into data by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) profile and by demographic information and cohort. As a result, headteachers have easier access to information allowing them to determine the poverty-related attainment gap in their school by identifying target groups/pupils experiencing disadvantage. The use of these tools is being monitored over session 2024/25 to help improve consistency and identify a need for any further support for senior leaders in using the tool.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> asking every school to have a cost of the school day position statement known by the whole school community 	<p>At the most recent Equity Network meeting there was discussion of the importance of having a clear cost of the school day position statement for schools. Examples from various schools were shared and emphasis placed on the need for clear communication with parents and carers about financial support and policies. Participants were asked to complete a quick poll about the cost of the school day in their school. The poll gathered information on the current status and progress of cost-related policies in schools.</p> <p>The updated school uniform guidance from the Scottish Government was also shared with the network. The guidance focuses on affordability, sustainability, and inclusivity, and aims to support schools in developing and reviewing their uniform policies. These items will be a focus for the next Equity Network meeting in May with further support and advice available from the Attainment Advisor.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintaining our focus on attendance levels and termly communication to parents and carers 	<p>Attendance continues to be monitored regularly through data discussions. Parents are sent attendance information termly to remind them of the impact nonattendance can have on attainment. A focus on P1 has been added to discussion agendas in order to address an emerging downward trend in attendance.</p> <p>The Educational Psychology service is working closely with schools to share strategies to support emotionally based school nonattendance (EBSNA).</p>	
Prevent families from experiencing poverty wherever possible		
<p>Continue to work in collaboration to address the root cause of poverty through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> targeting families most in need of our help by sharing data 	<p>Schools across the city continue to work in collaboration with each other, other services and agencies to target families most in need of help and either provide that help at source, or signpost families to the most appropriate source of assistance. As a result, a wide range of support has been made available to families with children attending school or ELC in Aberdeen city.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the provision of Money Advisors 	<p>Parents and carers continue to be signposted to the support provided by money advisors which may include support with debt management, benefit advice and support to claim benefits.</p>	

[illegible]

- [illegible]

[illegible]

- reviewing oversight arrangements for those who are cared for out of authority

As of 28.2.25	
Total number of children in foster care OOA (age 3-18)	140
Nursery (3-5)	5
Primary	63
Secondary	72
Number of children in residential school	36
Number in residential care but attending mainstream	10

Not included in the figures above:

- 3 young people who are OOA with foster carers but no longer attend school.
- 5 in a residential placement but have left school.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> expanding our Edge of Care pilots to St Machar 	<p>Discussions have taken place with both senior staff in St Machar Academy and locality social work to identify where there may be gaps in provision and where the skill set of the pilot teams can be used to offer support to children and families. Current staffing is being considered across the pilot teams as well as wider teams within each service area to maximise capacity and best meet the needs across the 3 ASG's. The current pilot model is being reviewed to continue to allow the flexibility it currently offers and to further align with other supports along the continuum of provision. Staff in the pilot teams continue to have high quality CPL input, which includes all staff completing the 'Keeping the Promise Award' and being trained to deliver the Dynamic Youth award to support children and young people to add to their qualifications profile.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> supporting the development of our Family Support Model test 	<p>The lead has been appointed, and work has begun with key stakeholders to plan the implementation of tests of change.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementing our Request for Assistance 	<p>Following a review of the system requirements and the nature of the data to be processed, IT colleagues are bringing the development of the new Request for Assistance process in-house.</p>	
Addressing inequality		
<p>Continue to address inequality by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all secondary schools registering with Equally Safe at School and ensure key staff complete the e-module 	<p>In line with national guidance, all secondary schools are reviewing existing programmes with a view to register on the Equally Safe in School website. Bucksburn Academy are engaging with Equally Safe at School (ESAS) as one of the Pilot schools. The experiences from this will support further schools' participation with the programme. Officers have been in contact with ESAS with a view to presenting an overview of their service at a future HT meeting.</p> <p>Additional staff have engaged with opportunities to train as trainers for Mentors in Violence (MVP). 7 staff were trained in an additional training session in March.</p> <p>Schools will record incidences of gender based violence using SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities Module (BEM). All incidents of gender based violence will be tracked and reviewed as part of the ongoing audits into bullying incidents over session 2024/25. This will support the collection, monitoring and review of the data. There has been one recorded incident this academic session.</p> <p>The Director of respectme, Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service will be meeting officers on 26 March.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> secondary schools to review their RSHP (relationships, sexual health and parenthood) curriculum 	<p>All Health and Wellbeing leads across the city are engaging with Education Scotland and the reform of the PSE (Personal and Social Education) Curriculum. The structure of the curriculum is to change from six areas of learning to eight, which allows for broadening and clear focus and outcomes. Education Scotland have also identified seven areas of importance that will run through the new structure. Equity and being respectful, supportive and safe are two of these which will take a deeper dive into equalities and gender based violence across the PSE curriculum as a whole.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuing to support all secondary schools to establish effective 	<p>Schools continue to engage with Time for Inclusive Education. We have 420 teaching staff across 55 education settings who have completed Stage 1 of the E-Learning Module. 3 Schools are involved in Stage 2 professional</p>	

<p>systems support LGBTQIA+ community school</p> <p>to in</p>	<p>learning. 1 School has completed all the outcomes. and there will be a further offer in March 2025.</p> <p>To support the published Guidance on LGBT Inclusive Education staff will have the opportunity to attend professional learning delivered by TIE in April.</p> <p>LGBT groups from our schools are collaborating with each other and across Aberdeenshire to coordinate an event for LGBT students this Spring. They are identifying a date and venue for a disco. This will support LGBT students across Aberdeen to make connections and be part of the larger community.</p> <p>Four Pillars continue to deliver the certified LGBT+ Awareness Training to school staff. The two-hour sessions which are delivered via TEAMS are running from the 25 February to 25 March.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> primary schools to pilot primary Mentors Against Violence programme and full roll out across secondary 	<p>A Scottish Government pilot of a primary version of Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) is currently running in selected central belt schools; this will be rolled out nationally in session 25/26. The feedback from pilot schools have been very positive regarding this adapted version of the full programme.</p> <p>ACC MVP trainers are supported the independent sector running an MVP training course at Robert Gordon's College in January 2025. This was a highly successful professional learning opportunity with 10 members of RGC staff trained and a further 9 members of ACC staff. Additionally, a further 2 nominated secondary colleagues are attending an MVP train the trainer event in Glasgow in March 2025. Upon successful completion this will take the number of MVP trainers in the city to 4.</p>	

High quality professional learning for all		
<p>Maintain an agile professional learning programme for all ELC and school staff based on both QI outcomes and audits of need</p> <p>Continue to increase opportunities for collaboration at secondary subject level</p> <p>Establish an ELC support worker network</p> <p>Where possible, support staff to gain statutory qualifications in order to realise career progression and improve the staffing pipeline</p>	<p>Professional learning continues to be planned based on needs identified through Quality Improvement visits and inspection evidence.</p> <p>Recent local Northern Alliance Learning, Teaching and Assessment Toolkit sessions have been well attended, and sessions are continuing this development work this term.</p> <p>Opportunities for a SMART Technologies Train the Trainer programme will commence on the May inset days to upskill staff and continue to support the roll out of the Northern Lights project.</p> <p>Work continues on the Behaviour Action Plan, with more than 200 practitioners engaging with work on Being Restorative and 30 practitioners completing a Train the Trainer Keeping Trauma in Mind programme. Work with Maybo has progressed, with around 2000 staff accessing e-Module online learning and face to face sessions on the November and February inset days. 12 trainers successfully completed the Level 2 (9) and Level 3 (3) Maybo Train the Trainer programme. E-learning modules have been opened up to include libraries and community learning staff.</p> <p>We are continuing to use ACC Learn to provide access to e-Learning opportunities, including two supporting children with healthcare needs courses for staff and senior leaders.</p>	

	A need analysis for all school based staff and Head Teachers has been sent to schools and results will inform our planning for professional development next session.	
Senior and Middle Leadership development		
Continue to deliver a programme for Middle Leaders to enhance leadership skills Engage with external professional learning opportunities to improve leadership capacity	<p>Two experienced Head Teachers have recently started supporting the QIO (Quality Improvement Officer) with a Leadership remit; this builds capacity with growing numbers of staff interested in developing their leadership skills.</p> <p>The CLPL (Career Long Professional Learning) courses for early phase Middle Leaders continue to have good attendance with 6 sessions now delivered. The quality of professional dialogue to deepen participants' understanding is a strength of these sessions.</p> <p>The most experienced Middle Leaders group have recently been studying Aberdeen's Quality Improvement Framework to deepen their understanding of expected standards across settings and to achieve clarity in self-evaluation.</p> <p>Our participants in this year's Into Headship are continuing to make good progress with a record number of Middle Leaders working through the process. This will support the recruitment of new Head Teachers within Aberdeen City.</p> <p>The process for recruiting for Into Headship for next session have been undertaken in March. with 3 applicants being successful. Two participants from last session led an informative online session sharing their experience of the Into Headship process. This has been shared through the Middle Leaders networks.</p>	
Increase opportunities for middle leaders to participate in Quality Improvement activity Deliver newly appointed HT programme and review implementation	<p>All middle leaders in school continue to have the opportunity to participate in quality improvement visits in their Trio or Quad. This has been extended to senior Early Years Practitioners in ELC ensuring specific actions for ELC are actioned timeously. Middle leaders report they see this opportunity as impactful and high quality professional learning.</p> <p>The newly appointed head teacher programme continues to be delivered when a new HT or acting HT takes up post.</p>	
Continue to support staff health and wellbeing		
Deliver staff wellbeing surveys Continue to signpost staff to corporate supports for health and wellbeing and highlight case studies Monitor compliance in the application of corporate staffing policies	<p>170 staff attended Being Restorative Training, was which delivered through six sessions on both February in- service days by Education Scotland. This is part 1 of a 2 part course, the second to be delivered in the 25/26 session. Attendees included teachers and support staff from all phases and staff from Active Schools.</p> <p>SAMH/Penumbra continue to support our Senior pupils by delivering Suicide Prevention & Self-Harm sessions. Four academies have completed this. A Wellbeing Support Day, co-ordinated by Penumbra, is being offered to Staff and Parents on the May in-service day, with several harm reduction support services taking part. This is being delivered in conjunction with the Grampian Wellbeing Festival.</p> <p>The Educational Psychology Service offer Coaching, accessible to all school staff, and also Systemic Early Intervention Consultations for Middle and Senior Leaders to discuss key issues or areas of practice relevant to them to find shared solutions, or support.</p>	

Monitor workforce to ensure our capacity to deliver for children and families		
<p>Monitor recruitment to ensure swift identification of any issues to be addressed.</p> <p>Build in performance management and absence reporting expectations for HT network and DHT network (CLPL planned)</p>	<p>The Quality Improvement Manager with responsibility for staffing continues to monitor ongoing requests to recruit. Discussions have recently begun to address emerging difficulty in recruiting to certain secondary subjects and we are working with schools in the central belt and Scottish Government to attract more graduates into teaching as a career. Bespoke recruitment and selection training for school leaders has been planned and delivered over 5 sessions by People & Citizen Services (P&C) colleagues, over 100 school leaders will have undertaken the training by mid-March.</p> <p>Dates for training around performance and absence management will be confirmed with P&C colleagues for later in 2025. Recruitment of our own probationer teachers is underway and is informed by our predicted requirements for August 2025.</p>	

Continue to develop School Profiles		
Evaluate the consistency of effective use of school profiles and ensure access for all	Data discussions in November 2024 between Quality improvement Officers (QIO) and school leaders demonstrated a continued spread of knowledge and understanding of school profiles. QIOs continue to support senior leaders in understanding their attainment data. A small test of change has been implemented to increase the rigour around the discussion of data overtime in the North of the city. This will be rolled out to south schools for the May data discussions.	
Implement improved tracking and reporting		
<p>Mandatory data training sessions for senior leaders which includes BGE (Broad General Education) tracker, H&WB (Health & Wellbeing) data, School Profiles, etc this should also cover analysis of data and planning next steps, and transition at all levels</p> <p>Data training for all staff to ensure accountability through the system</p> <p>City wide programme of moderation including work with university to ensure alignment with undergraduate training programme</p>	<p>As part of the Quality Improvement Visit, data is interrogated at class, faculty and school level with relevant staff in school.</p> <p>Senior Leaders can request Systemic Early Intervention Consultations from the Educational Psychology Service to support their data analysis or explore how to gather data for their Improvement Plans in relation to key aspects of performance at any point through the school year.</p> <p>A Moderation presentation has been developed for use by all settings to ensure a shared understanding of the moderation cycle. Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officers (QAMSOs) may support schools and ASGs in the delivery of this presentation and subsequent development work.</p>	
Collaborate with partners to join data sets when beneficial to do so		
Improve data sharing processes to ensure that all relevant data		

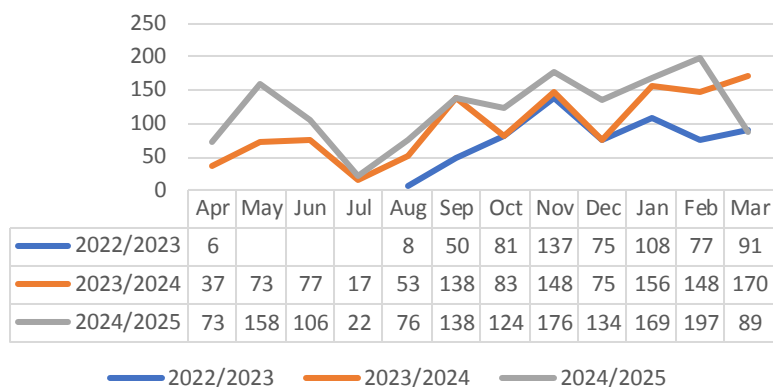
can be shared to support planning and implementation of interventions e.g. PEPAS (Physical Education, Physical Activity and School Sports), Health	A data sharing agreement is in place with Sport Aberdeen and has been agreed by all partners to allow data to be shared safely and the impact of interventions tracked more effectively.	
Increase central oversight of tracking data and PEF impact measures		
Continue to monitor the use of the Equity tracker and provide support through the Equity Network sessions	The equity planning and tracking format has been in place since session 2023/24. Evidence shows that most schools are becoming more confident in ensuring plans demonstrate a clear understanding of context through improved interrogation and interpretation of data. Increasingly, interventions are time specific and being tracked more regularly with signs of greater confidence to adopt, adapt or abandon if desired progress is not being made. The equity tracker was on the agenda for the equity network which took place in January 2025 and further opportunities for collaboration, support and guidance were made available for all equity leads.	
Clear expectations around the Core Quality Indicators		
Implement the refreshed Quality Improvement Framework to help improve standards against the core Quality Indicators	<p>Central officers will continue to work collaboratively with schools and Associate Assessors to implement and evaluate the refreshed Quality Improvement Framework which was approved at Education and Children's service committee in July 2024.</p> <p>This will allow further improvements to be presented to committee in June 2025.</p>	

Continually improve central Quality Improvement approaches		
Implement quality improvement calendar (QIC) which provides well planned, focused quality improvement activity	The Quality Improvement Calendar continues to support schools to plan their own improvement activities in line with centralised activity. The QIC for 2025/26 is being developed and will be shared with school leaders before the Easter break. This will further ensure that all schools/services are fully informed, allowing for efficient planning for next session. Next session's QIC will include a Building Capacity page, outlining all professional learning opportunities for the session. The QIC will continue to be a live document.	
Evaluate the effectiveness of activities within the QIC to determine next steps	All activities contained within the calendar are being evaluated at the time of delivery and will be evaluated again in 6 months to evaluate the ongoing impact on our schools.	
Maintain approaches to collaborative improvement across the city		
<p>Continue to support delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant</p> <p>Align partnership forum activity with the family support model building on good practice in existence</p> <p>Refresh trio model and involve the Associate Assessors in supporting quality improvement activity.</p> <p>Review and develop collaboration with locality leads / QI team</p> <p>Improved transition across the city</p>	<p>Our lead officer continues to update schools and ensure best practice is in place to deliver the covenant.</p> <p>Trios and Quads continue to work well to support quality improvement activity across the city.</p> <p>Associate assessors are continuing to play a key role in ensuring leadership teams are aware of the national standard.</p> <p>Sessions on each of the core indicators are being run by the Secondary Associate Assessors during May and June to support improvement in learning, teaching and assessment and ensure best practice is shared across all schools.</p> <p>The role of the locality lead in supporting early level will be reviewed as part of our annual quality improvement framework review.</p>	
Delivery of Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan		
<p>Work with the parent forum to improve communication between schools and parents and increase parental engagement</p> <p>Stronger family series to be further developed</p>	<p>Officers continue to work with colleagues from corporate services to streamline and update a digital resource for parents to be launched in Spring 2025. The parent forum has been invited to provide feedback on the new resource once it is ready to be published.</p> <p>Stronger Families Series continues to support NIF (National Improvement Framework) priorities with an ABZ campus awareness session delivered in January. Sessions to support attendance and wellbeing are planned for Term 4.</p>	
Develop and implement the Parental Involvement & Engagement Plan	Actions from the new Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan are progressing well, including those outlined above. 'Connect' report an increase in direct engagement with their parent council support and resources, with 27 schools engaging with the organisation's networking system and 16 schools attending online training. This means we are making good progress towards the action plan target of increasing engagement by 50% more schools by end of 2025.	

Accessibility Update

Augmentative and alternative signage at learner appropriate height	An ACC E-learn module has been created to support consideration moving forward.	
Consider suitability, accessibility and capacity within Victorian schools through feasibility study and options appraisal	The Outline Business Case is planned to be presented to the Council's Education and Children's Services Committee and Finance and Resources Committee in Spring 2025	
CIRCLE framework training delivered with partners across settings including use of Up and Away to support understanding of environments to meet needs.	Please see earlier update on CIRCLE.	
Develop guidance to meet a range of sensory needs	Guidance completed and available via padlet. Ambassadors are now using these to support schools.	
Child's planning format which is accessible for learners	Pilot is ongoing.	
Empower children and young people to have their voice heard when experiencing child protection processes through effective use of alternative communication systems	Bucksburn Academy ASN Wing and Orchard Brae School staff continue to build their skills and resources to consider how best to support pupil voice and agency for those learners with complex additional support needs, this includes the use of Makaton and assistive technologies.	
Access to information through a single digital source of information for parents, carers and disabled young people	Platform for the website has been agreed and initial engagement underway with partner agencies.	
Implement "One Good Adult" programme	Implemented	
Ensure summary information regarding additional support needs is accessible and available in a variety of formats in accordance with legislation	This will be considered when developing the website above.	
Outstanding actions from the Behaviour Plan		
Improve the consistency of incident reporting by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuing to investigate how to send an automatic notification to staff through Core HR - Reviewing arrangements further in light of the National Behaviour Plan (to include clear definitions when Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2 and Respect for All has been refreshed) 	<p>Work is continuing on developing a system of automation, currently a member of the Health and Safety team reviews all incidents and sends an email response to staff.</p> <p><i>Supporting learners: A relationship and rights focused approach to physical intervention and seclusion</i> is the new local guidance for schools based on the Scottish Government's guidance Included, Engaged and Involved part 3.</p> <p>This guidance highlights all the steps in the process of managing these situations and gives clear instruction to all staff. Definitions are included in this guidance and supporting appendices show the ACC processes and further information to support staff.</p>	
Gain further assurance around the knowledge of/compliance with agreed policies by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short Health and Safety briefings to be developed in collaboration with Trade Unions and posted on the Edu-Sharepoint site 	Person Centred Risk Assessments (PCRAs) are currently under review by the secondary intervention group, with the support from colleagues in the Health and Safety Team. The objective of the review is to support schools to implement and identify appropriate pathways and interventions timeously. Further training will be available to all staff on PCRAs and Incident Training once this guidance has been developed.	

Number of reported incidents as at 24.03.25



An Induction programme for staff has been drafted in consultation with the safeguarding group. This includes all mandatory training and training logs are being designed to track compliance.

All schools have updated their health and safety policies.

Refresh Behaviour and Relationship policies:

- All actions complete

The safeguarding group (comprising of officers, school staff and trade unions) continues to meet fortnightly.

All schools will receive the new Supporting learners: A relationship and rights focused approach to physical intervention and seclusion as the new guidance for schools in April, this will be supported by bespoke Q&A sessions. The new PCRA guidance will fall in line with this guidance and the language will be consistent through all documents to ensure clarity.

Actions are being delivered within timescales.

Ensure robust provision of risk assessments by:

- Collaboratively reviewing and updating Person Centred Risk Assessment guidance to include escalation arrangements, FAQs, the frequency of review alongside considerations of how best to provide targeted support to the young person during this period
- Quality Assurance process over 2024/25 to include sampling of Person Centred Risk Assessment processes

An approach to stress risk assessment is in development and will be worked on with trade unions and the headteacher group.

The e-module will provide guidance on the creation and review of Person Centred Risk Assessment (PCRAs), and this will be accompanied by written guidance. The module has been published, and the guidance is currently being developed. This new guidance will include reference to grab and go PCRAs which provide key information for supply staff working in a school.

Quality assurance of PCRAs continue to be reviewed during quality improvement visits .

A refresh of the PCRA documentation is underway with input from Health and Safety team. Samples of the current format have been gathered, and an audit of relevant information is almost complete. This will enable the document to be streamlined and provide non ambiguous language to support learners and staff.

Supporting staff by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regularly reminding staff of corporate wellbeing supports through the education newsletter - 	<p>Corporate wellbeing supports are shared through the education wellbeing newsletter to ensure all staff in schools have access to all supports available. Education will be part of the corporate pulse checks in relation to health and wellbeing.</p> <p>We are awaiting information on the publication of resources to support improvement in relationships at school level. Guidance on enabling police investigations will be discussed as part of the safeguarding group activity.</p> <p>.</p>	
Further build the capacity/capability of staff by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuing to roll out CALM theory (de-escalation) training to all school communities - Continuing to offer bespoke training through the Educational Psychology Service - Programme of restorative practice training being put in place from August 2024 - Implement Restorative Justice training (currently being negotiated) - Consider PSE review as part of National Improvement Planning 2024/25 	<p>Our approach to supporting schools who have dysregulated/distressed learners continues to develop with the introduction of understanding and supporting learners. This session is a bridge between first level Maybo and CALM theory. Further bespoke support can be delivered by the CALM team on request from schools.</p> <p>A bespoke suite of professional learning is under development. This is based on the changing needs of the service, national trends and the feedback given by staff at all levels. The model for this will be based on the Education Scotland structure of informed/skilled/enhanced. It will support practitioners at all levels and cover a diverse range of professional learning.</p> <p>The PSE curriculum review is underway with Health and Wellbeing leads for all schools attending sessions from Education Scotland. The curriculum will change focus and emphasis to broaden and provide depth to learning. Education Support Officer, Health and Wellbeing will support schools in the implementation of new or emerging curricular needs.</p>	
Improve knowledge of the legislative framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All actions complete 	<p>The exclusion webinar providing legal advice is available to all schools. This is the first in a series of webinars being developed to support schools with legislation.</p>	
Ensure effective mechanisms are in place to support continuous improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All actions complete 	<p>The HT group has now identified priorities with action plans to support these. This includes the service at Riverbank, the directory of support and a review of the Child's Planning Support Forum.</p> <p>A further group has been created to specifically address issues at secondary level, this group have also identified priorities which focus on learners who are unable to identify safe behaviour in school and are at risk of being involved with the criminal justice system.</p>	
Continue to focus on a positive culture - All actions complete	<p>This has been gathered and will be used to share best practice across the local authority, informal feedback from our recent Thematic Inspection of the Education Service was complimentary of our positive culture.</p> <p>Our latest staff wellbeing survey closed on Tuesday 14 January and feedback is currently being analysed by data and insights. Cluster data will be shared with the safeguarding group and data</p>	

	<p>across all clusters will be reported through Staff Governance Committee.</p> <p>All managers are regularly reminded of the need to promote open and blame free reporting of incidents.</p>	
<p>Engagement with parents and carers on behaviour and relationships by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tabling this Action Plan with the City-Wide Parent Forum for comment - 	<p>The Chief Officer has a standing item on all parent forum meetings to update on progress of the behaviour plan. These updates are appreciated and provide information for parent representatives to share at local meetings to ensure the information is disseminated across the whole parent body.</p>	
<p>Committee business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the Devolved School Management scheme as planned - Review the plan regularly in light of any updated national guidance - 	<p>The review of the Devolved School Management scheme is planned for 2025.</p>	

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	29 April 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Aberdeen City Integrated Children's Services Strategic Plan Annual Report 2023/24
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/078
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne and Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR	Eleanor Sheppard
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.1 and 2.4

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This Annual Report outlines work undertaken by the Children's Services Board over 2024/25. The report also proposes changes to the agreed Aberdeen City Integrated Children's Services Strategic Plan to support Community Planning Partners to positively respond to changes in published data and national policy intent.
- 1.2 This report satisfies a number of instructions from Committee including:
- to ensure that yearly progress reports are presented to Committee & thereafter for approval by the Community Planning Aberdeen over the lifetime of the Plan (21st March 2023);
 - 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 (4th July 2023);
 - to instruct the Chief Social Work Officer to provide an update on work to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children through the Children's Services Plan Annual Report (20th February 2023);
 - to update on progress to deliver a Bairns Hoose within the Annual Report (20th February 2024); and
 - to consider the findings of the health & wellbeing annual report and plan next steps as part of work being taken forward through the Children's Services Plan (30th April 2024).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 note the progress made in delivering the Aberdeen City Integrated Children's Services Strategic Plan from April 2024 to date;
- 2.2 note the changes evident in data sets released over the reporting period;

- 2.3 approve the Aberdeen City Integrated Children's Services Strategic Plan Annual Report 2023/24;
- 2.4 delegate authority to the Executive Director Families and Communities to submit the Annual Report to the Community Planning Aberdeen Board for ratification; and
- 2.5 delegate authority to the Executive Director Families and Communities to submit the Annual Report to Scottish Government pending approval from the Community Planning Aberdeen Board.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1. Part 3 (Children's Services Planning) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires every local authority and its relevant health board to jointly prepare an Integrated Children's Services Strategic Plan in respect of a three-year period. The current Aberdeen City Integrated Children's Services Strategic Plan was approved by the Education and Children's Services Committee in March 2023.
- 3.2 The legislation also requires every local authority and its relevant health board to jointly prepare a report on the impact of plans on an annual basis, and to submit these Annual Reports to the Scottish Government for review.
- 3.3 The agreed Aberdeen City Integrated Children's Services Strategic Plan is one of a suite of Statutory Plans which support delivery of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. In preparing the Plan in March 2023, considerable work was undertaken to align reporting arrangements in order to better integrate the full range of statutory Plans. Better integration of Plans is supporting delivery of more integrated services, helping make the best use of time and resources and providing a clearer insight into the needs of children and families. Our approach has been positively evaluated nationally from a Children's Services Planning perspective.
- 3.4 As a result of this integration, this Annual Report includes the annual Child Poverty Plan Action Report (LCPAR) which is required to comply with the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. Our approach has been deemed to be 'strong' from an external review from a child poverty perspective. Given the embedded focus on poverty within the Annual Report, the Report was presented to the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee in April 2025 for comment, prior to being presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee for Council approval. The Committee asked a number of questions about the Report, asked some clarifying questions and made helpful suggestions on sources of support.
- 3.5 In addition, this Annual Report responds to the Committee's request (formerly Public Protection Committee) for an annual report on the progress of our Corporate Parenting responsibilities outlined in Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. It also helps deliver our duty to report to Scottish Government Ministers every three years on how the Local Authority

is meeting its corporate parenting responsibilities as detailed in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

- 3.6 More integrated evaluation and reporting is helping Officers identify the issues to be addressed more clearly than is possible when looking at policies in an isolated way. There is a need to continue to integrate the development of strategies, policies and associated Implementation Plans wherever possible.

Approach taken to developing the Annual Report

- 3.7 In preparing this report the Children's Services Board has reviewed data sets made available since publication of our last Annual Report in March 2024 and reflected on progress in delivering our Plan. This has helped identify changes that need to be taken account of. Early findings have been validated by a range of stakeholders, including with Young Ambassadors (10-16 yrs) and Aberdeen Youth Movement (16-25 years). Reviewing both data and insights has helped us draw firmer conclusions on the activity most likely to realise improved outcomes and therefore help the Children's Services Board assess the adequacy of the current Plan.

Key achievements

- 3.8 Over the last year, the Children's Services Board has successfully worked with a range of partners to:
- secure funding from Scottish Government through our Fairer Futures Partnership, developed a high level implementation plan and appointed a Lead Officer to help drive the changes forward;
 - develop a national team around the Person Toolkit as part of our involvement in the Getting it Right for Everyone (GIRFE) national pathfinder;
 - prepare for the opening of our Bairns Hoose;
 - initiated a whole system approach to healthy weight in response to findings from our last Annual Report, and secured the support of a range of partners to help us address this risk;
 - realised a 12% increase in the uptake of Early Learning and Childcare for eligible 2s following engagement with the Scottish Government Data Pipeline;
 - increased school attendance at a faster rate than our peers;
 - reduced the rate per 100,000 of young people admitted to hospital due to assault from 52.9 in 2022 to 43.5 in 2023. The local rate is lower than the national rate;
 - increased presentations at National 5;
 - increased the number of people now claiming the benefits they are entitled to;
 - reduced the number of workless households in Aberdeen (1,700 less than in 2022); and
 - the Improvement Service Community Planning Tool shows that 92% of our communities are performing well compared to their comparator communities when looking at child poverty in isolation. When looking at wider measures, this percentage drops to 78%.

Learning from the data review

- 3.9 Undertaking the annual review has broadly confirmed the appropriateness of the current plan, although some new risks are evident which will require additional action to be taken by the Sub Groups who report to the Children's Services Board.
- 3.10 Our Best Start in Life Sub Group will continue to focus heavily on ensuring all families receive appropriate financial support by collaborating with NHS health point services and the local population to raise awareness of available resources, as well as continuing to collaborate to understand opportunities for pre and ante-natal women related to healthy weight. The Sub group has also identified the need to maintain our focus on safe sleeping, in collaboration with the Child Protection Committee and Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.
- 3.11 There is a need to better understand the factors which sustain household smoking behaviour and to consider what more might be done around the rise in premature births in some areas of the city as part of our Collaboration for Healthy Equity in Scotland (CHES). In addition, there is a need to collaborate with Public Health colleagues and organisations such as the Asthma and Allergy Foundation to better understand the concerning emerging trend around hospital admissions due to asthma, and monitor the impact of the Low Emission Zone on these levels over time. This fact finding work is likely to inform our work to develop the next Local Outcome Improvement Plan and may have actions extending well beyond Children's Services.
- 3.12 The Attainment and Transitions Sub Group will maintain Plans around the senior phase curriculum, and the Education and Lifelong Learning Service will continue to address variation. Emerging data suggests the need to now initiate some work on improving long term positive destinations and this will be taken forward in close collaboration with Skills Development Scotland. The Education Service will maintain their focus on school attendance, but there is a need to look in more detail at attendance at the primary 1 stage.
- 3.13 There is also a need to continue to give close attention to personal and social education programmes to ensure that our young people know how to keep themselves safe, particularly in relation to suicide. We will ask our Mental Health and Wellbeing Group to consider if any further action is required.
- 3.14 Our Children with Disabilities Group will be asked to prioritise planned work to improve transitions between child and adult services by making use of the GIRFE Toolkit developed as part of the national GIRFE pathfinder.
- 3.15 For the most part, our established plan remains appropriate. The disparity in outcomes at community level continues to suggest that the wider family supports currently in place are not making a difference to some groups, confirming our findings from last year's annual report and the need to think quite differently about how we work with and for families in need of our help and support. This will be progressed through our planned Fairer Futures Partnership and our Future Libraries Model.

- 3.16 As discovered during our last annual review, we must continue to look for ways to join data sets and look at community level data to ensure that we work to a shared and clear understanding of the problems our communities face.
- 3.17 There is a need to continue to carefully target those groups recognised as most likely to be impacted by poverty, and to increase our knowledge and support of them whilst maintaining an awareness that the evidence may challenge our responses in areas, and for residents, falling out with historically understood need/priority. Our place-based approach to the development of our Future Libraries may offer a helpful context to explore some of the challenges facing families more fully.
- 3.18 ABZ Works offers invaluable support to citizens, but we now need to extend its reach further and continue to deepen their understanding of the barriers that our citizens face. The Improvement Service are supporting an external review of our approach to Employability and the Children's Services Board will support the implementation of any proposed changes, in part through the development of our Future Libraries Model.
- 3.19 Health partners need to continue to understand and address the barriers that can result in poor health outcomes for some groups and communities.
- 3.20 Undertaking the Annual Review has again shown that richer information is available when policies and plans are aligned. It will be important to fully embed the establishment of our next Children's Services Plan with work to develop our Local Outcome Improvement Plan for 2026-2036, which as members know is our overarching poverty strategy. This will trigger a need to review the general timescales for development of the Children's Services Plan (which has a 3 year cycle) to better align with the 10 year LOIP.

Internal evaluation of the work of the Board

- 3.21 In addition to our planned improvement work and work supporting delivery of national policy, the Children's Services Board has continued to keep abreast of impending legislative changes to ensure readiness for what lies ahead and continues to evaluate the impact of established arrangements.

Next steps

- 3.22 The Plan put in place two years ago, with the additions made last year to focus on communities with a high prevalence of families living in SIMD 1, healthy weight and joining data sets continues to be relevant.
- 3.23 A number of key areas have been identified for further investigation to help inform the development of the next Local Outcome Improvement Plan (and associated Children's Services Plan). They are to:
- better understand the factors which sustain household smoking behaviour and to consider what more might be done around the rise in premature births in some areas of the city as part of our Collaboration for Healthy Equity in Scotland (CHES).
 - collaborate with Public Health colleagues to better understand the concerning emerging trend around hospital admissions due to asthma,

and monitor the impact of the Low Emission Zone on these levels over time.

- 3.24 We require to initiate some work to address new vulnerabilities identified through this Annual Review. These are to:
- look in more detail at attendance at the primary 1 stage.
 - give close attention to personal and social education programmes to ensure that our young people know how to keep themselves safe, particularly in relation to suicide.
 - Work with health partners to better understand and address the barriers that can result in poor health outcomes for some groups and communities.
- 3.25 Some work requires to be accelerated. This includes:
- planned work to improve transitions between child and adult services by making use of the GIRFE Toolkit developed as part of the national GIRFE pathfinder.
 - Extending the reach of ABZ Works by supporting the implementation of the recommendations made following the review of Employability.
- 3.26 The Aberdeen City Integrated Children's Services high level plan has been amended to take account of these additions (changes shown in red).

Strategic Stretch Outcomes					
Increase the number of 0-5s who meet developmental milestones by 2026	Improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and families by 2026	Improve the attainment, health and wellbeing and positive destinations of our care experienced by 2026	Improve the attainment and positive destinations of our children and young people by 2026	Reduce the number of young people charged with an offence by 2026	Increase the number of children with ASN or disability who secure a positive destination by 2026
Strategic Priorities					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve the health outcomes of expectant and new mothers ➤ Improve uptake of benefits ➤ Improve access to emergency formula and food for infants ➤ Address early speech and language needs ➤ Increase the uptake of immunisations ➤ Improve the quality of ELC provision and maintain uptake ➤ Investigate factors sustaining household smoking and the rise in premature births 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focus on prevention and early intervention ➤ Provide access to joined up services and bereavement support ➤ Respond quickly in a stigma free, needs and rights led way ➤ Increase levels of physical activity ➤ Increase the provision of child friendly environments within local communities ➤ Investigate the rise in hospitalisations due to asthma and ➤ Ensure school PSE Programmes help keep children safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Deliver a Bairns Hoose ➤ Deliver The Promise ➤ Increase the provision of health assessments for the care experienced ➤ Continue to close the gap between those who have care experience and their peers ➤ Increase the no. of foster carers available locally ➤ Keep brothers and sisters together ➤ Ensure adequate provision of legal advice and advocacy ➤ Implement the recommendations of the Secure Care Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement refreshed guidance on the use of restraint ➤ Better track those who are in or on the edge of the care system ➤ Improve learning transitions from P7 to S1 ➤ Deliver ABZ Campus to widen the range of courses ➤ Deliver Aberdeen Computing Collaborative to ensure long term employability ➤ Delivery of Tier 2 services to close the gap through SAC funding ➤ Continue to address the cost of the school day and child poverty in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reduce levels of anti-social behaviour ➤ Deliver Mentors in Violence Prevention across all secondary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Delivery of neurodevelopmental pathway ➤ Establish better assurance systems ➤ Increase the number of Young Carers receiving support ➤ Improve transition planning from child to adult services ➤ Ensure that the voices of children (including those who use alternative communication systems) are central to processes and Plans ➤ Decrease the number of children not accessing full time education
Enabling Priorities					
Access to services	Increase integration	Reduce risks	Commissioning	Data	Workforce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement a single Request for Assistance process ➤ reduce the number of access points to information and services ➤ investigate and address any issues in P1 attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Build on the integration models including that at ELC Links ➤ Establish an assurance system to test the strength of the system ➤ Improve alignment between children and adult services ➤ Develop a Target Operating Model for children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Better understand why children are placed OOA ➤ Understand the long term impact of ELC on outcomes for families ➤ Agree and implement a whole system approach to addressing obesity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Aligned to the 10 principles of family support ➤ Jointly respond to the needs of those displaced ➤ Evaluate readiness for implementation of the UNCRC ➤ Support the implementation of recommendations arising from the review of Employability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve knowledge of the 6 groups by co-designing with service users and children ➤ Improve data matching ➤ Improve the tracking of the outcomes of those most vulnerable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase knowledge poverty agenda and of benefits ➤ Increase knowledge of trauma and risk ➤ Develop ways of working (SIMD1) to better support the provision of rights

3.27 With Committee approval, the areas identified will be built into the workplan of the Children's Services Board.

3.28 It is proposed that this Annual Report be presented to the Community Planning Aberdeen Board for formal ratification in April 2024. The Annual Report will be submitted to Scottish Government thereafter.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Closer alignment of services could help realise efficiency in the longer term.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Section 8 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires the Council and NHS Grampian to prepare a Children's Services Plan every 3 years and to keep that Plan under review under section 11. Section 13 of the Act provides that as soon as practicable after the end of each 1 year period, a local authority and the relevant health board must publish (in such manner as they consider appropriate) a report on the extent to which children's services and related services have in that period been provided in the area of the local authority in accordance with the children's services plan. This Report and Appendix satisfies these duties.
- 5.2 The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets out steps required to be taken by the Scottish Government, Local Authorities and Health Boards to tackle child poverty. The Act creates a requirement for Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to annually agree and publish a Child Poverty Action Report. Following ratification the Report must be submitted to Scottish Ministers.
- 5.3 The Corporate Parenting duties included in Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 are designed to ensure that the attention and resources of various organisations are explicitly focussed on the task of safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of looked after children and young people, and care leavers. This part extends the duties of corporate parents and the reporting responsibilities of local authorities.
- 5.4 Aberdeen City Council has a duty to report to Scottish Government Ministers every three years on how it is meeting its corporate parenting responsibilities as detailed in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- 5.5 Section 59 of the 2014 Act provides that corporate parents must prepare a plan for how they propose exercising their corporate parenting responsibilities and must keep this plan under review; corporate parents must consult with one another before preparing or revising the plan and must publish the plan or revised plan.

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	Risk of not changing our local system to	Delivery of the Children's Services Plan and regular	L	Yes

	reflect changes in national policy.	review of the appropriateness of the Plan to ensure maximum impact.		
Compliance	Risk of not complying with legislation	This Annual Report complies with the Statutory Guidance and legislative requirements.	L	Yes
Operational	Risk that we make a lesser impact by working to a high number of strategic plans	The Plan pulls all strategic Plans together to help maximise impact.	L	Yes
Financial	Risk that we don't have sufficient resource to meet the needs of priority groups	The Plan will help us make best use of available resource by ensuring partners work to a common purpose.	L	Yes
Reputational	Risk that we don't prioritise those in greatest need.	Mitigated by undertaking a detailed strategic needs assessment and looking at the data by group before drawing conclusions.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No risks identified			

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Ensure the Council follows best practice as a corporate parent to get the best outcomes for looked-after young</p>	<p>The needs of children and young people most often require a strong multi-agency response. This Plan will support the further integration and collaboration across services supporting children and families to help realise improved outcomes.</p>

<p>people, those in kinship care and those with additional support needs such as autism, developmental disorders or mental health problems</p> <p>Commit to realising the potential of each individual, by seeking to widen curriculum choice and implement progressive choices.</p>	
<p><u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u></p>	
<p><i>95% of children (0-5 years) will reach their expected developmental milestones by the time of their child health reviews by 2026</i></p> <p>90% of children and young people will report that their experiences of mental health and wellbeing have been listened to by 2026</p> <p>As corporate parents we will ensure 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.</p> <p>95% of all our children, including those living in our priority neighbourhoods, will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026</p> <p>Fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026</p> <p>95% of our children with disabilities will experience a positive transition to adult services by 2026</p>	<p>This Plan details how all children's stretch outcomes will be realised over the next year and will help to coordinate our work across the Community Planning Partnership.</p>
<p>Regional and City Strategies</p>	
<p>Regional Cultural Strategy</p> <p>Prevention Strategy</p> <p>Children's Services Plan</p> <p>National Improvement Framework Plan</p>	<p>The Children's Services Plan prioritises prevention and is closely aligned with the National Improvement Framework. The Plan is designed to bring all statutory Plans for children into one Plan to improve service delivery.</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	No
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Aberdeen City Integrated Children's Services Plan 2023-26](#)

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Annual Report April 2024 – March 2025

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Community Planning
Aberdeen



ABERDEEN CITY CHILDREN'S SERVICES BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR



Our published Plan for children, young people and families 2023-26 articulates the outcomes Community Planning Partners are currently working to realise for children, young people and families across Aberdeen. As we reflect on progress made in the second year of the Plan, we continue to be thoughtful of how the needs of our families continues to change. This yearly review therefore presents an opportunity to check that our planned improvement projects are still the most appropriate and help determine any further amendments required to our agreed Plan.

In preparing this report we have reviewed data sets made available since publication of our last Annual Report in March 2024 and reflected on progress in delivering our Plan to identify any changes that need to be taken account of. Early findings have been shared with a range of stakeholders for validation and challenge, including our Young Ambassadors and Aberdeen Youth Movement.

We continue to integrate the full range of statutory Plans and reports in an attempt to better align reporting and reduce duplication. As a result, this Annual Report covering 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025, details the progress the Community Planning Partnership has made in delivering against several key national policies including:

- addressing child poverty;
- delivering The Promise; and our
- Corporate Parenting Plan.

In addition to our planned improvement work and work supporting delivery of national policy, the Children's Services Board has continued to keep abreast of impending legislative changes to ensure our collective readiness for what lies ahead. This has seen the Children's Services Board participate in planning for The National Care Service (NCS) through our local Programme Board, oversee preparations for our first Bairns Hoose, monitor the progress of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 and consider the implications of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024.

This report only provides a flavour of how partners are working together to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in Aberdeen City. I continue to be humbled by the collaboration and increasing sense of shared accountability demonstrated by members of the Children's Services Board.

Eleanor Sheppard

Executive Director – Families and Communities (Chair of the Children's Services Board)

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



As of the end of January 2025, 32 multi-agency Improvement Projects have been initiated and testing is now well underway, 8 of our projects have now achieved their aims.

Some other key achievements over the reporting period are listed below.

- Secured funding from Scottish Government through our Fairer Futures Partnership, developed a high level implementation plan and appointed a Lead Officer to help drive the changes forward
- Helped develop a national team around the Person Toolkit as part of our involvement in the Getting it Right for Everyone (GIRFE) national pathfinder
- Continued to prepare for the opening of our Bairns Hoose
- Initiated a whole system approach to healthy weight in response to findings from our last Annual Report, and secured the support of a range of partners to help us address this risk
- Through our engagement with the Scottish Government Data Pipeline, we have realised a 12% increase in uptake of Early Learning and Childcare for eligible 2s
- There has been a rise in primary school attendance, with the attendance of those who are looked after increasing at a faster rate than their peers. Local attendance levels are slightly better than national levels (92.3% in 2023 compared to 92.2% nationally).
- Reduction in the rate per 100,000 of young people admitted to hospital due to assault from 52.9 in 2022 to 43.5 in 2023. The local rate is lower than the national rate
- The number of presentations at National 5 increased to 11,236 in 2024 from 10,660 in 2023, an increase of 576 and the highest number on record for the local authority. At National 5 in S4, the per pupil presentation increased to 5.49 in 2024 from 5.22 in 2023, an increase of 0.27.
- There is clear evidence that far more people are now claiming the benefits they are entitled to
- The Improvement Service Community Planning Tool shows that 92% of our communities are performing well compared to their comparator communities when looking at child poverty in isolation. When looking at wider measures, this percentage drops to 78%.
- There has been a reduction in the number of workless households in Aberdeen (1,700 less than in 2022)

We are proud of our achievements, but there is clearly more to be done.



CONTENTS

What does the data published since March 2024 tell us about:

Our Babies?	5
Our Under 5s?	7
Our Primary School Pupils?	9
Our Secondary Pupils?	11

What does the data published since March 2024 tell us about child poverty and the needs of different communities? **14**

Best Start Bright Futures	27
Cost of living	41
Income from social security and benefits in kind	48

How effectively is our shared work helping us deliver on The Promise? **52**

Whole Family Wellbeing Funding **62**

How is the Improvement work coordinated through the Children's Services Board improving outcomes for children, young people and families and what are our next steps?

The Children's Services Board	64
Best Start in Life	70
Mental Health and Wellbeing Collaborative	71
Corporate Parenting	72
Attainment and Transitions	73
Youth Justice	74
Supporting Those with Additional Support Needs and Disabilities	76

Appendices

Improvement Project Case Studies	78
Improvement Project Index	84

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT OUR PRE AND POST-NATAL SERVICES?

What does the data published since March 2024 tell us?



Between 2008 and 2023, the standardised birth rate in Aberdeen fell from 10.2 per 1,000 pop. to 7.8 per 1,000. Births to younger mothers has seen a significant fall. For mothers under 20 there has been a 77.5% drop from 2002 to 2023 and for mothers from 20 to 25 a 44% drop (this will be partially attributable to age specific fertility rates). However, in contrast, births to mothers aged 40 and over has increased by 190% over the same period.

What is getting better?

Babies exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks has increased again from 41.3% in 2021 to 41.9% in 2023.

Levels are now well above the national average and the gap from national is increasing.



In 2024, we are on target to have increased the number of Health Visitors by 10.6 Whole Time Equivalents.



93.6% of babies were born at 37+ weeks gestation, slightly above the Scottish average 93.2%.



92.2% of pregnant women in Aberdeen City did not develop gestational diabetes, above the Scottish average of 90.8%. This reflects positively on the hard work and dedication of everyone involved in maternal healthcare in our area.

Looking forward, we anticipate that the increased number of health visitors will likely lead to a more robust delivery of the Universal Health Visiting Pathway. With more health visitors, we can ensure earlier interventions for children, helping them meet their developmental milestones more effectively.

What has stayed the same?

The percentage of babies born of healthy weight in the three years ending in 2024 was 82.0% compared to 82.4% in the three years to 2023. This is broadly tracking national averages



76% of babies born in Cults/Bieldside are breastfed at 6-8 weeks, compared to only 16% in Heathryfold and Middlefield. The variation at community level continues to be significant.



There has been a reduction in the number of unborn children on the Child Protection Register (from 53 from Aug 2022 to July to 45 from August 23 to July 24). However, this age group remains the highest.



The number of unborn children on the Child Protection Register has slightly reduced but this group remains the largest on the Register suggesting that we are not yet providing the right support for some families at community level. The collaboration as part of the Fairer Future Partnership presents a valuable opportunity to refresh our focus in order to effectively address the needs of families.

What is worsening?

Exposure to second hand smoke at 6-8 weeks has increased from 7.4% in the three years ending 2021 to 8% in the three years ending 2023



Levels of maternal obesity have increased again to 25% in the three years ending 2023/24. This is slightly below the Scottish average (27.6%). Although the city sits below the national average, levels are increasing more quickly locally.



There has been a rise in premature births. Levels are now above the national average (8.7% locally compared to 8.3% nationally) and the highest recorded locally over the last 10 years. The inequality gap is steadily reducing. 17% of births are premature in Summerhill, compared to only 3% in some communities.

We are making little, if any, impact on levels of second hand smoke at 6-8 weeks. Levels of maternal obesity continues to be of concern. There is a need to better understand the rise in premature births given the long term effect this can have on individuals.

Families living in SIMD 1 are proving particularly challenging to support within our current system. There is an urgent need for us and our partners to collectively identify these families. By doing so, we can better track their progress, gain a deeper understanding of the issues they face, and work with them to support positive outcomes in a person-centred and family-led manner.

So, what next?

In broad terms, a falling birth rate, and consequently an aging population, is likely to present challenges for any local authority area. These include uncertainty in the design and delivery of local services and, in the longer term, challenges to the economy of a declining workforce and falling consumer demand. Supporting Aberdeen to remain a family friendly city must continue to be a priority.

The improvement projects outlined in our current Plan are still thought to be appropriate and relevant. Considerable focus is currently being given to ensuring all families receive appropriate financial support by collaborating with NHS health points services and the local population to raise awareness of available resources.

We need to conduct further scoping work to understand the opportunities for pre and ante-natal women related to healthy weight, this ties in with the ongoing work across Aberdeen on healthy weight management and the Fairer Futures Partnership. We need to better understand the factors which sustain household smoking behaviour and what it would take to address this.

The rise in premature births, particularly in some areas of the City, may be worthy of consideration as we engage with Professor Marmot and Public Health Scotland through the Collaboration for Healthy Equity in Scotland (CHES).

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THOSE UNDER SCHOOL AGE AND THE SERVICES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT THEM?

What does the data published since March 2024 tell us?



There has been a reduction in applications for Early Learning and Childcare provision (ELC) due to a drop in birth rate and steady increase in the number of parents and carers who are now choosing to defer their child's entry into primary 1.

What is getting better?

There has been a rise in the proportion of children meeting developmental milestones from 87.4% in 21/22 to 89.8% in 22/23. This is better than the national and family group average. However, uptake across communities varies significantly.



Based on the data on eligible 2s shared through the Scottish Government Data Pipeline, there has been a 12% increase in uptake of ELC for eligible 2s (205 of the 456 thought eligible are attending).



32 ELC Modern Apprenticeships have now successfully moved into the ELC workforce, this is helping to address some recruitment challenges experienced by the local authority. Recruitment of health visitors has improved over the year.



The increase in those meeting developmental milestones is welcomed, however there is greater coverage of assessments in higher SIMD deciles and this heavily influences the city wide data. There is clear evidence that data linkage helps to increase the uptake of eligible 2 Early Learning and Childcare placements, our work to link data for additional uses must continue. There is also evidence of an increase in the number of Modern Apprentices (90 starts for Social Services (Children and Young People) in 2023/24) compared to 85 in the previous year.

What has stayed the same?

The percentage of children who have been identified as having developmental concerns at the 27-30 month review has increased from 6.2% in 2022 to 8.3% in 2023. This is lower than the national average of 16.9% and reflective of poor coverage in some communities. The level of concern at community level ranges from 18% to 1%.



The proportion of ELC settings graded good or better dropped over 2023/24 to 80.2%, due largely to challenges experienced by our funded providers (national average 89.8%). The average Care Inspectorate gradings for Local Authority ELC provision have increased across all Quality Indicators (QIs).



Considerable variation in the uptake of immunisations remains. 100% of families living in the Oldmachar ward benefited from the MMR at 24 months, compared to only 68% in the City Centre (west). Similar patterns are evident when looking at the 6 in 1.



Health Visitors have worked hard to undertake assessments of children at 27-30 months and coverage is improving across the city, however some families continue to find it hard to engage with established arrangements and health colleagues are testing out different arrangements to increase uptake. The differences evident across areas of the city in those identified as having developmental concerns, must be better understood, particularly given the potential lasting impacts in later life.

The increase in average Care Inspectorate gradings for Local Authority provision is welcomed, but variation requires our continued focus. There is a need to review mechanisms in place to support Funded Provider settings to fully respond to Care Inspectorate recommendations timeously.

What is worsening?

There has been a rise in infant deaths (aged 0-1 years) per 1,000 children from 2.5/1000 in the four years ending 2020, to 3.1/1000 in the 4 years ending 2021. Levels are lower than those nationally, although the gap to national has reduced.



In 2023/24, 98.72% of our eligible pre-school population and 78.92% of our eligible ante pre-school population were placed in ELC, a slight decline from last year. This is attributed to an increasing % of families choosing to defer entry to primary 1 (17.9% in 23/24 compared to 14.2% in 2022/23.)



The drop in uptake of the 6 in 1 at 24 months is greater than national averages. Only 95.1% of children were vaccinated in 2021-2023 from 95.9% in 2020-22.. There has been a 0.9% drop in MMR uptake over the same time period (90.1% in 2021-23 from 91.0% in 2020-2022 much lower than the national average of 93.8%



The historical shortage of Health Visitors has impacted on work for this age group, it is hoped that recent improvements in staffing levels will support longer term improvement. There is considerable evidence of variation in data at community level and this needs to be addressed through the provision of services more tailored to the needs and wants of individual communities rather than taking a generic approach across the city. This is being progressed through our Fairer Futures Partnership and through our Future Libraries Model.

There is considerable evidence that parents and carers, recognising the impacts of recent world events on their child and knowledge of the more expansive and flexible funded offer of 1140 hours of ELC, are choosing to delay entry to both ELC and school to support their child's development. The impact on both ELC and primary school placements will require ongoing monitoring.

There is a need for the Children's Services Board to support the Child Protection Committee and Alcohol and Drugs Partnership collaboration to encourage and educate around infant safe sleeping given that local analysis has identified that alcohol and drug use escalates risk. The rise in infant deaths is of considerable concern.

So, what next?

The improvement projects outlined in the current Plan are still thought to be appropriate, but the need to reflect on the needs of families living in different communities is again evident and will drive our work over the coming year. There is a need to maintain our focus on safe sleeping.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT OUR PRIMARY AGED PUPILS?

What does the data published since March 2024 tell us?



There has been a rise in primary pupil numbers from 14,573 in September 2022 to 15,210 in September 2023. The rise in school applications means that some families are now not able to access the school of their choice. This has led to an increase in school placement appeals from 167 in session 22/23 to 236 in session 23/24.

Greater diversity is evident (26.9% primary pupils are registered as being from an ethnic minority locally compared to only 12.2% nationally, with 56.7% identifying as being 'white UK' compared to 77.7% nationally). However, the number of children who have English as a second language has reduced from nearly 22% in 2022/23 to just over 19.1% in 2023/24. Despite the reduction, the percentage of learners who have English as a second language is significantly higher than the national average of 8.6%.

What is getting better?

There has been a rise in primary school attendance, with the attendance of those who are looked after increasing at a faster rate than their peers. Local attendance levels are slightly better than national levels (92.3% in 2023 compared to 92.2% nationally).



The proportion of adults satisfied with local schools has increased 71.3% to 72.3% in 2023. Although still slightly below national (73.7%) the rising local trend is at odds with a declining national trend.



There has been an increase in the number of children registered for free school meals across primary 6 and 7, from 682 in 2021/22 to 876 in 2022/23. This growth in registration is greater than the 5.7% growth in population across P6 & 7.



The percentage of primary 7 children with poor dental health has decreased. In 2023 79.7% of children had good dental health, an improvement of around 4%. Outcomes are better than the national average of 75.2%. Levels of tooth decay ranges from 56% in Torry west to 96.5% in Braeside/Mannofield.



There has been a 25% increase in the number of young people participating in universal sports activities.



There has been improvement across all Curriculum for Excellence measures and the city is now in line with national averages, up one ranking position on P1.4 and 7 for literacy to 18 of 32, and up 2 ranking positions on attainment gap for P1.4 and 7 Numeracy to 20 of 32.



The rapid increase in school population has resulted in there being less flexible space available in school buildings to support children in primary schools. Despite this lack of flexibility, there is evidence of improvement in primary curriculum for excellence (attainment) levels and attendance

continues to be better than the national average. There is evidence that collaboration with partners around key risks, for example around dental health, is improving outcomes for children.

What has stayed the same?

The percentage of primary 1 children with poor dental health has fallen slightly. In 2024 70.6% of children had good dental health. Outcomes are poorer than the national outcome of 73.2%



The number of children claiming free school meals is slightly higher than the national average (77.15% locally compared to 76.4% nationally) but with considerable variation at community level.



Attendance rates per 100 for looked after children sat at 88.2% in 2022/23. Local levels are considerably better than the national (84.3%) and family group average (86.1)



This age group again highlights the considerable variation in patterns of behaviour and outcomes across communities which can be masked by looking at city wide data sets. We must maintain our focus on need at community level.

What is worsening?

The number of children hospitalised due to asthma, 0-15 years, increased from 105.4 per 100,000 in 2022/23 to 117.8 per 100,000 in 2021/22 and appears to be rising further. Although better than the national average of 11.9, there is an encouraging declining trend nationally which is at odds with an increasing local trend.



When looking at our relative position compared to other Local Authorities in the Local Government Benchmark Framework, attainment in CfE is down one ranking position on attainment gap for P1,4 and 7 Literacy to 21/32, down one ranking position on P1,4 and 7 for numeracy to 19/32



There has been a rise in the number of children living in poverty from 20.5% in 2021/22 to 21.8% in 2022/23. Local levels are in line with national averages but greater than the family group.



Although attendance is better than the national position, the city sees poorer school attendance at P1 (91.6%). This dip at Primary 1 is not seen nationally.



More than 1 in 5 children across Aberdeen City are now experiencing poverty and there is considerable variation at community level when looking at the health outcomes of parents and carers, which can directly impact on children and young people and maintain intergenerational poverty. Our continued focus on attainment, attendance (particularly at primary 1) and child poverty will be important. There is a concerning trend around hospitalisations due to asthma, which is bucking the national trend.

So, what next?

Planned work to increase alignment with adult services should continue alongside the development of our community based Family Support Model in Northfield and Torry.

There is a need to consider if more could be done to address the concerning emerging trend around hospital admissions due to asthma, and monitor the impact of the Low Emission Zone on these levels over time. There is a need to look in more detail at attendance at the primary 1 stage.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT OUR SECONDARY PUPILS?

What does the data published since March 2024 tell us?



There has been a rise in secondary pupil numbers from 10,430 in September 2022 to 10,977 in 2023. The pupil population has become increasingly diverse. The most recent (re-baselined) population estimates from National Records Scotland identified that our city population has grown by 2.4% since 2011.

There were 4,675 young people in the senior phase of our secondary schools at the point of school census in September 2023. This is 210 more than at the time of the census of September 2022 (4,465). There is clear evidence this has increased further in 2024.

What is getting better?

77% (75%, 71% at earlier data points) of learners feel positive or very positive about their body image, showing a further increase of 2% from November 2022.



Reduction in the rate per 100,000 of young people admitted to hospital due to assault from 52.9 in 2022 to 43.5 in 2023. The local rate is lower than the national.⁶



8.6

There has been a drop in alcohol related hospital admissions for those aged 11-25 from 255 per 100,000 in 2022 to 226.4 per 100,000 in 2023. However, this sits slightly above the national average (211.5)



The overall average total tariff score has risen from 882 in 2023 to 893 in 2024. This is still below national (918) although emerging trends suggest that local data could overtake national in the next 2 years.



The number of presentations at National 5 increased to **11,236** in 2024 from 10,660 in 2023, an increase of 576 and the highest number on record for the local authority. At National 5 in S4, the per pupil presentation increased to **5.49** in 2024 from 5.22 in 2023, an increase of 0.27.



37% of young people achieved 5+ awards at level 6 in 2022/23, better than the 36% in 2021/22. This is one percentage point behind the national average of 38% although bucks the national trend.



There are encouraging signs in some health and education outcomes. Despite the gains, some groups of children continue to do less well than others with clear signs of less positive movement in some communities.

Variation across our secondary schools is evident, the recent rapid increase in pupil numbers (particularly coming through the early stages of secondary in August 2024) is thought to be a factor.

What has stayed the same?

Uptake of the HPV vaccine in S3 girls has increased from 76.6% to 79.2% in the three years ending 2023. This remains marginally below the national level of 80.7%. There is considerable variation at community level with only 58% of those in Tillydrone being vaccinated.



The number of presentations at Higher increased to 5,944 in 2024 from 5,689 in 2023. The A-C pass rate for 2024 was 73.59%. This represents a decrease from 75.02% in 2023. The National pass rate has decreased by 2.2% from 2023 and currently sits at 74.9%.



The physical wellbeing survey told us that there are times where children and young people do not have the right access to food to meet their nutritional needs. 3%, 238 (compared 3.7%, 256 in 2022).



63% of young people secured 5 passes at level 5 in 22/23, this is slightly down on 21/22 (66%) with the Local Authority position against others largely unchanged (20th out of 32 Local Authorities in 2022/23 compared to 19th in 2021/22).



School exclusion rates per 1000 children have reduced from 52.9 in 2018/19 to 25.7 in 2022/23. However, this is still higher than the national average of 16.6. Although significantly reduced, exclusion rates for those who are looked after are significantly higher than national levels (164 per 1000 compared to 97 per 1000 nationally).



41% of young people from SIMD 1 achieved 5+ passes at Level 5 in 2022/23. This is better than the 34% in 2021/22 but still some way from the national average (50%) 19% now achieve 5+ at Level 6, a 6% improvement and now gaining on the national average of 22%

The proportion of children entering positive destinations in 202/23 was maintained at 93.6%, this is still some way from the national average of 95.9%



We are still some way from the virtual comparator in terms of education outcomes and must maintain our focus on this area and work to address the variation from school to school.

Focused work on sustained positive destinations should be initiated as Skills Development Scotland continue to work with HMRC to find a resolution to data sharing arrangements which could let us better understand those who do not secure a longer term positive destination.

There is also a need to monitor the number of young people who are economically inactive due to anxiety/mental health needs as 51 young people were economically inactive due to anxiety/mental health needs as of October 2024.

What has worsened?

There has been a continued rise in death by suicide in 11-25 year olds from 7.86 per 100,000 in 2021 to 8.2 per 100,000 in 2022 (crude rate). Despite local data being positive against the national (10.9 per 100,000) our locally rising trend is at odds with plateauing national data.



The average total tariff score for those living in SIMD 1 has reduced from 591 to 481. This is some way from the national average of 658.

At National 5, the A-C pass rate for 2024 was **73.3%**. This has decreased from 74.6% in 2023.



The physical wellbeing survey highlighted an increase in the time spent on technology with 28% (27% in 2022) stating that they spend more than 6 hours on technology at the weekend. 946 of these are Primary stage learners.



61% (69% last year) of learners who completed the health and wellbeing survey have at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity a day

There is a need to take further action on the health led National Self Harm Plan to get ahead of the concerning rise in suicide. We need to better understand our local data in order to amplify our preventative offer.

The disparity in outcomes across communities is considerable and we must have a laser focus on variation at community level.

So, what next?

There is a need to maintain our Plans around the senior phase curriculum and also continue to give close attention to personal and social education programmes to ensure that our young people know how to keep themselves safe. Programmes should take account of the higher prevalence of rates of death from suicide and in Aberdeen North (12.6 per 100,000) compared to Aberdeen Central and Aberdeen South (sitting at 10.5 and 10.4 per 100,000). We will ask our Mental Health and Wellbeing Group to consider if any further action is required. Work to improve school attendance should continue.

The disparity in outcomes continues to suggest that the wider family supports currently in place are not making a difference to some groups, confirming our findings from last year's annual report and the need to think quite differently about how we work with and for families in need of our help and support. This will be progressed through our planned Fairer Futures Pathfinder.

What does our analysis by life stage tell us we need to address?

For the most part, our established plan remains appropriate. There is a need for us to maintain our current focus on child poverty, safe sleeping, attendance (particularly at primary 1) /attainment, addressing variation and improving transitions between child and adult services.

As we discovered during our last annual review, we must continue to look for ways to join data sets and look at community level data to ensure that we work to a shared and clear understanding of the problems our communities face. We need to continue to explore new ways of supporting our communities and citizens through our work to develop our Family Support Model as part of our Fairer Futures Partnership with Scottish Government. We need to continue to progress our whole system approach to healthy weight.

We need to start to be curious around air pollution and try to better understand why more children are presenting at hospital due to asthma. We also need to look carefully at what more can be done to prevent suicide given concerning local trends. We need to initiate some work around positive destinations.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CHILD POVERTY IN THE CITY?

What does the data published since March 2024 tell us?

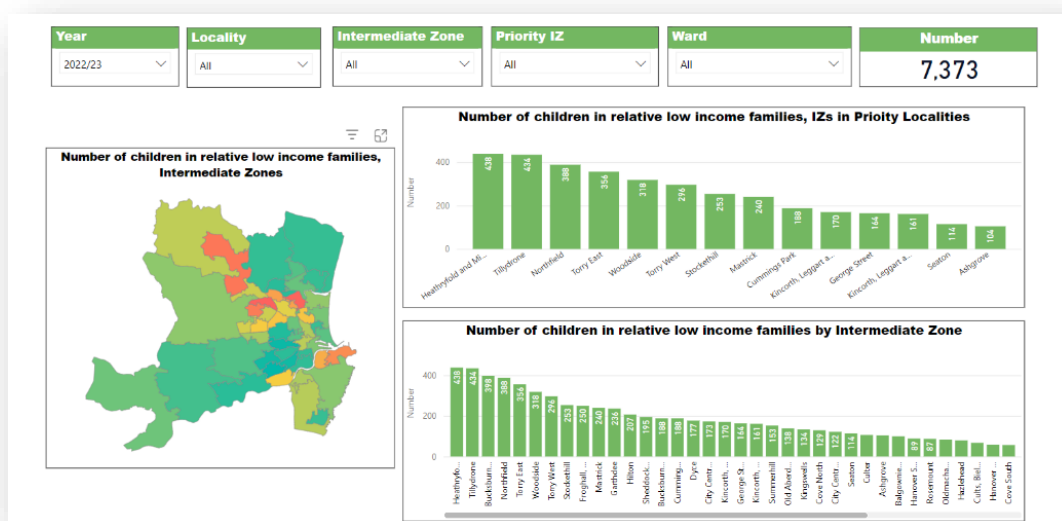


The cost of living crisis continues to impact on the resilience and mental health of families, with increasing numbers of people feeling socially isolated across our communities. Community level data shows that poverty is an overarching factor in long term outcomes for children and families.

The number of children living in poverty

Recognised statistics, contributing to the national child poverty dashboard, detailing the exact number of children living in poverty across the city vary according to the methodology and source used. Families Living in Low-Income circumstances is a generic term used to describe relative poverty defined by a variety of these measures. The most recent data (June 2024 End Child Poverty measure) estimated that for 2022/24 21.8% (20.5% in 2021/22) of children in the city were living in households where the household income is below 60% of median income **after housing costs** (more than 1 in every 5 children). This shows us that despite a range of interventions put in place locally, there continues to be a steady rise in the number of children living in poverty.

Data from 2022/23 shows that in some city communities, according to the separate official statistics which populate the majority of data in this document, over 35% of children are living in relative poverty compared to only 3.7% in other communities. This data refers to children living in households where the household income is below the current 60% of median income **before housing costs**. Around 61% (4,500) of children in low-income families are in working households. The concentration of children living in low-income families varies considerably across Aberdeen City.



The working age population

In the year from July 2023 – June 2024, 19.5% of Aberdeen's working age population (over the age of 16) were economically inactive compared to the 25.5% recorded between July 2022 and June 2023. The trend for this overall measure, from the commencement of 2024, is offering early indications of a reduction in inactivity with Aberdeen reverting to pre-pandemic levels and also being lower than Scotland levels, after a run of outcomes (covering April 2021- September 2023) where the city's inactivity levels were higher than the national picture. This improvement is welcomed and suggests that our interventions are making a positive difference.

Of those who were economically inactive, 32.8% were students, 28% were long-term sick, 18.4% were looking after home/family and 11.8% were retired (prior to national retirement age). Looking at the trend patterns for each of these groups suggests that student inactivity, although lower than at June 2023, has been on an upwards trajectory, while inactivity due to long term illness is similar to that in 2022/23 and 2021/22 and improving in comparison with Scotland levels. This may be indicative of there being fewer opportunities for students to work flexibly or could equally show that studies are being prioritised.

After an extended period of very low inactivity among the retired cohort, the 2023/24 data indicates that this is returning to 'normal historical' levels, but with this cohort still being more economically active than at Scotland level. Of those who were of working age and not working, 88% stated that they were not actively seeking employment. The last set of official statistics on the % of inactive population in Aberdeen seeking employment (October 2022-September 2023) was 14.2%, below the Scotland level.

In the 2023 calendar year, there were an estimated 13,500 workless households in Aberdeen, a fall of 1,700 on 2022, with reversion to the previously common position where the proportion of workless households in Aberdeen (16.2%) was below the Scotland level (17.4%).

Employment rate/Economic Activity by Minority Ethnicity (16-64 years)

NOMIS data (derived from Annual Population and Labour Force Surveys) shows that between July 2023 and June 2024, 63% (64.5% in 2022/23) of those who are classified as being of minority ethnic background were employed, compared to the wider city figure of 76%. The first figure is statistically unchanged from the previous year, but with a widened gap of around 4 percentage points to the city's overall outcome.

The city level minority ethnic employment rate outcome is higher than the Scotland figure of 56% whilst the unemployment rate was 15.7% (10.7% in 2022/23) the lowest figure of the four large urban local authorities where sample data was available. This was 10 percentage points higher than the overall city figure. Although the city has a more favourable picture compared to others, there is a need to understand this more fully given the significant shift in demographic and increasing diversity evident across the city.

Economic Inactivity rates for Aberdeen among minority ethnic groupings at 25% (28% in 2022/23) were, with the exception of a single authority, the lowest of each of the 14 local authorities for which data was available. This was higher than the overall figure for the city which was 19.5%. There is no specific data from this source outlining the proportion of inactive persons who were seeking employment. This data may be indicative of family members accompanying students at both city universities, but worthy of further interrogation.

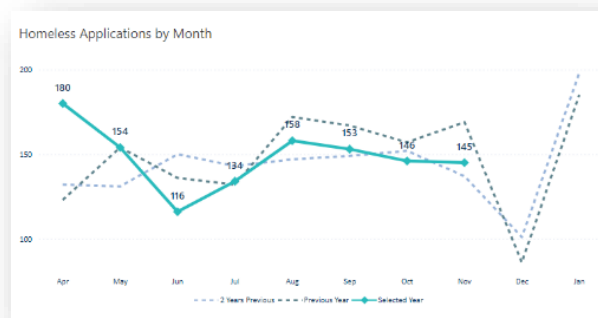
In combination, the change in data for 2023/24 is suggestive that, the employment and unemployment rates, although better than most comparable local authorities is most statistically influenced by a movement from economic inactivity. Some caution requires to be exercised around interpretations derived from the source dataset as the sample sizes for each local authority do not enable the generation of full granular outcomes for all 32 authorities.

Rise in homelessness

In 2023-24, there were 1,778 homelessness presentations to the council, an increase of 0.5% on the previous year, whilst still high, a less sharp rise than the 25% reported in 2022-23.

In March 2024, 442 households were in temporary accommodation (up from 399 in March 2023), 90 of these households had either pregnant women or children in them.

483 young people (aged 16 - 24 years old) applied for homeless assistance in 2023/24, up 3.9% (+18) on 2022/23. 105 of these were from applicants aged 16/17 years old, a 10.5% (+10) increase on the 95 received the previous year with most reporting being asked to leave their family home.



378 were from applicants aged 18 -24 years old, a 2.2% (+8) increase on the previous year.

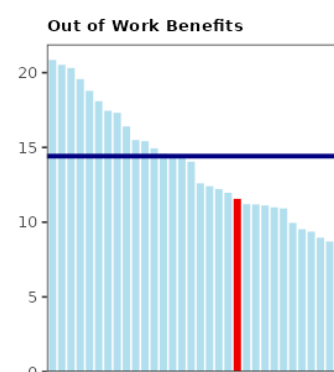
Analysis at individual case level shows that most are due to a breakdown in relationships and the service will work in collaboration with other Council Clusters to review a sample of cases to elicit learning. Sampling of cases to date illustrates that the conflict being experienced in the family home is influenced by a number of other factors (such as other children within the home, illness, financial pressures) and the involvement of other services with the family leading up to the point of crisis.

Work to address homelessness is being driven through our engagement with [Homewards](#).

Claimant count

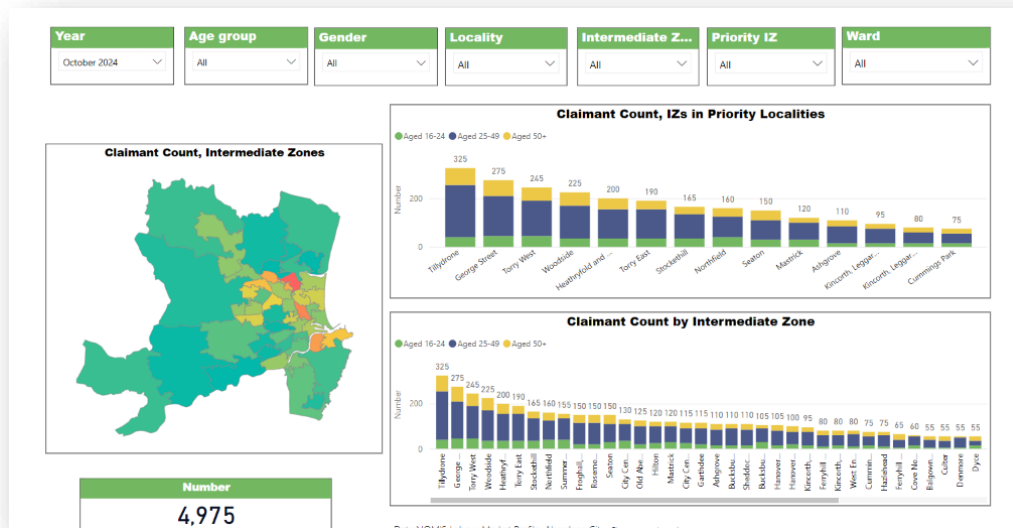
The city level claimant count rose from 4,595 in October 2023 to 4,975 in October 2024. However, there was a slight drop (875 in October 2023 to 870 in October 2024) in the number of 16–24-year-olds claiming. These trends are at odds with those reported last year, suggesting that more families are now claiming the benefits they are entitled to and this is welcomed.

In October 2024, there were 1,592 Claimants in our priority localities, higher than in October 2023 (1,530). This represents 30.1% of all claimants in the city, a marginal reduction on the positions recorded at prior snapshot points as a consequence of the overall rise in the claimant count, and some shifts in claimant activity within other non-priority localities.



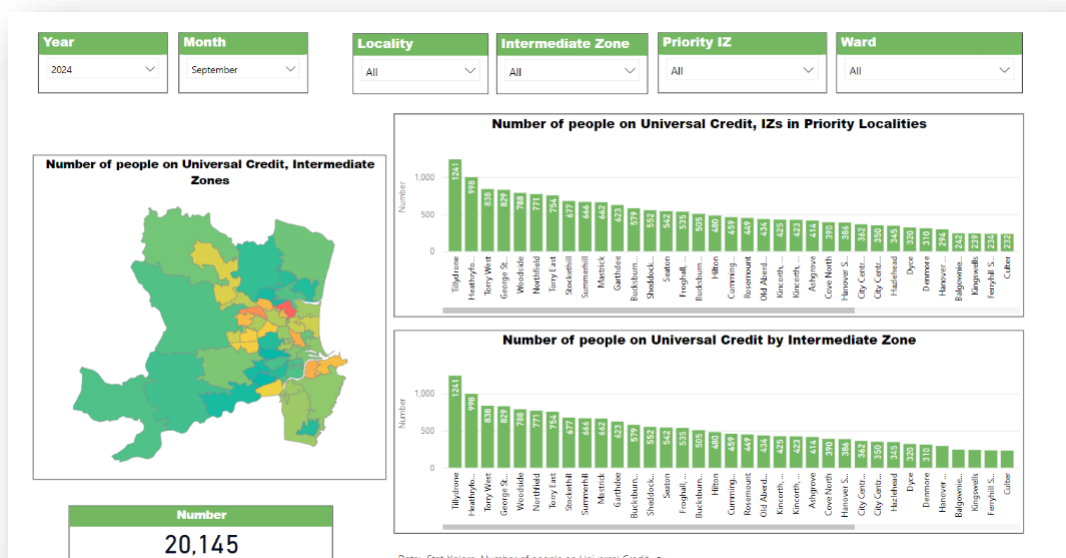
The claimant count continues to vary across the city by zone, with Tillydrone having the highest proportion of claimants.

The Improvement Service Community Planning Tool shows that the Local Authority area has increased by one place against other community planning partnerships for this measure. Aberdeen City now sits 20 out of 32 Local Authorities (compared to 21 of 32 last year) for levels of Out of Work Benefits. This is still below the national average but is the highest within our Family Group suggesting that our financial inclusion arrangements are more effectively supporting families to claim their entitlements.



Universal credit

There has been a considerable rise in the number of people claiming Universal Credit, from 18,470 in September 2023 to 20,145 in September 2024. There is considerable variation in the level of claimants at community level, with Tillydrone being home to the highest proportion of claimants. Some caution is needed in interpreting these figures since small numbers of people continue to transfer to Universal Credit from legacy benefits.



Spread of poverty across the city

Poverty is not spread equally across our city. The number of children living in relative low-income families, based on the official statistics released in March 2024, varies across the city by ward zones.

In 2022/23, Hazlehead/Queens Cross recorded the lowest number of children (147/ 4.1%) and Northfield/Mastrick, the greatest number, although this number is improved from the previous year. There is a high of 967 in Northfield/Mastrick, (28.2%, 30.4% in 2021/22) and 684 in Torry/Ferryhill (24.0%, 23.1% in 2021/2022), both figures are improved on 2022.

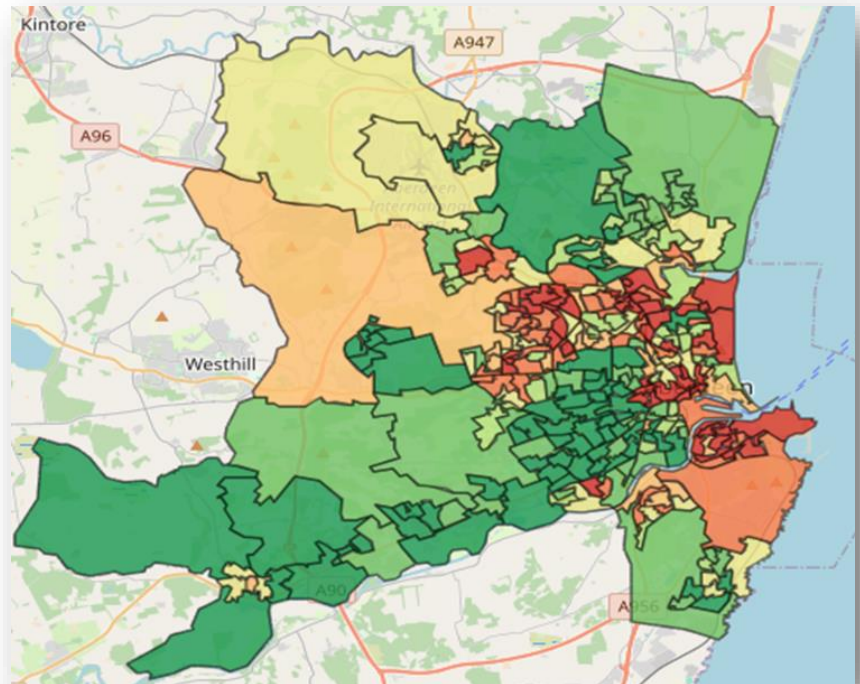
Hilton/Woodside/Stockethill (25.5%) and Tillydrone/Seaton/Old Aberdeen are both sitting at around 690 children living in relative low-income families. Tillydrone/Seaton/Old Aberdeen continues to have the city's highest proportion of children living in relative low-income families at 32.3%, a small increase on 2021/22.

The George Street/Harbour ward has a relatively lower number of children in this category than these zones at 465 children, but despite falling out with the priority locality structure, is now experiencing the second highest % of child poverty behind Tillydrone.

Dyce/Bucksburn/Danestone has experienced the greatest material rise in both the numbers and % of children in relative poverty, with 761 children (517 in 2021/22) and 24.8% (16.9% in 2021/22). Numerically and proportionately, this ward now sits above Torry/Ferryhill in terms of relative poverty based on this measure.

These patterns of change are suggestive that child poverty trends at ward levels have been less fixed relative to each other than in most previous years, with gains in some priority neighbourhoods whilst others, and some out with priority activity definitions, have experienced a less positive direction of travel. This signals a need to continue to sharpen our focus at community level.

The Scottish Government Child Poverty Map – Aberdeen City (Improvement Service, based on Official Statistics) shows the spread of relative child poverty across the city.



The impact of this spread is seen across a range of outcome measures from the Community Planning Outcome Tool. A colour RAG (Red / Amber / Green) rating has been used to show where there has been statistically significant movement locally and/or in comparison with Scotland trends.

2022/23 2021/22	Average Highest Attainment - 2022/23	Child Poverty (%) - 2022/23	Crime Rate, per 10,000 - 2022/23	Depopulation Index - 2022/23	Early Mortality, per 100,000 - 2022/23	Emergency admissions per 100,000	Out of work benefits (%)	Participation rate
Aberdeen city least deprived	6.0 (6.1)	3.7 (3.9)	564.4 (717.8)	91.3 (91.8)	245.3 (250.3)	19591.0 (18298.6)	3.1 (3.4)	96.0 (96.5)
Aberdeen city most deprived	4.9 (5)	35.3 (35.0)	1779.8 (2057.2)	102.0 (101.6)	782.3 (787.2)	25449.7 (29916.6)	25.3 (26.8)	85.0 (83.8)
Scotland least deprived	6.1 (6.1)	6.1 (6)	500.9 (519.3)	94.2 (94.2)	244.8 (243.6)	18280.9 (18309.4)	3.9 (4.3)	96.4 (96.2)
Scotland most deprived	5.1 (5.1)	38.8 (37.3)	1829.4 (1882.5)	100.4 (100.3)	799.6 (794.7)	31497.9 (32122.0)	30.7 (31.4)	87.7 (87.2)

Improvements noted include:

- a reduction in the % of children experiencing child poverty in the least deprived communities (from 3.9% in 2021/22 to 3.7% in 2022/23. This is significantly lower than the national average of 6%.
- A considerable fall in crime rate across communities in Aberdeen
- A very slight reduction in early mortality per 100,000, bucking the national trend.

Areas of concern include:

- An increase in the percentage of children living in poverty in the most deprived communities (from 35% in 2021/22 to 35.3%). The rise locally is less acute than the national rise from 37.3% to 38.8%.

Grant applications and Advice Services

There were 1,630 applications to the Best Start scheme in the 12 months from September 2023 to 2024, (1,455 in the previous annual period) with the Best Start Foods component representing both the greatest year-on-year change in component application levels (1,465 +315)) and in the proportion of accepted applications (63% +3 p.p.) In 2022/23, these figures were 1,150 and 60% respectively.

Applications against the Best Start ELC and School Age component totaled 525, similar to the prior year. There were 1,065 Applications against the Pregnancy and Baby component, a more marginal rise in the proportion of all accepted applications (+2 p.p.) and an increase of 280 applications on 2022/23.

In common with the national trend, the number of applications being received against the Best Start scheme for both the Pregnancy/Baby component and the Foods component has risen in 2023/24 as a consequence of both population and circumstantial changes, alongside the increasing accessibility/knowledge of the supports available through the Scheme.

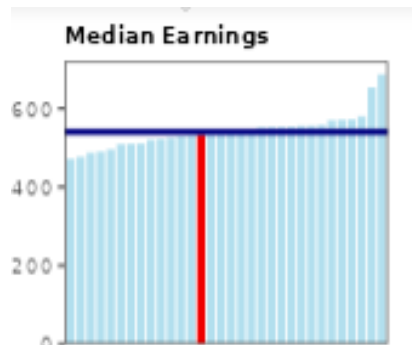


Earnings from Employment/Self-Employment

The Improvement Service Community Planning Tool shows that the Local Authority area currently sits 20th (22nd in 2021/22) out of 32 Local Authorities for Median Earnings, more or less in line with the national average. In 2022/23 Median Earnings for Aberdeen rose to £533 (+7%), slightly faster than the Scotland level.

Median Earnings is an important metric in that it evidences the financial gains from employment/self-employment across the full spectrum from the lowest to the highest earners and is materially and dynamically linked to estimates of relative poverty.

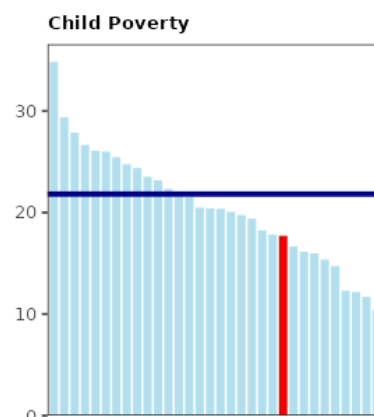
It is important to note that changes in Median Earning levels may have consequential effects on calculations of relative poverty that are not directly related to a fall or increase in household incomes of lower earners, although this may influence the number and percentage of households/individuals classed as being within lower income family circumstances by these core poverty measures.



Benchmarking Child Poverty performance

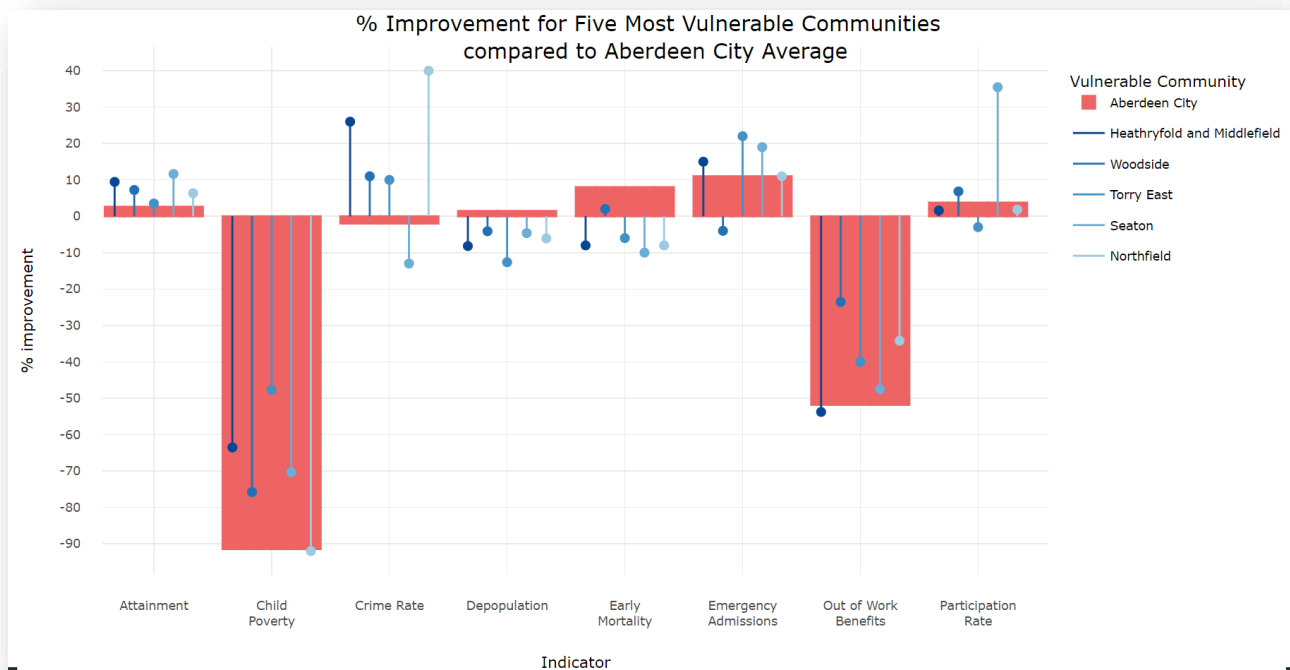
The Improvement Service Community Planning Tool shows that 92% of our communities are performing well compared to their comparator communities when looking at child poverty in isolation. The city centre (north and east), Bucksburn north, Woodside, Tillydrone, Torry East and Northfield are not keeping pace with their comparator communities.

However, when looking at child poverty and its associated measures, this drops to only 78% of communities who are outperforming similar communities. This drop is largely driven by attainment and participation levels signaling a need to continue to prioritise these areas.

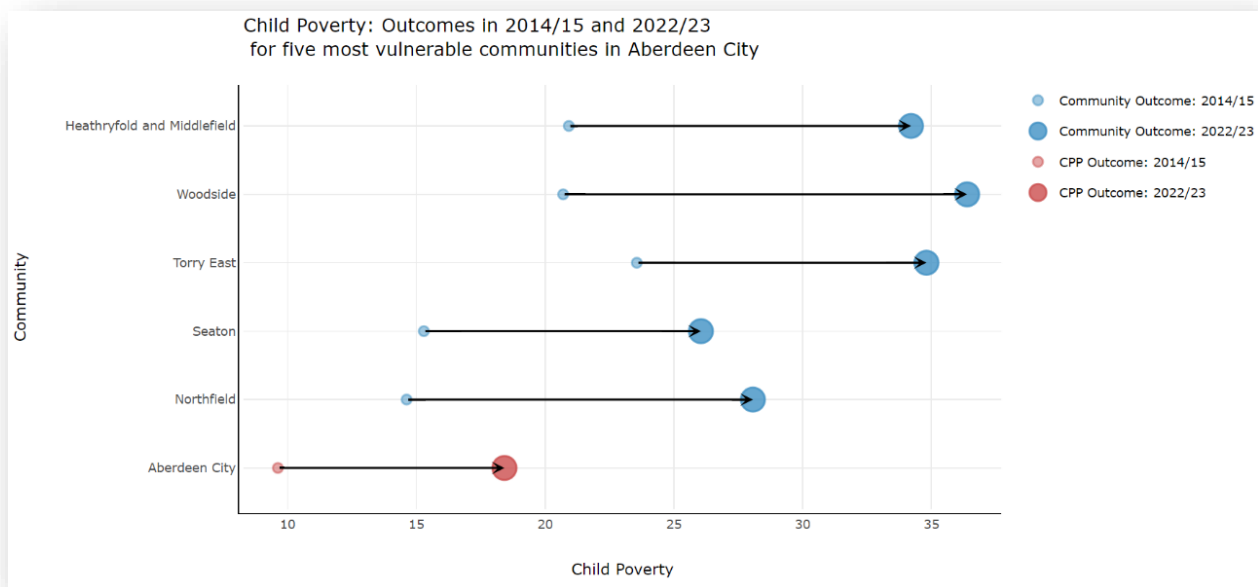


Levels of child poverty in the city are slightly below the national average; Aberdeen sits second behind Perth and Kinross in levels of child poverty when comparing levels of poverty with our Family Group. The Local Authority area currently sits 23 out of 32 Local Authorities for levels of child poverty which is below the national average, this is unchanged from last year.

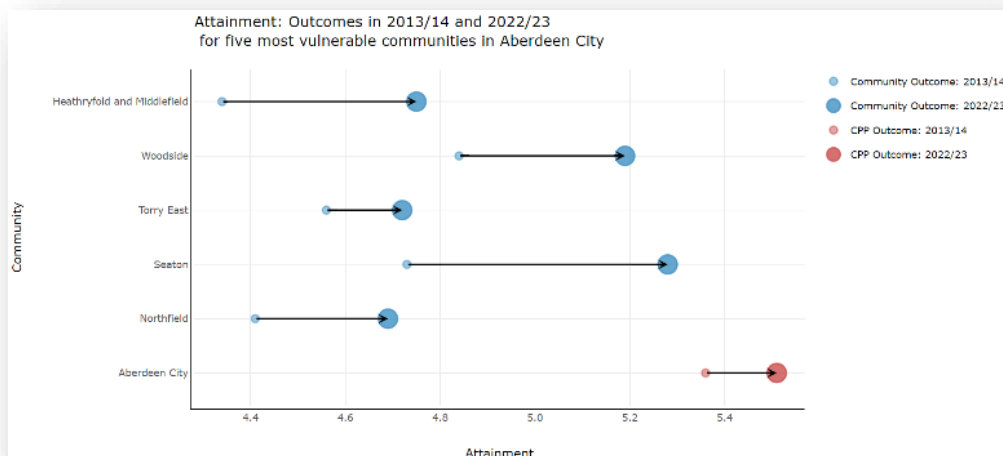
The Community Planning outcomes tool allows us to look at changes in our communities most vulnerable to child poverty over time and identify differences at community level. The visual demonstrates the considerable differences in crime and participation rates in what the tool has identified as our 5 most vulnerable communities.



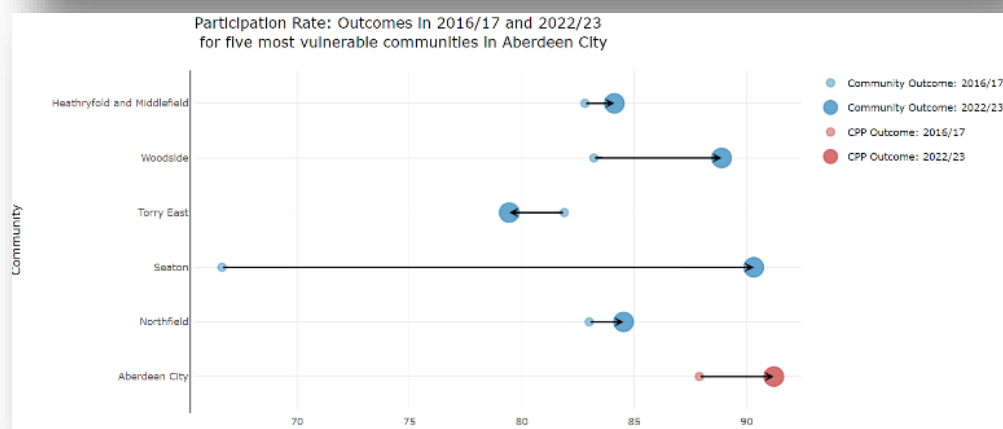
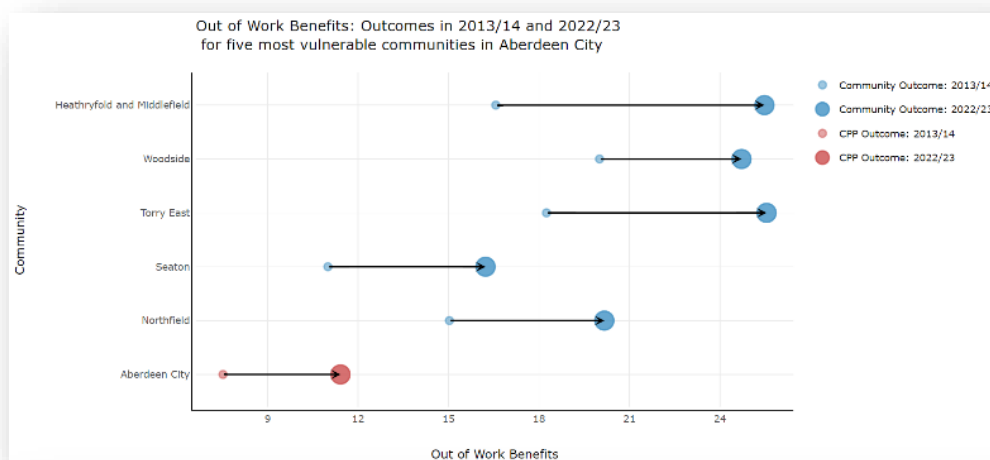
When looking at how these more vulnerable communities are faring against levels of child poverty, we can see that levels of child poverty are increasing (against a baseline from 2014/15) at a faster rate than the city mean growth.



Levels of attainment across our 5 most vulnerable communities show similar variation around attainment. Gains are evident across all communities, although the scale of improvement varies considerably.



Out of work benefits, the participation rate and emergency hospital admissions show similar levels of variation.



Groups Most at Risk of Poverty

Those groups identified as being most at risk of poverty through the national priority plan continue to face particular challenges locally. We continue to build our knowledge of how poverty impacts individual groups. The data below outlines the present data and offers, where possible, the most recent trend directions from the available data.

Single Parent Families: In August 2024, there were 410 (5.5% of all claimants) single parent Housing Benefit Claimants in Aberdeen City. This compared to 527 in March 2024 and 573 as at December 2023. In August 2023 this figure was 651 (8.1% of all claimants). Of this number, 50 households had 3 or 4 dependents, in comparison with 98 in August 2023. In August 2024, the number of Universal Credit Claimant single parent households was 5,437, an increase on both December 2023 (4,692 households) and that in August 2023 (4,628).

Disability: At September 2024, there were 2,125 (1,260 in September 2023) Aberdeen resident applications to the Scottish Child Disability Scheme, providing for 2,625 (2,090 in September 2023) child recipients. The number of households in receipt of the child disability element of Universal Credit in August 2024 was 1,082, up from 813 in March 2024, and 688 in August 2023.

Youngest Child Less Than One Year Old: In August 2024, there were 431 households in Aberdeen City in receipt of Universal Credit with a child under the age of 1 year old, the same as in August 2023. The % of families where the youngest child was in this age group and was experiencing relative poverty in 2023/24 was 31%, slightly lower than in 2022/23 but greater than for those families with children overall (23%). The distance between these two cohorts has closed marginally.

Larger Families(3+ children): The number of Housing benefit claimants with 3 or more child dependents in August 2024, were 88. This is a 53% reduction on August 2023 (156 claimants), and lower in comparison with 128 in December 2023. There were 1,802 households with 3 or more children who were in receipt of Universal Credit at the same point in time, roughly similar to that in August 2023.

Younger Mothers: In August 2024, there were 12 Housing Benefit Claimants with dependents under the age of 25 years, which had reduced from 13 in August 2023 but increased from 8 in December 2023 and 9 in March 2024.

Minority Ethnic Families: 63% of those who are in ethnic minority families are employed compared to 76% of those who are white in Aberdeen City. There is presently no consistently reliable data around the influences behind this differential at national or local levels. Most recent Common Advice data (2022/23) indicated that 234 (5.5%) clients of declared Minority Ethnic background had engaged with ACC/CAB financial advice services from a total of 4,204 with a known ethnicity. This was slightly higher than in 2021/22.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CHILD POVERTY IN THE CITY?



There is a need to continue to think about how we collect and align data to ensure that we continue to build an understanding of the challenges facing our residents. The Child Poverty Employability Coordinator will work to understand these needs more fully over the coming year and develop a co-designed child poverty employability action plan.

What is getting better?

The number of people now successfully claiming universal credit has increased from 7,705 in March 2020 to 20,145 in Sept 2024.



92% of communities are performing better in child poverty than might be expected (when comparing them to similar communities). The city centre (east and west), Tillydrone and Bucksburn East have the poorer outcomes.



90% of communities are performing better in out of work benefits than might be expected (when comparing them to other similar communities). Torry east, Heathryfold/Middlefield, Woodside, Mastick and Northfield have the poorest outcomes.



In the 2023 calendar year, there were an estimated 13,500 workless households in Aberdeen, a fall of 1,700 on 2022.



A reduction in the % of children experiencing child poverty in the least deprived communities from 3.9 in 2021/22 to 3.7% in 2022/23. This is significantly lower than the national average of 6%.



A considerable fall in crime rate across communities in Aberdeen




There are some positive indications that more families are claiming their full entitlements, that there are less workless households and that we are faring reasonably well when comparing progress against our comparators. However, we cannot be complacent as there continues to be significant evidence that long term outcomes are significantly impacted by poverty (as clearly evidenced through our earlier review of data by life stage) and that recent economic shocks have increased risk significantly.


The disparity in outcomes at community level remains considerable. There is a need to carefully consider how services are delivered for and with those who need our support most.

What has stayed the same?


The claimant count, as a % of the working age population has remained stable at 3.2%. This is in line with the national average.



The claimant count, as a % of the 16-24 population, has increased from 3.3% to 3.7% in 2024/25. This is higher than the Scottish average of 3.5%, and much higher than the family group average of 2.3%.



In 2022/23 Median Earnings for Aberdeen rose to £533 (+7%), slightly faster than the Scotland level.



There is a need to understand the rise in claimant count in our 16 to 24 population better. NOMIS November 2024 data shows that there is a higher proportion of those aged 16 and 17 claiming locally compared to Scotland wide and UK wide data.

Claimant count by age - not seasonally adjusted (November 2024)				
	Aberdeen City (Level)	Aberdeen City (%)	Scotland (%)	Great Britain (%)
Aged 16+	4,950	3.2	3.1	4.2
Aged 16 To 17	40	1.1	0.7	0.2
Aged 18 To 24	855	4.1	4.2	5.5
Aged 18 To 21	475	4.5	4.7	5.9
Aged 25 To 49	2,940	3.3	3.6	4.8
Aged 50+	1,115	2.7	2.2	3.2

Source: ONS Claimant count by sex and age
Note: % is number of claimants as a proportion of resident population of the same age

[view time-series](#) [compare other areas](#) [query dataset...](#)

There is also a need to work with our communities, as part of our Future Libraries model, to increase access to the supports they require in a way that is better suited to their needs and wants.

What is getting worse?

The Scottish House Condition survey suggests that more children are living in fuel poverty (now 26.1%).



There has been a decline in the number of people rating a neighbourhood as a very/fairly good place to live to 93%. This is 3% lower than the national average.



There has been an increase in the number of city voice respondents who reported that there was a time during the last 12 months when they were worried they would not have enough food to eat (from 5.4% in 2019 to 9.4% in 2024)



There has been a rise in the number of city voice respondents who reported that there was a time during the last 12 months where they were worried that they would not be able to heat their homes (from 10.0 to 24.6)



The number of children in relative low income families has increased from 5,450 in 2016/17 to 7,378 in 2022/23



483 young people (aged 16 - 24 years old) applied for homeless assistance in 2023/24, up 3.9% (+18) on 2022/23. 105 of these were from applicants aged 16/17 years old, a 10.5% (+10) increase on the 95 received the previous year with most reporting being asked to leave their family home.

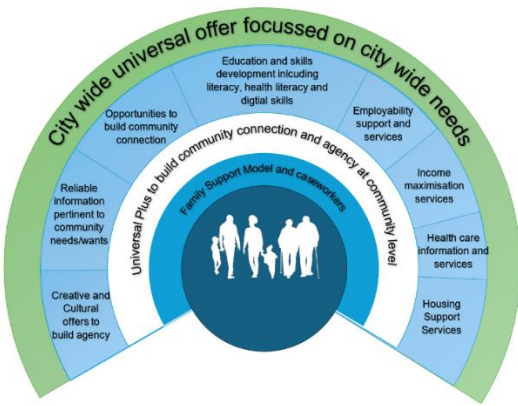
Torry (east and west), Northfield, Heathryfold/Middlefield and Commings Park have the poorest outcomes.



Analysis of need as part of our work to develop our Future Libraries model has highlighted the very high proportion of citizens who feel socially isolated. There is a need to address this social isolation through our Future Libraries model and help citizens develop the agency they require to feel in control of their choices.

So, what next?

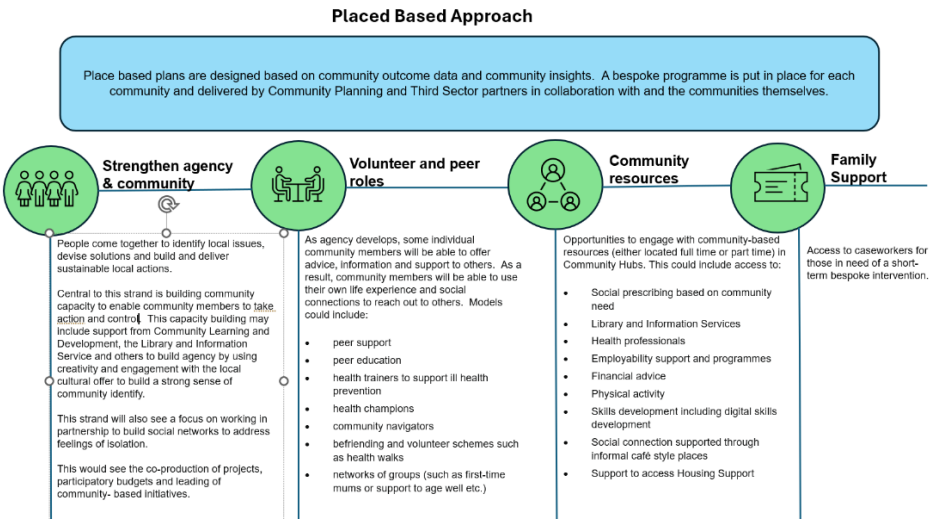
Data shows that poverty continues to impact on our families and that this is likely to continue, although there are some signals from more recent information of an apparent stabilisation of the employment market and an increase in those who are economically active and in employment/self-employment may feed through to future improvements in poverty related measures. There will be a need to ensure that the issues highlighted through this annual review of data are shared with the Local Employability Partnership to ensure that they are taken into account as new priorities and the Delivery Plan are developed.



There is a need to ensure that our communities have the agency they require to continue to overcome the challenges they are experiencing as we develop our Future Libraries Model.

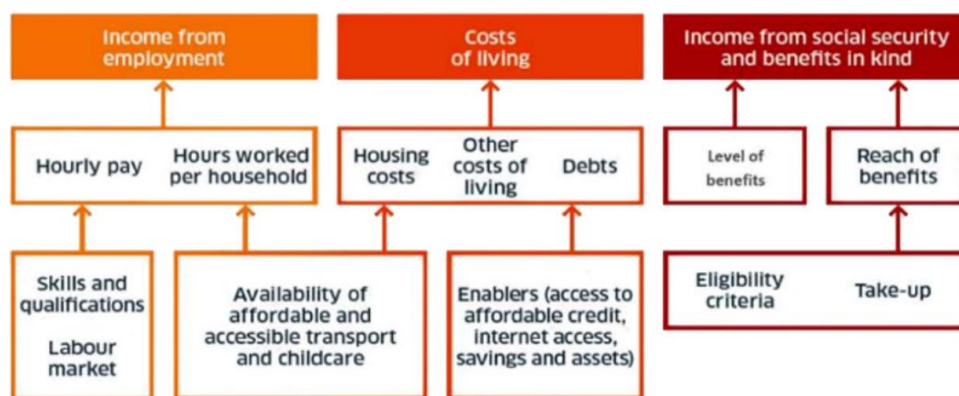
There is now a further tranche of data-based evidence that families are increasingly being supported to access locally and nationally managed entitlements and this is encouraging but does highlight the number of those who need our continued help, and those whose changed circumstances have required engagement with support mechanisms for the first time.

There is a need to continue to carefully target those groups recognised as most likely to be impacted by poverty, and to increase our knowledge and support of them whilst maintaining an awareness that the evidence may challenge our responses in areas, and for residents, falling out with historically understood need/priority. Our place-based approach to the development of our Future Libraries may offer a helpful context to explore some of the challenges facing families more fully.



Best Start, Bright Futures

Best Start, Bright Futures tells us that the three drivers of poverty are income from employment, cost of living, and income from social security and benefits in kind. We know that impacting these drivers will positively impact levels of child poverty and so have structured our report under these three headings whilst recognising how interrelated they are.



Our shared Local Outcome Improvement Plan continues to guide how the Community Planning Partnership works together to tackle and prevent poverty long term. However, the cost of living crisis, combined with existing inequalities, have increased the risk of acute poverty.

The Community Planning Aberdeen Anti-Poverty Group is dedicated to ensuring that we respond to emergency need now as well as working together across other Outcome Improvement Groups and with community partners to prevent further harms in the future. Our Citizen's panel data reveals that too often people are forced to make a choice between food and fuel due to a lack of income from employment or social security.



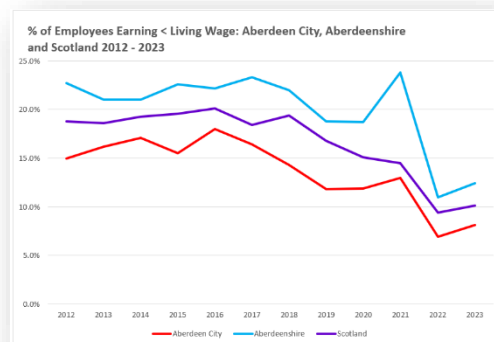
The Anti-Poverty Group brings together a range of partners to ensure communities are able to access the support they need to prevent unnecessary short term suffering. Examples of this work are provided in the following sections and range from funding community organisations to provide local support services in our most deprived communities through the Fairer Aberdeen Fund, to income maximisation work through the Financial Inclusion Team, increasing access to affordable food through foodbanks and cash first initiatives, and preventing fuel poverty through provision of fuel vouchers. This early intervention and response work bolsters the efforts of the Children's Services Board, and other Outcome Improvement Groups, in a bid to end child poverty now and in the future.

The findings from this Annual Report will help to shape our work over 2025 to start drafting a new Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) for 2026-2036. The refresh of our Children's Services Plan will be fully aligned to our work to establish a new LOIP so that a holistic approach is taken and to ensure that all of Community Planning Aberdeen Outcome Improvement Groups play their role in addressing child poverty. To ensure alignment with LOIP 2026-36, the next refresh of the Children's Services Plan will cover the time period 2026-2031.

Income from employment

In 2023/24, the employment rate, as measured through the Annual Population Survey, across Aberdeen City sat slightly below the national average (73.5%) for the first time at 72.8%. The most recent 12-month data (July 2023-June 2024) indicates that this has risen to 75.9%, and reverted to a level ahead of the Scotland figure (75.5%). This pattern of improvement has now been demonstrated over three consecutive dataset releases. This data will require careful monitoring.

In 2023, those earning less than the real living wage had fallen to 8.1% in Aberdeen. This equates to half the proportion of those working compared to 2013. This data will require to be carefully monitored to ensure continued positive movement.



ABZ Campus

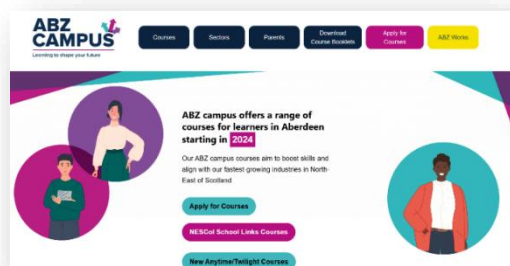
Our education service continues to ensure that a wider range of courses are available in growth and volume sectors, in part through delivery of ABZ Campus, to ensure that our young people are well placed to be economically active post school. ABZ Campus Phase 2 has reached the mid-point in course delivery with over 700 participants on over 60 courses across a range of providers in schools, NESCOL and other partners.

Focus groups have provided valuable and positive feedback on the experiences of young people on ABZ Campus courses and we continue to engage with young people to ensure that we are continuing to 'get it right' for them.

Delivery of pilot virtual or *anytime* courses has commenced with fourteen courses offering young people from both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire an opportunity to benefit. Given this is a pilot year, the numbers of participants remains modest with a view to expansion in future years.

10 young people are enrolled in an Employability Course as part of ABZ Campus with a further 6 young people benefiting from a pilot programme for young people with additional support needs.

Plans for Phase 3 of ABZ Campus (Session 2025-26) are well underway with course offers being finalised with partners, publicity planned, and course choice within schools commencing in January 2025. As we continue to develop ABZ Campus, we have received contact from five other local authorities who have asked for collaboration and dialogue to understand the positive journey of ABZ Campus. This is offering us further opportunities to explore possible connections to reflect on and improve our own offer, including working with individual schools to increase their in school offer to young people.



Learner Voice
Almost all found the information about courses easy to access and understand
Almost all felt valued and welcomed in their host establishment
Almost all said they received regular feedback about how they were progressing
Most rated learning and teaching as 'good', almost all were happy with the quality of the learning and teaching

ABZ ANYTIME/TWILIGHT COURSES BY LEVEL

Anytime Courses
SCQF Level 7 History Advanced Higher (Aberdeen City) Modern Studies Advanced Higher (Aberdeen City) Online Art & Design Portfolio Development (Robert Gordon University) Environmental Awareness (SRUC) Access Course in Physics – Engineering (University of Aberdeen) Access Course in Chemistry (University of Aberdeen)
SCQF Level 6 Local Food Production (SRUC)
SCQF Level 5/6 Veterinary Terminology (SRUC)
SCQF Level 5 Equine (SRUC) Horticulture (SRUC) Investigation into Modern Agriculture (SRUC) The Principles of Animal Care (SRUC)
Twilight Courses
SCQF Level 6 Higher Computing Science (RGC Online) Higher Applications of Mathematics (RGC Online)

Aberdeen Computing Collaborative

The Aberdeen Computing Collaborative has made significant progress this year in enhancing computing science and digital skills across the North East given the importance of skills in the prosperity of the region. The Collaborative has spearheaded a £16 million bid to advance computing science and digital skills in support of the North East Investment Zone. This initiative aims to:



- Deliver professional development for educators, ranging from early years practitioners to secondary school specialists.
- Foster a digital workforce to meet the needs of the North East's expanding digital sector.

The bid, led by Aberdeen City Council with contributions from Aberdeenshire Council, Opportunity North East, Robert Gordon University, University of Aberdeen, and North East Scotland College, seeks £10 million in investment zone funding to enhance digital skills through school-based activities. The outcome of the bid will be known early in 2025.

A survey was conducted to gather insights into young people's experiences with computing science and digital education in schools to help define next steps. Key findings include:

- **Comfort and Access:** Most learners feel comfortable using computers and have access to a computer at home. 92.6% of respondents felt confident or very confident about using computers. 89.5% of all respondents had access to a computer at home.
- **Perceptions of Lessons:** Learners highlighted the need for computing science lessons to be more dynamic and less repetitive, with many expressing excitement and interest in learning more about technology.
- **Appealing Learning Methods:** Hands-on activities and real-world applications are seen as key motivators for learner engagement
- **Career Importance:** The majority of respondents consider computer skills crucial for future careers, highlighting the need for effective computing education.

What is your experience of Computing Science/Digital in school? (Learners could select multiple options)	619 Responses
Doesn't seem relevant to the real world	8.40%
I do more fun computing in my own time	27.95%
I enjoy it but it's really difficult	18.09%
I learn things I already know	22.78%
I like creating with digital tools	35.86%
I would like more time to develop my skills	30.05%
I'm excited by my computing lessons	31.99%
It's difficult because the tech is so old	25.04%
Lessons are boring	23.59%

These results emphasize the importance of tailoring education to make lessons more engaging and relevant to learners' aspirations.

A subject-focused professional learning day was organised for computing science teachers, led by STACS (Scottish Teachers Advancing Computing Science). This was funded by the Scottish Government. The event received overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees, who found it highly beneficial in enhancing their teaching strategies and subject knowledge.

A Scottish Government grant has facilitated the purchase of equipment for a new Digital Space at ONE TechHub on Schoolhill. This state-of-the-art facility will:

- Serve as an event and training space for schools and other users.
- Provide opportunities for hands-on digital activities.
- Strengthen connections between schools, the Aberdeen Computing Collaborative, and local digital sector businesses.



The Digital Space became operational in January 2025, marking a significant step forward in providing innovative digital learning opportunities. Aberdeen Computing Collaborative remain well positioned to respond to the outcome of the Investment Zone bid when known.

ABZWorks update

This year has seen significant changes to the delivery of employability services in Scotland, with the move to the third phase of the Scottish Government's No One Left Behind strategy and the end of the Fair Start Scotland programme. Local Authorities now have a greater responsibility to deliver a broader range of employability services and a greater focus on people with disabilities and/or long-term health issues. This change has resulted in a 162.8% increase in referrals for employability support received by ABZWorks this financial year to date.

The team continues to review approaches in order to maximise the number of citizens they are supporting and will respond positively to an externally supported review currently underway.



ABZ Child Poverty Coordinator led work

A Child Poverty Employability Coordinator, funded by the Scottish Government through No One Left Behind, has been in post since March 2024.

Activities delivered to date include:

1. Commissioning of Rocket Science to carry out a study looking at barriers into employability for parents. The key barriers identified were: access to and cost of childcare; travel; lack of flexible employment opportunities; and upskilling/retraining needed to enter the workforce. The report and next steps will be published on the ABZWorks website in due course.
2. Ongoing distribution of the Lone Parent Fund to remove financial barriers to employment for those newly employed; it has been accessed by 23 parents this financial year to date.
3. Offering childcare support to enable parents to engage in employability activities. At the time of writing, six have received direct funding while others had received support through contracted training provision with childcare costs built into the contract costs.
4. The commissioning of a variety of training provision specifically for parents, including an ELC access to childcare course, an in-work support course, a confidence to cook course, and an enterprising new parents course which aims to support people into self-employment. A Financial Inclusion officer has been embedded in the ABZWorks team to ensure participants are accessing this support, and with a particular focus on parents. As a result of this intervention, one family is now £18,000 a year better off (they had been in receipt of only £434 per month).

A project got underway in January with 25 young parents paid the Real Living Wage to co-design an employability support package for young parents. This is being funded via the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Accelerator monies.

A child poverty employability action plan will be developed in the coming year.

Targeting those most at risk of poverty

Eight 'Test and Learn' projects were commissioned over the year. Four have been delivered to date and we await evaluation reports from the providers. Another four are due to begin early in 2025. These are short-life projects are designed to test out innovative ideas for engaging with target groups and delivering employability services differently in light of the move to the third phase of No One Left Behind.

The service has continued to deliver popular jobs fairs, including a 'generic' event, a jobs fair for disabled people, and another for refugees and displaced people. Feedback from participants and employers continues to be positive. A redundancy support and jobs fair event was also held following the closure of the Stewart Milne Group. Securing information about the number of attendees who secured work as a result of the event is extremely challenging, however the Department for Work and Pensions confirmed that very few Stewart Milne Group employees had applied for unemployment benefits, suggesting that the majority rapidly secured employment, which is reflective of shortages in the construction sector. Plans for future events are being developed meantime.



The Fit Next programme for school leavers without a positive destination, removing barriers to employability participation, building confidence, social circles, employability skills, introductions to training providers and employers, and work experience continues to be delivered and to secure positive outcomes with our young people. We have leveraged employer input through Community Benefits clauses attached to major Council contracts and corporate social responsibility opportunities to secure ongoing support from employers in these sessions.

Two Fit Next cohorts were supported this year. Of the 22 participants, four progressed to college, two gained employment, two have completed a work experience placement and continue to engage with the service, and 11 have progressed onto commissioned training courses. Three completed the Fit Next programme and asked for no further support and have now disengaged from ABZWorks.

The ABZWorks team has secured several local and national awards in recognition of the quality of their work. The team built on their success of winning the SURF Award for Removing Barriers to Employability for our work with Care Experienced Young People, by winning a CoSLA Excellence Award for Achieving Better Outcomes for the Most Vulnerable In Partnership, recognising our work with HMP Grampian, hospitality firm Greene King, and Skills Development Scotland to create an accredited hospitality training programme and pipeline to employment for prisoners approaching release to the city. Additionally, the ABZWorks procurement framework for the commissioning of employability services was shortlisted for a UK-wide GO! Procurement award.

There is clear evidence of the impact of ABZWorks. An internal and external evaluation is currently being concluded to help inform how best to increase the reach of the service.

ABZWorks Development Grant

At the time of writing, the third phase of ABZWorks Development Grants, created to support grass roots organisations, particularly those in the priority areas, to build their capacity to develop and deliver employability activities and build links with hard-to-reach groups, is underway. Up to £10,000 is available per organisation.

To date 54 applications have been made, 21 in the current round, and 12 grants are in the process of being awarded.

Work Experience Programmes

Paid work experience programmes with guaranteed interviews for those who complete continue to be delivered, aligned to sectors where we know there are skills shortages (we have one underway currently for care experienced young people, and another for eligible city residents of all working ages in the health and social care sector, and the aforementioned scheme for parents within local authority ELC settings). Additionally, we have secured agreement with NHS Grampian to offer four opportunities within the organisation, with one post live at the time of writing.

This financial year to date of eight Early Learning and Childcare placements, three parents moved onto the relief pool, two are ongoing at the time of writing, and two did not complete the placement, and one was unable to start but continues to receive employability support. Two placements were provided in PEEP groups, with one intern moving into employment and the other placement ongoing.

A lower number of placements was secured for care experienced young people this financial year. Four have been offered placements to date. One progressed to college, one is working towards achieving a Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS) card, and two disengaged but support

remains available to them. Discussions are progressing with social work about creating an internship at Westburn to support development of employability activity for a care experienced young person. Talks are ongoing with the Corporate Landlord about the provision of a small number of placements within areas of the service which has hard-to-fill posts and which may provide progression routes for suitable interested individuals.

Using United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Funds and working in partnership with NHS Grampian and Alcohol and Drugs Action, ABZWorks has developed a paid work experience scheme for people in recovery from substance use. Given the often significant challenges faced by people in recovery, this project has had limited success in terms of work experience placements due to the work required to prepare people. However, huge progress has been made by several of the individuals participating in the programme with sustained engagement just one measure of success. To date 12 people have been referred to this project and signed up with ABZWorks, with more referrals in discussion. Of those, one disengaged, and two have progressed to rehabilitation. Those who continue to engage are receiving keyworker support, while ongoing drop-in and relationship building sessions continue for others who are approaching a stage in their recovery which would enable them to meaningfully and safely engage, or to seek advice on employability support availability. One individual has surpassed the need for a placement and moved into permanent employment in January, while another is applying for health care roles. Both will continue to receive support from all agencies, including their dedicated ABZWorks keyworker, to smooth their transition into employment and help sustain it.

An additional benefit of this project has been the formation of a Recovery Support Group with membership including training providers, HMP Grampian, Aberdeen in Recovery, Alcohol and Drugs Action, Narcotics Anonymous, and SACRO.

Employer Engagement

The second ABZWorks Conference took place, this year stretching to a two-day event, with day one focused on training provision and employability, and day two focused on employer engagement, the energy transition, and the ABZ Pipeline. The employer event provided some solid information on skills gaps, information from employers about recruitment and retention challenges, and a commitment from several to provide work experience placements across all working ages, form an employer arm of the Local Employability Partnership, broad support for the ABZ Pipeline and a clear desire to be part of the project development and future delivery.

A number of training providers have now signed up to our dynamic purchasing system for the procurement of employability services, which was co-designed with providers and continues to grow. Aside from ABZWorks Development Grants, all employability provision is being procured via the framework, which enables us to provide a broad range of services to city residents at all stages of the pipeline. Our approach is being used as an example of best practice by the Scottish Government's Improvement Service. This financial year 59 contracts have been awarded, with a total value of £899,810.73, providing a broad and person-centred range of activity to employability programme participants across No One Left Behind and United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund monies. We will offer more contract opportunities on receipt of the 2025/26 grant offer from Scottish Government, which we anticipate receiving in spring. We anticipate it will include a further year of funding for a child poverty employability post.

The Employer Recruitment Incentive scheme, which provides up to £6,000 to employers to offset the costs of taking on new members of staff, has unfortunately not been available this year due to a grant funding delay. Subject to funding we hope to relaunch it in the next financial year to incentivise the recruitment of not only young people, but also eligible parents, refugees and

displaced people. We anticipate an increase in the funding amount in the next financial year in line with the rise in the Real Living Wage.

A successful series of employer engagement sessions to promote inclusive employment in the city for key groups was delivered and well received by the business community. These sessions aimed to not only increase employer confidence and increase the number of opportunities for groups including parents, young people, displaced people and refugees, disabled people, and people with convictions, but also raise awareness of the broader support available from Aberdeen City Council via ABZWorks, as well as partner agencies including the Department for Work and Pensions, and Skills Development Scotland.

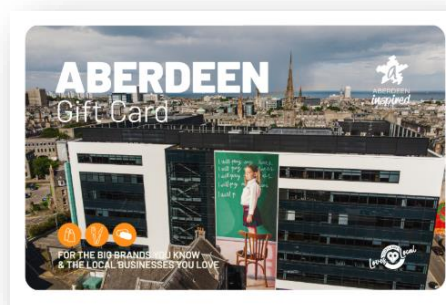
Supporting residents into Fair Work

Increasing training and reskilling opportunities as well as business creation is key to both developing new fair work employment opportunities; reducing the number of people in receipt of Universal Credit and to diversifying the economy. We are taking forward a number of initiatives to support people who will be coming off (or significantly reducing) their benefits.

In the past year, 730 people have received employability support via ABZWorks and the number continues to rise. Of those, 119 have moved into employment, 12 into self-employment, 30 into further or higher education, and 144 have gained accredited qualifications. At the time of writing, 789 training places have been taken up across commissioned provision.

We continue to provide Aberdeen Gift Cards to employability programme participants to remove some of the financial barriers to employment. This money is spent locally, boosting the economy and supporting jobs, while equipping individuals with essentials for interviews and starting work, such as interview clothes, transport costs, haircuts, etc. To date, £1,395 has been distributed via Aberdeen Gift Cards.

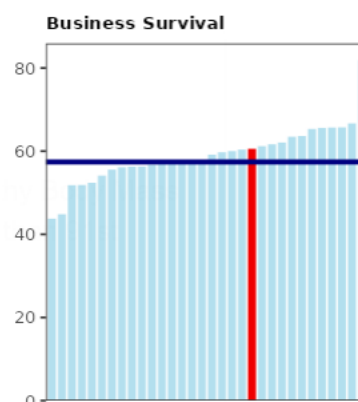
In line with Scottish Government grant funding requirements, all recipients of employability funding, whether by contract or grant, via Aberdeen City Council must commit to paying their staff the Real Living Wage. This is embedded in contracts and grants.



Supporting citizens to start a business and reduce their universal credits

Business survival rates are currently better than the national average (compared to last year when survival rates were in line with the national average). Despite this, the Local Authority relative position has decreased from 18th out of 32 last year to 21st out of 32 this year. Aberdeen City Council sits in the middle of the Family Group.

ABZWorks offers a salary payment for eligible parents setting up their own business, paid at Real Living Wage rate for hours worked on their business, to support their progression and mitigate the risk of financial hardship as individuals build up their enterprise. Eight parents have benefited from this to date and the opportunity is being discussed with others as they develop and progress their business plans.



We have partnered with the Scottish Childminding Association to provide seed funding to eligible city residents who wish to become registered childminders, removing the financial barriers which often prevent people from taking up this career opportunity, however this is proving to be a slow burner. A marketing campaign will be launched to promote the opportunity and associated benefits of being a childminder.

Supporting care experienced young people into sustained employment.

Through our employability support for care experienced young people project we've put in place a range of initiatives to help remove barriers and provide support and opportunities to help them feel confident and ready for employment. 59 young people have been supported over the last year. The programmes have been very successful across a number of outcomes, including: sustained engagement; achieving qualifications; engaging in work experience; progressing into a positive destination; sustaining that destination.

We have worked to build on the successful design and delivery of a pilot project co-designed with a small group of care experienced young people in 2023 and are now focusing on creating a structured employability service at a location where care experienced young people feel comfortable and supported, and where they can meet a range of trusted employability professionals.

A new project has been developed in partnership with care experienced young people and we are working with Social Work youth team colleagues to create a paid work experience placement to enable a care experienced young person to be at the heart of the design, development and delivery of this activity.

Focus on Numeracy

The ABZWorks team was tasked by the Finance and Resources Committee to manage the distribution and delivery of Multiply monies. Multiply is designed to improve numeracy levels of city residents aged 16+ who are not in education.

Activities undertaken to date include: the development of a mathematics portal by the education service; commissioning the University of Aberdeen to deliver Level five mathematics qualifications; Family Learning delivering numeracy activities to support parents' understanding of mathematics and develop their ability to support their children's numeracy; and Community Learning and Development delivering a range of accredited numeracy activities to adult learners.

Additional activities will come on stream this year including a pilot project to improve parents' numeracy and financial management skills, with a parent on a paid work experience internship embedded in the team to ensure lived experience is brought to the co-designed activity.

Focus on Growth and Volume Sectors

We are in talks with Ufi VocTech Trust about securing grant funding to use technology and digital innovation to provide targeted content, courses and digital work experience to school leavers, unemployed people, workers at risk of redundancy, and adult returners.

Subject to the funding being approved, Aberdeen City Council as lead accountable body will work with NESCol and Aberdeenshire Council to produce content that will be locally-specific employment information. The programme will ensure that participants gain essential meta-skills and practical knowledge, instilling confidence, and preparing them for the future job market – directly or through further study.

The ABZ Pipeline project commenced in 2024 to produce a skills development pipeline model through 3-18, with a focus on potential experiential career learning and progression activities. Our aim is to work in partnership with our partners to “implement a systematic and progressive approach to skills development, aligned to learner needs, across the North East of Scotland” which also takes account of industry needs. The Project Officer has engaged with employers and industry bodies from across the energy sector to strengthen links with education and employability services as well as assessing learners’ awareness of growth and high demand sectors. The project has also highlighted the potential for employers to provide resources to use prior and post the experience to amplify learning. One industry body is now doing this for Primary Schools (GUH, Subsea Expo).

Through engagement with NESCol, a plan has been drafted for a series of practical green skills workshops for young people in the senior phase. By linking with multiple employers there is huge potential to enrich young people’s skills and understanding, thus helping to support a just transition in developing ‘green skills’ and awareness of career opportunities.

Green skills courses have been commissioned, as have a number of digital skills courses, while the ABZWorks Development Fund has also been used to lever the development of digital skills across the city.

Planning for the future

The coming year will see a requirement through No One Left Behind funding to provide Supported Employment Support, providing Specialist Employability Support targeted at those who typically, require longer-term access to services including significant aftercare and in-work support to sustain employment. Participants may include, but are not limited to, people with disabilities, severe mental ill health and addictions who require support from workers with relevant experience and training.

Our work to date, particularly on paid work experience schemes, but also in partnership with HMP Grampian and Greene King, and with NHS Grampian and Alcohol and Drugs Action, puts us in a strong position to continue to provide Specialist Employment Support. Additionally, we have commissioned Values into Action Scotland to provide a Specialist Employment Support Service for disabled people, with the contract running until 31 March 2025, in line with No One Left Behind funding provision.

Going forward, the work of ABZ will be heavily influenced by the externally supported review of services currently underway.

Scottish Attainment Challenge funding supporting pupil and family wellbeing.

Scottish Attainment Challenge funding continues to be targeted to support the wellbeing of pupils and families. For 2024-25, Strategic Equity funding of £955,190 is allocated to continue providing youth workers, family learning workers, and Financial Inclusion Team support to schools, children, young people, and families across the city. Data from our yearly school [wellbeing survey](#) suggests that the interventions are making a considerable difference to our children and young people, with almost all local outcomes more positive than national averages.

Youth work funding primarily focuses on early intervention and specifically targets children, young people, and families identified to be most at risk of disengaging from education, particularly at points of transition. By collaborating with school staff and partners, the focus areas include improving attendance, reducing exclusions, increasing engagement, and raising attainment and achievement. Transition continues to be significant focus, with many effective programmes supporting primary-secondary transition, offering young people opportunities for social development, skill-building activities, and confidence-building in working with new people.

The Family Learning Team partners with schools, local community groups, and other agencies to engage parents, carers, and their children in learning activities that positively impact the whole family. These activities include outdoor learning, cooking classes, and parenting workshops, fostering positive attitudes towards lifelong learning. Individual and targeted support is also provided for behaviour, school attendance, helping parents to support their child's learning or providing advice and support for families whose children have additional support needs. The family learning team has developed strong relationships with various partner agencies to ensure families access the right support at the right time.

Families may be signposted or self-refer to the Financial Inclusion Team. Engagement with this service has led to significant financial gains for families across the city and has helped remove some of the barriers to school attendance experienced by families living in poverty such as access to suitable clothing. A Support for Families booklet detailing sources of support is updated regularly and issued electronically to all families with children in city schools three times each year. Hard copies are also available in all city schools.

Youth Work

Youth Workers in schools are an integral part of our model of Family Support aligned to The Promise. The Youth Work and Family Learning Teams have also committed 6 staff (4 youth workers and 2 Family Learning staff) to the multi-agency Edge of Care pilots. The learning and feedback from young people and families indicates that the 'pilots' offer valuable support to young people and families who have an escalating need and risk profile. Education Scotland and the ACC Youth Work and Family Learning teams have worked on an adapted version of the national Promise Award to make it more suitable for youth work and family learning providers across Scotland. This locally developed Keeping the Promise training will be delivered nationally by Education Scotland and by ACC Family Learning.

To address instances of increased youth disturbance reports in the city centre during school holiday periods, the ACC youth work team, with support from Community Safety and Police Scotland, have developed and delivered engagement and interventions in the city centre covering holiday periods. Activity has been focused on diverting young people away from risk taking behaviours in the city centre and included initial relationship building and capturing young people's voice relating to what there is to do in the city centre, where they are traveling from, instances of risk taking behaviours they take part in and their perceptions of feeling safe.

In some instances already formed relationships from youth work in schools has proved valuable in engaging young people in a different context. Alongside detached youth work provided by the ACC Youth Work team and Police Scotland, a Young People's City Centre Partnership Group has been formed to bring together city wide youth services and organisations across the partnership including ACC, H&SCP, business and the third sector. This group aims to support youth activity in our communities and city centre, identification of safe spaces for young people, to better understand the needs of young people regarding risk taking through action research and address health outcomes related to vaping and alcohol and substance use.

Progress against the Community Learning and Development Plan are regularly [reported](#) to Committee and exemplified through [case studies](#).

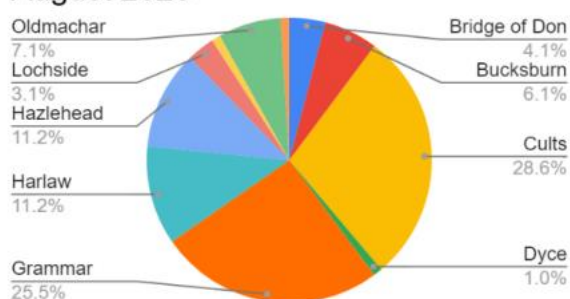
Removal of the costs of the school day

In all our schools, curriculum costs are fully covered, and resources for home learning are provided to learners who require them. Secondary schools have eliminated all fees for subjects that previously incurred costs, particularly in Home Economics, Art, and Technology. Yearly data analysis shows a steady increase in the number of S4-S6 students enrolling in practical classes in the majority of our schools since the removal of all curricular costs, which would suggest that some students had previously avoided these subjects due to the charges, even if they had an aptitude for and enjoyed them. This ongoing change has made access to the full curricular offer more equitable and inclusive.

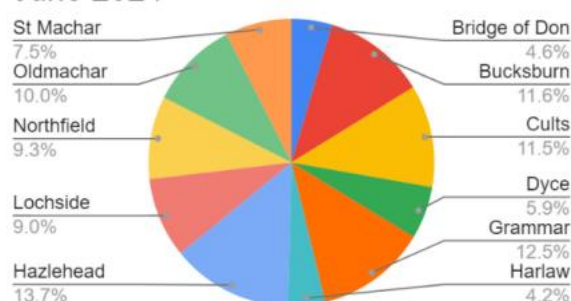
Removal of Music Service costs

The Music Service has worked hard to ensure that children who may not have previously engaged with the service due to costs, have equitable access. The data below shows continued progress towards the aim to offer tuition on a more equitable basis across the city.

August 2020



June 2024



The service continues to [monitor](#) progress carefully.

Request for Assistance

The Request for Assistance (RFA) process is a vital mechanism for accessing support across services, providing a single access point for the ASN & Outreach, School Nursing Service, Children's Social Work, Autism Outreach, and the Virtual School. It enables data analysis at system-wide, category, and individual levels, supporting targeted interventions and risk mitigation. Over three years, it has transformed working practices, resource allocation, and service commissioning. The system is now expanding to include all children's services as part of a Family Support Model, with Version 2 in development.

The rollout of the Microsoft Education project has impacted on the current RFA process due to an incompatibility with the new Education Identity. A temporary workaround using legacy identities is in place but this highlights the need for RFA Version 2 as a long-term solution. The RFA Version 2 project is transitioning in-house, building on work from the Education Psychology Service Microsoft Project. The new system will enhance service levels and broaden access to RFA for partners supporting children, young people, and families.

Digital and Technology colleagues are defining the scope and timeline for Version 2, which will resolve compatibility issues and improve functionality. This approach ensures a sustainable and integrated solution. The RFA process remains critical in supporting children and young people by streamlining service access and enabling data-driven decisions. Version 2 will address current challenges, enhance the system's value for all stakeholders and be a central component of our emerging family support model.

Wider achievement in schools

Day visits, which include all curricular and outdoor activities have been steadily increasing since 2022. There is now less reliance on privately booked coach travel due to increased costs, with pupils accessing free public bus travel wherever possible.

P6 and P7 residentials must now be planned and booked much earlier than in previous years due to increased demand and the closure of many outdoor centres over recent years. In order to keep costs to parents and carers at a minimum, schools have been thinking more creatively about P7 activity weeks. Kittybrewster primary pioneered an activity week where the staff and pupils camped using some of the equipment we hold centrally for our Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions.

The numbers of pupils participating in Aberdeen's Duke of Edinburgh's award programme has reached a record high with over 1000 participants. This is due to pupils continuing through the higher award levels along with new groups being set up including at Orchard Brae, the Virtual School and Oldmachar Academy. The Aberdeen Open Award Centre, which offers DofE opportunities to any young people in the City, is now based at Northfield Academy and has trained new volunteers to increase their capacity.



Aberdeen City has always had strong numbers of young people undertaking the John Muir Awards. Aberdeen has the 3rd highest level of pupils in Scotland achieving the award (443 young people achieving the award with 83 of these being inclusion awards in 2023). Other awards being undertaken in the city are: Saltire awards, Dynamic youth awards, Hi5 awards and Youth achievement awards.

The Amped project which is an automotive project based at Northfield Academy has now expanded to Hazlehead Academy where an after school programme is delivered for pupils interested in a career in the automotive sector. Due to the nature of the workshop training, groups sizes are limited to 4 with 20 young people enrolled in the course each term.

The Evolve system for the approval and management of educational visits, sports fixtures, and extracurricular activities is now well established having been running for 2 years. It has been widely praised by staff who prefer the simplicity and speed of the system. The Evolve system is now being rolled out to the youth work team. In 2024 statistics from Evolve shows:

- 2443 staff actively using the platform
- 3887 off site visits recorded
- 65,698 participant days recorded.

Access to Health Services

Tackling child poverty is a priority within NHS Grampian Health Inequalities Action Plan. Health services are working to mitigate the cost of attending appointments or hospital stays by designing a cash first approach.

NHS Grampian's partnership project funded by the Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund (CPAF) is underway to identify and address costs and cost-related barriers facing families accessing healthcare for their child. The intention is to map financial supports which may be available for families, to engage with families to understand their challenges and co-develop

solutions and then design a test of change. The CPAF application was with Aberdeenshire, with the intent to build on lived experience work there for the benefit of our whole population.

Aberdeen City is a vital partner in this work and colleagues within Aberdeen City and third sector organisations have been contributing to the initial mapping process to understand what supports families could be offered. Moving forward, there will be engagement with families and NHS staff to co-design support mechanisms for the benefit of all families accessing healthcare in Grampian such as to food and travel subsidies for patients and parents or carers.

Families have told us that they have missed appointments because they cannot afford the cost of travel and being able to claim costs back after the effect is not a solution. There is a new work stream underway to poverty proof discharge processes. This will include routine financial enquiry and onward referral where appropriate.

So, what next?

Far richer information is available when policies and plans are aligned. It will be important to fully embed the establishment of our next Children's Services Plan with work to develop our Local Outcome Improvement Plan for 2026-2036. This will trigger a need to review the timescales of the Children's Services Plan to better align with the LOIP.

There is a need to continue our work to ensure that the school curriculum is aligned to both growth and volume sectors, and to anticipate the skills required by the future workforce for example through our continued support of the Aberdeen Computing Collaborative.

ABZ works offers invaluable support to citizens, but now needs to extend its reach further and continue to deepen their understanding of the barriers that our citizens face. ABZ Works will be a key partner in the development of our Future Libraries Model.

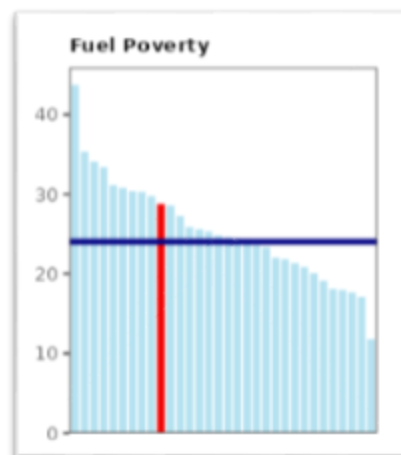
Health partners need to continue to understand and address the barriers that can result in poor health outcomes for some groups and communities.

Costs of living

The wider challenges created by the current Cost of Living crisis around fuel costs and high levels of inflation create a greater risk of families falling into poverty. Levels of fuel poverty in the city are currently far higher than the national average with the Local Authority ranked 10th out of 32 Local Authorities in this measure.

24.6% of City Voice respondents surveyed in 2024 reported they were worried they would not be able to heat their home, a decrease from 32.0% in December 2022.

The Local Authority continues to increase the uptake of unclaimed benefits across Aberdeen City. The Supporting Families Booklet continues to be routinely shared with families through the school Groupcall system, along with a link to the benefit calculator. 98.5% of the 549 completed calculations showed an entitlement to benefits with an increase of £135,458.20 per week of new benefits, compared to £3673.09 previously. This routine sharing must be maintained.



Free period products

Access to Free period products has continued to improve with a focus on the awareness of provision and consistency of service.

A survey of pupils in June 2024, showed that 94% pupils were aware they could access products in school and 81% aware they could access products from community venues. This is a marked improvement from the baseline survey in 2022 where the reported figures were 84% and 61% respectively. The survey also showed that 32% pupils had picked up products, a slight increase from 30% in 2022. Period dignity is a priority of the council's statement of provision and schools have continued to develop manageable systems of free access.



A range of disposable and reusable products continue to be provided. Whilst sustainable options are gaining popularity, disposable products are still preferred. The council continues to work with CFINE to provide for the preferred needs reported by young people. 1294 boxes of products have been provided to schools between January 2024 and December 2024. This work must continue.

Deep Dive in Poverty

A Child Poverty 'deep dive' undertaken with the Public Health System Leadership Group on the 28th of May brought together NHS Grampian, Aberdeen City and pan-Grampian partners. The Group considered how best we can work collectively to achieve impact for the benefit of children and young people living in poverty in Grampian. The key themes to emerge were with regards to addressing costs and barriers faced by children, young people and families accessing our services, strengthening our partnership working and considering how best we use data together. This has led to the closer partnership working. The Child Poverty lead for NHS Grampian is now vice-chairperson on the Anti-Poverty Outcome Improvement Group which facilitates our shared ambition to progress partnership working and collaborative activity in this vital area.

Addressing food insecurity

Over the year the Fairer Aberdeen Fund supported the distribution of 629 tonnes of free food (the equivalent of 1.5m meals), and 1079 food bank users were referred to other support services. There

were 7,600 shops at community pantries, providing a more dignified and sustainable approach to food insecurity.

In addition, the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee's cost of living fund has funded an additional 30.5 tonnes of free food (Equivalent to 72,620 meals) distributed to 69 organisations across the City and 500 weekly shops provided. Through this funding, 73 people were also provided income maximization support and advice.

Access to free Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)

Over 95% parents and carers who responded to the last Parent and Carer Consultation (June 2023) identified ELC as having a positive impact on their child's development. The service continues to review demand for provision on an annual basis to ensure that the delivery models are designed around the needs of children and families.

The Scottish Government are currently undertaking some pilots to determine how best to further roll out School Age Childcare. The Authority has recently reported to Education and Children's Services Committee on the National Delivery Framework for School Age Childcare and remains well positioned to react positively when more detailed delivery plans are developed in 2025/26. This will set out what a targeted School Age Childcare offer will look like for families within communities and provide a clear timescale for delivery.

Community support

Community Flats are supported in Cummings Park, Tillydrone and Seaton, to support people with a range of issues. Over the last year they supported people with welfare reform issues and have helped to address social isolation.

The Fairer Aberdeen Programme supported 135 parents and families with complex needs and 297 young people accessed 2,127 counselling sessions.

There were 600 contacts with older people to develop digital skills to help them keep in touch with their families and to access online services.

5,420 people saved with a credit union which provided £2.1m affordable loans, helping people avoid pay day loans and doorstep lenders.

981 households of older people and people with disabilities were supported with income maximisation and sourcing charitable funding, achieving a financial gain of over £537,000 and 1,742 households in priority areas received assistance with repairs, adaptations, and handyman services.

Fairer Aberdeen

Over 2023/24 the Fairer Aberdeen Programme funded 35 initiatives designed to tackle poverty and a total of 51,445 people have benefitted. The reach of the funding is wide with projects funded to support the development of pathways into work, family support, money advice and affordable loans and early intervention programmes designed to address gender based violence.

The Fairer Aberdeen Programme supported 827 volunteers, providing 139,495 hours of volunteering time, with a value of £2.2m. 5 Community Projects or Flats were funded in priority neighbourhoods to support community capacity building as well as providing a range of services and support. Funding was allocated to provide 220 winter clothing packs for families affected by poverty. There is now a need to ensure that the totality of offers available to families is more clearly

mapped and aligned to ensure that we maximise the impact of all available resource.

Provision of free breakfast clubs

There are an increasing range of breakfast clubs/wrap around supports for families. We have a mixed model of Breakfast provision in the city which can broadly be divided into the following three categories:

1. Registered provision – A Breakfast Club registered as childcare with Care Inspectorate and for which a fee is paid by parents / carers. (23 primary schools)
2. Unregistered provision – A free Breakfast service provided directly by the school. Often funded via Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to give children and young people a nutritional start to the day. (7 primary schools & 2 secondary schools)
3. ACC Catering service – A Breakfast service provided directly by Aberdeen City Council Catering Service at no or low cost to families, again to ensure children and young people start the day with some breakfast. (7 primary & 7 secondary schools)

The provision of free breakfasts for school pupils in Scotland is not a universal entitlement and is not currently in the Programme for Government for 2024-25. However, there is a very strong indication that it is likely to be included in future, as a targeted offer, as part of the Tackling Child Poverty agenda.

In the meantime, we are assured that we have good coverage of breakfast provision across the city and, in particular, in our priority areas with 70% of Primary Schools and 50% of Secondary Schools having access to Breakfast Club provision. We will continue to work with facilities colleagues, Head Teachers, internal and external School Age Childcare providers to ensure that breakfast is available where it is required and where need is identified.

Provision of IT

Aberdeen City Council is continuing its ambitious £17.7m investment in digital education services. Phase 1 of the delivery into schools was completed in October 2024 with phase 2 commencing in January 2025. High speed wide area connectivity, improved wifi access, modern devices and a better classroom experience are all included in the programme. Work will continue until December 2025 at which point the technical delivery will be replaced by new approaches to learning and teaching that have been run as tests of change during the phased roll out.

The programme will deliver: 14,000 laptops for learner use in schools, ensuring access to technology and promoting digital literacy; a device for every teacher to enhance lesson preparation, research, and communication and an improved classroom experience through the provision of Smart panels and classroom technology.

A virtual desktop environment is being piloted for subjects requiring high-specification computing, such as Art & Design, Computing Science, and Design & Technology, allowing remote access to advanced resources. Digital Champions across schools have received training to support the deployment of new educational services and this work will continue through the remaining technical delivery and beyond.

Warm Spaces

Warm Spaces have continued across the city, with a mix of Council premises and community and third sector organisations providing support.



There are 33 warm spaces across Libraries, Community Centres, Learning Centres, The Art Gallery, The Bon Accord Centre, Sport Aberdeen, Aberdeen Performing Arts and Faith Groups. Warm spaces continue to provide free access to safe, welcoming spaces across the city with a choice of location, activity and access to information, with each WarmSpace with its own unique offer including access to board games, family friendly activities and provider programmes.

The Warm spaces model in the city is influencing the development of safe spaces for young people in the city centre, being progressed through the Youth Network Partnership, starting with a test location within the Vaccination Centre in the Bon Accord Centre by Aberdeen Health & Social Care Partnership (AH&SCP) and ACC Community Learning and Development (CLD).

Fuel Support

Fuel poverty can have a significant impact on people's mental and physical health, particularly over winter. The Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee's cost of living fund has provided 292 households with payment vouchers towards their fuel bills as well as tailored energy efficiency advice. Families have been able to heat their homes over winter to help ensure their general wellbeing, contributing to improvement in health outcomes in the long term

Provision of free bus passes

The provision of free bus passes for children and young people has been promoted since the launch of the Under 22 Free Bus Travel Scheme. All 5-21 year olds resident in Scotland are eligible for Young Persons' Free Bus Travel, using a National Entitlement Card with the free bus travel product on it. The scheme has been promoted through multiple channels nationally and locally including through schools in order to increase awareness and to maximise uptake.

As of December 2024, over 32,615 young people have applied for and obtained a National Entitlement Card with free bus travel and are benefiting from this service, this is a considerable increase from the 29,621 reported in the last Annual Report.

Emergency formula

The Best Start in Life Group has had oversight of ensuring the implementation of a local Infant Feeding in a Crisis Pathway to ensure that appropriate infant formula is available for new parents.

The Group work in collaboration with CFINE Aberdeen City Council and NHS Grampian to develop a 'cash first' approach using Pay Point. Significant progress has been made with all families referred while being supported by family nurse or health visitor. To date 58 vouchers have been issued to 41 families through the pathway. 11 families have had repeat support.

As well as receiving the voucher, all families received follow up contact from an adviser from the SAFE team, most with instructions as to how to use the vouchers and offered a financial screening appointment via phone, home visit or agency appointment.

In addition, 35 families were offered a benefit check and additional support with food access, grants for energy support and referrals for additional child related items such as from Abernecessities. 19

families were identified as having the full entitlements in place or were on maternity leave and receiving maternity pay. Some were awaiting Child Benefits payments to start and did not require additional support with this from SAFE.

To date 16 families have had follow up support resulting from a benefit check. This has included support to claim additional welfare support via Social Security Scotland and Department of Work and Pensions. Including best start grant/food cards and Scottish Child Payment and from DWP there has been a variety of support with Universal Credit new claims /transfers from legacy benefits and noting additional elements to be added to the existing UC claim, Child benefit applications and advice on claiming childcare costs. From this support the financial gain is estimated to be in the region of £15,000. p/a. This cannot be noted as an exact figure without cross referencing all case outcomes for individual cases on the SAFECRM system alongside the pay point system. The full impact and evaluation of the pathway can be viewed in the [project end report](#).

Participants have provided positive feedback on the approach:

"The vouchers were a massive help to our family since our daughter requires the anti-reflux formula. This is about 133% of the price of an already expensive one. Monthly this adds up quickly. This has allowed us to prepare for winter, an expensive time generally. The other services such as the safe team and pantry have been a great help also. The pantry really helps us maintain cooking healthy meals without forking out an arm and a leg. The safe team have guided us through almost our first year financially which without, we would be struggling a lot more." Local father who Received help from SAFE, IFP vouchers twice and attends the pantry on a regular basis.

"You give me £60 voucher for formula, and I also received pantry food, thank you, it has really helped" Local mum who received lots of help with various issues relating to their baby.

Now that we have tested the pathway and are confident that it is meeting the needs of those identified we recognise that at present it is limited to referrals from two professionals working with young parents. Therefore, we will now focus on spreading the pathway across the partnership agencies to ensure that regardless of touchpoint that people across Aberdeen City who need this support can be directly referred and use the Infant Feeding in a Crisis Pathway.

The Cash First approach is also being tested by the Anti-Poverty Group with single males aged 18-45 as part of a new project. It is hoped that cash first initiatives can be a longer term solution to food insecurity and poverty. Recognising that some of these males will be fathers and that this approach can support them foster positive relationships with their children.

The project enhances the already established Early Years Financial Inclusion pathway. Both pathways have been well received by Midwives, Health Visitors, the Family Nurse Partnership and Allied Health Professionals. The Financial Inclusion pathway is a universal pathway that asks and offers all women and families if they require financial support.

Moving into the next phase of the work, the group is looking to extend the reach of the project providing training on the pathway and its referral process to other practitioners and services likely to come into contact with those who may need to use the Pathway. Work will also include the development and sharing of promotional materials in key settings (such as Libraries and ELC settings to increase the scope of self-referral from families themselves).

Food vouchers for holiday periods

Vouchers have been distributed to families who are eligible due to low income during holiday periods. The voucher, with a value of £25 for each two week period, continues to be welcomed. Around 700 less vouchers have been issued over each holiday period when compared to the numbers reported in the last annual report, suggesting that less families are now eligible due to changed circumstances.

Spring Holidays, 2024 – 4503 learners

Summer Holidays, 2024 – 4182 learners

Autumn Holiday, 2024 – 4402 learners

Best Start Food Grant

The number of Best Start and Best Start Foods grant applications received from city residents has seen a decline over recent years. In 2022/2023, there were 3,120 applications, while in 2023/2024, the number decreased to 1,750. As at the year-to-date (YTD) figure for 2024/2025, there have been 935 applications.

This trend aligns with the Scotland-wide data, where applications decreased from 85,825 in 2022/2023 to 53,266 in 2023/2024, representing a 37.9% reduction. The city's share of Scotland-level applications also dropped slightly from 3.6% in 2022/2023 to 3.3% in 2023/2024.

School Clothing Grants

As of December 2024, 4284 free school clothing grants have been approved over the year. This equates to grants for 2669 Primary pupils and 1,615 secondary pupils and is broadly in line with those awarded last year.

Access to Out of School Care (SAC)

While we have good coverage of SAC in Aberdeen there is still a demand for more places. Therefore it is important that we work with our partners to continually assess supply and demand across the city, and when and where possible either expand on existing provisions and/or create new services. As SAC is a paid for service, it is important that any new services are viable and sustainable. Expansion also has to take account of space available and the maximum number of registered places according to Care Inspectorate registration.

With almost a quarter of respondents (24%) saying they will require School Age Childcare for their preschool children currently attending an ELC nursery and/or childminder it is important that we also look ahead and consider future coverage. Therefore we must continue to facilitate communication between parents, carers currently accessing ELC Nursery provisions and childminders and all SAC providers regarding future supply and demand.

Affordability continues to be a concern for many families with almost 17% saying they do not access SAC due to cost. We are also increasingly aware that cost can be an ongoing concern for many families who are currently in work but facing cost of living challenges. With 46% of families saying they were not aware of any available financial support and only 28% of respondents currently receiving support it is essential that this information is made more readily available. We will work with the Financial Inclusion Team and all SAC providers to ensure that all parents and carers are made aware of what financial support is potentially available to assist with the costs of SAC. We will also link with the Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) to ensure that all information shared is current and in line with their existing drive to promote potentially available childcare financial support and benefits.

In order to respond positively to the findings of this survey, the Early Years team have:

- established a focus group with our School Age Childcare partners to help develop and inform the refresh of the Aberdeen City School Age Childcare Policy;
- gained Committee approval of updated and refreshed School Age Childcare [Policy](#)
- engaged and communicated with parents, and carers whose children are currently attending ELC nursery and childminder settings to monitor future projections of potential supply and demand. At this time we also communicate the importance of planning ahead with regards to wrap around care once children transition to primary school;
- continued to promote the availability of potential financial support and benefits available to assist in the cost of childcare; and
- developed a more detailed understanding of our own SAC services and we will continue to consult and engage with Aberdeen City Council service users directly to ensure that we are continuing to meet their needs within our services.

So, what next?

There is considerable work being undertaken in this area and this will continue in line with current plans. The Education and Lifelong Learning service remains ready to progress any expansion of targeted School Age Childcare in line with national policy when known.

There is a need to look at potential duplication across different partners to ensure that we can demonstrate best value around common themes such as financial advice, counselling and wider family support. This may be best undertaken as part of our model of Family Support and will rely on a high level of common data collection and sharing, and openness to new commissioning arrangements.

Income from social security and benefits in kind

Money Advisors in schools

The Council has attached Money Advisors to schools to help support families within their own communities through Scottish Attainment Challenge funding.

As the Advisors have become established, they have become more familiar with the scenarios facing families, and as awareness of the service has grown, their impact has significantly increased. The notable rise in financial gains achieved through the Advisors indicates their growing effectiveness and integration within the community. Additionally, the increased use of the On-line benefits calculator and the Financial Inclusion Service through alternative routes suggests that families are now accessing support through a variety of channels.

Over the last year the 2 Money Advisors who are attached to the Financial Inclusion Services have helped families achieve:

- Financial Gains of £374,610.85
- Assisted/Assisting 102 households with debt issues.
- Helping with total debts of £765,953.16
- 224 households were given full benefit checks.
- Assisted 47 households to claim benefits.
- Assisting 3 households to challenge being turned down for benefits.

Families who have accessed the Financial Inclusion Service independently of the school Money Advisors have been helped to achieve further:

- Financial Gains - £647,787.14
- Assisted/assisting 135 household with debt issues
- Helping with debts of £1,572,482.65
- 163 households given full benefit checks.
- Assisted 51 households to claim benefits.
- Assisted 28 households to challenge being turned down for benefits.

Data from the online benefits calculator shows that 2435 families have used the online benefit calculator. Of the completed calculation, 1679 families had £471,803.73** per week of new benefits identified.

**This does not confirm if they went onto claim the benefit as this is anonymised and could be people doing several calculations.

Maximising the update of benefits

Significant progress has been seen as more families access entitlements through Money Advisors linked to schools, funded by Strategic Equity Funding. Money advisors offer confidential help on financial matters, assisting families in accessing benefits, grants, emergency funds, and food banks.

Resources and support booklets are available electronically through schools and in hard copies, covering various stages of a child's development to support parents. These booklets are shared thrice yearly via school communication channels. Data available indicates a substantial increase in benefits being accessed following booklet distribution (from £15,301.26/week to £135,458.20/week) following August 2024 distribution.

Comprehensive support from advisors assists families with dealing with creditors, negotiating payment plans, and accessing emergency funds, positively impacting child poverty, wellbeing, development, participation, family resilience, and preventing family breakdowns and homelessness.

The implementation of the Policy in Practice LIFT Dashboard has further enabled the Local Authority to identify households most in need, allowing for targeted support and effective resource prioritisation. Since 1 November 2024, targeted communications have been initiated with 86 families affected by the benefit cap. These efforts involve engaging households through various channels, offering specific discretionary housing payments to mitigate income losses caused by the benefit cap, and working towards long-term financial improvements to achieve exemptions from the cap.

Additional funding of £96,382 for Scottish Welfare Fund has been made available to support Crisis Grant applications. This also includes provision of benefit and financial advice, as well as further support to ensure the provision of adequate emergency food.

Scottish Child Payment

Social Security Scotland data shows that in 2023/24, there were 1,720 applications from city residents to the Scottish Child Payment fund. This represented a significant reduction on 2022/23 which peaked at over 5,700.

As at 30th September 2024, this figure was 820 offering a half-year position that, notwithstanding variable monthly trends, would indicate a forecast figure at 2024/25 year-end that could be similar to, or potentially lower than, in 2023/24.

This figure represents 4% of all applications to the national scheme, similar to that recorded in the previous years of this payment. This is below the population adjusted average for Scotland's Urban Local Authorities, and in line with Edinburgh, our closest matching authority.

At the end of September 2024, the scheme had 10,335 children in Aberdeen benefitting from this scheme. At the same point in 2023, this number was 10,265. Taking recent population projections and previous estimates into account, these numbers represent roughly similar proportions of the city's children for each year.

Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund

Funding secured from the Scottish Government has secured the development of a "Low Income Family Tracker" which allows Aberdeen City Council to identify families in crisis, or those at risk of falling into crisis, who would benefit financially from targeted pro-active engagement. The tracker brings together indicators of poverty from multiple data sources held by the Council, the Department for Works Pension and other publicly available data. This is now operational and is informing targeted prevention work.

Free school meals

Data taken from the annual Healthy Living Survey saw free school meal uptake in Primary Schools rise from 72.3% in 2023 to 74.5% in 2024. Uptake in Secondary Schools fell from 56.5% in 2023 to 49.7% in 2024.

Uptake of free school meals varies considerably from school to school and the school catering service continues to work with local schools to better understand the factors influencing children and young people to not take up their entitlement and reports progress to [Committee](#). According

to the most recent data from the Healthy Living Survey, the percentage uptake in Primary Schools currently sits at 74.5% and 49.7% in Secondary Schools.

A number of initiatives are in train to help to address uptake challenges in our Secondary Schools. The Catering Service concluded the implementation of a pre-order App for all Secondary School pupils in October 2024, and there are early signs that the App has been well received. An additional snack bar has been added to the available catering service points in Cults Academy.

The work to establish a food hub at St Machar Academy to test an alternative approach has unfortunately been delayed. The food hub is to be situated outwith the main school building and provide 'grab and go' food provision, allowing pupils to be outwith school to meet their friends but still take up their free school meal entitlement. The installation of the pod is now expected in summer 2025, coinciding with other works taking place in the school playground including external dining facilities. An external point of sale and external dining facilities are also proposed as part of the proposals for a new extension at Harlaw Academy.

Update of Early Learning and Childcare for Eligible 2s

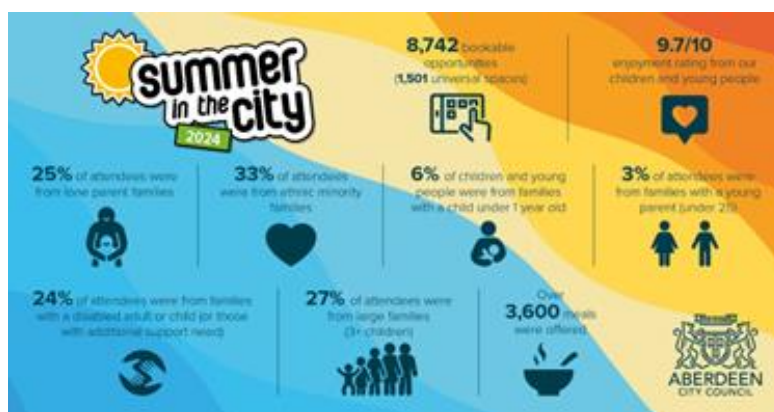
202 Eligible 2 year old children were placed in ELC in 2023/24, representing approximately 37.4% of the eligible population. (+6% from 2022/23). The introduction of a new Data Pipeline Project with the DWP has helped to increase uptake through better targeting of those who are eligible. The team have also implemented improved processes to increase uptake further and we expect to see higher numbers again in 2024/25. Work to expand uptake is included in our refreshed [Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan](#) published this year.

In the City Programmes

In line with the aims of the previous 'In the City' holiday programmes, the main focus remains to encourage participation and to maximise the positive opportunities available to young people and their families with a particular focus on those within the Tackling Child Poverty Plan priority groupings.

The programme continues to engage with the widest demographics, providing free opportunities for both priority families and those who do not identify as part of a priority group to take part. The programme targets the 5-14 years age group with some activities still being made available for those not in this age range. Bookable opportunities for priority families have taken the form of short, family, half-day and full-day sessions.

Since summer 2021, the programmes have provided more than 64,000 bookable opportunities, including weeklong/ multiday camps and childcare camps, day long and short activities being offered, as well as numerous drop-in activities in parks, museums, galleries and local communities and bespoke programmes for those with complex additional support needs.



The enjoyability rating as provided by children and young people for the Summer 2024 programme was 9.7 out of 10. This rating was consistent with the previous programme. Progress continues to be reported to [Committee](#). On-going funding of the programme will be considered as part of the Council budget setting process.

So, what next?

In addition to the work already in place and being progressed through the Children's Services Plan, the Council and its Community Planning Partners remain committed to using all available tools to enable young people and families to access financial support and the benefits for which they are eligible.

Having delivered significant improvement in benefits uptake, Community Planning Aberdeen have reset targets for the city to increase this by a further 10% by 2025.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROMISE



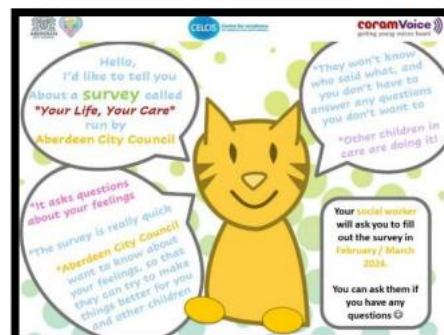
Central to the work of the Children's Services Board is delivery of The Promise. The Children's Services Board reviewed progress in delivering Plan 21-24 in October 2024. The [evaluation](#) highlighted that good progress is being made in a number of areas but that there is more to do. This position is reflected nationally.

Bright Spots

Through the later part of 2023/24, children's social work entered into a partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Looked After Children's Care and Protection (CELCIS) and Coram Voice to initiate our widest reaching participatory activity with our care experienced community in order to determine the extent to which our children and young people experience a good childhood and have the right supports in place.

'Bright Spots' is a research and service improvement project set up by Coram Voice to understand what is important to children in care and care leavers and share learning about what makes life good for them by measuring subjective well-being. Having demonstrated our strategic buy in and commitment to embedding the voice of children in local decision making processes, 2 cohorts were surveyed.

The 'Your Life Your Care' survey was presented to 345 children/young people aged 4 – 17 years, and 'Your Life Beyond Care' to 227 young people aged 16 – 26 years.



The initial findings and areas for consideration and improvement are detailed below and are being discussed with CELCIS to better understand the responses given by our children and young people.

Your Life, Your Care (for those aged 4 – 17 years)

249 children in care responded to the survey from a total eligible population of 345: a response rate of 72%. This is very high compared to the national average.

Positive findings include:

- More than half of children and young people (11- 17yrs) in Aberdeen had the same social worker over the last year and significantly fewer children and young people had three or more social workers in this period compared to the Bright Spots comparator group.

- 70% of young people gave high or very high scores (7 to 10) for happiness with the way they look. This is significantly higher than the proportion of the Bright Spots comparator group (61%).
- Six out of seven (86%) children and young people in care (8-17yrs) felt their lives were getting better.
- 61% of all children aged 8-11yrs with brothers and sisters felt that the time they were able to spend with them was 'just the right amount', higher than the Bright Spots comparator group (47%).
- Almost all (99%) of young people (11-17yrs) in Aberdeen felt that they had an adult who they trusted and who sticks by them no matter what; a significantly higher percentage than the average (91%) of the Bright Spots comparator group of local authorities.
- All of the youngest children (4- 7yrs) trusted the adults they lived with, and all children aged 8-11yrs trusted the adults they live with 'all or most of the time' or 'sometimes'. 95% of 8-11yrs and 94% of 11-17yrs indicated that the adults they lived with showed an interest in their education 'all or most of the time' or 'sometimes'.
- 93% of children and young people (11-17yrs) in Aberdeen always felt safe where they lived, this is significantly higher than the percentage of the Bright Spots comparator group (86%). Unusually, this is also higher than the percentage for the youngest children (4- 7yrs) in Aberdeen (87%)
- The proportion of children and young people in Aberdeen City who spent time outdoors in nature more than once a week (88% of children (8-11yrs) and 89% of young people (11-17yrs)) was higher than the general Scottish population (67%).
- 92% of 8-11yrs 'all or most of the time' or 'sometimes' felt listened to when decisions were made about their lives, and this was even higher for young people (11- 17yrs) (94%).

Areas for consideration stemming from the survey responses from those aged 4-17:

- Fewer children and young people in Aberdeen had received an explanation about why they were in care and did not want to know more when compared to children and young people in the Bright Spots comparator group. (48% to 65% for 8-11yrs, 69% to 78% for 11- 17yrs).
- As children and young people in Aberdeen got older, fewer reported having a pet at home (78% of 8-11yrs and 56% of 11-17yrs), and significantly less children and young people (11-17yrs) had a pet when compared to the Bright Spots comparator group.
- The proportion of young people (11-17yrs) with a really good friend was well below that of the general population (91% to 97%).
- A quarter of children (8-11yrs) and one in ten of children aged over 11yrs did not know they could ask to speak to their social worker on their own. These proportions are both significantly above those for the Bright Spots comparator groups
- Many of the comments from children and young people across all age groups related to their relationships with parents, and brothers and sisters. Children and young people (8- 17yrs) reported mixed views and experiences of family time, and the complexity of many family arrangements came across, such as children seeing some of their brothers and sisters but not others. Just over a third (34%) of children aged 8-11yrs reported that the amount of time they spent with their mum was 'just right' and 18% felt time with their dad was just right. Of young people aged 11-17yrs , more children (45%) felt time with their mum was 'just right, but just 20% thought time with their dad was 'just right'.
- A significantly higher proportion (43%) of children and young people (8-11yrs) in Aberdeen reported being afraid of going to school because of bullying when compared to the Bright Spots comparator group. Of those who were afraid, most were getting help.

- Whilst the majority (87%) of children (4-7yrs) said that they 'always' felt safe at home, when compared to the Bright Spots comparison group, a higher proportion of children (4-7yrs) in Aberdeen said that they didn't always feel safe where they lived.

The proportion of young people (11-17yrs) in Aberdeen City giving positive scores was significantly above the Bright Spots group for several key wellbeing indicators:

- Very high/high scores for feeling that the things they do are worthwhile (76% to 65%).
- 'Very happy' yesterday (44% to 35%). Very high scores for feeling positive about the future. (45% to 36%)

Life Beyond Care (for those aged 16-26)

156 young people responded to the survey from a care leaver population of 227: a remarkable response rate of 69%. This is very high compared to the national average.

Positive findings include:

- Two-thirds (66%) of comments about Youth Team Workers or Social Workers were very positive. More care leavers than children and young people (11-17yrs) in care in Aberdeen trusted their worker (79% to 69%) and found it easy to get in touch with them (75% to 58%). Workers came second only to friends as providers of emotional support identified by care leavers. 43% of care leavers had a pet, which is a significantly greater proportion than the 28% of the Bright Spots comparator group. Over half (54%) of care leavers with pets felt they were a source of emotional support.
- More than nine in ten of care leavers (92%) who answered felt that they had a person who they trusted, who helped them and stuck by them no matter what. This is significantly above the proportion for the Bright Spots comparator group (86%). 96% had a person who listened to them. 90% had a person who believed they would be a success. 88% had a person who told them when they'd done well.
- Care leavers (94%) in Aberdeen more often had access to the internet at home compared to young people (83%) in the Bright Spots comparator group.

Areas for consideration stemming from the survey responses from those aged 16-26:

- Three in four young people with experience of care felt that where they lived now was right for them. One in four did not. 30% did not 'always' feel safe in their home and 36% did not 'always' feel safe in their neighbourhood. 41% did not 'always' feel settled in their home.
- One in five (22%) care leavers felt lonely 'often/always', over twice the rate for young people in the general population. This was more than seven times the rate for young people in the general population (3%). One in six care leavers (17%) did not have at least one good friend. This is more than eight times greater than the rate for young people in general population (2%).
- Over a third (35%) young people indicated that they had a long-term health problem or disability, and over half (27) of those providing further information mentioned mental health conditions (most commonly depression and anxiety).
- Nearly half (47%) of care leavers in Aberdeen were not in education, employment or training compared to just 13% of 16-24 year-olds in the general population. The proportion finding it difficult to get by financially was almost three times that of the general population of 16-24 year-olds
 - Almost a third of care leavers (31%) gave low scores for happiness with their appearance. The Bright Spots comparator group figure was 28%.
 - 54% of care leavers reported high or very high happiness the previous day compared to 75% of young people (16-24yrs) in the general UK population. Care leavers in

Aberdeen also had greater levels of anxiety the previous day, with almost a third of care leavers (31%) giving high anxiety scores compared to 22% of the general population.

Over a third of care leavers gave low anxiety scores, and this rate was just under that of the general population (35% to 37%). One in five care leavers (21%) gave very high scores when asked to what extent they felt things they did in their lives were worthwhile.

There was a degree of polarisation in Aberdeen, with wellbeing indicators suggesting some care leavers doing very well, and others doing much less well. Wellbeing findings in Aberdeen were broadly similar to the Bright Spots comparator group.

There are indications from the survey, that the structural inequalities that exist for our young care leavers disproportionately impacts on them. We recognise that as a partnership we need to continue our efforts to mitigate these inequalities and support our care leavers to maximise their potential.

As noted the above findings require to be read with caution. It is important that assumptions are not made while we work with CELCIS over the coming months to dig into the data to better understand the responses given by our young people. This activity will also support us to ensure we target our improvement activities on the correct areas.

This project has encompassed the ethos intrinsic to the Promise 5 Foundations having provided our care experienced community the opportunity to share their voice, and feel they are genuinely being listened to. The findings will be fully considered as we transition to Plan 24 – 30 and as we refresh single service and multi-agency Plans such as our Children's Services Plan.

Preparations for the second Change Plan

We welcome the national indicators recently published by Promise Scotland. Baseline data across these indicators has been collated to aid our readiness for implementation.

Promise Vision Statement	Outcome	Core Indicators (2024/25)	Data
Where children are in their families and feel loved they must stay – and families must be given support together to nurture that love and overcome the difficulties which get in the way	The rate of children entering care decreases. For those that do need to enter care, a higher proportion are able to stay living at home with parents, or in a family setting in kinship care or foster care	Number and rate of children in the 'care system' during the year	457 as of 31.07.24 compared to 500 as of 31.07.2023.
		2. Number of children (0-17 years) entering the 'care system' during the year	200 over academic year ending 2023/24 compared to 138 over 2022/23
		3. Number and percentage of children in the 'care system' who are living at home with parents	60 (13%) as of 31/07/24 compared to 61(12.2%) as of 31.07.2023.
		4. Number and percentage of children in the 'care system' living in the community	35 (8%) as of 31.07.2023 (Voluntary Home, Other Community, Secure, LA Home)
		5. Number and percentage of children who are living in kinship	96 (21%) as of 31.07.23.
		6. Number and percentage of children who are living in foster care	210 (46%) as of 31.07.24.

Promise Vision Statement	Outcome	Core Indicators (2024/25)	Data
	The underlying universal support system must support all families and identify those who need more support.	7. Number and percentage of children who are living in residential care each year	51/11 (residential school & other residential) equating to 15% as of 31.07.23.
		1. Rate of registrations to the child protection register from initial and pre-birth Case Conferences during the year per 1,000 0-15 year olds	12.5% as of 31.07.24 (please note not all children are 0-15 as not measured this way in national minimum data set. Also includes pre-birth.)
		2. Percentage of child death reviews which identified modifiable factors in a child's death	Not currently held.
		3. Percentage of children with a developmental concern recorded at their 13-15 months, 27-30 months, and 4-5 year reviews.	13-15mth: Aberdeen – 8.4% Scotland – 12.5% 27-30 mnth: Aberdeen – 10.2% Scotland: 17.9% 4-5 yr: Aberdeen – 17.2% Scotland – 16.6%
		4. Number and percentage of children living in temporary accommodation.	442 households in temp 85 (19.2%) with children
		5. Two year averaged estimate of the number and proportion of children living in relative poverty after housing costs.	7,378/18.9%
		6. Two-year averaged estimate of the number and proportion of children living in absolute poverty after housing costs.	6,011/15.4%
		7. Number and rate of children on the Child Protection Register, with domestic abuse listed as a concern identified.	21 as of 31.07.24. 0.5 per 1000
Scotland must limit the number of moves that children experience and support carers to continue to care.	The average number of homes a child experiences each year decreases.	1. Percentage of children who have experienced 3 or more homes within the last year.	5% over 2022/23
	For children for whom it is safest to live away from their family, there must be sufficient availability of carers who can provide stable	1. Number of registered foster care households per 1,000 0–17-year-olds, and relative to number of children in the 'care system'.	74 households 1.9 1000 children
		2. Number of foster carer deregistrations in the last year.	1 De-registration in the last year.
		3. Care Homes for children and young people and residential special schools workforce:	

Promise Vision Statement	Outcome	Core Indicators (2024/25)	Data
	loving environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Size of WTE (Whole-time equivalent) workforce, rounded to the nearest 10 - Vacancy rate in Care Homes for children and young people - Vacancy rate in residential special schools 	50 - ACC 8.7% - ACC
		4. The Secure care workforce, in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Size of WTE workforce, rounded to the nearest 10 - Vacancy rate 	Not applicable
	There must be sufficient capacity within children's social services to recruit loving, attentive carers and support them to continue to care, and provide children and young people with stability when moves need to happen	1. Staff working in children's fieldwork services, including qualified social workers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WTE (rounded to nearest 10) - Rate per 100,000 0-17 year olds - Stability index 	130 1 member of staff to 300 children.
Schools in Scotland must be ambitious for care experienced children and ensure they have all they need to thrive, recognising that they may experience difficulties associated with their life story.	Care experienced young people spend more time in school.	1. Rate of attendance for pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year. 2. Cases of exclusions per 1,000 pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year.	88.36% (2022/23) 477.01 (rate per 1,000 – 2022/23)
	The average attainment of care experienced young people increases.	1. Proportion of pupils who experienced care at some point within the school year at stages P1, P4, P7 and S3 achieving the curriculum for excellence level relevant to their stage.	P1 (22/23) Reading – 81.82% Writing – 72.73% L&T – 81.82% Numeracy – 90.91% P4 (22/23) Reading – 62.5% Writing – 62.5% L&T – 50% Numeracy – 62.5% P7 (22/23) Reading – 60% Writing – 60%

Promise Vision Statement	Outcome	Core Indicators (2024/25)	Data
			<p>L&T – 80% Numeracy – 60%</p> <p>S3 – Levels 3 & 4(22/23) Reading – 36.36% Writing – 36.36% L&T – 45.45% Numeracy – 50%</p> <p>S3 – Level 4 (22/23) Reading – 0% Writing – 0% L&T – 9.09% Numeracy – 50%</p>
		2. Proportion of pupils who experienced care during their last year at school achieving at least one SCQF level 5 qualification (or better).	FROM INSIGHT (2023) 29.41%
		3. Proportion of pupils who experienced care during their last year at school achieving at least 1 SCQF level 6 qualification (or better).	FROM INSIGHT (2023) 5.88%
		4. Proportion of pupils who experienced care during their last year at school in a positive destination 9 months after leaving school.	Not currently recorded.
Where living with their family is not possible, children must stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed.	The number of brother and sisters staying together in the 'care system' increases.	1. Proportion of family groups living in foster families who have been separated.	33.82% (As of 02/01/2025 – from D365)
		2. Number and proportion of new foster care households approved for family groups of 2 children, and 3 or more children.	1 new fostering household approved in 2024 to take a family group of 2/3.
Scotland must strive to become a nation that does not restrain its children.	The use of physical restraint in residential care should be reduced, and where possible eliminated.	1. Number of incidences of physical restraint reported between 1st January and 31st December in care homes for children and young people.	<p>Aberdeen City does not utilise physical restraint as a means of managing children's behaviour within our care homes.</p> <p>We are aware that we commission care from external providers who do</p>

Promise Vision Statement	Outcome	Core Indicators (2024/25)	Data
			utilise this approach. It is the duty of the care provider to record such instances.
		2. Number of incidences of seclusion reported between 1st January and 31st December in care homes for children and young people.	Aberdeen City does not utilise seclusion as a means of managing children's behaviour within our care homes. We are aware that we commission care from external providers who do utilise this approach. It is the duty of the care provider to record such instances.
		3. Number of incidences of Physical restraint reported between 1st January and 31st December in secure care.	Nil
		4. Number of incidences of seclusion reported between 1st January and 31st December in secure care.	Nil
		5. Number of incidences of physical restraint reported between 1st January and 31st December in school accommodation services.	
		6. Number of incidences of seclusion reported between 1st January and 31st December in school accommodation services.	
Scotland must seek to uphold the wellbeing of care-experienced children and young people and ensure that there is timely access to, mental health support before crisis point so that children can avoid hospitalisation.	The number of staff employed in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services is proportionate to demand.	1. Number of staff employed in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	
Care experienced children and young people have access to	Health outcomes, and access to health services improve for	No Indicator Identified	

Promise Vision Statement	Outcome	Core Indicators (2024/25)	Data
support ensuring that their health needs are fully met.	care experienced children and young people.		
Scotland must stop locking up children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care.	The number of young people entering young offenders' institutions decreases.	1. Number of under 21s in custody.	Justice Team
		2. Average number of children in secure care on a given day throughout the year.	Justice Team
		3. Number of referrals to the children's reporter on offence grounds.	Justice Team
Young adults for whom Scotland has taken on parenting responsibility must have a right to return to care and have access to services and supportive people to nurture them.	The number of young care experienced people receiving support increases.	1. Proportion of young people who are eligible for aftercare services who are receiving services.	73% (2023)
		2. Number and proportion of eligible young people who are going on to continuing care.	44 currently classed as 'Continuing Care'.
Care experienced adults must have a right to access to supportive, caring services for as long as they require them. Those services and the people who work in them must have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people access what they need to thrive.	The number of households experiencing homelessness decreases.	1. Number and rate of people of working age living in poverty.	The number of working age adults living in relative poverty from the most recent data was 29,143. This equates to 19% of adults in this age group.
		2. Number of households living in temporary accommodation.	As at 31st March 2023 there were 7 care experienced households accommodated in temp, at the same point in 2024 there were 8. At 31st December 2024 there were 10 households. Currently there are 8
		3. Number of households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness.	April 2024 Jan 25 – 25 2023/24 – 25 2022/23 - 18
	Support for people who use drugs or alcohol increases.	1. Number and proportion of people receiving help for problematic drug and alcohol use within waiting times standard.	Alcohol: 18 (Dec 24) 95% started treatments within 21 days Drugs: 22 (Dec 24) 100% started treatments within 21 days

Promise Vision Statement	Outcome	Core Indicators (2024/25)	Data
	Support for adult mental health increases.	1. Number and proportion of people receiving psychological therapy within referral guidelines	

Aberdeen City welcomes publication of Plan 24 – 30, which restates our collective ambition to improve the lives and outcomes of all children and young people with care experience and ensures a stronger preventative approach that mitigates the need for children and young people to enter formal care settings. The Promise Progress Framework will provide an opportunity to ensure a greater level of consistency to reporting progress to deliver on the ambitions of the Promise. It will enable benchmarking against national reporting and enhance opportunities for partnerships to share learning and improvement activity with each other. Wrapped around the framework will be the need to ensure a continuing approach to capture the experiential impact of the changes we as a partnership are making.

The Children's Services Board have agreed to adopt the Framework as a data reporting tool that we consider on a regular basis, appreciating that some data sets are only updated annually. Doing so will allow us to ensure we have early sight of areas where great collective effort may be required to effect the anticipated change.

Whole Family Wellbeing Funding

The Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) is a £500 million investment over the current Scottish Parliament (2022 to 2026). As part of Element 1, £32 million has been provided in each of the financial years 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024 to support Children's Services Planning Partnerships across Scotland to scale up and drive the delivery of whole family support services in their areas and build capacity for transformational change.

In Aberdeen City we have invested our WFWF in a variety of areas to support our children, young people and their families to improve our holistic whole family wellbeing offer, including:

Scaling up Youth and Family Support

Scaling up new ways of working to support early intervention work. Investment in work of Youth Workers, Family Learning and Financial Inclusion (early prevention work) aligned to Family Support Model.

The development and implementation of collaborative and creative approaches to address and meet the needs of children, young people and families across the city continues to be the focus for this resource which is contributing to:

- Increased and easier access to Access to Money support
- Reduced levels of exclusion
- Increased levels of attendance
- Increased levels of parental engagement
- Increased levels of attainment

Request for Assistance

Developing the second version of our Request for Assistance system in order to create a single pathway for families to access support services.

Testing of the system has been progressing well with really positive engagement from third sector partners. The resource will be integrated into our existing systems to allow a single point of truth for those supporting families as well as a single point of referral. We are continuing to sign up partners looking towards phase 2 where families will be able to self-refer.

Co-Located Multidisciplinary Teams

Piloting co-located multidisciplinary teams in Northfield and Lochside Academies to ensure more effective and holistic planning for the children and families most in need of our support.

The multi-disciplinary teams have been established in Northfield and Lochside Academies. There continues to be a base within Northfield Academy which is on site to be available and accessible to the young people who have been identified as requiring extra support individually and as a family.

Supporting Kinship Carers

Building the capacity of kinship carers to enable them to feel better supported and have their own needs recognised more effectively. A range of engagement activity has been undertaken with kinship carers. This highlighted strengths and areas where improvements have been made. Support to kinship carers is now offered from a variety of multi agencies and this is facilitated, in part by the funding of a CDO spanning Kinship/Family Learning/Fit like Hubs via WFWF. New support groups have been established including a Kinship/ASN group. Two Information Events

have taken place, linking kinship families with relevant organisations and a Support Guide has been given to all carers.

Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM)

Rolling out SCIM in order to ensure that every child who has experienced abuse or neglect has access to a Bairn's Hoose model of support including access to a trauma recovery service.

We have successfully embedded SCIM across our child protection service. We will take this learning into the development of our Bairns Hoose which will offer a multi-agency and co-located service. This service will be rights focused and ensure 'recovery' is core to our intervention.

The recovery element will be fully aligned to our wide family support offer. The Bairns Hoose has been designed in collaboration with young people to create a trauma informed environment in which children, young people and their families feel safe when accessing child protection supports.

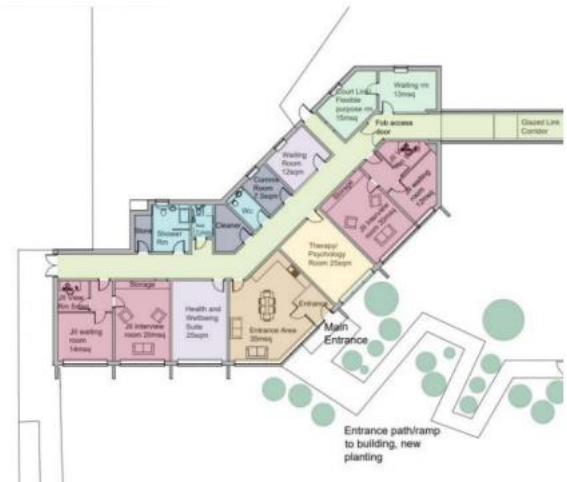
Place2Be

Supporting the development the Place2Be project, focussing on the mental health of children under the age of 10.

Pilot testing has been undertaken at Kingswells School with Place2Be counselling for a year. Place2Talk offers our pupils the opportunity to attend drop-in sessions so they can receive counselling in the moment without needing to be referred or join waiting lists. In the last year 116 pupils have been seen over 66 sessions.

Parent Support – Children with Disabilities

Improving the peer and community support available for children with disabilities within Aberdeen City.



HOW WELL HAS THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES BOARD WORKED TOGETHER?



The working arrangements and successes of the Children's Services Board

The Children's Services Board has led a review of Sub Group Terms of Reference to ensure that the Third Sector is appropriately represented. In addition, consideration has been given to how best to strengthen arrangements to elicit and act on the voices of children, young people and families at Sub Group level. We have considered the accessibility of the reports we generate and now produce child and easy read versions of key reports. Arrangements will continue to be kept under review, particularly as we respond positively to the Statutory Guidance on Part 3 of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024.

The Children's Services Board has invested time in considering how best to track progress against our ambitious plan. Revisiting our arrangements for tracking progress has enabled a more direct link to reports being presented to Community Planning Aberdeen, as a result the Board can now more quickly take action when risks and issues are identified. These changes continue to build a culture of collective responsibility and candour amongst Board members.

Considerable time has been invested by our Sub Groups in the development of Improvement Project Charters with examples of on-going work shown in the appendices. Taking this approach has supported new groups of staff from across the Community Planning Partnership to join forces on shared projects aligned with our Plan. The progress of each charter is routinely reported to the Community Planning Aberdeen Board.

Over the course of this year our Sub Groups have helped bring 8 of our 32 projects to a successful completion well ahead of the end of our Children's Services Plan (links to detailed reports on each can be found in the appendix).

Improving our knowledge of our local systems. In addition to providing leadership to our Sub Groups, the Children's Services Board has collaborated to evaluate progress on a number of key national policies. This has included evaluating our progress in realising the changes described in the first Promise Change Plan and our success in embedding children's rights. As we move forward, the statutory Children's Rights Report and progress against the second Change Plan will be fully embedded into our Children's Services Plan Annual Report so that the connections across different policies are fully taken into account. Recently published Promise outcomes have been incorporated into this Annual Report as a first step towards that aim and a Power BI with live tracking data is under development to aid the Board's routine oversight of progress.

The Children's Services Board reviewed the findings of the Children with Disabilities Thematic Review of Children's Social Work Services undertaken by the Care Inspectorate. This has helped ensure we are responding positively to the voices of our disabled children and their families. We are pleased that The Care Inspectorate recognised the quality of local Child's Plans, assessing the majority of Plans as Good or better. We are also proud that the Inspectorate recognise that effective arrangements are in place to support multi agency working. Over the coming year we will work together to broaden the range of opportunities available for those with a disability to help strengthen our arrangements and continue to improve transitions from children's to adult services.

The Board has also taken a keen interest in the Secure Care Pathways Review. This national report highlighted the need to improve transition planning, particularly around issues such as housing and mental health and wellbeing support. Our focus on transition and our work as part of the Fairer Futures Partnership will help us move these areas forward over the coming year.

The Children's Services Board continues to benefit from close collaboration with the Child Protection Committee (CPC), delivering shared audits and quality assurance activity. We have now brought a number of audits to completion, most recently on Transitions to P1.

Audit 6 (Transitions to P1) reviewed the processes in place for vulnerable children transitioning from Nursery to P1. The audit team looked at the quality and consistency of the process. Key learning points included:

- Of the 72% concerns evident, 15 had gaps in the information provided.
- In some cases, risk had been passed on without taking relevant actions prior to transition.
- There were some inconsistencies in the transition meetings and planning, such as information being shared between health professionals but not with Primary school transition colleagues. 21 Childs Plans were not shared with Education

A number of recommendations will be taken forward as a result of the audit. Current shared work with the Child Protection Committee includes starting to undertake our self-evaluation in preparation for our next Joint Inspection.

Collaboration. We continue to benefit from close collaboration with our local Health Determinates Research Collaborative (HDRC). The HDRC, in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh, will help us evaluate the impact of our local Bairns Hoose which will become operational in July 2025. The design and development of our Bairns Hoose has been strongly influenced by the voice of children and young people that have experienced abuse and harm.

Our Bairns Hoose will bring together child protection partners to deliver a colocated and integrated approach to how we investigate and support children and young people who have been abused/harmed. It additionally will have the capacity to support children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has been harmful to others. Ensuring our Bairns Hoose will have a live Court link will enable all children who have to attend court to provide evidence in an environment that is familiar to them and more conducive to their needs.

Building on our partnership with Children First, they will deliver advocacy and recovery support to children (and their family) going through a child protection process. Increasingly we want to see connection to recovery support being initiated from the Inter-Agency Referral Discussion ensuring early and effective support. The impact of delivering recovery support in this manner will be a strong focus of the evaluation the University of Edinburgh and HDRC will provide, enabling us to consider how this improves the outcomes of children and young people.

In addition the HDRC are supporting our Whole System work on healthy weight following the identification of this risk as part of our last Annual Report and evaluation into the impact of the expanded offer of Early Learning and Childcare.

We recognise the need to continue to amplify our collaboration with children and young people and ensure that there are effective mechanisms in place to support the meaningful empowerment and participation of children and young people. We have been working with our wider Community Planning Partnership to ensure that our Children and Young People can be involved as far as possible in our improvement work. Each of our Local Outcome Improvement Plan projects have identified where their work can and should engage children and young people and will continue to report on involvement. This has included the development of a youth engagement toolkit and promotional material for young people to get involved

As a Board we have agreed to establish a shadow Board of young people to flag up areas of concern and recognise the need to utilise a broader range of mechanisms to help young people shape the next Children's Services Plan. Preparatory work has included developing a directory of Youth Groups representing different demographic groups to ensure both wide and targeted involvement. Shadow Board arrangements have been tested as we have developed this Annual Report and we will continue to refine arrangements to ensure that they are meaningful for young people and linked to the [Youth Engagement Project Charter](#).

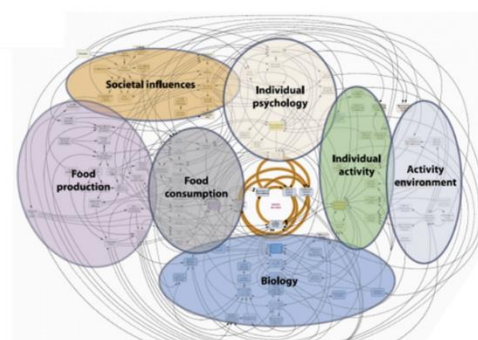
As a Board, we have continued to collaborate in order to ensure that there are suitably aligned learning and development opportunities for our staff. Members of the Children's Services Board considered the level of Trauma Training staff in their respective organisation/service would require and a Group are currently establishing formal recommendations for consideration by the Board. An E-Learning Module as an output of our work to Write Right about Me has been made available to staff across the Community Planning Partnership.

Initiating work to take a whole systems approach to [healthy weight](#). Following the publication of last year's Annual Report, we have taken steps to respond to the increasing number of children and expectant mothers who are not of a healthy weight.

Our work on healthy weight was initiated by convening a range of stakeholders to discuss the issue collectively to avoid silo working. The event helped to establish an understanding of what a whole system approach would look like and start developing a shared vision based on a shared understanding of local data.

Attendees learned that 1 in 5 primary 1 aged children in Aberdeen are at risk of being overweight or obese, with higher rates seen in more deprived areas. Among children aged 2-15 in Scotland, one third are at risk of overweight or obesity. For adults, 67% are either overweight or obese, with 29% being classified as obese.

Half of the pregnant women in Aberdeen were overweight or obese in 2022, and obesity continues to rise year-on-year. Deprivation plays a significant role, with those in the most deprived areas nearly twice as likely to be at risk. Trends also show disparities based on gender, age, and ethnicity, with men and boys showing higher obesity rates compared to women and girls. Poor diets, low physical activity, and the severe health and economic consequences of obesity highlight the need



for urgent, comprehensive public health interventions. With the financial cost of obesity in Scotland projected to reach £5.9 billion by 2030, it is crucial to address both individual behaviours and broader social causes.

The event gathered a range of key themes that have been used to develop a high level plan being led by Public Health colleagues. The Board look forward to supporting this important work.

Responding to the needs of a changing population.

Those represented on the Board continue to support a high proportion of displaced children and young people including those fleeing conflict and unaccompanied asylum seeking children. After Glasgow, the city welcomes the highest proportion of displaced people and services continue to respond with agility although this has placed considerable pressure on local services. Mitigating the risk to service provision will require our on-going attention. Aberdeen's Educational Psychology Service are currently creating guidance on working with Refugee & Displaced Families to aide the work of Education and Lifelong Learning staff with supporting this vulnerable group.

As of 31 December 2024 Aberdeen City has received 59 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People (UASYP), representing a 20% increase in the number as at the same point in time in 2023. As you would expect the age profile has also changed over the same period - as of 31/12/23, 18% of UASYP were over the age of 18 years, as of 31/12/24, 58% are over 18 years of age. Age profile is particularly significant given that funding to local authorities reduces as the young person ages, regardless of individual need. Focussed support to this group of individuals is led by a small dedicated resource within our Children's Services Youth Team.

The increase in volume is indicative of increased arrivals into Kent on small boats, with UASYP assigned to local authorities on a rotational basis. Additionally, Aberdeen has received a significant number of asylum seeking adults dispersed via the Hotel Dispersal scheme. Of these, a small but significant number note upon arrival that they are in fact under 18yrs of age. As a consequence they require prompt assessment to determine if there is robust evidence to be clear that they are not a child. Those accepted as under 18yrs of age are considered to be *looked after* and placed outwith the hotels in more appropriate arrangements for their needs. The model we have developed is a highly supported housing dispersal model.

Recognising the vast majority of asylum seeking young people indicate their wish to remain in Aberdeen once their asylum status is resolved has required work to augment our accommodation options to meet the growing demand. Collaboration with housing providers and registered social landlords continues to be a focus. We have also extended our 3rd sector partnership with Action for Children to provide outreach aftercare support. We have developed our approaches to take account of diverse cultural backgrounds, experience of loss and how for many this manifests in trauma. Securing health support, education provision and social integration remain key activities in our strategic planning.

In terms of broader population changes in relation to resettlement and asylum, the displaced population continues to grow, although the pace of arrivals has slowed over the last 12 months. Over 3000 displaced people have been welcomed to Aberdeen city since 2016, the vast majority of whom have arrived since 2021 via Afghan resettlement routes and in 2022, through the Ukrainian scheme routes.

Arrivals also occur through asylum routes and there are currently circa 380 asylum seekers in either Contingency of Dispersed accommodation in Aberdeen.

Data trends in 2024

- The overall resettlement population increased slightly in 2024 compared to 2023. Notwithstanding this, there was significant churn within the population, impacting on service demand levels.
- The biggest increases were evident in the displaced populations which are generally assessed as having higher levels of integration needs:
 - the number of asylum seekers placed in dispersed accommodation increased as per the National Accommodation Plan.
 - 108 asylum seekers had their claims approved (compared to 17 in 2023) and separately a pattern is emerging of those with positive decisions moving from other English/Scottish Local Authority areas to Aberdeen.
 - Demand increased to accommodate Afghan households recently arrived in the UK and supported by the Ministry of Defence with local integration support being provided.
 - The United Kingdom Resettlement Programme restarted with a commitment to welcome 12 households into Aberdeen.
 - The increases were offset by a fall in the asylum Contingency Accommodation population with the closure of one hotel.

To support the needs of families within the displaced population, whole family support was commissioned from Action for Children and Children 1st and continues to be provided.

Getting it Right for Everyone (GIRFE). In collaboration with ACHSCP, the Children's Services Board has worked as part of a GIRFE Pathfinder with Scottish Government.

GIRFE aligns with the Framework for Health and Community Care and builds on self-directed support implementation across Scotland. The Pathfinders from across Scotland engaged with a range of stakeholders, including children and their families to codesign a toolkit resource entitled *The team around the person*. People with lived experience, from across Scotland, have actively helped to identify the barriers that prevent us Getting It Right for Everyone and have worked with the local GIRFE team to shape and test the tools detailed within the GIRFE toolkit. The toolkit aims to support a more person-led, consistent and individualised approach to health and social care support. This approach will help to embed inter-agency working across Scotland. This is fundamental to ensuring a GIRFE approach can be taken forward at a local level, as well as across Scotland.

As part of the pathfinder process, Aberdeen has helped to inform the development of a national toolkit to help inform a person led approach to managing transitions between children's services and adult services. This included the application of feedback from parents in Aberdeen who have experience in local arrangements. To help improve the experience of those that are cared for and their families when moving between children's and adults' services, a multi-agency group was recently established in Aberdeen. This group will seek to apply the new GIRFE toolkit to its activities.

Transitions to Pathways from Children's Services

Building on the learning from the GIRFE Pathfinder we have progressed work, on a multi-agency basis, to review the pathways that support the transition of young people entering adulthood. Transitions were specifically flagged by the Care Inspectorates in their 2024 Thematic Review as nationally being an area where improvement was required. Young people and parents highlighted

that transitions were often experienced as being distressing and confusing. These were experiences we recognised locally. Staff across the partnership similarly echoed the transitions process can be a complex one, particularly for young people who require ongoing support from health and social care services.

We established a multi-agency group to redesign our transition pathways and guidance to address the challenges families have highlighted. This work is progressing at pace and our updated transition process will begin to be rolled out from 1 April 2025. The main objectives of this project are to:

- Establish and embed an agreed process/pathway for improving transitions of young people moving on from school, with a key focus on the process of transition for young people requiring ongoing support from health and social care services.
- Develop a clear standard Operating Procedure for staff/services.
- Communicate the revised process/pathway with parents, carers and young people to improve knowledge of the Transitions process within Aberdeen City.
- Ensure an ongoing focus on improving transitions is built into Business as Usual practice informed by the voices of children and young people.
- Ensure Aberdeen City's transition planning and guidance takes account of learning from the Care Inspectorate's Thematic Review and national policy (National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy for Disabled Young People A Statement of Intent Sept 2023).
- Ensure Aberdeen City's transition planning and guidance aligns to the existing best practice, Principles of Good Transition 3 and COMPASS national tool.

Initiating work to reform how we support families living in SIMD 1. Following the publication of last year's Annual Report, we have taken steps to respond to the evidence of significantly poorer outcomes evident in those living in SIMD1. The Children's Services Board has undertaken a comprehensive [review](#) of the complexity of the challenges being experienced by our families living in SIMD 1 to support proactive planning for our model of Family Support.

As part of this work, Community Planning Partners actively engaged with planning for our [Future Libraries Model](#), which has triggered a need to look at our Future Libraries as a key component of our model of preventative Family Support. The Children's Services Board identified a need to work together to:

- Address the perception of libraries
- Improve the visibility of buildings e.g. Greyhope
- Create a neutral trusted venue in the community where you go for information and support
- Promote Co-location through our Future Libraries Model
- Improve engagement with religious and community groups to maximise the use of facilities
- Consider the delivery of existing programmes such as Bookbug, to consider how they might best be modernised

As a Children's Services Board we are delighted to have been selected as a Fairer Futures Pathfinder. We have commissioned CELCIS as our evaluation partner as we develop our model of Family Support, developed a [High Level Implementation Plan](#) and appointed a [Programme Lead](#) to support this important development. Governance arrangements for our Fairer Futures work have been agreed. We have achieved much over the last year, and will now establish our Fairer Futures Steering Group to coordinate the reform work being undertaken as part of our partnership with Scottish Government. All, 'business as usual' activity will continue to be overseen by the Children's Services Board.

Best Start in life Group Projects

The Best Start in Life Group continues to support infants and their families to realise improvement in early health, this year we have made some significant improvements with two of our projects having achieved their aims through successful improvement activity.

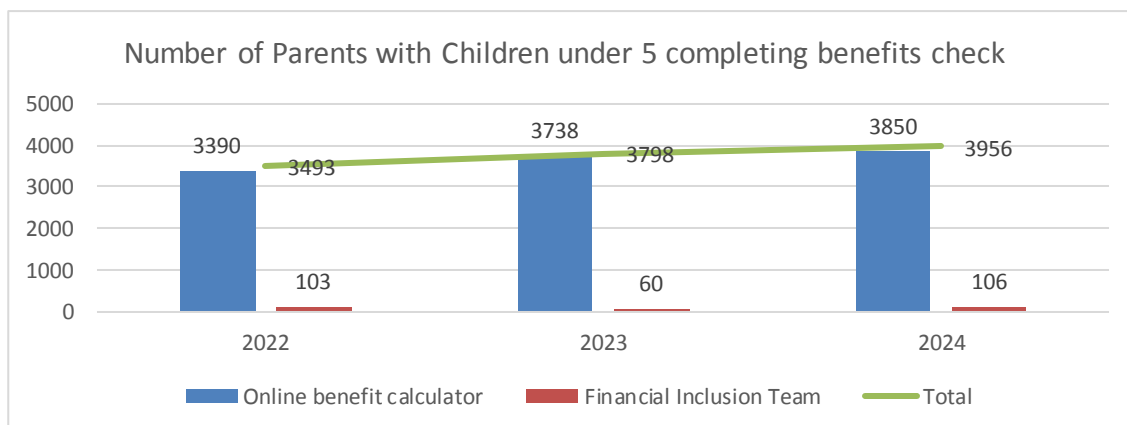
Our 2024 data shows that we are getting better at identifying the early signs of neglect among 0-4 year olds associated with Parental Mental Health/Addiction/Domestic Abuse. This is an increase of 13% compared to 2022/23, highlighting the positive impact that our Health visitors and family nurses are having. Work continues to support practitioners likely to come into contact with families in order to maximise our early identification of those in need of our help.

The Group has successfully expanded the provision of PEEP (Parents as Early Education Partners) over the course of 2024, with 147 PEEP sessions offered. Of the sessions delivered in November 2024, 11 were delivered by multi agency partners, an increase of 57% compared to November 2023. Many organisations are now seeking to engage with and support the programme - specifically to promote it or to offer venues to deliver within. In order to take advantage of these offers of support, we are expanding our training to new practitioners with some additional funding. PEEP parents have used some of these funded places with plans for further PEEP development. As a result other PEEP initiatives and new partnerships with other services have been initiated.

Significant progress has been made in the development of the infant feeding in a crisis pathway, working with practitioners to identify parents who need support. So far, all families referred by the family nurse or health visitor have been supported with 58 vouchers issued to 41 families through the pathway to date. 11 families have had repeat support. The full impact and evaluation of the pathway can be viewed in the [project end report](#).

Now that we have tested the pathway and are confident that it is meeting the needs of those identified, we recognise that at present it is limited to referrals from two professionals working with young parents. Therefore, we will now focus on spreading the pathway across partnership agencies to ensure that regardless of touchpoint, people across Aberdeen City who need this support can be directly referred and use the Infant Feeding in a Crisis Pathway.

The Group have also focused on increasing by 10% the number of parents with children under 5 completing benefit checks. This aim has been achieved with a 13% increase in the number of new parents and parents of pre-school children who completed a full benefits check, from 3493 in 2022 to 3956 in 2024 as shown below. Completed checks have been done via the online benefit calculator and the Financial Inclusion Team.



As a result of the completed benefit check, the total financial gains have increased year on year, from £497,183.21 in 2022 to £600,667.29 in 2023 (20.8% increase from 2022) and £762,992.08 in 2024 (a 27% rise from 2024 and an impressive 53.4% cumulative increase from 2022). The full impact and evaluation of the early years financial inclusion pathway and targeted improvement can be viewed in the [project end report](#).

These projects are seeing real improvements to support for those families that have come into contact with them. Updated data suggests that the % of children assessed as reaching their expected developmental milestones (including incomplete assessments which are excluded from the figures above) improved between 2021/22 (87.4%) and 2022/23 (89.8%), but there is still considerable work to do to reach pre covid levels (97.1% in 2020/21). It is acknowledged however that only 67.4% of eligible children were assessed in 2022/23, down from 78% in 2021/22 and 87% in 2015/16. Increasing both the completeness, and the proportion, of children assessments will remain a key focus of the Group for the year ahead, with a view to expanding the number of practitioners and services that are aware of the supports available and how to refer clients to these.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Group Projects

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Collaborative Subgroup have focused this year on developing a number of projects tackling various aspects of support for Children and Young People.

Feedback from our annual surveys with school pupils have seen an increase in the number of young people who now feel that they are listened to all of the time up from 64% in 2021/22 to 70% in 2023/24, showing progress towards our overall stretch outcome. But work to improve the experiences of those young people most likely to be affected by mental health concerns continues.

We are working in our local communities to gather information about the supports available to children, young people and their families. Better understanding of these local supports will help our services and providers better understand the early intervention opportunities to refer those who need our help before their needs escalate to require support from Tier 3 services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

We are refocussing our efforts to ensure that we give Care Experienced Young People regular, consistent and high quality health assessments to make sure they can be supported throughout their time in care and afterwards. We have engaged widely with our partners and gathered feedback from young people to inform this work and will begin testing improvements in 2025.

We have been testing a pilot programme of local youth activity social prescribing through our school community hub in Torry to support young people to feel safe in their community and improve their overall mental wellbeing. Youth workers have started a group for pupils who use the community wing after school; the pupils who took part are now in S1 at Lochside with some now engaged with a cooking group at Deeside Family Centre. The group are currently considering the need to start up another group in 2025.

Our most recent data on children and young people shows promising improvements to their confidence (S1-S6 pupils reporting that they always or often feel confident has increased by 10% from 35% in March 2022 to 45% in November 2023) and the extent to which they feel safe in the community is improving (80.7% in 2021/22 to 87.5 % in 2023/24, a citywide increase of 16.8%). However direct referrals to CAMHS and Children's Social Work remains high.

With this data in mind, next year's work will focus on further improvements to health assessments provided to care experienced young people with the aim of reducing the need to escalate support. Likewise we will focus further on improving the Tier 2 community mental health services to defer more referrals away from CAMHS.

Corporate Parenting Sub Group

The Corporate Parenting Subgroup continues to lead our focus on supporting our Care Experienced Children, Young People and their Families. Driven through our Aberdeen City Corporate Parenting Plan and providing a leading role in ensuring our Partnership Keeps the Promise. The improvement projects being led by the Group reflect this focus.

We have been expanding our training programme to support our colleagues throughout the partnership to better understand their role as Corporate Parents. This year we have undertaken a pilot Corporate Parenting Training module for staff in Aberdeen City Council. Over half of the 7745 staff identified as having a role in supporting those that are care experienced have now been trained. We are now looking to expand this support to other organisations.

Our Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) Programme is now supporting 35 Care Experienced Young People to be confident new parents. The FNP is now providing bespoke support to those young people. Initial feedback has been very positive, with parents reporting they feel 90% prepared for parenthood by 36 weeks.

We have been working to reduce the number of young people coming into the Care system and have successfully realised a 5.1% decrease. The project team is now looking to improve the balance of care on a partnership basis to ensure that where possible young people entering care can remain with their families, with their brothers and sisters and in their local school and community. Where this is not possible we continue to work with our foster carers and residential teams to ensure children and young people receive high quality care.

For those leaving care we are working to further develop our multi-agency and integrated approaches to ensure they receive high quality throughcare and aftercare. Since the initiation of the project there has been a 68% increase in the number of eligible young people receiving aftercare (171 to 288 in 2024), with 78% of eligible young people receiving support in 2024. Further details can be found in the [project end report](#).

The Group continues to give thought to how we deliver on The Promise's expectations around the use of restraint and restrictive practices. Across all our local foster and residential services we have successfully moved away from utilising restraint and restrictive practice in how we care for our children. We however recognise that the position across national resources and other agencies is more varied, requiring a lead from Scottish Government. Our Education Service is currently consulting with Trade Unions on guidance for schools across the city which is in keeping with updated national guidance.

Key areas of focus for next year include consideration of how to positively respond to the feedback provided by Care Experienced children and young people through our engagement in the Bright Spots programme. Our children and young people have provided us with very clear feedback on areas where we have improved and areas where we still have further work to do. We will develop a multi-agency plan and adopt a coproduction approach to address the noted areas where further improvement is still required. In addition we will explore how to build on this highly valued engagement work with our care experienced children, young people and young adults. In addition

we will be expanding our whole family support offer to ensure early and preventative support to families mitigating the need for a referral to children's social work and ultimately supporting our efforts to reduce the number of looked after children living out with their family network.

We recognise there continues to be a need to build on our continuing efforts to ensure all staff, with corporate parenting responsibilities, better understand how their role can contribute to improving the outcomes of care experienced young people. This will include expanding access to the refreshed corporate training developed by the partnership.

The refreshed Keeping the Promise Award which raises awareness of care experienced children and young people and some of the challenges they face has been successfully delivered to central officers in Education. The training materials have been shared with schools and CLD leads with the expectation that the award will be undertaken by all practitioners by the end of this session.

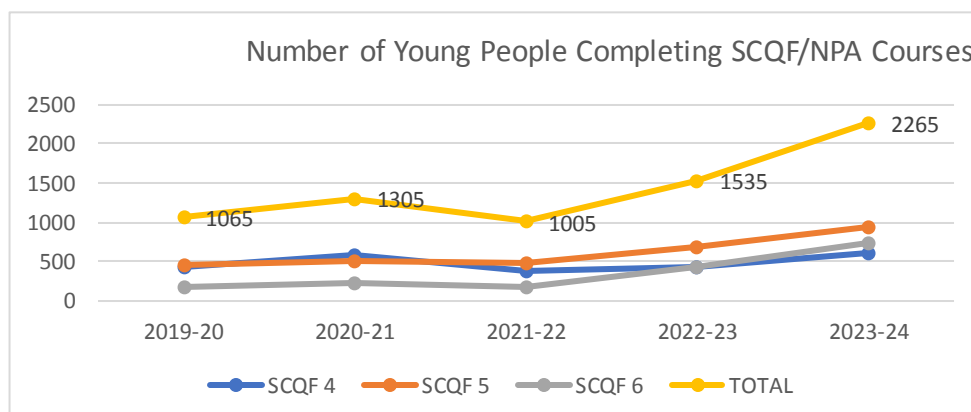
We are also expanding our self-evaluation work to better understand the drivers that contribute to the placement of children/young people out with their family and in high cost residential placements. This self-evaluative activity will continue to inform the development of our whole family support model. This recognises a strong correlation between the mental wellbeing of parents and children who are cared for outwith their family network.

Attainment and Transitions to Adulthood Sub Group

The Attainment and Transitions to Adulthood Group works in partnership to deliver the best possible educational opportunities for our children and young people, particularly our children and young people living in quintiles 1 and 2. The Sub Group has been focusing on how to improve health and educational outcomes for young people and their families and supporting the expansion of our curriculum offer and our post school opportunities.

We've made significant progress in expanding our curricular offer through our ABZ Campus and our broadening courses project where we have achieved our aim with a 56.6% increase in completion rates of SCQF/NPA from the baseline of 1005 in 2021/22 to last academic year to 2265 (2023/24). The full impact and evaluation of project can be viewed in the [project end report](#), however specifically we've seen a:

- 125% increase in the completion of NPA (1005 - 2265 students in 2023/24)
- 20.5% Increase in completion of Foundation Apprenticeships (127 - 156 students in 2023/24)
- Increase from 0 HNCs in 2021/22 to 12 in 2022/23 and 9 in 2023/24 respectively.



In 2023/2024, 1128 young people completed digital and technology courses, an increase of 19.75%. Of the three new digital NPA courses, data for 2023/24 showed:

- Esports - that across Level 4 to 6, 16 young people completed the Esports course with a 100% pass rate.
- Games Design, 18 young people completed level 6 with a 100% pass rate, with 54 at level 5 and a 85.19% pass rate and 15 at level 4, with a 66.67% rate.
- Cybersecurity - 79 young people completed level 4 and 5 Cybersecurity, with a 65.52% pass rate for level 4 and 24% for level 5.

Across academic year 2024/25 and into 2025/26 we will continue to expand the reach of our curricular programmes such as ABZ campus and Regional Digital Collaborative to provide more and more opportunities for young people to achieve.

Through our co-delivery project, we now have 2 education and health co-located services:

- The first co-located service is at Links ELC Hub where a Health Visitor is based two days per week. The Health Visitor works closely with the Centre Manager to identify families where vulnerabilities may lie.
- Co-delivery of Health and Wellbeing at Northfield

The full evaluation of project can be viewed in the [project end report](#). The project has now identified areas of improvement to test within the current co-delivery model at Northfield over the next year with a focus on increasing attendance at the school.

The Sub Group has also expanded the use of our online tool aimed at helping staff to recognise signs of harm and neglect among the children, young people and families they engage with. Having trained 626 staff so far, further Face to Face training sessions continue to be held. 72% of those undertaking the training report that they are recognising signs of harm, with 20% reporting they were extremely confident in doing so.

Follow up positive destination data for those who left school in Academic Year 2022/23 has declined slightly since 2021/22 from 90.8% to 90.1%. This figure is even more marked for those young people from SIMD Quintiles 1 (85.0% - 82.9%) & 2 (88.6% - 83.6%). We will work with Skills Development Scotland to address this issue over the coming year.

As such into next year we will be focussing on more targeted work with our more vulnerable learners and those most at risk of not going on to a Positive Destination, such as those living in our more deprived communities. Working in partnership with SDS a number of young people have already been identified. We will support these young people before and in transition from school and into onward destinations providing, 1 to 1 multi agency support.

Youth Justice Sub Group

The Youth Justice Subgroup supports those young people experiencing or at risk of entering the justice system. The Group are keenly aware that this cohort of young people will have a number of needs and may have been impacted upon by adverse childhood experiences. As a result, improvement projects take a trauma informed approach.

We continue to support our local communities and young people with the development of street work sessions and extracurricular activities for young people, particularly during the holidays

including team building and sports activities. Since the last annual report there has been an overall continued reduction in anti-social behaviour calls of 11%.

Our Project to support the reduction in the number of young people going missing from Care homes has come to a successful completion this year. Over the course of the project there has been an overall reduction in the number of Care Experience Young People going missing by 49% since 2022. This has been built on ensuring a trauma informed approach that also takes into account of young people's desire to stay out with friends. More details of this project can be found in the appendices, the full details of the work can be found in the [project end report](#)

Adopting a collaborative approach with Police Scotland has aided our work to support a reduction in the number of charges incurred by our children looked after in our local children's homes, in 2021/22 no children were subjected to charges; this rose to 7 in 2022/23 (based on data sharing). We are now seeking to expand this success to the wider care experienced cohort, as well as other young people at risk of entering the justice system. We will do this by supporting our police and community services to take a trauma informed approach to cautioning and charging young people; expanding opportunities for 16/17 year olds for Diversion from Prosecution, linking these to community support needs.

Another main focus of the group has been supporting our readiness for the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024. The legislation has the intention of ensuring the better integration of national policy with legislation which aims to improve systems which protect, intervene and where necessary accommodate children. The Act contains a series of measures aimed at improving children's experiences of the care and justice systems, whether victims, witnesses or children who have caused harm. The following progressive intentions are noted;

- Improve opportunities for prevention and early intervention
- Systems are age and stage appropriate and rights respecting
- Age of Referral to Principal Reporter raised to 18 for all referral grounds
- Secure accommodation replaces Young Offenders Institutions (YOI) for 16/17-year-olds
- All children in secure care, will be considered Looked After Children
- Children in secure care will be able to remain in secure care past age 18 but not beyond 19
- Children will no longer be held in police cells, rather this will be in a "place of safety"

The above measures will ensure that children are able to access systems designed with their needs in mind. The majority of children in conflict with the law have experienced developmental trauma, abuse and other adversities. The changes will ensure all children have the same protections.

Looking ahead to 2025/26 our readiness for the implementation of the Children's (Care & Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 will continue to have a strong focus. While there is much uncertainty about the plan for the implementation, we will continue to proactively prepare for this legislative change. We will build on the mapping activity already undertaken which identified key areas of change activity. This will continue to be developed in collaboration with colleagues in Justice Social Work but also utilise our positive links with the [Children and Young People's Centre for Justice](#). The focus for change includes but is not limited to;

- Scoping Early and Effective Intervention options for 16/17-year-olds
- Identifying workforce development needs of Children and Justice Social Work and partners
- Understanding and managing risk in relation to 16/17-year-olds referred to SCRA who will have higher levels of support need and require assessments of needs.

We continue to deliver local dissemination activities to assist our multi-agency partnership to be prepared for changes incumbent from the legislation. In addition we have had a clear focus on our data around 16/17-year-olds currently involved in both Children and Adult systems and attempts to forecast levels of demand by inclusion of data re 16/17-year-olds homelessness needs.

Additionally, we will continue to consider further opportunities to reduce the overrepresentation of care experienced children and young people within the justice system.

Additional Support Needs and Disabilities Sub Group

The ASN & Disabilities Sub Group continues to focus on improving the opportunities for those young people with ASN/Disabilities and their families. Our projects focus on providing community and school based services, as well as providing support for families awaiting diagnosis.

With the aim of supporting this cohort of young people a bespoke Sensory Ambassador programme is now being tested. This has been developed in collaboration with Education, NHS and third sector partner SensationALL in response to the need of practitioners to gain deeper knowledge, skill and confidence of the broad range of sensory considerations.

The group has also supported the pilot of a Neurodivergent Pathway in order to provide support to those families with children awaiting an autism diagnosis, to test a mechanism to increase the number of families accessing support by 20%. The initial pilot has concluded with significant results. This has included reducing the time taken for children to be assessed as well as providing tools, techniques and links to services to support parents in the interim. Feedback has included:

“Just finally getting the support for our son, which was all we ever wanted, that’s the main thing, like, obviously the diagnosis helps because you can’t often get supported without a diagnosis, but that wasn’t the thing for us, it was getting the support and educating ourselves and being kind of able to help them.”

“We feel definitely feel like we have more tools and more information now than we ever have, and that is all down to the Test of Change”

The project hopes to expand, subject to funding, testing in other sites. The full evaluation of project can be viewed in the [project end report](#).

Our young carers project has continued in its success having now increased the number of young carers accessing support by **20%**. Contributing to the increase has been our targeted promotion and providing the “Think Young Carer Toolkit” training to all schools, external organisations including Health services, Education services, Police Scotland, and numerous Third Sector agencies (15 directly and connecting with others through ACVO and the Third Sector Forum). This has resulted in more professionals understanding who a young carer is, their needs, and what supports are required and where to refer young carers to. You can read more about the work in our detailed [project end report](#).

Though the work of the group has continued throughout 2024/25, direct progress of the group has slowed due to a number of changes in management. The group has now begun to consolidate. Looking to 2025/26 the focus is on renewing engagement in supporting our school pupils with ASN/Disabilities as well as supporting their families.

What next for the Children's Services Board?

Reviewing our progress has confirmed the suitability of the Children's Services Plan 2023-2026. There is a need for us to maintain our current focus on child poverty, safe sleeping, attendance (particularly at primary 1) /attainment, addressing variation and improving transitions between child and adult services. However, undertaking this review has again shown the disparity in outcomes at community level confirming that the wider family supports currently in place are not making a difference to some groups. We need to think quite differently about how we work with and for families in need of our help and support. This will be progressed through our planned Fairer Futures Pathfinder. Outcomes data confirms that we should focus on wider Northfield and Torry.

As we discovered during our last annual review, we must continue to look for ways to join data sets and look at community level data and particular groups to ensure that we work to a shared and clear understanding of the problems our communities face. There is also evidence of the need to continue to progress our whole system approach to healthy weight.

Some new areas have emerged that may require our attention. We need to be curious around air pollution and try to better understand why more children are presenting at hospital due to asthma. We also need to look carefully at what more can be done to prevent suicide given concerning local trends. We need to initiate some work around positive destinations and gain a better understanding of the factors which sustain household smoking behaviour and what it would take to address this.

We propose to continue to deliver on our agreed Plan for 2023-26 but to also invest our time and energy in our Fairer Futures Partnership in order to test new ways of working with those who most need our help. This will see the current Chair of the Children's Services Board move over to chair our Fairer Futures Steering Group, and a new chair appointed to the Children's Services Board to help coordinate and oversee all, 'business as usual' improvement activity already outlined in our Plan.

What are we trying to achieve?

To expand our offer of PEEP (Parents as Early Educators Programme) across the city where demand for our service currently outstrips ability to deliver

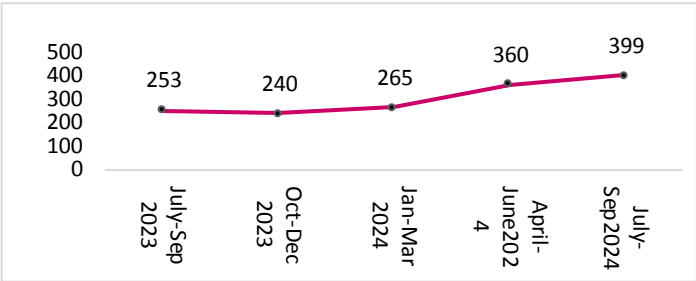
How are we doing this?

We are adopting a multi-agency approach to support and train staff and capacity build by:

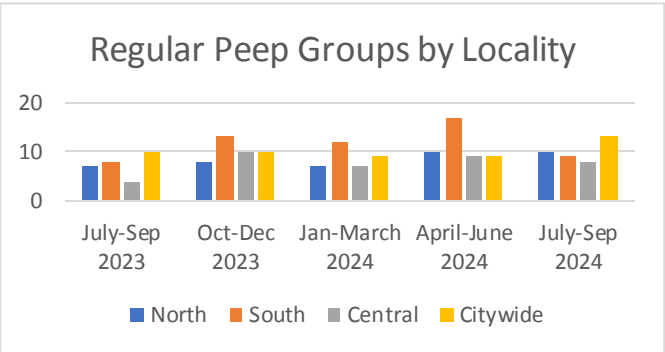
- Developing promotional materials with families and Peep practitioners to share with partners
- Pair up partners/services that have similar goals to deliver Peep (i.e. family learning with libraries, ChildSmile/health with nurseries)
- Provide ELC trained practitioners a term of co-delivery of a group with a Peep team member and/or with a trained practitioner to deliver the Healthier Families pilot.
- Develop a tiered training criteria for Peep delivery, including provision of funded training spaces to mitigate barriers.
- Develop a local Peep Practitioner network

What have we achieved?

- A **63.4%** increase in the number of families that have benefited from Peep (from 253 in Jul-Sep 2023 to 399 in Jul-Sep 2024)



- **11** of our Peep Programmes now being run by Multiagency Partners
- A total of **147** PEEP Sessions have been delivered over 2024
- We also provide a number of regular Peep groups throughout our locality areas



What impact have we had?

There were 106 responses to our annual Peep survey:

- Overall, the feedback has been positive. 83.8% of the parents said that their confidence to support their child's learning and development has improved since attending Peep
- and 63.2% feel their relationship with their child has gotten better
- Asked what Peep could do differently, respondents suggested having longer and more sessions available to families.

What do we plan to do next?

With a significant number of venues and services offering space and promotion of Peep

- We have further Promotional Materials in development
- We are also expanding our training opportunities thorough 2025
- Expand our initiatives further through our new partnerships

Appendix 2. Supporting Our Care Experienced Young People: Improved Corporate Parenting

What are we trying to achieve?

Improvement in our corporate parenting approach. Our new eLearning pilot is intended to promote a single ongoing multi agency Corporate Parenting Training Programme incorporating the voice of our Care Experienced community; recognising corporate parenting training is an ongoing process where our workforce will require opportunities to engaged in continuous professional development.

How are we doing this?

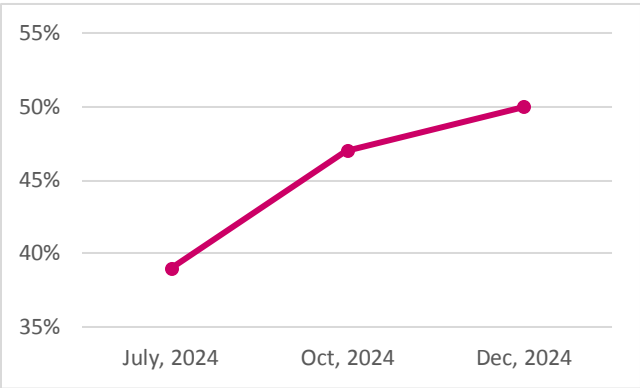
Through our multi agency project we have:

- Developed an eLearning module involving practitioners and Care Experienced Young People
- Began to map the development needs of our workforce across multi agency partners
- Began to pilot an eLearning training module in Aberdeen City council and are begging to expand to other agencies

What have we achieved?

Just over **50%**, of our Aberdeen City Council Staff have been trained in corporate parenting since the module went live in May 2024

Percentage of Staff at Aberdeen City Council Pilot Trained



- Over **150 multi-agency** staff have received in person training, since August 2023 with development and delivery planned on an ongoing basis.
- A further **220** multiagency staff and 100 Children’s Panel volunteers, have now also been identified for training

What impact have we had?

Care Experienced Young People have helped and will continue to shape our corporate parenting training.

Our module has been informed by the views of Care Experienced Young People. The training also including media created by them

What do we plan to do next?

- Developing our participatory and co-productive activity with our care experienced community, linking in the Bright Spots Findings, Promise related improvement activity
- Expanding the Aberdeen City Council Pilot to other multi agency partners and Childrens Panel volunteers
- Hold 1 to 1 discussions with professionals in various services within council, as well as with partner agencies and ACVO 3rd Sector Promise Lead, to promote the importance of understanding Corporate Parenting
- We continue to revise content to keep its information as current as possible

Appendix 3. Digital and Tech Courses: Improving our Curriculum Offer

What are we trying to achieve?

Aware that Digital and Technology is a key growth Sector in Aberdeen we are looking to expand our curriculum to include more opportunities for young people to gain qualifications in this area with the aim of increasing the completion rate in digital and tech courses by 20% by 2026.

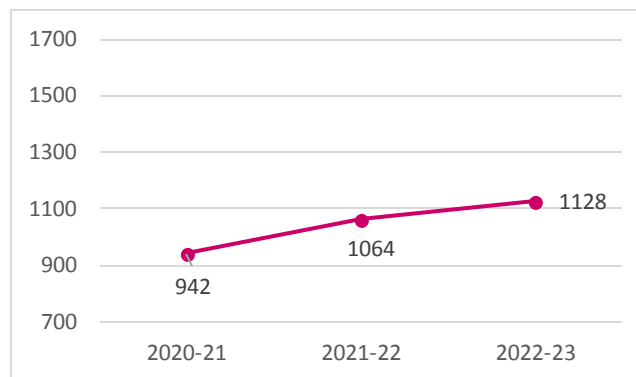
How are we doing this?

- Developing new National Progression Awards and wider range of digital qualifications with aim of 1 NPA, related to digital and tech sector
- Developing and introduce new “gateway qualifications” such as Level 4/ Level 5 Esports, Games Design, Data Science
- Introducing targeted professional learning specifically on teaching of Computing Science and Digital across broad general education (Early Years to S3) to increase confidence of staff and to broaden the pipeline into qualifications through the delivery of professional learning and reduce withdrawals.

What have we achieved?

Across the past 3 academic years we have significantly increased the number of young people competing Digital and Technology Courses a total increase of **20%**

No. Young People Completing Digital and Tech Courses



Pass rates in the courses have been very positive:

100% of pupils taking part in NPA Levels 4,5 and 6 **Esports** passed

The **Games Design NPA** Also saw significant positive results: with 67% passing Level 4; 85% passing level 5 and **100% passing Level 6**

What impact have we had?

Our pupil feedback surveys have highlighted that pupils are very aware **97% agreeing** that computer skills were important for their future career

48% expressed an interest in developing coding skills

What do we plan to do next?

- We intend to establish a Digital Hub in the city at ONE Schoolhill, with the aim of expanding access to eSports and other NPA courses and activities across Aberdeen Computing Collaborative
- Our initial Investment Zone bid has been expanded to a 10 year programme to support Digital as a growth sector. This will help further develop Digital and Tech qualifications

Appendix 4. Supporting Young People at Risk: Reducing the number of missing Looked After Children

What are we trying to achieve?

The project was initiated with the aim of reducing the number of children and young people looked after in Children's Homes from going missing. This was achieved by adopting a multiagency approach and providing individualised support for the young people involved

How are we doing this?

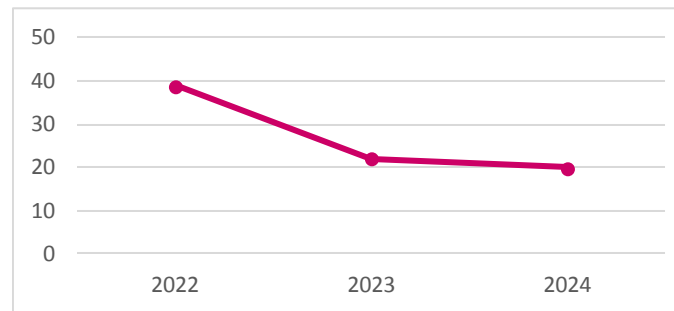
Through our multiagency project we have:

- Been implementing 'Our 'Not at Home' policy for those young people, for instance staying overnight with friends
- Trauma-Informed training delivered to Police Scotland workforce to ensure a trauma informed approach is adopted when engaging with care experienced young people
- Establishing pre-arranged visits to Homes by Police
- Create a new referral pathway for those young people needing support following an missing episode
- Co-design a resource to support young people on entering care to reduce their fears

What have we achieved?

Over the course of the project there has been an overall reduction in the number of Care Experience Young People going missing by **49% since 2022**

No. of care experienced young people reported missing from children's homes to Police Scotland



100% of the children reported as missing in 2023 and 2024 have had a return home welfare discussion with Police or staff at the home.

80% of the children reported missing in 2023 did not go missing again in 2024.

The Not at Home policy has helped our young people's lifestyle and ensures that despite their care experienced status, their absence is managed more similarly to that of a non-CE young person. **There are no reported cases** of a CEYP being reported as missing having previously been classed as 'Not at Home'

What impact have we had?

CEYP themselves report feeling less "hunted" by the Police, when they were simply out with friends

Trauma informed Single Points of Contact for each Children's Home has helped establish positive relations between Police and the young people.

Young People are reported to be less anxious when Police are scheduled to visit the Home

What do we plan to do next?

- Numbers of CEYP reported as missing will continue to be monitored and efforts made to maintain relatively low levels Always with a view to keep all missing children, including CEYP, safe and well.
- We will continue to ensure Police staff are provided with quality trauma informed training and that positive relationships between multi-agency staff and the Children's Homes are maintained
- We will consider how learning from this work could spread to other cohorts of Looked After Children and Vulnerable Adults

Appendix 5. Supporting Families: Neurodevelopmental Pathways Pilot

What are we trying to achieve?

The purpose of the project was to create a new pathway to ensure that children, young people and families receive neurodevelopmental assessment, associated support, and access to services, that meets their needs at the earliest opportunity.

How are we doing this?

We carried out a pilot study in one of our local Primary schools. Our testing included:

- Understanding the nature of the needs within the school and what support the staff felt they needed and engaged with our Parents to understand how equipped they felt to support their children thrive
- Delivering training, modelling and reflective practice with school staff
- Embedding a part time multi-disciplinary team within the school to accept referrals to assess, diagnose children who parents and the school felt could be neurodivergent
- Creating support plans for those children post diagnosis to share with school and parents
- Establishing Family Health Link Practitioners) to 'hold' families through the referral and assessment process and to support both school and home implement the support plans.

What have we achieved?

All parents supported though the project were enthusiastic about the speed of the assessment, reporting that the reduced waiting time helped to reduce their anxiety and helped them to support their child and to make decisions within their lives.

The project help significantly shortened waiting times for the families awaiting diagnosis:

- Parents were supported to request an initial assessment within **2 weeks**
- As well as first clinician observations within **2 weeks**
- Parents waiting feedback from clinicians was reduced to **6 weeks**
- And the time the school had to wait for the outcome was reduced to **12 weeks**

What impact have we had?

Feedback from families included:

"Just finally getting the support for our son, [...] that's the main thing, [...] the diagnosis helps because you can't often get supported without a diagnosis, but that wasn't the thing for us, it was getting the support and educating ourselves and being [...] able to help them.

We definitely feel like we have more tools and more information now than we ever have, and that is all down to the [Project]

What do we plan to do next?

Within the school:

- Developing an enhanced sensory room and use of spaces across the school
- Formulation Planning for specific children on the following assessment and diagnosis.
- Supporting all children in school to better develop their understanding of neurodiversity and inclusion through use of LEANS (Learning About Neurodiversity in Schools)

Regionally:

- The success of the pilot is now helping shape the development of a Grampian wide approach to supporting families awaiting diagnosis

Our LOIP Projects

Stretch Outcome 3: 95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27-30 month review by 2026

[Reduce by 5% the no. of children aged 0-4 who are referred to Children's Social Work as a result of neglect arising from parental mental health, addiction and domestic abuse 2026.](#)

[Increase by 40% the number of Peep programmes delivered by multi-agency partners by 2025.](#)

[100% of urgent requests for first stage infant formula and nutritional support for pre-school children are met by 2024.](#)

[Increase by 10% the no. of parents with children under 5 who are completing a full benefits check by 2024.](#)

[Improve dental health at primary 1 to the national average by reducing the levels of dental health in areas of deprivation to 50% by 2025.](#)

Stretch Outcome 4: 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026

[Reduce demand on Tier 3 services by 5% by 2026.](#)

[Reduce waiting time for interventions starting, by each tier 2/3 service by 5% by 2026.](#)

[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.](#)

[Increase by 5% the number of S1-S6 pupils who report that they feel confident by 2025.](#)

[Increase by 10% the % of children living in areas of deprivation who feel safe in their communities by 2025.](#)

Stretch Outcome 5: 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

[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 care experienced young people by 10% receiving multiagency throughcare/aftercare support by 2024.](#)

[80% of care experienced parents will report that they believed they were sufficiently prepared for parenthood by 2026.](#)

[80% of the identified multi-agency workforce successfully complete Corporate Parenting training aligned to the Promise by 2025.](#)

Stretch Outcome 6: 95% of all our children, including those living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2), will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026

[75% of identified multi-agency staff reporting confidence in identifying and taking action on harm by 2026.](#)

[Increase to 3 the delivery of co-located and delivered services by health and education by 2024.](#)

[Increase by 10% the rate of completion of NPA/FA/HNC courses available to young people across the city by June 2024.](#)

[Increase the % of learners entering a positive and sustained destination to be ahead of the Virtual Comparator for all groups by 2025.](#)

[Increase by 20% the number of young people completing courses aligned to support the digital and tech sector by 2026.](#)

[Increase to 50 the no. of people completing more integrated health and care courses by 2025.](#)

Stretch Outcome 7: 83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.

[Reduce by 20% the number of care experienced young people charged with an offence by 2025.](#)

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.
Stretch Outcome 8: 100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/ Disabilities will experience a positive destination by 2026.
Increase by 10%, the percentage of children and young people with additional support needs (ASN) and/or a disability accessing full time education by 2026.
Increase by 5%, the percentage of young people with additional support needs/disability entering a positive destination by 2025.
Increase by 20% the number of registered young carers accessing support from the Young Carers service by 2025.
By 2025, 90% of families with children with an additional support need or disability will indicate that they have access to peer and community support that meets their needs.
90% of identified multi-agency staff working with children and young people with disabilities will report confidence in identifying and taking action on how harm presents in children with additional support needs/disabilities by 2026.
Increase by 20% the number of families of children with autism or awaiting diagnosis accessing support prior to diagnosis and reduce the interval between referral and diagnosis by 2024.
Our Completed Projects
Emergency Formula
Financial Inclusion Pathway
Kinship Care Support
Throughcare and Aftercare Support
Co-Located Services
Breadth of Courses
Missing Looked After Children from Children's Homes
Young Carers
Neurodivergent Pathways

Strategic Stretch Outcomes					
Increase the number of 0-5s who meet developmental milestones by 2026	Improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and families by 2026	Improve the attainment, health and wellbeing and positive destinations of our care experienced by 2026	Improve the attainment and positive destinations of our children and young people by 2026	Reduce the number of young people charged with an offence by 2026	Increase the number of children with ASN or disability who secure a positive destination by 2026
Strategic Priorities					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve the health outcomes of expectant and new mothers ➤ Improve uptake of benefits ➤ Improve access to emergency formula and food for infants ➤ Address early speech and language needs ➤ Increase the uptake of immunisations ➤ Improve the quality of ELC provision and maintain uptake ➤ Investigate factors sustaining household smoking and the rise in premature births 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focus on prevention and early intervention ➤ Provide access to joined up services and bereavement support ➤ Respond quickly in a stigma free, needs and rights led way ➤ Increase levels of physical activity ➤ Increase the provision of child friendly environments within local communities ➤ Investigate the rise in hospitalisations due to asthma and ➤ Ensure school PSE Programmes help keep children safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Deliver a Bairsns Hoose ➤ Deliver The Promise ➤ Increase the provision of health assessments for the care experienced ➤ Continue to close the gap between those who have care experience and their peers ➤ Increase the no. of foster carers available locally ➤ Keep brothers and sisters together ➤ Ensure adequate provision of legal advice and advocacy ➤ Implement the recommendations of the Secure Care Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement refreshed guidance on the use of restraint ➤ Better track those who are in or on the edge of the care system ➤ Improve learning transitions from P7 to S1 ➤ Deliver ABZ Campus to widen the range of courses ➤ Deliver Aberdeen Collaborative to ensure long term employability ➤ Delivery of Tier 2 services to close the gap through SAC funding ➤ Continue to address the cost of the school day and child poverty in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reduce levels of anti-social behaviour ➤ Deliver Mentors in Violence Prevention across all secondary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Delivery of neurodevelopmental pathway ➤ Establish better assurance systems ➤ Increase the number of Young Carers receiving support ➤ Improve transition planning from child to adult services ➤ Ensure that the voices of children (including those who use alternative communication systems) are central to processes and Plans ➤ Decrease the number of children not accessing full time education
Enabling Priorities					
Access to services	Increase integration	Reduce risks	Commissioning	Data	Workforce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement a single Request for Assistance process ➤ reduce the number of access points to information and services ➤ investigate and address any issues in P1 attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Build on the integration models including that at ELC Links ➤ Establish an assurance system to test the strength of the system ➤ Improve alignment between children and adult services ➤ Develop a Target Operating Model for children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Better understand why children are placed OOA ➤ Understand the long term impact of ELC on outcomes for families ➤ Agree and implement a whole system approach to addressing obesity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Aligned to the 10 principles of family support ➤ Jointly respond to the needs of those displaced ➤ Evaluate readiness for implementation of the UNCRC ➤ Support the implementation of recommendations arising from the review of Employability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve knowledge of the 6 groups by co-designing with service users and children ➤ Improve data matching ➤ Improve the tracking of the outcomes of those most vulnerable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase knowledge poverty agenda and of benefits ➤ Increase knowledge of trauma and risk ➤ Develop ways of working (SIMD1) to better support the provision of rights

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	29 April 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Inspection Reporting
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/081
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne/Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR	Shona Milne/Graeme Simpson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	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 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;
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools to implement continuous improvement in keeping with agreed Quality Improvement Frameworks approved at committee in July 2024; and
- 2.3 Instructs the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to utilise learning from the National Thematic Report: Local authority approaches to support school improvement to inform the development of the Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Plan and Quality Improvement Framework for 2025/26.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Education Service utilises a Quality Improvement Framework (QIF) to support schools and ELC settings to achieve the standards expected by external inspection agencies. The QIF categorises schools/ELC settings as needing different levels of support based on internal self-evaluation and external scrutiny from the central team:
- Category 1/Universal includes schools/settings who have self and external evaluation identifying all core Quality Indicators (QIs) as good or better.

- Category 2 /Targeted includes schools/settings with external and or self-evaluation which has identified one or more of the core QIs as *satisfactory or below*.
- Category 3/Intensive includes schools/settings with external and or self-evaluation which has identified one or more of the core Quality Indicators as *weak or unsatisfactory*.

3.2 **Joint Quality Improvement Framework**

HMle and the Care Inspectorate have worked together to develop a combined self-evaluation framework to support quality improvement in all early learning and childcare (ELC) settings. The new framework was designed to provide a more integrated approach to assessing care, play and education rather than both inspection agencies utilising separate documentation. The new combined framework contains quality indicators(QIs) to support reflection and help settings to identify practices that are going well and those areas which require improvement.

Bright Horizons Tree House Early Learning and Childcare provision, based at Robert Gordon's University, has agreed to be part of the pilot inspection using the new framework. A member of the local authority quality improvement team will join the Tree House inspection to gain an understanding of how the new framework will be implemented.

The two inspection bodies have committed to using the framework during all inspections from September 2025. Information on the new framework can be found [here](#). The Local Authority Quality Improvement Framework will be refreshed to take account of this updated national resource.

3.3 **National Thematic Inspection: Local authority approaches to support school improvement**

In September 2024, a team of 3 Inspectors from Education Scotland visited Aberdeen City Council to help assess the strength of Local Authority arrangements in place to support school improvement. Inspectors gathered evidence under 4 key themes:

- The implementation of effective improvement planning and standards and quality reporting
- Self-evaluation and quality assurance
- Professional learning
- Universal and targeted support and challenge

Findings under each theme are summarised below, the full Local Authority report is available in Appendix A.

Effective improvement planning and standards and quality reporting

Inspectors noted that the school Quality Improvement Framework (QIF) provides clear exemplification of expected and appropriate processes, standards of self-evaluation, improvement planning and standards and quality reporting at school and local authority level. Aberdeen City Council sets clear expectations of overall standards.

The ethos of trust and strong connection between central staff and school-based staff was noted to be a strength, enabling collaborative improvement to take place. As a result, headteachers see themselves as leaders of change across the local authority. Stronger partnerships across secondary school have helped to deliver ABZ Campus.

Inspectors could clearly identify how the data gathered through self-evaluation and improvement planning was used to inform priorities for the service and the wider council.

From discussions with Inspectors and written feedback, there is now a need to:

- Evaluate the impact of improvement planning formats and consider a consistent format across all sectors.
- Continue to evaluate the impact of systems and processes on improvement across the city, with a particular focus on schools in Category 3.

Self-evaluation and quality assurance

Inspectors noted that quality improvement visits, including the use of Trios, Quads and Associate Assessors, are helping to build leadership capacity and capability across the local authority and to develop a shared understanding of standards.

Clearer roles and responsibilities for the central team are supporting greater levels of challenge. Inspectors noted the local authority quality assurance calendar has the capacity to be a key driver for improvement.

The reliability of data has improved, and data is accessible. Local authority data is showing greater alignment between self-evaluation and inspection gradings, with levels of accountability increasing. The introduction of engagement trackers and regular discussions at service manager and one-to-one meetings ensure the Chief Officer has oversight of improvement activity across all schools.

The Northern Alliance Learning and Teaching Toolkit is supporting the exemplification of highly effective practice and supporting schools with focused staff self-evaluation.

Discussion with Inspectors and written feedback indicates there is need to continue to extend opportunities to participate in quality improvement visits to middle managers, and to continue to monitor the impact of these arrangements.

Professional learning

Inspectors noted that the ACC professional learning offer is informed by key themes from schools' self-evaluation and standards and quality reports. It is responsive, varied and agile, and as a result meets the needs of individual school contexts.

Staff at all levels are empowered to share areas of strong practice across the authority. Headteachers utilise established mechanisms to share practice and to work collaboratively on local and national priorities.

Good use is made of the local authority Lead Teacher and Northern Alliance Learning and Teaching leads. City wide priorities are well supported by central officers to ensure implementation.

Discussions with Inspectors and written feedback indicate there is now a need to:

- Track the impact of sharing practice on improvement.
- Monitor the impact of middle leadership work on the secondary middle leadership pipeline.

Universal and targeted support and challenge

The targeted approach to supporting schools has resulted in schools moving from category 2 to category 1. Central officers and headteachers recognise that the challenge is more significant for schools to move from category 3 to category 2. Inspectors recognised the use of bespoke support for individual schools who require a more targeted approach, and the need to focus on improved outcomes for children and young people.

The recent increase in the number of Associate Assessors in the city was highlighted as a strength, which will impact positively on the structure of the Trios and Quads, quality improvement visits and the offer of targeted support for schools in category 3.

Discussion with Inspectors and written feedback indicates there is now a need to think further about how to evidence the impact of positive movement for schools in lower categories.

Key successes: A clear QIF has been established and is scrutinised by Committee on a yearly basis. The level of support each school is being afforded is also presented to Committee. Reporting the service's progress in moving forward published service priorities to Committee has increased accountability across the service.

There is a culture of collective responsibility, and this is supporting the drive for greater consistency. Involving secondary Associate Assessors in quality improvement visits has helped improve the accuracy of self-evaluation against national standards. Training to improve the use of evaluative language is beginning to improve the quality of writing in reports.

Key challenges: Staffing is more consistent now. However, the Local Authority continues to find it hard to recruit high quality school leaders, high quality middle leaders, and some secondary specialisms and supply staff. Challenges remain when leadership capacity is a concern. A number of factors continue to impact on the local authority's capacity to deliver their agreed programme. These include:

- Changes in school leadership
- The skills of middle leaders
- Conflicting demands and unaligned national policies
- Variable national professional learning offer
- The volume of inspections or unanticipated tasks

Officers believe the feedback on Local Authority approaches accurately reflects work locally, with some of the areas identified for improvement also featuring in the national report.

Key learning from the visit, alongside recommendations from the National Report will be considered as we refresh our Quality Improvement Framework and develop the National Improvement Framework Plan for 2025/26. The local report can be found at Appendix A and the national report found [here](#).

3.4 Education Scotland Inspection of Manor Park School and Nursery Class

During the week beginning 9 December 2024, a team of Inspectors from Education Scotland visited Manor Park School and Nursery Class to undertake a short model inspection. During the visit, they talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The headteacher and staff across the school and nursery know children and families very well. They are caring and supportive of children and each other.
- Practitioners in the nursery offer high-quality learning experiences for children. They actively seek and act upon children's views and interests to develop and plan for relevant and meaningful learning. As a result, children in the nursery are highly motivated, engaged and make very good progress in their learning.
- Staff in the school and nursery work well with partner agencies to support children's emotional wellbeing. As a result, children's readiness for learning is improving.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Aberdeen City Council.

- School leaders and teachers must review and improve their approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. They should ensure all children experience high-quality, well-planned learning and teaching, that is matched appropriately to their learning needs.
- Senior leaders and staff across the school need to improve attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- Senior leaders need to continue to support teachers to develop confidence in making accurate professional judgements about children's progress and attainment. Teachers need to develop a deeper understanding of national standards.
- All staff must work together to agree shared expectations and approaches to improve the behaviour and engagement of all learners across the school.
- Senior leaders need to improve how they measure the progress that children at the primary stages make over time.

Manor Park School was evaluated as Weak across the quality indicators

Primary School Quality Indicators	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	Weak (2)
Raising attainment and achievement	Weak (2)

The inspection team felt that there were strong and positive relationships between children and staff reflecting the school values and it was clear staff ensure children's wellbeing is at the heart of all they do. Inspectors noted that learning experiences were not consistent across the school resulting in tasks not consistently being matched to the needs of all children.

Inspectors noted that the recent focus on attainment in writing has meant children are making satisfactory progress from prior levels of attainment. Attainment in reading, listening and talking and numeracy was weaker and there is a need for increased opportunities for children to practise skills along with more structured learning and teaching.

In the week before the inspection members of the school Senior Leadership Team (SLT) experienced significant events in their personal lives but were keen for the inspection to go ahead as planned. Officers tend to be steered by Senior Leaders in such cases, but there is potentially learning for the Local Authority on when to request a delay to planned inspections.

Prior to the visit the school was sitting at Category 2 of the Quality Improvement Framework, and this had been validated during a Quality Improvement Visit on 6th November. Following the inspection, the school will be moved to Category 3.

Inspectors plan to return within 1 year of the publication of the letter to carry out a further inspection. The quality improvement team will regularly review progress against the areas for improvement before HMle return. The school will also be supported by trio headteachers and Associate Assessors. An action plan to address the areas for improvement in the school can be found at Appendix B - Learning Teaching and Assessment and Appendix C - Raising Attainment and Achievement.

Manor Park ELC was evaluated as Very Good across the quality indicators by HMle.

Nursery Class Quality Indicators	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	Very Good (5)
Securing children's progress	Very Good (5)

The warm, welcoming, positive and nurturing environment was also reflected in the ELC. Practitioners know the learners and families well. Children have opportunities to learn life skills such as preparing snacks. Inspectors observed them developing social skills and good manners in the dining hall where they enjoyed having lunch together. The team were delighted with the evaluation as it highlighted how they work well together using their knowledge of child

development and learning, to model high quality interactions with children. The interactions help to consolidate and extend children's learning.

Manor Park ELC was sitting in Category 1 prior to the inspection and will remain in Category 1. Staff will be given the opportunity to share their practice with other settings through planned visits and open sessions.

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

3.5 Education Scotland Return Inspection to Westpark School and Nursery

In December 2023, HM inspectors visited Westpark School and Nursery Class. Following the visit a letter was issued outlining a number of areas for improvement. Inspectors returned to school in February 2025 and reviewed progress against the original areas for improvement.

Area for improvement 1: Staff in school and nursery need to develop their approaches to gathering information from observations or assessments of children's progress. They need to use this information more effectively so that children can build on what they can already do.

Inspectors found that staff had increased confidence in planning and assessing children's learning resulting in the gathering of more accurate information to support learning experiences which better meet the needs of children and young people. Senior leaders recognise that new approaches will take time to embed, and inspectors were confident that senior leaders had the capacity to support staff to ensure approaches were consistent across the school.

Area for improvement 2: All staff, including senior leaders, should deliver consistently high-quality learning and teaching which provides children with increased pace and challenge. They need to ensure lessons have a clear focus on children making greater progress.

Senior leaders and staff have developed guidelines for effective learning and teaching, which most staff confidently apply. Regular monitoring is recommended to ensure high-quality learning experiences for all children. Teachers are enhancing their skills in questioning and feedback. Practitioners are improving their knowledge of play-based learning, aiming for a balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children now have more opportunities to learn in differentiated groups, with appropriate challenges in literacy and numeracy.

Area for improvement 3: Senior leaders and teachers need to ensure that regular checks of children's progress lead to improvements in their attainment.

Inspectors noted that senior leaders and teachers now make use of the wide range of data on children's progress to identify children who are not making appropriate progress. Senior leaders track and monitor children's attendance regularly and work well with partners to support children who struggle to attend school on a regular basis.

The inspection team could see that some progress had been made against each of the areas for improvement however felt that the staff and SLT required time to allow the new systems and approaches to embed fully. As a result, the

team have asked the local authority to provide a report on further progress within one year of the return inspection.

The action plan to overtake recommendations can be found at Appendix D – ELC and Appendix E - School. The letter sent to the school community can be found [here](#).

3.6 **Care Inspectorate Inspections**

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

- 3.7 **Great Western @ Great Western Road**, a funded provider on Great Western Road, received an unannounced inspection in February 2025. Inspectors noted that children experienced warm, caring, and nurturing approaches from staff who knew them well. Children were happy, confident and having fun in a warm and homely environment that was very well resourced. This contributed to them having high quality play and learning experiences. Children and families benefitted from a service committed to continuous improvement. Effective staff deployment ensured that the needs of children were well met throughout their day.

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 team at Great Western are delighted with the very good evaluations across all areas. Great Western @ Great Western Road was sitting in Category 1 prior to the inspection and will remain in Category 1.

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

- 3.8 **Queenswellies Nursery**, a recently opened funded provider in the Hazlehead area of Aberdeen, received an unannounced inspection in February 2025. The inspectors noted that children's wellbeing benefitted from warm and nurturing interactions. Their interests and preferences were recognised and used to inform planning. Staff felt well supported and were beginning to work well together as a team. Quality assurance and improvement processes were in place, to ensure progression they should ensure that these refer to specific areas of this nursery.

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

The team are delighted that the first inspection of the service is positive. They will continue to work towards their goals. Queenswellies will sit in Category 1 of the Quality Improvement Framework.

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

- 3.9 **Albyn ELC**, a funded provider setting in Albyn School, received an unannounced inspection in February 2025. Inspectors noted that children experienced warm and caring interactions from staff, supporting them to feel loved and cared for. They were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning. Children and families enjoyed a relaxed and welcoming environment. Staff worked well together to meet children's needs throughout the day. Children's play and learning was enhanced through connections with the local community.

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)

Staff will now work on the areas for development around how children access outdoor play and they will continue to develop and embed quality assurance systems to support continuous improvement of the service.

Albyn sat in Category 1 of the Quality Improvement Framework and will remain in this category.

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

- 3.10 **The Bruce Nursery**, a funded provider setting in the west end of Aberdeen, received an unannounced inspection in March 2025. Inspectors noted that Children were happy, confident and actively involved in leading their play and learning. They experienced warm, caring and nurturing support. Good use was being made of loose parts and open ended resources to enrich children's play and learning. Children enjoyed relaxed, unhurried, sociable snack and mealtimes. Positive relationships with families supported continuity of care and effective partnerships. The manager and staff were committed to the ongoing development of the service and quality assurance processes should continue to be embedded to secure sustained improvements across the service.

Aspect being inspected	Previous evaluation October 2023	Recent Evaluation March 2025
How good is our care, play and learning?	Adequate (3)	Good (4)
How good is our setting?	Adequate (3)	Good (4)
How good is our leadership?	Adequate (3)	Good (4)
How good is our staff team?	Good (4)	Good (4)

The Bruce Nursery team are pleased that the changes they have made have been recognised and will continue to work towards their goals. The Bruce

Nursery will move from Category 3 to Category 2 of the Quality Improvement Framework.

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

- 3.11 **Little Clouds Nursery**, received a follow up inspection which took place on 19 March 2025. This was an ungraded inspection to check that they had met the requirements made at previous inspection and that they were making progress towards the areas for improvement.

The key messages from the follow up were that Children were happy and enjoyed an increasing range of play activities. Children were cared for by staff who knew them well. Infection control practices had improved which helped keep children safe. An improvement action plan was in place to help support continued improvement. Staff had improved practice around accident and incident management. The service had made some progress and continued to work with the Care Inspectorate and local authority.

At the previous inspection three requirements were made and the actions taken against each are outlined below:

Requirement 1

By 30 January 2025, the provider must have a robust plan in place which details how the service will provide quality play and learning opportunities that are child-led, meaningful and sufficiently challenging.

Action taken on previous requirement

The quality of children's play and learning opportunities was supported by an improvement action plan. This addressed how children would experience play that is child-led, meaningful and sufficiently challenging. The Care Inspectorate carried out a series of monitoring visits and meetings with the service, provider and manager. At each stage, the provider and manager worked with the Care Inspectorate to provide up to date information when this was requested. The improvement plan included details on how the service will improve the quality of play and learning opportunities for children. The provider and manager should now ensure that staff have protected time to attend key training events, and that staff are supported well to achieve the planned improvements.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

By 30 January 2025, the provider must ensure children are cared for in an environment which is clean and hygienic, and they are protected by sufficient infection, prevention and control measures.

Action taken on previous requirement

Inspectors found the children were cared for in a clean and hygienic environment. Staff had revisited training during regular staff meetings. Staff were aware of their role and responsibility in maintaining a hygienic environment. Management conducted regular quality assurance to ensure standards and practice was consistent. Staff supported children of all ages to wash hands at appropriate times such as during mealtimes and personal care routines. Nappy changing areas were clean and well kept. Some maintenance had been completed in the nappy changing areas to support this. A new dummy storage system to maintain hygiene was in place and consistent within staff practice. This collective approach helped ensure children were cared for in an environment that was clean, tidy and supported their health and wellbeing.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 3

By 10 March 2025, the provider must ensure children receive nurturing care and support from a staff team that have the knowledge, skills and competence to provide individual care that is right for them.

Action taken on previous requirement

Inspectors found that the children were well cared for by staff who knew them well. Staff had attended a range of training specific to the needs of the service and were able to speak confidently about the impact of this on their practice. Inspectors reported staff responded well to a number of first aid scenarios put to them displaying good critical thinking skills and decision making and changes to service policy around accident and incident management were evident in staff practice. Inspectors noted that the management team had made progress in developing a plan for continuous improvement and they could see how they were developing this to support staff following a significant incident.

Met - within timescales

All requirements were met within timescale and although some progress was recognised by inspectors against all areas for improvement identified in November 2024, these will remain in place and will continue to be worked on as part of the setting action plan.

The setting will remain in Category 3 of the Quality Improvement Framework and the Locality Lead Officer will continue to offer support, training and advice on a fortnightly basis.

The follow through report can be found [here](#). The action plan can be found at Appendix F

. 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct 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?
Strategic Risk	Risk of not improving outcomes for learners	Positive engagement with Inspection agencies and sharing learning across the system where appropriate.	L	Yes
Compliance	Risk of not complying with national guidance	Positive engagement with Inspection agencies and sharing learning across the system where appropriate.	L	Yes
Operational	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
Financial	No risks identified			
Reputational	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
Environment / Climate	No risks identified			

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement Commit to realising the potential of each individual, by seeking to widen curriculum	

choice and implement progressive choices. Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners across the city.	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.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous People - 95% of all our children, including those living in our priority neighbourhoods, will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.	Engagement with inspectors provides an opportunity to learn from national best practice and validate self-evaluation evidence available. The support and challenge received by Inspectors helps to shape improvement plans for the coming sessions in keeping with the LOIP stretch aims.
Regional and City Strategies Regional Cultural Strategy Prevention Strategy Children's Services Plan National Improvement Framework Plan	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.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	No assessment required. I confirm this Shona Milne , Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning .
Data Protection Impact Assessment	No DPIA is required.
Other	

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A - National Thematic Inspection: Local authority approaches to support school improvement
Appendix B – Manor Park School Learning Teaching and Assessment Action Plan

Appendix C - Manor Park School Raising Attainment and Achievement
Action Plan

Appendix D - Westpark School and ELC Action Plan

Appendix E - Westpark School Action Plan

Appendix F - Little Clouds Action Plan

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National Thematic Inspection: Local authority approaches to supporting school improvement

Summarised Findings

Local Authority	Aberdeen City Council
Lead inspector	Jaqueline Gallagher

In September/ October 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Aberdeen City Council. During our visit, we talked to senior leaders, local authority officers, parents/carers, headteachers, teachers, representatives from professional associations and elected members.

Purpose and themes

The purpose of the visit was to gather evidence about how Aberdeen City Council supports school improvement, with a focus on how they support schools to improve the quality of education through:

- the implementation of effective improvement planning and standards and quality reporting
- self- evaluation and quality assurance
- professional learning
- universal and targeted support and challenge

Context of the local authority

Aberdeen City is an urban local authority (LA) located on the Northeast coast of Scotland.

Thirty four percent of children and young people in primary and secondary schools live within deciles 1-2 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

Approximately 35% of children in primary school and 46% of young people in secondary school have been assessed as requiring additional support with their learning.

The average attendance in 2022/2023 was 91.2%. The national average is 90.2%.

Across the city there are 48 primary schools, 11 secondary schools and one special school.

Since 2024, the Executive Director of Families and Communities oversees education and lifelong learning, children's social work and family support, housing and corporate landlord. She is supported by the Chief Education Officer for education and lifelong learning, as well as by three other Chief Officers for the additional aspects of her remit. The structure is now shaped around the social

determinants of health, with a focus on working across business areas to address emerging issues, such as a preventative approach to obesity and making a difference to those who live within SIMD 1.

Throughout the school session 23/24 there has been a change in leadership in over 20% of schools. Since 2019, there has been a change in leadership in 24 primary schools, eight secondaries and one special school. The percentage of pupils with English as a second language has risen from 14% in 2015/16 to over 20% in 2023/24. There has been a 14% rise in the school population since 2019.

The challenging financial situation has resulted in a lack of investment in the established school estate. The service has also been involved in making plans to address the finding of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in three school buildings and supporting 500 families who require to be rehomed for their safety due to the finding of RAAC in their homes. Employment in the city is at its lowest level since 2016, with roughly one in four of the working population economically inactive.

Theme 1 - How do local authorities support schools to improve the quality of education through implementing effective improvement planning and standards and quality reporting?

- *How clear and effective is the local authority's arrangements and advice to schools on self-evaluation, improvement planning and standards and quality reporting?*
- *How does the local authority ensure that schools' self-evaluation is accurate, rigorous and robust, based on reliable and comprehensive data and information?*
- *In what ways does the local authority promote collaboration with all stakeholders, especially learners, as essential to effective self-evaluation and identification of priorities?*
- *What is the role of central teams in providing critical feedback to school leaders on the quality/robustness of their self-evaluation and school improvement planning processes?*
- *To what extent does the local authority use the data from individual school or cluster improvement plans and standards and quality reports, to direct their officers' work?*

The school Quality Improvement Framework (QIF) provides clear exemplification of expected and appropriate processes and standards of self-evaluation, improvement planning and standards and quality reporting at school and local authority level. It is based on quality indicators (QIs) 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2. Following a review of lessons learned from school inspections with headteachers, and consultation with professional associations, the QIF was amended in advance of the 2024/25 school session. The intention is to broaden the evidence base gathered during school visits. This includes monitoring the impact of work against the agreed Behaviour Plan, ensuring the removal of single points of failure and introducing more intensive arrangements for those yet to evaluate as 'good' or better.

There are new self-evaluation formats which are different for primary and secondary schools. The effectiveness of these different formats is still to be evaluated and the rationale for the different formats is unclear. The QIF makes clear the aligned responsibilities of stakeholders for Elected Members, the central team, school leaders, middle leaders and class teachers.

The LA sets out clear and helpful expectations of overall standards and how and what to evaluate through its suite of quality improvement documents, including self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. These provide helpful exemplification of statements from 'weak' to 'very good' which support evaluative writing under each QI. There are professional standards for each QI, for example the learning, teaching and assessment (LTA) standard. There is clear and supportive guidance, linked to the standards documents. For example, how to write a standards and quality report with exemplification of evaluative statements provided from 'weak' to 'very good.'

Senior officers in the central team have prioritised building a more positive collaborative culture to utilise all capacity for improvement. Headteachers view themselves as leaders of change across the local authority, as well as in their own school and locality. Since the beginning of session 2024/25, headteachers in both primary and secondary schools no longer work in locality trios, but rather in cross-authority trios and quads. The central team has carefully designed these trios to match schools where practice is strong, (category 1), with schools who are receiving more intensive support, (categories 2/3). This development is at very early stages. Headteachers view this change as both a catalyst for improvement and a means of delivering increasingly consistent approaches to improvement across the LA. The central team report that the new arrangements are allowing them to have better understanding of school needs city wide.

Stronger partnerships across secondary schools have helped deliver ABZ Campus. This provides young people with a greater range of course choice in secondary through a core timetabling offer across Aberdeen City, extending now into Aberdeenshire. There are links with partners and North East College to extend the delivery of a range of courses which meet the needs of a wider group of learners.

Headteachers have indicated that they employ a wide range of strategies to engage children and young people in self-evaluation and school improvement. These are designed to fit the context of their schools and be appropriate to the age and stage of learners.

The Director and Chief Officer work closely with Elected Members, who highlight the importance of the positive, constructive relationships that exist between themselves and the Director and Chief Officer. This transparent approach and the trust this engenders is very beneficial to the management of the school estate in their view. Elected Members speak very highly of the impact of the QIF. They believe the QIF has a central role in addressing inconsistency in the experiences of children and young people across Aberdeen. There is not yet sufficient evidence that the developments in systems, processes and communication are consistently leading to actual improvement in all schools across the city.

Members of the central team provide effective exemplification of high-quality self-evaluation to all schools. Local authority officers quality assure and provide critical feedback on the draft plans of every establishment. They verify that the identified priorities are based on reliable data and correlate with sound evidence, drawing from a range of sources. In addition, they verify that collaboration and

consultation arrangements are in keeping with those outlined in the QIF. This rigorous approach has begun to improve the quality of planning processes across Aberdeen. Central officers protect time over the summer to review and moderate all school improvement plans. This ensures feedback for schools takes place early in the school session and is consistent across the local authority.

The Director and Chief Officer, in conjunction with members of the central team, use the data from the self-evaluation and improvement plans for the following purposes: They identify the priorities for inclusion in the National Improvement Framework Plan, the Children's Services Plan and associated partnership plans including the Locality Improvement Plans. Where appropriate, they shift the priorities in the Council Delivery Plan to help shape the focus of other services (for example the work of the employability team (growth sectors) or Strategic Place Planning (obesity). They identify any necessary changes to the central structure and priorities to help resource any shift in focus. They identify the focus of the professional learning offer and review their quality assurance/improvement arrangements on a yearly basis.

Theme 2: How do local authorities support schools to improve the quality of education through self-evaluation and quality assurance?

- *What methods does the local authority use to evaluate school performance (review the quality of education) for example, gathering evidence from stakeholders, review/validated self-evaluation visits, attainment analysis)? How effective are these methods? How often does this take place?*
- *To what extent do officers carry out regular and rigorous evaluation of the quality of school provision? How is this work quality assured?*
- *How does the local authority evaluate the quality of learning, teaching and assessment?*
- *How clear and effective is the advice and support for schools on approaches to self-evaluation and their quality assurance? How effectively does the local authority moderate this at strategic and school levels?*
- *How does the local authority identify and share effective practice through quality assurance? Is this making a difference across the authority?*

The central team carries out at least one formal quality assurance visit per year in each primary school and two visits in secondary. These visits are successfully helping to build leadership capacity across the city. They involve both central team staff and senior school leaders who have the opportunity to participate at least on a two-year cycle. This has been successful in developing an increased level of consistency of understanding.

Officers in the central team revised the use of trios/ quads to support collegiality across the city. The purpose was to create a network of support and challenge to improve the quality of learning and teaching. There are set expectations of roles including those of central officers. This development is at early stages, but all participants speak very positively about the impact on greater consistency of approach to school improvement. There is emerging evidence of greater levels of challenge now that trios and quads have been restructured around categories of support. Officers need to continue building on this work to ensure the changes being implemented result in improved outcomes for children and young people.

Trios of headteachers provide support and challenge through regular formal and informal meetings. Members of school senior leadership teams from within the trios participate in quality improvement visits. They leave their partner schools with key action points following the quality improvement visit which are followed up on subsequent visits. Central officers have restructured the quads in secondary to include an associate assessor. Central officers believe this will help build capacity and capability further. Secondary associate assessors participate in quality improvement visits. Central officers believe this is helping improve accuracy of self-evaluation against national standards.

Members of the central team, supported by the trios headteachers carry out regular and routine visits to schools. During these visits they validate school quality improvement activity and discuss attainment data. In all schools, either a quality improvement manager or an associate assessor carries out a series of formal two-day visits across the session focussed on all QIs. There is also a visit focussed on QI 2.3 which involves learning walks. Members of the central team meet fortnightly with headteachers. Headteachers shape aspects of the agenda through ongoing feedback. Central officers use this and a range of other digital teams to share information about local and national developments across schools.

The local authority quality assurance calendar is clearly understood by stakeholders and is designed to be the model for schools. It has the capacity to be a key driver for planned improvement, but the impact is not yet evident.

The local authority promotes the role of data as a key driver in staff understanding both the need for progress and the methods of supporting this. All schools track children and young people's progress using SEEMiS. Members of the central team carry out attainment reviews in all primary schools, uplifting data three times per year. In secondary, there are three attainment reviews per year, two in person. Data is uplifted at key points during the year and fed into PowerBI reports to allow tracking over time and trends to be identified. Education officers then discuss the accuracy of the data with headteachers. This is improving the reliability of attainment data. These processes are well supported by the new digital platforms, as well as multiple channels of virtual communication. The central team and headteachers report teachers have an improving understanding of school data. They are increasingly using data better to plan learning and teaching and track children and young people's progress. There are more bespoke arrangements to support those schools in need of a higher level of support, such as those who are still in further inspection measures.

Local authority data demonstrates increasing alignment between self-evaluation and inspection gradings. Levels of accountability are increasing, but there is a need to continue to build capacity and capability at middle leadership level. Central officers believe that they have had considerable success in utilising quality assurance activity as rich professional learning for headteachers. The next step is to extend this opportunity to faculty heads and primary middle leaders to further improve outcomes for children and young people across Aberdeen City.

The Chief Officer discusses individual schools during professional review and development meetings and service manager meetings to quality assure arrangements and processes in place. In addition, she regularly reviews school engagement trackers as well as participating in a sample of quality improvement visits. Effective practice is shared formally and informally through trio/quad engagement and during service manager and head teacher meetings. Central officers use information gathered during quality improvement visits to match schools with highly effective practice to those with developing practice in the same area. Highly effective practice is beginning to be exemplified on the Northern Alliance learning and teaching toolkit.

Theme 3: How do local authorities support schools to improve the quality of education through professional learning?

- *What professional learning does the local authority currently provide to support school improvement?*
- *What is the impact of this on developing the skills and knowledge of school leaders and staff on school improvement?*
- *What support systems (e.g., mentoring, networks of practice, peer support groups, cluster support) are available for school leaders and staff? How are these approaches improving school performance and outcomes for learners?*
- *To what extent do senior leaders have opportunities to support improvement beyond their own establishment? What difference is this making?*
- *How effectively does the local authority utilise Associate Assessors (if applicable) to support school improvement across establishments.*
- *Does the local authority's professional learning strategy draw on support from national organisations?*

The local authority provides and facilitates a wide range of professional learning opportunities and programmes linked to the National Improvement Framework (NIF) plan. Local authority planning of professional learning is informed and influenced by key themes within school self-evaluation documents and standards and quality reports. The professional learning offer is responsive, varied and agile. As a result, the central team and headteachers report that schools participate in a programme of professional learning which better meets the needs of their context.

The central team has created conditions to ensure a supportive and empowered approach to system-wide collaboration for professional learning. They direct staff at all levels to identified areas of strong practice across schools, resulting in learning from colleagues in a range of ways. Trios and quads of headteachers are involved in formal quality improvement visits alongside the school improvement team. They work collaboratively in areas of school improvement, sharing practice and moderating using the Aberdeen standards. This happens through quality improvement visits, work in trios/quads and online through digital channels where staff share practice and regularly ask for, or offer, support or ideas from colleagues. Where areas of effective practice are identified, the central team ensures that they monitor the impact of any activity with senior leaders in schools.

Headteachers meet in person and virtually to share practice. There are professional learning inputs from the central team and headteachers, for example about the work on improving attendance in schools. Quality improvement managers have established 'Magpie Meets' to allow headteachers to share

practice and resources with each other. This is now led by headteachers as a useful way to support each other and improve practice across schools. Across the city, there are examples of schools working together to improve outcomes on a shared issue identified through self-evaluation. This work is in line with the NIF plan and encouraged and supported by the central team. Headteachers have created a wide range of opportunities for professional development, such as programmes for newly qualified teachers. This has developed a positive culture of collaboration and sharing across schools. There is a need now to ensure this sharing of practice leads to improved performance for all schools.

The LA has a programme of induction and professional learning for headteachers new to post, which includes an allocation of a 'buddy' to support in the new role. Middle leadership development is supported in partnership with Education Scotland colleagues. Headteachers in secondary schools are responsible for delivering the collaborative middle leadership training to develop the cohort of depute headteachers. Evidence of impact is as yet limited. Central officers believe that the middle leadership programme is beginning to feed the 'pipeline' of future head teachers. However, they recognise this as an area in need of further development.

Identified school staff have responsibility for leading areas of professional learning across the local authority through the Grassroots programme. Experienced teachers lead professional learning events across the city. This is developing the skills and leadership of the staff involved.

The local authority lead teacher delivers professional learning in QI 2.3 for schools or associated school groups to support the embedding of the Aberdeen Standard. The development and use of the Northern Alliance toolkit at regional level is planned as a next step to provide a sustainable approach to improving this area.

The central team works closely with their Attainment Advisor and together they have created an equity network and devised an equity tracker. The network meets four times per year to share practice and support with tracking interventions. An online equity channel allows for further collaboration. There is not yet evidence of impact.

Schools are expected to take forward city-wide priorities such as implementing the CIRCLE framework, the CYPIC writing programme and data analysis. Central officers provide support to all schools through learning sessions, webinars and online activities.

The outreach additional support needs service has developed training at local authority and school level. This provides senior leaders and teachers with support in areas identified through self-evaluation such as self-regulation and the use of assessments to support dyslexia pathways. The educational psychology service contributes to the professional learning calendar. This involves supporting Grassroots work and the central offer along with specific school requests. The service has realigned itself to the three localities and into line with the school

improvement team to allow for more effective liaison and closer partnership working. This is a recent development and there is little evidence yet of impact.

Associate assessors within the local authority work alongside quality improvement officers and headteachers to support school improvement. They participate in visits to schools as part of the QI calendar and support in other areas of improvement planning and preparation for inspection. The number of associate assessors has recently increased. It is planned that the greater number will be able to impact positively on more QI visits and areas of targeted support.

Theme 4: How do local authorities deliver universal support and challenge for all schools, and/or targeted support for specific schools to improve the quality of education?

- *What is the universal offer of support and challenge for all schools?*
- *How does the local authority use the data from individual school or cluster improvement plans and standards and quality reports, to provide targeted support?*
- *What measures are used to identify the need for targeted support?*
- *Is there targeted support for specific schools? What might that look like? (examples?) What action is taken if a review of a school concludes that a school is not performing satisfactorily and requires targeted support?*
- *What support systems (for example: mentoring, networks of practice, peer support groups) are available for school leaders and staff?*
- *What is the role of central staff in facilitating/contributing to collaborative approaches, which improve school performance and outcomes for learners?*

Central officers use a range of data to allocate all schools to one of three categories which provide varying degrees of support and challenge. They allocate schools after examining attainment data, self-evaluation evidence, and intelligence from quality assurance visits. Universal and targeted supports are allocated as follows.

Category 1: all schools receive a universal offer which consists of a range of supports including written and verbal feedback on their standards and quality report and improvement plan; engagement in a formal attainment review three times each year; quality improvement visits; professional learning offer linked to national and local priorities; best practice shared at headteacher meetings; and a termly review of attendance and exclusion data.

For all schools categorised as category 2, an annual central team-led quality improvement visit provides an aspect of targeted support. Central officers regularly meet with the school's senior leadership team. An associate assessor has a key role in providing support.

Category 3 are schools identified as in need of 'intensive' support to improve outcomes for children and young people. Intensive support includes focused meetings to assess progress against specific targets recorded in an engagement tracker. Category 3 schools benefit from a bespoke offer of professional learning, for example a focus on self-evaluation or learning pathways planning. A peer headteacher provides valuable 'buddy' support. The school's senior leadership team engages in the authority-wide quality improvement visit programme. Members of the central team provide support to develop the curriculum.

This targeted approach to supporting school improvement has successfully resulted in some schools moving from category 2 to category 1. The authority recognises the challenge they face in moving schools with the most significant needs from category 3. Senior leaders in schools consistently value this city-wide framework of support and challenge. There is however insufficient evidence of improved outcomes for learners.

Senior leaders recognise that there are not yet sufficiently strong levels of attainment across the local authority, nor are all inspection outcomes consistently positive. Senior officers are taking immediate steps to strengthen their own quality assurance processes when external evaluations have not aligned with their internal evaluations. These are increasingly in alignment.

In one school, identified as requiring highly intensive bespoke support, there is evidence of significant planning for improvement. Wrap-around support and challenge is provided through a number of workstreams, called 'Tactical Teams,' which are aligned to specific quality indicators. These teams are drawn from across the LA school network and support the strong, cohesive approach to collaborative improvement. Arrangements for universal and targeted support are reviewed regularly in collaboration with central officers and the headteacher and presented to the Education Committee for approval.

Headteachers value this approach of staged support, which is helping to embed a culture of empowerment, while recognising the accompanying need for accountability. The foundation of this successful approach lies in the work undertaken in recent years to grow an ethos of trust and strong connections between central staff and school-based staff. This is a strength of the LA's work. Next steps are to ensure that there is an impact on improved outcomes for children and young people.

5. Any other relevant information

Key successes

A clear QIF has been established and is scrutinised by Committee on a yearly basis. The level of support each school is being afforded is also presented to Committee. Reporting school self-evaluation categories and inspection results to Committee has helped increase accountability, especially now that headteachers attend Committee to respond to inspection reports. Reporting the service's progress in moving forward published service priorities to Committee has increased accountability across the service.

There is a culture of collective responsibility, and this is supporting the drive for greater consistency. Involving secondary associate assessors in quality improvement visits has helped improve the accuracy of self-evaluation against national standards. Training to improve the use of evaluative language is beginning to improve the quality of writing.

Key challenges:

Staffing is generally more consistent now. However, the LA continues to find it hard to recruit high quality school leaders, high quality middle leaders, secondary

specialisms and supply staff. Challenges remain when leadership capacity is a concern.

Other factors cited by the local authority include: the churn in school leadership; upskilling middle leaders; time, conflicting demands and unaligned national policies; a variable national professional learning offer and; the volume of inspections or unanticipated asks that impact on the local authority's capacity to deliver their agreed programme.



HMIE Action Plan: Learning, Teaching and Assessment: The Quality Indicator was evaluated as weak.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School leaders and teachers must review and improve their approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.• All staff must work together to agree shared expectations and approaches to improve the behaviour and engagement of all learners across the school.• Senior leaders need to continue to support teachers to develop confidence in making accurate professional judgements about children’s progress and attainment.• Teachers need to develop a deeper understanding of national standards.			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They should ensure all children experience high quality, well planned learning and teaching that is matched appropriately to their learning needs.• Improved pupil engagement in learning across the school.		
Improve the quality of Learning and Teaching across the school.					
Next Step from SIF	What do we want to achieve?	How are we going to achieve it?	Measures of Success How will we know this has been achieved? <i>What evidence will we have?</i>	Who/When By	RAG Rating
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop children’s learning through consistent high-quality learning and teaching in all classrooms.• Develop teaching staff’s professional skills in ensuring high quality learning and teaching experiences are	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approaches to learning and teaching will be consistent across the school with all learners experiencing high quality learning and teaching.• Pupils’ engagement and motivation for learning will increase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff to use learning and teaching documents to gather evidence of individual and whole school progress in improving quality of learning and teaching including consistent implementation of shared expectations.• Staff to agree on learning attributes to support raising expectations of learners and increased engagement.• Baseline and summative data to be collected to measure impact of Northern Alliance professional learning in relation to effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Across all classes there will be a consistent use of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria which improves pupils’ learning and engagement.• Quality Assurance evidence, including pupil voice, of 3 and 5 star learners will show the impact of learning attributes across the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching Staff• Pupil Support Staff• Senior Leaders. <p>(November 2025)</p> <p>Teaching Staff Pupil Support Staff Senior Leaders</p>	

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consistently applied across all learners' experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in all staff's professional awareness and confidence in delivering creative and high quality learning experiences. Increase in professional awareness of leading the learning. 	<p>questioning and increased staff skills in facilitating learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate the use of the shared overviews/approaches to Learning, Teaching and Assessment to impact on consistent experiences for all learners. All teaching staff will engage in professional learning which supports their own identified development needs to ensure consistently high quality learners' experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across all classes there will be an increase in children's creativity and curiosity in learning through increased quality of questioning and effective use of plenaries. Evidence will show an increase in consistency across learners' experiences. Staff will evidence the impact of CLPL within their classrooms and approaches to learning and teaching. PR&Ds will evidence completion of targets for GTCS registration. 	<p>Baseline – completed Summative (December 2025)</p> <p>Teaching Staff Senior Leaders (On-going)</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Teaching Staff (June 2026)</p>	
Children will be able to lead their own learning by identifying strengths and next steps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children will be able to express themselves (not necessarily verbal) about learning and next steps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the use of self and peer assessment from CYPIC model across other curricular contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality assurance evidence will show that helpful written feedback, which supports learners 	<p>Teaching Staff Pupil Support Staff Senior Leaders.</p>	



<p>Develop consistent approaches to assessment and extend skills in self and peer assessment.</p> <p>Assessment information to be used effectively to support raising attainment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All classes will embed 3 and 5 star learners to impact on pupil learning. Staff will increasingly evidence the use of assessment data within planning and evaluations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop the use of 3 and 5 star learner approach to ensure consistency across the classes. Senior Leaders to continue to support teachers' confidence in analysing assessment data to identify gaps in children's learning and plan, monitor and review to ensure interventions are effective in classes. Continue to develop planned approaches to moderation activities to increase accuracy of teacher judgements of attainment. 	<p>to make progress, will be consistently used across the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil voice and learning evidence will show that self and peer assessment is positively impacting on pupil learning and progress. Assessment data will evidence impact from interventions on learners progress and attainment. Termly learning and teaching meetings will evidence the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased use of data within planning. Increased confidence in staff discussing the use of data and impact of learning and teaching approaches. 	<p>(On-going)</p> <p>Teaching Staff Senior Leaders.</p> <p>(On-going)</p>	
<p>Improve learners' engagement across the school by staff agreeing shared and raised expectations for all learners' behaviour.</p>					



<p>All staff will consistently apply expectations and boundaries for pupil behaviour to support improving pupil engagement in learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pupils will positively engage in learning. • All pupils will interact positively with each other and support peer learning. • All staff will be committed to ensuring consistency across the school in relation to behaviour and expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going work around Trauma informed and restorative practices. • Continue to develop approaches which will empower staff to create safe, purposeful learning environments. • Continue to develop relationship centred approaches to support all learners to be ready and engaged in learning. • Continue to develop the use of Rights / relationship policies in day to day activities in school to support the use of them as a tool for change. • Staff to agree appropriate use of school day to support learners' engagement and motivation and increase quality learning time. • Interventions to continue to be planned for children who require support, or increased challenge in their learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement levels of pupils will increase and improve pupil learning. • Pupil voice will reflect that pupil feel supported by all adults within our school through positive relationships. • Increase in the number of pupils who are ready to learn. • Data around behaviour incidents will decrease. • RISE Wellbeing data will show connection scores of 6+ across all year groups. • Quality Assurance evidence of learners' engagement will show an increase in engagement scores. • Pupil voice will evidence increased motivation for learning across all classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff • Pupils • Senior Leaders • Partners <p>6th May 2025 – Agreed Expectations</p> <p>Reviewed August 2025 In-Service</p> <p>Reviewed November 2025.</p> <p>Senior Leaders Teaching Staff Pupil Support Staff</p> <p>(On-going)</p>	
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Pupil Experiences and Learning Opportunities					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more open-ended child-initiated activities to extend children's thinking and learning in their play. • All classes to increase children's engagement in learning further through well planned enquiry-based approaches. • Plan opportunities for children to apply learning in new and unfamiliar contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All play opportunities will deepen and enrich pupil learning. • Skills for learning will be embedded within all learning contexts. • Pupils will have an increased opportunity to apply their learning in a variety of contexts. • Increased and consistent use of high-quality outdoor learning experiences to enrich learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Leaders to develop progressive pathways and increased opportunities for children to develop skills in both Digital literacy and Outdoor Learning across all classes. • Approaches to IDL to be extended to include using a variety of learning contexts to support deepening learning and using skills. • All staff to be involved in CLPL to support approaches to Active Learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a clear digital learning progression and outdoor learning pathways in school. • All staff will evidence using it within their planning for learning. • All pupils will be able to articulate what skills they have been learning. • Staff will evidence through planning the different contexts for learning being used. • There will be increased evidence of active learning being used to support skills for learning, work and life. 	Senior Leaders (completed February 2025)	
				Teaching Staff Pupil Support Staff Partners Pupils On-going	
				Teaching staff December 2025	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop how planned learning will be appropriately assessed including the use of observations within play-based learning to inform planning. Develop the use of evaluations to support ensuring that planning is responsive to children's needs and learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased focused learning time, which improves attainment and ensures pace and challenge. Robust data which is consistently used by all staff to impact positively on learners. Consistent and robust planning for learning across the whole school. Increased staff confidence in evaluating learning and teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching staff to continue to work together as stage teams to support moderation of planning for learning, sharing the learning and the use of assessment data to address gaps. Assessment calendar to be further developed to include specific on-going assessment. Medium term planners to be reinstated to support recording how pre and post assessments are used Senior EYP and ELC team to share their professional learning around the use of observations to plan for learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher planning will evidence the use of assessment effectively across planned learning. Teacher's planning will evidence the use of assessment to inform and adapt planned approaches to learning. Pupil voice and progress will show evidence impact of well planned learning and interventions. P1 staff will have evidence of quality observations which are used effectively to inform planning. 	<p>Teaching Staff (Reviewed December 2025, June 2026)</p> <p>Senior Leaders Teaching Staff (completed – implemented August 2025)</p> <p>Senior Leaders Teaching Staff. (April 2025)</p> <p>SEYP HT P1 Team ELC Team (May 2025)</p>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More effective planning for children with additional support needs to include interventions for support and challenge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions and supports are timely. • Pupils' attainment and progress increases. • Increased staff confidence in addressing gaps and ensuring progress in learning. • Increased pupil motivation, engagement and independence in learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFL and Class teams to continue to work together to plan and develop the use of IEPs and planned supports to improve meeting additional support needs. • Staff to work collaboratively as stage/level groups to develop data informed approaches to learning and teaching to support raising attainment within Literacy and Numeracy. • Pupil voice to be extended and implemented/reviewed by all teaching staff to include class, stage and level pupil voice on experiences and interventions to support pupils and improve engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for learning and planning for learners' needs will be effective and ensure positive outcomes for all learners. • Through pupil voice and evaluation of learning, pupils will increasingly show they are aware of their learning, progress and next steps. 	<p>Teaching Staff (On-going – reviewed termly)</p> <p>Teaching staff Senior Leaders (Termly)</p>	
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HMIE Action Plan: Raising Attainment and Achievement: This Quality Improvement indicator is currently evaluated as weak.

Next Step from SIF	What do we want to achieve?	How are we going to achieve it?	Measures of Success How will we know this has been achieved? <i>What evidence will we have?</i>	Who/When By	RAG Rating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior leaders need to improve how they measure the progress that children at the primary stages make over time. Senior leaders and staff across school need to improve attainment in literacy and numeracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approaches to moderation will ensure that all staff have consistent professional judgement. Data will be consistent in its quality and its use to address gaps and raise attainment. Data to measure progress will be consistently used to support raising attainment. Senior leaders and staff will be more confident and consistent in identifying children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Termly meetings to continue to be held between staff and Senior Leaders to review attainment data and progress. HT to continue to review data with QIO team as per ACC QA Calendar. HT to work alongside Trio HTs to support quality assuring data and ensuring consistency. Whole school tracking systems to be updated as per HMIE recommendation and continue to be used to support measuring progress over time. Moderation visits and activities to be undertaken alongside ASG and QA Improvement trios staff teams. Cohort data will be recorded on updated excel spreadsheets to support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes from meetings will evidence robust discussions about individual children, the use of benchmarks and clear next steps. The HT and Senior Leaders will have consistent data within the tracking system, which evidences progress over time for all pupils. Staff questionnaires will show staff being more confident in using pupil data to effectively support learning and teaching and 	<p>Teaching staff Pupil Support Staff Senior Leaders (On-going)</p> <p>Senior Leaders (On-going)</p> <p>Senior Leaders Teaching staff (December 2025)</p> <p>Senior Leaders Teaching Staff Improvement Trio HTs (June 2026)</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will increasingly be confident in using assessment and data to impact on pupil progress. 	<p>measuring attainment overtime.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff to review and update progress document to ensure that there is a shared understanding of what pupil progress looks like across the school. Time to continue to be assigned to support stage/level/support and teaching staff discussions around progress and attainment data. SFL will continue to use NSA data to support identification of targeted pupils and gaps in learning at P2, P4, P5, P6 to raise attainment. Moderation Calendar and Assessment Calendar to be reviewed with staff to support developing consistency across the school. Evaluation of Moderation Cycle by staff to develop clear understanding of CLPL needs and areas for improvement. 	<p>ensure progress over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data from NSA, CfE and standardised assessments will correlate and reflect the impact of moderation activities. Excel spreadsheets will show accurate data and planning will reflect how data is used. Tracking documents, minutes from tracking meetings and learning and teaching meetings will evidence consistency across the school in relation to pupil progress. IEPs and Group Support plans will evidence impact 	<p>Teaching staff (August 2025)</p> <p>Teaching staff Senior Leaders (On-going)</p> <p>Teaching Staff Support Staff (On-going)</p> <p>Teaching Staff</p>	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and Teaching staff to meet termly to share information and have clear understanding of next steps for learners. Facilitate staff visits to trio settings to support sharing of practice and develop professional confidence in approaches to addressing the attainment gaps. Collaborative reviews of data at stage, level and whole school to be undertaken by Senior Leaders and teaching staff to support self-evaluation and improvement. 	<p>of SFL interventions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of CLPL will be evidenced in practice and through reflective professional dialogue. Staff will have evidence of progress overtime. 	<p>Pupil Support staff (August 2025)</p> <p>Teaching Staff (June 2026)</p>	
Raising Attainment in Listening and Talking					
Regular opportunities to develop L&T skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening and talking – first level the pupils need to be able 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All pupils will make sufficient progress in literacy and numeracy between first and second levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff to use IDL model to support Making Learning Visible strategies (See, Think, Wonder) to support the application of 	<p>Attainment data in listening and talking will increase.</p>	<p>Teaching staff Pupil Support Staff Pupils (August 2025)</p>	

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<p>to communicate clearly and audibly and contribute to discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Second level need to make notes in their own words. - Taking turns to talk and respectfully agreeing and disagreeing at all levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the confidence of pupils to articulate their opinions and thoughts within class and whole school group tasks. • Pupils to be able to confidently express their learning in their own words. 	<p>improvement of listening and talking skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills School to be used to support pupils reflecting and sharing their learning with partners and groups. • Pupil voice groups to continue to be used to support improving our school and sharing different ideas. • Pupils to be actively encouraged to share their learning at Assembly more. • Learning attributes and relationship policies will be used to consolidate respectful interactions between pupils. 	<p>Through learning within IDL, and all contexts for learning, pupils will be able to demonstrate increased confidence to articulate and use their listening and talking skills to share learning.</p> <p>Pupil voice groups/activities and decision making will evidence the ability of pupils to disagree in a respectful way.</p> <p>The number of pupils sharing their learning, ideas and opinions at Assemblies will increase.</p>	<p>Teaching staff Pupil Support Staff Pupils Partners (October 2025)</p> <p>Pupils Teaching staff Pupil Support staff Senior Leaders (December 2025)</p>	
Raising Attainment in Reading					
<p>Develop approaches to reading which support positive engagement in reading.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pupils will make sufficient progress in reading between first and second level. • All learners will become engaged readers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFL team to share approaches to supporting reading comprehension and phonics with all teaching staff and pupil support staff. • Whole School approaches to reading skills to be undertaken through Reading Schools framework. 	<p>Standardised reading scores and comprehension tests for all pupils will show an increase.</p> <p>The school will achieve Reading Schools Core</p>	<p>SFL/PT Teaching staff Pupil support staff. (On-going – June 2026)</p> <p>Pupils Parents Partners</p>	

			Level Award by June 2026.	Staff (June 2026)	
<p>Develop approaches to addressing address gaps at Early, First and Second Level including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early level – working on their sounds and confidence in reading them. - First level – fluency and literal questions - Second – fluency understanding and expression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pupils will make expected progress in phonological awareness by the end of P1. • Increase in reading age/text level increase their reading ages for all first and second level readers. • Increase in confidence and fluency for all first and second level readers. • Approaches to reading across the school will be consistent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy development officer to review phonological awareness with P1-P3 staff team. • ASG partnership action plan to work on reading comprehension at P4 and P5 to support raising attainment in reading. • On-going use of interventions using digital interventions to support reading skills and vocabulary. • PT to work with PSAs/EYPS to develop approaches to supporting reading and phonics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from phonological awareness will show an increase overtime. • Minutes and driver diagrams will evidence impact on reading attainment through collaboration. • Data from interventions will show a positive impact on attainment data. • Staff will demonstrate through their practice that approaches to reading are effective in raising attainment. 	<p>P1 team Pupil Support Staff PT (June 2026)</p> <p>PT Teaching staff ASG Colleagues (February 2026)</p> <p>PT SFL staff Teaching staff (February 2026)</p> <p>Teaching Staff Pupil Support staff P1 EYPs (December 2025)</p>	
Raising Attainment in Writing					

<p>Continue to develop approaches to writing which impacts on progress overtime.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting CYPIC approach to writing in P4-P7 - Developing opportunities for mark making and independent writing at Early level. 	<p>Pupils at Early level will be confident and independent writers.</p> <p>CYPIC writing approaches across First and Second Level will continue to support raising attainment overtime in writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff's confidence in raising attainment in writing will continue to increase. • Pupils will be motivated and increasingly independent writers and learners. • Pupils' attainment in writing at First and Second Level will rise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 team to continue to develop the learning from Greg Botrill's CLPL to support increased independent writing and mark making in P1. • Support staff to be engaged in professional learning around supporting writing and learners using the CYPIC model. • Staff to consolidate approaches to moderation of progress, data and pupils' work to support a shared understanding of impact and progression for all pupils. • Baseline writing to be undertaken with all pupils and moderated by staff groups and used to inform teaching aims. • Summative writing to be undertaken with all pupils and moderated by staff groups and used to inform teaching aims and moderation of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from staff will reflect an increase in confidence of pupils and staff in facilitating this. • Assessment evidence will reflect increased independent writing. • Classroom learning visits will show that all classes in P4-P7 are effectively and consistently implementing the approaches. • Learning and Teaching meetings, tracking meeting and level moderation meetings will evidence consistency. • Assessment data and evaluations for each class will show an increase in writing data, 	<p>Teaching staff Support staff (May 2025)</p> <p>Teaching staff Senior Leaders (June 2025)</p> <p>Teaching staff Senior Leaders (June 2025)</p> <p>Teaching staff Senior Leaders (June 2025)</p>	
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		<p>professional judgement and NSAs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil voice on writing regularly collected throughout the year to highlight positive engagement in writing. Pupil focus group to meet termly with PT to moderate and feedback on learning. Staff to develop stretch and teaching aims as a group and for each cohort. Work to be undertaken with CYPIC lead and Trio School to support approaches, and ensure effective implementation of bundle/moderation of data and learning. P4-P7 classes to develop sharing the learning displays to support engagement in learning by all pupils. 	<p>engagement in writing, and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attainment data for each cohort will show an increase in writing attainment. Pupil voice will show increased motivation and confidence in writing. 	<p>Senior Leaders (June 2025)</p> <p>PT Trio Visits (November 2025)</p> <p>Teaching staff (June 2025)</p>	
Raising Attainment in Numeracy					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop approaches to numeracy which support consistent progress and the development of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confident and independent learners who are apply their prior learning across contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDL framework to incorporate numeracy benchmarks to support learning in maths across the curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment information from IDL will reflect progress in numeracy. 	<p>Senior Leaders (August 2025)</p>	

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<p>skills within a variety of contexts over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop approaches to practical maths across the curriculum, which consolidates prior learning in practical and beyond number skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners will have key skills within practical maths which are used to support skills for learning, work and life. Staff will be confident in consolidating maths within different context to support raising attainment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure of learning week to include a block of practical maths to support retention in learning, progress and raising attainment. Outdoor Learning framework to support using practical maths within a variety of contexts. Proceed with planned visits to Trio and ASG schools to develop increased awareness of different approaches to learning and teaching in numeracy and maths. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil and staff voice will reflect clearer understanding of connections between curricular areas. Assessment, observation and evaluations will evidence pupils are able to demonstrate using learning in a variety of contexts. Staff will be able to talk about the impact of visits on their approaches to learning and teaching in numeracy and maths. 	<p>Teaching Staff (June 2026)</p> <p>Teaching staff (June 2026)</p> <p>Teaching staff (P7/6 team – June 2025, Other visits planned for session 2025-26)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early level children need further support to use strategies of counting on and counting back, and to subtract numbers within 20. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased pupil fluency in applying numeracy skills. Improved articulation of learning in numeracy and understanding of strategies. Increased confidence by staff in supporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New standardised assessment to be introduced and to be used alongside NSA data to support clearer identification of gaps and strengths. Staff at Early Level to continue to moderate and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment data will show progress and raising of attainment within numeracy. Numeracy assessment data, evaluations and 	<p>Teaching staff Pupil Support Staff. Senior Leaders (June 2025 for P2, P3, P5 and P6; August for P1, P4 and P7)</p> <p>SEYP ELC/P1 team (On-going)</p>	

Together Everyone Achieves More (T.E.A.M. MP) – Where Everyone Matters

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	<p>learners within numeracy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in attainment data and progress in numeracy overtime. • Consistent data in numeracy which is used effectively and confidently by staff to support clear identification of gaps. 	<p>use numeracy overviews to capture achievement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations to continue to be used to inform next steps in learning within numeracy. • Staff to continue to provide numeracy opportunities and a numeracy rich learning environment. • Staff to use Number Talks approaches to support pupils to articulate their understanding. 	<p>observations will reflect progress of all pupils in numeracy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECERS and CIRCLE framework data will show increased engagement. • Staff feedback will reflect increased confidence in supporting learners. • Pupil voice will reflect increased confidence and motivation in numeracy. 	<p>SEYP P1 Team (Termly)</p> <p>Senior Leaders (On-going)</p> <p>Teaching staff Pupil Support Staff (On-going)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At first level, children need to develop addition/subtraction within 3-digit numbers. • At first level, children need support to develop their understanding of division. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pupil fluency in applying numeracy skills. • Improved articulation of learning in numeracy and understanding of strategies. • Increased confidence by staff in supporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numeracy group to develop approaches to pre and post assessment within maths. • New standardised assessment to be introduced to support clearer identification of gaps and strengths. • Staff to implement approaches to mental maths which support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment data will show progress and raising of attainment within numeracy. • Group plans, evaluations and SFL intervention data will reflect progress of 	<p>Teaching staff Pupil Support Staff. Senior Leaders (June 2025 for P2, P3, P5 and P6; August for P1, P4 and P7)</p> <p>Teaching staff Pupil Support staff (On-going)</p>	

	<p>learners within numeracy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in attainment data and progress in numeracy overtime. • Consistent data in numeracy which is used effectively and confidently by staff to support clear identification of gaps. 	<p>deepening of learning and application of skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to continue to provide numeracy opportunities and a numeracy rich learning environment. • Support staff to be trained in Numeracy strategies to support pupils to articulate their understanding. 	<p>all pupils in numeracy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECERS and CIRCLE framework data will show increased engagement. • Staff feedback will reflect increased confidence in supporting learners. • Pupil voice will reflect increased confidence and motivation in numeracy. 	<p>PT Teaching Staff (Termly)</p> <p>Senior Leaders (On-going)</p> <p>Teaching staff Pupil Support Staff (On-going)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At second level, children need to develop confidence in mental calculations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pupil fluency in applying numeracy skills. • Improved articulation of learning in numeracy and understanding of strategies. • Increased confidence by staff in supporting learners within numeracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numeracy group to develop approaches to pre and post assessment within maths. • New standardised assessment to be introduced to support clearer identification of gaps and strengths. • Staff to implement approaches to mental maths which support deepening of learning and application of skills. • Staff to continue to provide numeracy opportunities and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment data will show progress and raising of attainment within numeracy. • Group plans, evaluations and SFL intervention data will reflect progress of all pupils in numeracy. • ECERS and CIRCLE framework data will 	<p>Teaching staff Pupil Support Staff. Senior Leaders (June 2025 for P2, P3, P5 and P6; August for P1, P4 and P7)</p> <p>Teaching staff Pupil Support staff (On-going)</p> <p>PT Teaching Staff (Termly)</p>	

Together Everyone Achieves More (T.E.A.M. MP) – Where Everyone Matters
We aim to be ready to learn, engaged in learning and leading the learning by developing the values of
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in attainment data and progress in numeracy overtime. <p>Consistent data in numeracy which is used effectively and confidently by staff to support clear identification of gaps.</p>	<p>a numeracy rich learning environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support staff to be trained in Numeracy strategies to support pupils to articulate their understanding. • SFL targeted support to ensure focus on mental maths and the use of strategies to support learning and progress in numeracy. 	<p>show increased engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff feedback will reflect increased confidence in supporting learners. • Pupil voice will reflect increased confidence and motivation in numeracy. 	<p>Senior Leaders (On-going)</p> <p>Teaching staff Pupil Support Staff (On-going)</p>	
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Westpark Action Plan - How Good is Our Early Learning & Childcare?

Staff in the school and nursery need to develop further their approaches to gathering information from observations or assessments of children's progress. They need to use this information more effectively so that children can build on what they can already do.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment: HMle assessed as Weak

Areas for Improvement	Actions Required	Desired Outcomes for Learners	Timescales	Evidence and confirmed completion	Next Steps
<p>Senior leaders and practitioners should use local authority progression frameworks to plan children's learning and individual next steps. They should improve approaches to measure and check all children's progress.</p> <p>Practitioners need to develop an understanding of how to plan effectively and record children's learning.</p> <p>Practitioners need to plan learning that extends and develops levels of engagement further.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PT/SEYP - create a shared vision/guidance material illustrating ELC Westpark planning systems (intentional, responsive and personal planning). ELC team to further develop their knowledge and understanding of the ACC Early Level Progression Pathways. QIO/LL support visits to be offered while developing planning processes. Personal Plans to be updated to include a clear support strategies section. Record keeping linked to Personal Planning to be accurate and kept up to date. SEYP/PT to quality assure. SEYP/PT to ensure learner's Care Plans are up-to-date. 	<p>Practitioners will confidently facilitate both intentional and responsive learning opportunities that offer support and challenge.</p> <p>Personal plans are used effectively to meet learners needs.</p>	<p>May '24</p> <p>Mar '24</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Mar' 24</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>This is being reiterated from time to time – working with LA to finalise new planning – May 24</p> <p>Seniors meet re planning May 24 – shared understanding of planning requirements – audit using bullet points – May 24</p> <p>New planning documentation/approaches developed.</p> <p>Shared vision/guidance material illustrating ELC Westpark planning systems (intentional, responsive and personal planning).</p> <p>Personal Plans now include clear strategy section. Regular checks with parents and updated plans. QA calendar for review dates.</p>	<p>Senior leaders and practitioners will continue to develop use of local authority progression frameworks to plan children's learning and individual next steps.</p> <p>They will continue to improve approaches to measure and check all children's progress.</p> <p>Senior leaders will continue to provide staff support to help them to develop a clearer understanding of how to plan effectively and record children's learning.</p> <p>As planning processes continue to be implemented, it will be important to ensure they meet the learning needs of all children</p>

Practitioners need to develop further their use of open-ended questions to extend and deepen children's learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practitioners - use national practice guidance to increase further their knowledge and understanding of the role of the adult to support children's learning. SEYP/PT/LL to observe/support practitioners with a specific focus linked to Realising the Ambition. Practitioners to participate in LL training offer linked to quality interactions. (Group reflection tasks.) 1:1 support meetings led by SEYP to be established for all ELC staff. Staff to formulate Westpark question steps to use when interacting with learners. 	Practitioners will be able to extend children's learning through use of open-ended questioning.	May '24	<p>HLP resources accessed and training provided – to support questioning alternatives – Feb 24</p> <p>Observation and recording input from LL – May 24</p> <p>QA work on spaces, experiences and interactions May 24</p> <p>QA work on See Saw posts with ELC staff – May 24</p> <p>Support sessions established – records of meetings and actions from these.</p>	Practitioners will continue to develop further their use of open-ended questions to extend and deepen children's learning.	
Senior leaders need to improve the availability of digital resources to increase children's digital skills more effectively across the setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEYP to share Education Scotland's Digital Learning at Early Level video with full team. https://sites.google.com/ab-ed.org/elcpartners-sharepoint/home/professional-learning/elc-training-aberdeen Audit use of digital technology. Increase the offer, link to intentional planning. Daily use of Seesaw. Practitioners will plan time for children to share the online platform posts with adults and discuss what they are learning through their play. 	<p>Seesaw utilised effectively to increase confidence levels for all learners.</p> <p>Digital resources enhance children's learning.</p>	May ' 24	<p>Staff watched digital learning video – feedback collated –May 24</p> <p>Children can independently access seesaw through QR codes to upload posts (with supports)</p>	Senior leaders will identify additional digital resources and strategies to increase children's digital skills more effectively across the setting.	

ELC team need to ensure the quality of observations are consistently high quality and capture significant learning for every child. Practitioners need to identify clear, appropriate and meaningful next steps for all children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer monitoring (within setting/other settings). LL to lead training linked to quality observations. Progression pathways to be used consistently to create meaningful next steps. In-house training on quality observations using Ed Scotland resources QA of observation posts and 1-to-1 support 	Practitioners will be able to set clear, appropriate and meaningful next steps for all children.	May '24	PT/SEYP QA dip samples undertaken/supporting staff to improve. LL training May 24 Framework for high quality observations	Staff will continue to develop their observation and interaction practices to extend learning and contribute meaningfully to ongoing planning.	
Practitioners need to develop a shared understanding of national standards through more opportunities for moderation within the school and across the local learning community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Level partnership working to be established with DHT Kingswells, PT Bramble Brae and DHT Quarryhill. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share/discuss relevant reading materials. Peer support to improve interactions, spaces and experiences. 	Increased understanding of national/local standards across Early Level.	March '24	Group established. Dates set for improvement planning support sessions. Moving through stages: play and play environment – moving to role of adult	Staff will continue to engage in professional learning, further exploring the role of the adult in supporting learning through play. This will help staff to support and extend children's learning.	

3.2 Securing children's progress – HMIE assessed as Weak

Areas for Improvement	Actions Required	Desired Outcomes for Learners	Stakeholders & timescales	Evidence and confirmed completion	Next Steps	
Tracking of children's progress over time is not yet sufficiently robust to reflect accurately the progress children are making. Senior leaders and practitioners need to gather evidence to improve the accuracy of their professional judgements. Practitioners should improve how they meet these targets to ensure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking and monitoring system to be established. Link to both developmental overviews and E&O benchmarks. Ensure termly data discussions are undertaken with SLT (Nov, Feb, May). SEYP/PT to use data to inform planning. Termly working in partnership meetings with families to set targets and update care plans/strategy forms. 	Shared understanding of tracking system, and increased staff confidence levels linked to achievement of a level, will improve forward planning for individuals and cohorts.	May '24	Developing spreadsheet of progression pathways for Numeracy, literacy and H&WB to sit alongside HLP developmental tracker 3s and 4s. This is to inform termly data discussions following May 24 meeting – May 24 Termly targets set with parents	QA work will focus on the use of planning and tracking to inform planning and improve progress towards benchmarks. SEYP will liaise with peer SEYP in ASG to identify strong practice	

that children make progress in a timely manner.						
The use of targeted intervention data should be more consistently used to identify targets and support for individual children. Senior leaders should ensure identified strategies to support all children who require additional support are consistently used by all practitioners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Care Plans/Child's Plans are robust (audit) • Practitioners to identify where further support or challenge is required – link to personal plans. • SEYP/PT to ensure clear interventions are planned, when required, linking with other agencies. • SEYP to report back to nursery staff regarding input from outside agencies (e.g. physio for EA+EA) 	Quality assurance will confirm all learners needs are being met.	Ongoing	<p>Target support group established – Talk B. - in see saw (Circle time - TB)</p> <p>Strategy sheets added to each child and shared with all staff together – April 24</p>	<p>Senior leaders will ensure identified strategies to support all children who require additional support are consistently used by all practitioners; regular supportive discussions in 1-to-1 meetings.</p> <p>Ensure more consistency in how supports are delivered and data gathered to evaluate effectiveness.</p>	
Most children would benefit from opportunities to develop their skills in Literacy & Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to evaluate how effective and relevant experiences/spaces are in encouraging choice, curiosity, creativity and critical thinking. • Ensure environmental print is meaningful. • Consider/evaluate as a team what literacy and numeracy looks like throughout ELC setting (inside & out). • Visit other settings to observe, consider spaces/use of resources. • Develop context areas guide for all practitioners. ('What kind of learning could you see in this area?') LL – support use of audit tools. 	Learners will benefit from a Literacy and Numeracy rich environment.	Ongoing	Within continuous provision. Audited May 24.	<p>Through play provocations & targeted skill development, all children will benefit from opportunities to develop their skills in information handling. (Maths/Numeracy)</p> <p>Numeracy rich environment audit tool will be used to record and inform improvements.</p>	

Practitioners should continue to develop children's skills in self-regulating their emotions and communicating their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships Policy ensures a shared understanding of techniques/approaches to support learners to manage their emotions. EPS - Emotion Coaching Training to be undertaken by all staff. Supports/strategies will be included in Personal Plans. 	A shared approach will be observed linked to self-regulation & techniques.	June '24	<p>Revisit relationships policy – August 24</p> <p>Support strategy sheet developed for each child to inform how all staff support each child appropriately</p> <p>Stage 1 emotion coaching started – to be completed in May 2025</p>	<p>Develop spreadsheet of key milestones for 3 and 4 year olds, to track individual progress, to identify any concerns and plan to meet needs.</p> <p>Practitioners will continue to develop children's skills in self-regulating their emotions and communicating their needs through emotion coaching.</p>	
Increased 'free flow' between inside and outside throughout the day required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEYP to continue to guide practitioners in daily routine expectations and address staff deployment concerns directly as required. Enhanced staffing allocation will ensure free flow availability can increase. SEYP/PT to monitor. 	Pupils will have regular access to inside/outdoors and make choices about their learning environment.	March' 24		<p>Develop spreadsheet of key milestones for 3 and 4 year olds, to track individual progress, to identify any concerns and plan to meet needs.</p> <p>Practitioners will continue to develop children's skills in self-regulating their emotions</p>	

					and communicating their needs through emotion coaching.	
Practitioners should make better use of information and data available, including data related to the setting's socio-economic context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning should be informed by context/community/individual needs by inviting families invited to monthly 'Coffee & Chat' meetings, to fill out questionnaires focused around information gathering and improvement. SEYP/PT to ensure there are improved links with other agencies (Home Start/CFine/HV etc 	Contextualised planning evident to support learners.	Ongoing	SIMD input	<p>Practitioners will make better use of information and data available, including data related to the setting's socio-economic context.</p> <p>Senior leaders and practitioners will develop further how work to close the poverty related attainment gap is measured.</p>	

Westpark Action Plan - How Good is Our School?

- Staff in the school and nursery need to develop further their approaches to gathering information from observations or assessments of children's progress. They need to use this information more effectively so that children can build on what they can already do.
- All staff, including senior leaders, should deliver consistently high quality learning and teaching which provides children with increased pace and challenge. They need to ensure lessons have a clear focus on children making greater progress.
- Senior leaders and teachers need to ensure that regular checks of children's progress lead to improvements in their attainment.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment – HMle assessed as Weak

Areas for Improvement	Actions Required	Desired Outcomes for Learners	Timescale	Evidence and confirmed completion	Next Steps
Staff should continue to engage in professional learning, further exploring the role of the adult in supporting learning through play .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Level partnership working to be established with DHT Kingswells, PT Bramble Brae and DHT Quarryhill. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share/discuss relevant reading materials. - Peer support to improve role of the adult/interactions, spaces and experiences. 	Staff will be able to support and extend children's learning through play.	March '24	<p>Group established.</p> <p>March 24 - Settings have been visited by DHT, Kingswells.</p> <p>Dates set for improvement planning support sessions – April 24.</p> <p>P1 to 3 teachers visited to see play-based learning in action – May 24 – collegiate discussion about next steps at Westpark – environmental audit (Realising the Ambition) – Nov 24</p> <p>Fortnightly staff book group to discuss relevant reading materials as well as the impact of their visits to other settings –Nov-Dec 24</p> <p>G Bottrill training accessed to inform play-based practices within the core curriculum Aug-Oct 24</p> <p>Peer support will improve role of the adult/interactions, spaces and experiences at Westpark Aug - Dec 24</p>	Continued engagement in professional learning, through organized book group, exploring the role of the adult in supporting learning through play.

				<p>Play-based learning position paper developed, published – shared with school staff – Nov 24.</p> <p>Ongoing support from and observations by Kingswells DHT - evidence document with progress and next steps – progress good</p> <p>P1 to 3 teachers – developing a pilot of play-based approaches in primary 2 to 3 will be developed (learning environment, staff-pupil interactions, play-plenary, evidence gathering) Aug – Dec 2024</p>	<p>Review play-based learning position paper in Term 4 to ensure impact.</p> <p>Review impact of play-based approaches in P2 and P3 in Term 4.</p>	
<p>Teachers need to support children better to take greater responsibility for leading their own learning. This should include developing children's understanding of what they are learning and why.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT/CTs to develop and review approaches to planning to ensure learners are leading their own learning. • Further develop use of 'Big Questions' for IDL contexts. • Further develop choice and autonomy across the school. (Assignments, projects, group work, goal setting, determine own path.) 	<p>Children are supported more effectively to develop an understanding of their next steps in learning.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Collegiate discussion regarding the refreshed approach to IDL/knowledge harvest conducted to inform Big Questions/planning. Feb/April 24</p> <p>LI/SC input May 24 followed up by session on feedback and target setting identified need to revisit this. CDM 27th May will be informed by Leadership approach of Ron Berger and target sharing with learners and feeding back during learning to inform these.</p> <p>Weekly assembly about leading learning, sharing of targets achieved and next steps – videos made – from Aug 24</p> <p>Twice termly staff meeting exploring contexts, big questions and sharing of learning</p> <p>Follow up LISC input on using SC to inform feedback Oct-Nov 24</p> <p>Teachers to produce evidence from exit tickets in Aug 24.</p> <p>SLT/CTs to develop and review approaches to planning to ensure learners are leading their own learning within refreshed planning processes for IDL contexts; providing pupil choice with big</p>	<p>Working with the Northern Alliance Toolkit, teachers will continue to develop practices to improve pace, challenge and differentiation to engage all learners.</p> <p>Planned CLPL May 2025 Inset with Trio schools (Phil Badham, Visible Learning</p> <p>Teaching staff will continue to develop children's understanding of what they are learning and why, and to understand</p>	

				<p>questions to be explored to shape the direction and evaluation of learning. Aug 24/Nov 24</p> <p>Develop choice and autonomy across the school (assignments, group work, goal setting, determine own path). Audit of IDL planning and agreement to include planning for opportunities to lead own learning – Nov 24</p> <p>Pupil focus groups in lesson observations to be used to evaluate use of LI and SC in classes. -Nov 24</p> <p>SLT to quality assure through learning walks/classroom observations. Examples of LI/SC collected from all stages and evaluated by stage groups during curriculum development meetings. - Aug- Dec 24</p>	their next steps in learning.	
<p>Most lessons are not planned at the right level of difficulty to provide all children with appropriate levels of pace and challenge. Children's work is often pitched at too low a level or repeats what they have already learned. Teachers need to develop how they plan learning which builds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT/CTs to develop and review their approaches to planning to ensure they plan children's learning progressively through the CfE levels. • April/May – review use of progressive planners, ensuring appropriate pace, challenge and support is evident. 	<p>Teachers will plan more clearly for different groups of children within each class to ensure all children make greater progress in their learning.</p>	Ongoing	<p>SLT/CTs to develop and review their approaches to planning to ensure they plan children's learning progressively through the CfE levels. Feb 24 – agreed approaches for use of progressive planners for Literacy, Numeracy, HWB & IDL.</p> <p>May 24 planning meetings identified ongoing assessment to inform teaching and learning as a clear next step. Revisit with LIs and SCs at development meeting in June 24.</p> <p>Pace challenge and differentiation partnership with Northern Alliance leads. Planning workshop September 24. Pre-reading and self-evaluation documents shared with teachers – June 24 – self-evaluation and input completed Oct 24 – class observations and positive summary Dec 24.</p>	<p>Teachers will continue to develop and refine how they plan learning which builds progressively on what children can already do.</p> <p>Evaluate pace, challenge and differentiation as par of QA processes to identify next steps.</p>	

progressively on what children can already do.				<p>Planning Expectations document developed in consultation with staff and to be used from August 2024</p> <p>Reviewed in Sept 2024 - embedded</p> <p>QA of use of new planning processes to ensure learning planned at an appropriate level - Planning summary Sept 2024</p> <p>April/May 25 – review use of progressive planners, ensuring appropriate pace, challenge and support is evident.</p>	<p>Quality Assurance calendar includes termly planning discussions: opportunity to evaluate and review progress/improvements with planning</p>	
Senior leaders should consider how Westpark Workshops build on children's prior learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT to quality assure monthly workshop activities ensuring they contribute to individual skills development and wider life of the school. • SLT/CT to create guidance material to support planning for Westpark Workshops. • Alter plans to ensure Westpark Workshops build on prior learning and link to skills development. • Staff to ensure Westpark Workshops are appropriately challenging. 	Workshop activities will build on learners prior learning and will have a clear learning focus.	June '24 August '24	<p>Considering DYW skills in outline plan for refreshed 'Skills Shops' Aug 2024</p> <p>Skillshop planning document shared with all staff, updated and collated monthly. (August 24)</p> <p>Skills embedded in Westpark Worlds Framework (IDL) Feb 2024</p> <p>Staff to ensure Westpark Skillshops are appropriately challenging, and skills developed to be shared and reflected on with classmates. Aug 24</p> <p>Teacher devised annotated DYW skills posters shared with all staff (Sept 24)</p> <p>Teachers from P1 to 3 including the language of skills in teaching and learning/play plenaries Sept 24</p>	<p>Review and refine skills, impact of tracking system using the ACC skills framework for workshops and inter-disciplinary learning</p>	

				<p>Wider achievement tracker to reflect opportunities to practise skills through extra-curricular activities and skillshops(Oct 24)</p> <p>Gen+ metaskills programme pilot established for all P6 and 7 pupils, and planning undertaken to track and evaluate application of skills. Jan-March 2025</p>		
Teachers should continue to develop how they use outdoor spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor learning lead to be established. Working group to create an action plan to support improvement planning. 'Certificate in Outdoor Practice' online taster session (19.4.24 – www.outdoorstinking.co.uk) SLT to monitor use of outdoor environment linked to IDL. 	Planning will support children to learn in a wide range of contexts.	Aug '24	<p>Outdoor lead established and initial training from external provider 'outdoors thinking' attended – April 24.</p> <p>NCCT to incorporate outdoor learning – July 24 – outdoor learning framework created for planning.</p> <p>Each Westpark World to incorporate some outdoor learning – Nov 24</p>	<p>Teachers will utilise outdoor learning framework to plan outdoor learning where NCCT is focused on science.</p> <p>Review pilot outdoor learning framework to inform creation of Westpark Framework 25/26</p>	
Teachers need to improve the clarity of learning intentions and success criteria so that children are much clearer on what they are learning and why, and how they will know how successful they have been.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Quality LI/SC' CLPL sessions to be undertaken by all CTs. LI & SC PP.pptx SLT to quality assure through learning walks/classroom observations. Pupil focus group to be used to evaluate progress. 	Children will be clear about the knowledge and skills they are developing or how they will know they have been successful.	May '24	<p>Recorded in progression pathways and ongoing assessments. April 24</p> <p>LIs and SCs input to be followed up in June 24 CDM meeting following May 24 QA focused on LI/SC use in classes.</p> <p>Teachers moderated their use of LIs and SCs and most teachers self-evaluated them as being relevant and appropriate. - May 24</p>	Teachers will continue to follow development work guidance to continue to improve the clarity of learning intentions and success criteria so that children understand what they are	

				<p>QA work in May 24 showed there is a need for more support for the majority of teachers in developing LIs and SCs (see summary evidence).</p> <p>LI/SC audit October- December 24 – to be self-evaluated for next steps</p> <p>Input re using LIs/SCs to feedback to learners Oct – Dec 24</p>	<p>learning and why, and how they will know how successful they have been.</p> <p>Quality assurance calendar will continue to include termly monitoring of jotters and practices in the classroom to evaluate progress on development and sharing of purposes of learning and assessment and feedback.</p> <p>Development work on differentiation, pace and challenge with Northern Alliance will continue.</p>	
Teachers need to develop the use of more skilled questioning techniques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Effective Questioning’ CLPL sessions to be undertaken by all CTs/PSAs. Higher Order Questioning & Thinking.pptx • SLT to quality assure through learning walks/classroom observations. • Bloom's question supports shared – included in planning 	More skilled questioning techniques will promote children's curiosity and help children to reflect more on their learning.	June '24 August 24	<p>Blanks question technique shared during CDM in Feb 24. Focus of class visits in May 24 and identified next steps revisited in new CDM calendar.</p> <p>Questioning progression pyramids on display in all classrooms March 24</p> <p>SLT to quality assure through classroom observations – high quality questioning added to</p>	<p>Introductory work on developmental approaches to questioning will be followed up by participating in ASG oracy training and</p>	

	folder – Teachers to develop bank of questions – to be revisited			<p>non-negotiable features of teaching and learning, used to audit practice during QA class visits and identify next steps. Sept 24</p> <p>QA work May 24 - A minority of teachers used higher order thinking or questioning strategies – see summary evidence –</p>	<p>further staff development work.</p> <p>Numbertalks development work will ensure consistency with this across P1 to 7.</p> <p>Early level staff will work towards developing interactions with pupils, including use of questions.</p> <p>QA classroom visits and learning walks will focus on questioning.</p>	
Teachers need to develop consistently high-quality verbal and written feedback across the school to help children know what they have done well and identify their next steps in learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT/CT to develop expectations document linked to feedback. • Feedback CLPL sessions to be undertaken by all CTs/PSAs. • SLT to quality assure through learning walks/classroom observations. • Collegiate moderation of feedback with next steps identified – June '24. • Pupil focus group to be used to evaluate progress. • Achievement of targets weekly feature at assembly 	Learners will be able to identify next steps in their learning.	Aug/Sept 24	<p>Practice sharing May 2024 CDM May 2024</p> <p>SLT/CT to develop expectations document with specific direction regarding providing high quality feedback to learners for all learning: shared with staff June 2024. Reviewed Aug 24, Sept 24 LT&A policy updated with non -negotiables June 24.</p> <p>SLT to quality assure through classroom observations/jotter monitoring.</p> <p>Achievement of targets weekly feature at assembly</p>	<p>Teachers will develop consistently high-quality verbal and written feedback across the school to help children know what they have done well and identify their next steps in learning.</p> <p>Termly monitoring of</p>	

				<p>Stage evaluations of LI/SC to consider appropriate feedback linked to progression pathways. Oct-Dec 24</p> <p>QA Trios to focus on moderation of writing at May in service.</p>	jotters and classroom visits will continue to support development of high-quality verbal and written feedback.	
<p>Senior leaders and teachers need to use assessment information more effectively to make accurate judgements of children's progress, and plan appropriate support where this is required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLT to audit current assessment approaches. CT/SLT sharing session to be undertaken. Share good practice/new examples for assessment/evidence gathering, across the curriculum. (Promote collaboration/learning from each other.) Moderation approach developed to validate teacher judgements using assessment evidence more effectively (SLT to identify and assess sample of learners prior to planning and tracing meetings) SfL teacher engaged to support children to achieve the next level through 4 targeted sessions per week in 6 week blocks. 	<p>Consistent approaches evident regarding use of assessments to support teachers' professional judgements throughout the school.</p>	<p>June 24</p> <p>September/October 24</p>	<p>Tracking/moderation in May 24 demonstrated some inconsistency in assessment informing records in progression pathways</p> <p>Expectations around refreshed expectations of range of assessment approaches to be revisited with staff and evaluated at termly tracking and planning meetings. June 24</p> <p>Developing assessment approaches - share good practice/ongoing assessment/high quality assessment in literacy. Monthly practice sharing.</p> <p>Internal triangulation of teacher judgement of progress and predicted achievement dates to support effective teacher use of assessment evidence (SLT to identify and assess sample of learners). May 24, Nov 24</p> <p>SLT to monitor teacher recording and use of assessment to inform groupings, planning and progress. Termly</p> <p>Teachers to moderate progress by planning learning and assessment with stage partners. Aug 24</p> <p>SfL teacher engaged to support children to achieve the next level through weekly targeted writing sessions in 3 weekly blocks. Oct 24</p>	<p>Revised assessment framework with termly snapshots in core areas of learning will be created.</p> <p>Quality assurance calendar includes termly meeting with teachers to discuss assessment plan and outcomes.</p>	
Continue to develop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLT to plan for termly opportunities for moderation 	Improved understand regarding progression	Ongoing.	Staff have developed confidence in and knowledge of progression pathways – Dec 24	Ongoing sampling of	

approaches to moderation.	<p>across the school. (Focus on literacy, numeracy, LTA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderation pairs to allow staff to observe and learn from range of strengths and experience throughout school. • CTs will identify next steps for learners and stage partners. • Moderation programme planned with schools from trios (Ferryhill and Culter), starting with writing in 11th Feb 2025. 	through Curriculum for Excellence levels.		<p>which will support judgement in planned moderation activities T3 and 4.</p> <p>Increased team teaching and assessing opportunities, including with SLT. SLT targeting numeracy and literacy assessments to triangulate SNSA and Class data for target children.</p> <p>June moderation of feedback – collation of LI/SC/feedback and pupil voice, identified next steps and exit tickets.</p> <p>Updated SFL timetable to support writing in each class P2-P7 – regular moderation of target learners by SFL and CTs.</p> <p>SLT triangulation of Literacy and Numeracy following tracking meetings – Nov 24</p> <p>Moderation with other schools to start with writing at Culter on 11th Feb in-service.</p> <p>SLT will lead pupil focus groups to check progress and predictions of achievement alongside teacher evidence (Focus on literacy and numeracy). May 24, Nov 24</p> <p>Analysis of NSA used to triangulate teacher judgement of achievement and next steps in learning – transition, planning and tracking meetings June 24, Sept 24, Nov 24</p> <p>SLT will plan opportunities for CTs from other settings – literacy with Ferryhill and Culter May 25</p>	<p>pupil work and focus groups to triangulate judgement about progress and level achieved.</p> <p>Annual stage partner moderation activity will support shared understanding of progress.</p> <p>SLT will plan numeracy moderation activities with teachers from other ASG and trio schools.</p>	
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3.2 Raising Attainment & Achievement - Weak

Areas for Improvement	Actions Required	Desired Outcomes for Learners	Stakeholders & timescales	Evidence and confirmed completion	Next Steps
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Improve attainment in Literacy and English.	<p>SLT/CTs to agree expectations for teaching Literacy, closely considering the following points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening & Talking focus: Increase learner confidence levels when contributing their ideas in whole class or small group discussions. • Reading focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Early Level – consider pace (new sounds & words). ➢ First Level - increase confidence when answering inferential and evaluative questions about familiar texts. ➢ Second Level – focus on author techniques (word choice/ emotive language). Increase focus on reading for enjoyment. • Writing focus: Presentation and handwriting – across the school. Increase range of purposes/extended writing. Writing calendar <p>CT to closely consider evidence gathering for Literacy. (Seesaw from ELC – P3, Google Classroom for P4-7.)</p> <p>Literacy Planet to be used for comprehension activities for training from P2 to 7.</p>	The majority of children making greater progress from their prior levels of attainment in Literacy.	Ongoing	<p>Feb '24 - Early Level staff revisited Active Literacy, application of phonics & use of progression planners.</p> <p>March '24 Expectations linked to daily writing/weekly extended writing, feedback and target setting for all learners agreed.</p> <p>April '24 Draft expectations linked to assessment of reading and writing shared.</p> <p>May '24 whole school phonics and spelling progression expectations document developed, due to roll out in August.</p> <p>May '24 handwriting competition class with most improvement shared at assembly.</p> <p>August- October 2024 Roll out of 5/10 minute boxes with PSAs and parent volunteers</p>	<p>Development and self-evaluation work will continue, with a focus on raising attainment in the key areas of literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>PEF PT to continue to lead improvements to raise attainment in literacy.</p>	
Improve attainment in Numeracy and Mathematics.	<p>SLT/CTs to agree expectations for teaching Numeracy, closely considering the following points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number, money and measurement. 	The majority of children making greater progress from their prior levels of attainment in Numeracy.	Ongoing	<p>Started consultation with PT from Braehead – to support action-planning for embedding mastery approach – June 24</p> <p>Audit of numeracy environment – undertaken by pupil focus groups in all classes – Sept 2024</p>	Development and self-evaluation work will continue, with a focus on raising attainment in the key areas of literacy and numeracy.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Early Level – Increase opportunities to use and record numbers. ➤ First Level – Fractions and use of analogue time requires focus. ➤ Second Level – Mental calculations of money including percentages – requires focus. • Shape, position and movement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focus required – angles. ➤ Further opportunities to consolidate S, P & M learning needed. • Information handling. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Focus needed – recording data/use of digital technologies. <p>CT to closely consider evidence gathering for Numeracy. (Seesaw from ELC – P3, Google Classroom for P4-7.)</p>			<p>CPA training by CfE level – Kris Karbis Braehead – Nov 2024</p> <p>Numeracy presentation focus and class competition – Nov 2024</p> <p>Revisited maths expectation agreement with CTs – November 2024</p>	Sfl teacher to lead improvements to raise attainment in numeracy.	
Senior leaders need to establish a range of accurate data on how well children are progressing in their learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT to audit current assessment approaches. • CT/SLT sharing session to be undertaken. Share good practice/new examples for assessment/evidence gathering, across the curriculum. (Promote collaboration/learning from each other.) • SLT to create a clear assessment calendar and system for tracking and monitoring accurate data. 	CTs increased confidence in their use of a range of assessments, data, and moderation activities will ensure professional judgements are increasingly robust.	June 24	<p>Feb to May 24 – development work on ongoing and holistic assessment and practice agreed – focus on development of holistic assessment approaches in literacy (T&L, reading and writing) – revisited following QA work – May 24</p> <p>Shared understanding of 75% as indicator of achievement for periodic and holistic assessments.</p> <p>Triangulation of tracking information developed and implemented May 24 (taking advice from management) - to be discussed with management in May 24</p> <p>Assessment calendar to be reviewed as part of WTA discussions – June 24</p>	<p>SLT will continue to review range of accurate data on how well children are progressing in their learning; including ongoing and periodic assessment evidence.</p> <p>Power BI training to access up-to-date attainment for key groups.</p> <p>Termly tracking and planning meetings will include consideration of children from key</p>	

					groups and to include analysis of progress and effectiveness of measures in place to raise attainment.	
Senior leaders and staff's analysis of data does not yet identify trends in attainment over time for different groups of children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems to be established to enable staff to monitor and report on the progress of learners (i.e. EAL/Care Experienced learners). Focus on specific cohorts – May tracking meetings. SIMD in the classroom staff input, considering impacts of poverty on attainment for each year group at Westpark – Dec 24 	Staff are able to use assessment information effectively to accelerate children's progress.	May 24	<p>Cohort (SIMD) and group data shared with staff in July 24</p> <p>Class tracking documents developed including specific groups to improve recognition, planning and tracking of progress – Dec 24</p> <p>Tracking overview for attainment for year groups over time, ACC and comparator school – Dec 24</p>	<p>SLT will establish a range of accurate data on how well children are progressing in their learning; including ongoing and periodic assessment evidence. Power BI training to access up-to-date attainment for key groups.</p> <p>Termly tracking and planning meetings will include consideration of children from key groups and to include analysis of progress and effectiveness of measures in place to raise attainment.</p>	
Further develop tracking systems linked to participation in club. SLT/CTs need to link to the specific skills being developed through participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLT/CT to consider use of ACC Skills Framework. ACC Skills Framework (sharepoint.com) 	Children will understand the skills they are learning through these experiences.	October 24	<p>Tracking of skills through IDL – May 24</p> <p>Added skills column to wider achievement tracker – Dec 23</p> <p>Golden Time linked to skills</p> <p>Working with Active Schools to develop use of skills language in extra-curricular areas. - Oct 24</p> <p>Working with Gen + to develop tracking of skills development. Jan 25</p>	The wider achievement tracker has been updated to include reference to metaskills demonstrated. SLT/CTs will link to the specific skills being developed through participation.	
Staff should consider how	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLT/CTs to audit current opportunities for pupils to 	Leadership opportunities will	Aug 24	Updated Westpark Skillshop plan – Aug 24.	Staff will consider how children can take	

children can take on more leadership opportunities across the school.	take on leadership opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share ideas/agree plans to increase opportunities. 	enable learners to be included more fully in school improvement.		Termly audit of wider achievement tracker to target opportunities. IDL audit and stage planning of 8 steps – November in service – to ensure opportunities for leadership planned for. Audit of leadership opportunities across school- Nov 24 Development of leadership opportunities across school – Feb 25	on more leadership opportunities across the school.	
SLT to further use and analyse the data linked to the poverty related gap , more rigorously.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop use of Pupil Equity planner. HT to link in with Suzie Wood, Education Scotland Attainment Advisor. 	SLT will be able to identify how effective targetted interventions are helping children most affected by poverty to attain as best they can.	June 24	Cohort (SIMD) and group data for each class ACC PEF tracking tool PEF gap analysis tracker Class trackers with PEF categories	PEF tracker will inform analysis of impacts of interventions to close the poverty related attainment gap.	

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Action Plan 1

Name of Setting: Little Clouds Nursery

Areas for improvement	Action required	Stakeholders & timescale	Desired outcomes for children	Evidence and review/confirmed completion	RAG Rating
How good is our care play and learning? 1.1 Nurturing care and support & 1.3 Play and learning					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provider must have a robust plan in place which details how the service will provide quality play and learning opportunities that are child-led, meaningful and sufficiently challenging. Support children's learning and development the provider should ensure that children access a range of balanced, stimulating and child focused play experiences 					
a) Ensure all staff have sufficient knowledge and understanding of child development and how to support children's learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff meetings will have dates/themes planned in advance to provide relevant training. 	Management	Children will be supported by reflective staff who endeavour to provide quality learning experiences. Children's learning experiences will be catered to their individual needs, preferences, age and stage of development. Children will have the opportunity to experience stimulating and inviting learning experiences based on their interests.	Communication issued to all staff and displayed. 16/12/2024	Green
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff meetings will be used effectively to develop staff' continuous professional development/build understanding on planning and curriculums and guidance through interactive in-house sessions. Offer further training opportunities for staff to deepen their understanding of aspects of play and learning, such as schemas. 	Management		Meeting agenda's, training content, ongoing monitoring of implementation & practice. Ongoing	Amber
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locality lead to provide training on quality interactions. 	Locality Lead, Management, Pre-School Staff		25/11/2024	Green
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff in a leadership role to attend 'Observation and Communication for Improvement' training, provided by Care Inspectorate to help develop an understanding which will then be shared with the team. 	Management, Room Leads, Assistant Room Leads		Staff to share their learning and implement this. Audits of observations to show progress.	Amber
b) Ensure all staff have sufficient knowledge and understanding of balanced planning approaches					

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<p>that effectively support children's learning.</p> <p>c) Ensuring children regularly access a balance of spontaneous and planned play experiences as part of their day.</p> <p>d) Ensure children are provided with activities that are age and stage appropriate.</p> <p>e) Ensure activities and play experiences provide sufficient challenge and</p>			<p>Children will be supported by staff who are committed to self-evaluation in order to improve practice.</p> <p>Children will be supported by staff who share the same vision, values and aims for learning and assessment.</p> <p>Children will feel inspired to learn through engaging with staff who promote their learning needs.</p> <p>Children will be supported by a staff team who works well together to meet the outcomes for all children through continuous evaluation.</p> <p>Children will be cared for in an environment that promotes continuous improvement and self-</p>	<p>23rd/24th January 2025 – Rory attended. 23rd, course cancelled 24th.</p> <p>13th/14th February 2025 – Emma Anderson & Gillian Reid attending.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide staff with 'I can statements' and provide them with an initial introduction to how these can be used. 	Management		Ongoing monitoring of next steps in observations.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a better system for the tracking of next steps. 	Management, All Staff		<p>Next steps form to feature in planning packs.</p> <p>24th February 2025</p> <p>Check with leads at weekly planning meetings that these are getting used for planning for children.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss and go over Leuven scale with staff team to support their understanding of levels of well-being and engagement. 	Management, All Staff		<p>Leuven scale to be discussed at staff meeting and encourage staff to identify where we could add this for self-evaluation in relation to children's well-being & involvement.</p> <p>24th March 2025</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide outerwear for staff to ensure they are equipped for all weathers, providing proper engagement with the children when outdoors. 	Provider, Management		<p>Once provided, monitor if interactions and level of engagement outdoors have improved.</p>	

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Appendix F - Little Clouds Improvement Action Plan

engagement to promote children's learning, curiosity and creativity.			reflection in order to improve the service. Children will be supported by knowledgeable staff who are committed to engaging in experiences to further their learning to improve practice.	Carry out spot checks on staff' outwear. 31 st March 2025	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop system for documenting PLODs. 	Management, All Staff		Once form is created, ensure this is being signed off when auditing planning. Ongoing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a more universal planning structure to support staff with their understanding of planning and assessment and roll this out. 	Management, All Staff		Structure to be developed and rolled out to all rooms. 14 th February 2025 Monitoring of this within each room and any changes required to improve it. Audit of planning and recording to identify positive outcome for children. Ongoing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange networking with other settings for staff specifically with settings performing well within play & learning to support and develop understanding further. 	Locality Lead, Management, All Staff		Banana Moon International contacted to organise a visit – no date. Cherry Tree – Abi, Becca & Gillian attended on 21 st November 2024. Notes taken for any proposed changes. Ongoing	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management to work closely with leads to support the development of planning through weekly meetings and regular mentoring/coaching opportunities. 	Management, Room Leads, Assistant Room Leads		Staff will bring planning, next steps, PLOD's and share planned activities.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning packs to be created for all staff which will include CfE, RfA, GIRFEC, CI framework, 'I can' statements etc. 	Management		Meetings to start W/C 17 th February.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management to attend the 4-session pedagogical leadership training provided by Education Scotland to support continuous improvement. 	Management		Packs created and handed out. 7 th February 2025.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management to attend ELC Improvement Programme provided by Care Inspectorate to support continuous improvement. 	Management		Sessions complete by 22 nd January 2025. Discuss learning and any changes required by 10 th February. Roll out changes. Ongoing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve peer review process for all staff to assess one another on activities, interactions, experiences and spaces to identify areas of improvement and build confidence. Room Lead/Assistant Room Lead support staff to do so and report to management weekly. 	Management/Room Leads/Assistant Room Leads All Staff		Sessions complete by 18 th March. Discuss learning and any changes required by 24 th March 2025.	
				Peer review form to be updated by 24 th February 2025. Process to be rolled out to staff by 28 th February. Areas for improvement identified. Ongoing	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop more in-depth processes for reviewing planning and assessment. 	Management		<p>Initial review and adaptations to audit for planning and assessment.</p> <p>3rd March 2025.</p> <p>Audits to be completed every 3 months</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	
How good is our setting? 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities					
The provider must ensure children are cared for in an environment which is clean and hygienic, and they are protected by sufficient infection, prevention and control measures.					
<p>a) Ensure all staff are sufficiently trained, skilled and knowledgeable in infection, prevention and control procedures and guidance.</p> <p>b) Ensure all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in keeping the environment clean and free from hazards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt nappy changing stations, ensuring they are refurbished and resealed to reduce infection control concerns. 	Management/Maintenance	<p>Children will have access to a safe and clean environment. Children will be supported in understanding the importance of good hygiene. Children will feel welcomed into a clean environment by competent and knowledgeable staff. The environment will be well maintained and equipped for the needs of all children attending the setting.</p>	<p>Adaptions completed on 22nd November 2025</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit infection control guidance, highlighting areas where staff require more knowledge and understanding. 	Management		<p>Notes taken on guidance.</p> <p>Completed on 11th November 2025.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide red dust pans and brushes for nappy changing areas to remove sand/grit/dirt before cleaning. 	Management/All Staff		<p>Purchased and in place by 18th November 2025.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase additional steriliser for dummies – Moonbeams sleep room. 	Provider/Management		<p>Steriliser provided and in use by 15th November 2025.</p>	

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c) Ensure that quality assurance of infection prevention and control practices consistently identifies areas for improvement, and that these are actioned promptly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff to develop a deeper understanding of infection control practices through regular training, assessments and quiz style activities. 	All staff		Training scheduled for staff meeting in January 2025.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handwashing resources and videos to be shared with staff, children and parents. 	Management/All Staff/Parents/Children		Meeting required rescheduling – February 2025.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handwashing resources and videos to be shared with staff, children and parents. 			Issue by 7 th March 2025	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff to be re-inducted regarding their roles and expectations concerning infection control, practices should be regularly monitored and issues immediately rectified, including nappy changing and toileting. 	Management		Re-induction planned for February 2025 staff meeting.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop better systems for conducting and monitoring cleaning through producing more user friendly and clear expectations of cleanliness such as rotas and/or checklists ensuring they reflect infection control guidance. 	Management		Monitoring ongoing.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spot checks conducted daily and recorded, feedback given. 			New rotas created and provided to all staff. 2 nd December 2024.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring/conducting spot checks. Ongoing. 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spot checks introduced 11th November 2025 – originally 4x daily, now reduced to 2x daily. January 2025. 	Management			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing monitoring. 				

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share Rose Lodge outbreak with staff to ensure they understand the severity of poor infection control practices. 	Management/All Staff		<p>Feature at February 2025 staff meeting.</p> <p>Staff to provide notes/identify steps not taken for outbreak to occur.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop staff knowledge on safe sleeping by issuing guidance to reflect on current practice. 	All Staff		Issue by 10 th March	
How good is our leadership? - 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well					
To support quality care experiences for children, the provider should improve quality assurance and self-evaluation and embed this into practice.					
<p>a) Ensuring children and families are meaningfully involved and influence changes within the setting.</p> <p>b) Ensuring quality assurance, self-evaluation and improvement plans lead to high quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review aims and objectives with staff, children and their families to develop our ethos and implement a shared vision. 	Management, All staff, Families	<p>Children will feel listened to and supported in an environment where all individuals share the same aims, values and vision. Children will have access to environment that is committed to continuous improvement and development. Children will be supported by</p>	April 2025	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share guidance with parents regarding coming into the setting. 	Management/All Staff/Parents		April 2025	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a more streamlined approach to care plans and chronologies to make them more user friendly 	Management, All staff		<p>Initial review March 2025.</p> <p>Ongoing changes as and when required.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management to evaluate and monitor quality assurance processes to create a more cohesive system that can be understood by everyone. Management to develop a more detailed quality assurance calendar. 	Management All staff		<p>QA calendar created for January 2025.</p> <p>Ongoing reflection to ensure it is robust.</p>	

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care and support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add CI framework to the bottom of monitoring records.		reflective, engaging and proactive staff who aim to provide the best start in life. Children will be cared for in a clean, relaxed, and engaging atmosphere.	December 2024	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide staff with more opportunities to develop their reflection and self-evaluation skills through training (ACC learn) and scheduled staff meetings.	Management All staff		Ongoing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management to conduct monitoring regularly for infection control (handwashing), play and learning, resources and routine.	Management		Daily spot checks as well as planned monthly monitoring.	
Ongoing					
How good is our staff team? – 4.3 Staff deployment					
To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider should ensure staff develop skills, knowledge and					
a) Ensuring children have a safe environment to play and learn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance the use of individualised support plans to ensure all requirements are appropriate to specific staff.	Management/All Staff	Children will be supported by staff who are aware of their roles, responsibilities and work-based goals. Children and staff are supported by a management team who aim to engage effectively and provide quality learning experiences for all.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management to mentor and coach team leads to build their confidence within their roles, which can then be shared with practitioners/trainees once leads are more confident.	Management/All Staff		Management have been present to support in moments which has involved giving feedback. January 2025 Ongoing coaching/mentoring to continue to be implemented.	

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education & Children's Services
DATE	29 April 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Early Intervention Service
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/074
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne
REPORT AUTHOR	Emma Powell/Elaine Thomson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1,1.1.2

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present a proposed operating model for a cost neutral time limited Early Intervention service, to be based at Riverbank School for up to 10 primary children and to share a summary of progress against the recommendations from 'Support for Learning: All our Children and Their Potential' (Angela Morgan, 2020) known as the Morgan Review.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee

- 2.1 Instructs the Chief Officer Education & Lifelong Learning to progress with a time limited (12 months) Early Intervention Service Test of Change at Riverbank School for younger primary school pupils, operational August 2025;
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer Education & Lifelong Learning to report back on progress in 2 committee cycles from commencement of service; and
- 2.3 Instructs the Chief Officer Education & Lifelong Learning to report a full evaluation of the Test of Change within 4 committee cycles from commencement of service.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 As outlined in [F&C/24/322](#), the rise in complexity of pupil need, at times triggered by recent world events, requires consideration of different working practices. Our Exploration of Learners' Needs ([F&C/24/322](#)) data showed us that effective systems and approaches are already in place across education settings in Aberdeen. The most effective systems give school staff meaningful involvement within the system and have strong supportive leadership at its core. Within these systems, strengths and learner-centred approaches are prioritised. The Exploration of Learners' needs also showed us that that multiple examples of good practice exist within education that can be built upon, that school staff, families, trade union representatives, and associated

educational professionals were all keen to work together in regards to the increased complexity of learners. Continuing and greater partnership working came through as a strong theme – between professionals who work to support schools, but also within Associated School Groups, between schools and partner agencies, and between schools and families. The opportunities for schools and school staff to work more closely alongside specialist services and external partners to build capacity and provide supportive collaborative working around a learner emerged as a key theme and an area that could be further developed. Increased transparency and signposting to parents was highlighted. The importance of a sense of belonging, and adults that care about them, to learners was key and rated positively by most learners who took part.

- 3.2 Committee instructed that an Early Intervention Provision, which mirrors arrangements in our Language Support Provisions and supports the positive return to mainstream school following a period of intensive support, be developed for younger children and presented to Committee for approval. Since the instruction Audit Scotland have carried out a review of Additional Support for Learning and called for recommendations at both national government and local authority level. We welcome the recommendations of Audit Scotland's review of Additional Support for Learning, and feel they align to our own direction of travel in terms of reinforcing our data gathering and scrutiny; enhancing our learning, teaching, and assessment; further developing our mainstream universal support and professional learning offers; creating a proposal for an innovative early intervention support building on existing good practice and utilising our range of Additional Support Needs & Outreach Services to try and address the growth in complexity of Additional Support for Learning; and remain adaptive and responsive to policy and guidance from Scottish Government & COSLA.
- 3.3 Officers have engaged with a range of key stakeholders to help co-design the proposals presented to Members for approval, this has included engagement with representative parents and carers, school staff, trade unions, and critically with learners.

LEARNING FROM WHAT OUR LEARNERS TOLD US

- 3.4 The Educational Psychology Service liaised with learners currently accessing Language Support Provisions (Appendix A). This was felt to be important as Language Support Provision learners are away from their mainstream home school for a period of time so have a similar experience to that being replicated through the proposed Test of Change.
- 3.5 Key components that make up a sense of belonging were highlighted by learners, alongside the success and enjoyment the learners had in their provisions. Learners told us that the following things are important to them:
- Opportunities to play – access to a wide range of appropriate (for their developmental stage) play opportunities - this could be imaginative, symbolic, sensory, arts and crafts, pretend, construction or toys
 - Opportunities for success in their learning

- Their successes being recognised and acknowledged – e.g. displayed visibly or listened to, and/or rewarded with feedback and positive attention
- A learning space that supports their needs, with accessible work, shared targets and activities, and visible supports and help, including key adults to help them
- Connections are important to them
 - with key adults, including (for some) teachers from their mainstream home-schools
 - to have friends – access to appropriate peers matter to them
 - to have access to spaces that support these connections, outdoor spaces, and play outside, alongside spaces internal to schools with friendly adults, e.g. dinner hall
- The opportunities for ‘social snack’ and food within their learning environment

3.6 These critical insights built on learners voice within the Exploration of Learners’ Needs ([F&C/24/322](#) which showed us the importance of key staff, and the sense of belonging learners’ mostly had across Aberdeen City. from learners have been built into our proposed Operating Model. On-going and longer-term engagement with Aberdeen City learners who have previously attended a Language Support Provision and transitioned back to their home school will continue to guide our work. It is evident through the feedback from those accessing the Language Support Provisions that careful consideration of how the mainstream home schools stay connected to the learners when they are accessing the Early Intervention Service is essential.

LEARNING FROM WHAT OUR STAFF TOLD US

- 3.7 26 Primary school Head Teachers were consulted and Request for Assistance data was scrutinised. This combined data helped identify three key groups of learners thought to be a priority for the Early Intervention Service (children with a high-level of dysregulated behaviour; children with experiences of trauma; children with neurodivergence).
- 3.8 It is recognised that there is much interaction between the three groups. There already exists the Autism Outreach Service to support schools to support neurodivergent learners within mainstream settings. It is important that any new service provides a different model to the current outreach service. Clear identifiers are required to provide clarity for all stakeholders on who would access the new Early Intervention Service and when. One of the key pieces of learning from the previous Exploration of Learners' Needs ([F&C/24/322](#)) was the need for training and support for school staff, working alongside and with them over a period of time. This will be built into the Test of Change model.

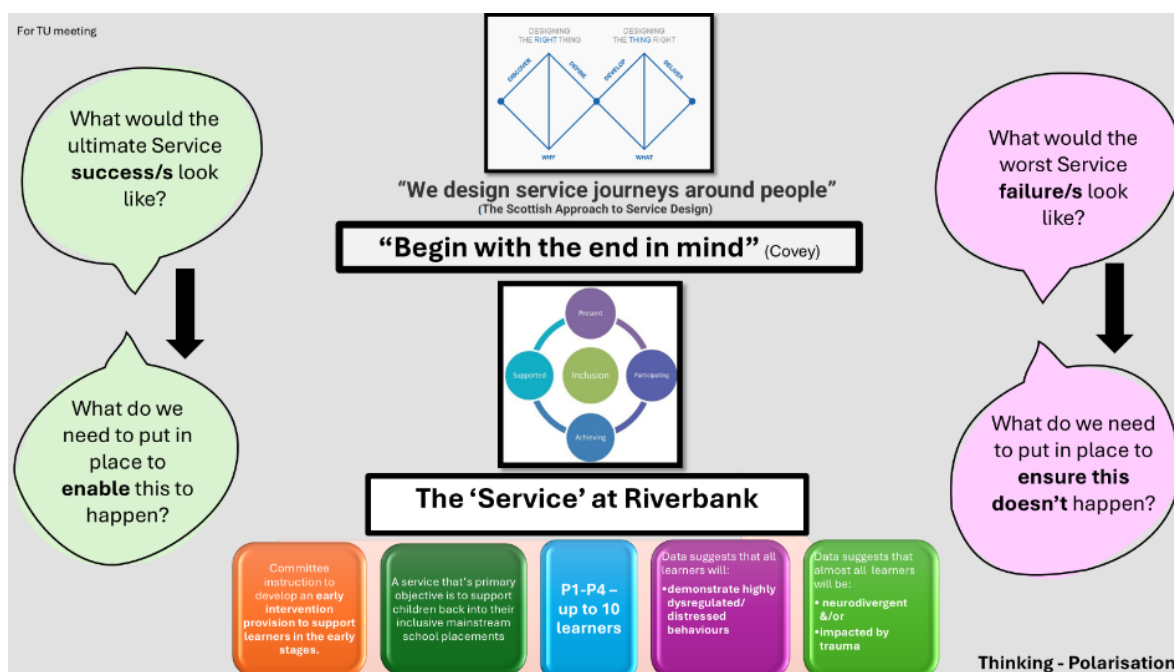
LEARNING FROM WHAT PARENTS AND CARERS TOLD US.

- 3.9 During the Exploration of Learners' Needs ([F&C/24/322](#)) parents and carers told us that the most effective experiences were when there was clear partnership working between parent/carers & school; and also between schools & external agencies; when communication was effective and transparent; when universal supports were embedded; with increased capacity building of school staff; with the learner at the centre of it all. To build on this learning, presentations and consultations have taken place with parent and carer representatives to consider "What would the ultimate service success look like?" and "What would we need to put in place to allow that to happen?". These were then considered in contrast to "What would the worst service failures look like?" and "What would we need to put in place to ensure this would not happen?". This was all considered using the Four Pillars of Inclusion model with further information available in Appendix B.
- 3.10 The top 3 themes that arose through the parental consultation were:
- Personal growth for each pupil – experiencing success
 - Provide resources and training for staff/service/parents
 - Recognition of success and 'feeling' it
- 3.11 In addition to this parents shared that their must haves were:
- Consistency
 - Structure – familiarity
- 3.12 Parents and carers felt the following values must be at the root of the service to ensure the best outcomes for the young people :
- Community – togetherness & belonging
 - Honesty
 - Safe
 - Happy
 - Valued for being themselves
 - Cared for

3.13 These important insights have been built into the proposed model.

LEARNING FROM WHAT TRADE UNION COLLEAGUES TOLD US

3.14 Consultation with Trade Union partners was based around the Four Pillars of Inclusion model. As can be seen below, one of the key questions asked of this group was, “What would you consider the essential values of this new service?”



3.15 The main themes emerging from this session have been built into plans and were:

- All Trade Union colleagues were pleased and acknowledged that this service was a step in the right direction.
- All Trade Union colleagues agreed that the personalised approach for individual pupils was positive
- All Trade Union Colleagues appreciated that pupils would be assessed on an individual basis to reduce barriers to the service.
- Health and Safety concerns were raised; however, this was addressed through the planned provision of training, support and supervision, which are all included in the design principles.

THE PROPOSED MODEL

3.16 Appendix C details the proposed Operating Model for the test of change project. The proposed Early Intervention Service at Riverbank is based around Education Scotland’s Pillars of Inclusion, as seen below:



- 3.17 The Early Intervention Service, to be known as "The Bridge" ("bridging the gap to sustainable participation") is proposed to work on a 12 week + model. A learner will spend 12 weeks with the service, and then further time provided from the service to support the embedding of interventions and support in the learner's mainstream home school. At the heart of the proposed Early Intervention Service is the learner and their experiences, and appropriate success for them is integral. This means that if there is a learner requiring a little more time than the 12-week model, there will be flexibility to do this.
- 3.18 Supporting the mainstream home school for a successful transition back from the Early Intervention Service is a key tenet of the proposed service. There will be timetabled time each week for the Bridge team to work with staff from the home school. One of the themes that came through the Exploration of Learners' Needs ([F&C/24/322](#)) was the importance of staff being supported in a range of ways, including working alongside others to learn and be supported by them.
- 3.19 Evaluating the impact of this Test of Change will be key and a few different evaluation tools will be utilised, with a particular focus on transition points. These include self-evaluation measures for the home school staff, but also objective measures. The Educational Psychology Service have identified a tool that supports evaluation of learning experiences, support, and environment for children with experiences of trauma. This tool will be used with individual learners in their home school and in the Bridge at Riverbank and will be used to help shape the general learning environment. Evaluation will be led by the Educational Psychology Service. Metrics of attendance and reported incidents in their home school setting will also be used to track impact on the learners and settings accessing the Bridge. Feedback from stakeholders will also feed into the evaluation of this Test of Change.
- 3.20 **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**
- In parallel with the development of The Bridge Test of Change, work has progressed to continually improve the professional learning offer to all staff across the Service in keeping with the recommendations from the Morgan Review. As outlined earlier, the need for high quality professional learning came through the previous exploration of learners' needs ([F&C/24/322](#)).
- 3.21 An Additional Support Needs Learning Festival took place on the February Inservice days, and 167 Pupil Support Assistants attended. A range of workshops were delivered by the wider ASN & Wellbeing Team comprising of the ASN and Outreach Service, Orchard Brae School, Orchard Brae Complex

ASN Service and the Educational Psychology Service. Topics covered included Sensory Needs, Planning for Support, Gathering Learners Voice to meaningfully include them in planning, Emotion Coaching and Emotional Based School Non-Attendance. Short-term impact evaluations have been positive, and services involved have received follow-up enquiries regarding topics covered, suggesting longer-term implementation of supports provided through the inputs. Longer-term follow-up is planned by the Education Support Officer co-ordinating the event.

- 3.22 The Early Learning & Childcare Service have a full day event for Early Years Practitioners planned for May 2025. In addition, dates have been identified and shared with Head Teachers for Local Authority INSET days next year. The impact of professional learning will continue to be monitored.
- 3.23 Trade Unions have been consulted on a draft model for staff, which follows the Scottish Government Framework of “Informed, Skilled & Enhanced” and will be utilised to help build the capacity and capability of all newly appointed Pupil Support Assistants to meet the demands of their work in learning settings. Consultation with other local authorities to build on their learning in this area has taken place, to enhance and develop local plans.
- 3.24 The induction framework, following final consultation and adjustments will be launched for the beginning of next academic year, to ensure all new starts will be accessing this. Evaluative feedback will be sought, including longer-term impact data from both Pupil Support Assistants and their senior leaders.

CONCLUSION

- 3.25 Further consultation with key stakeholders has added to our previously held data from the Exploration of Learners Needs ([F&C/24/322](#)). This further data supports and has shaped the development of The Bridge, an Early Intervention Service to be located at Riverbank School.
- 3.26 This service will have a clear focus on time limited but ongoing practical support for up to 10 learners who require a different approach. This approach will be wrap around in terms of involving the learner’s mainstream home school, parents and carers. Identifying what helps the learner, and what can be put in place within their mainstream home school, to ensure ongoing successes for them.
- 3.27 A key theme from both learner and parental consultation was the need for learners to have experiences of success, and for those successes to be recognised. A need for community and a sense of belonging also came through both parental and learner consultation, and how this is delivered in both the Bridge and in the mainstream home-school remains a key focus.
- 3.28 Opportunities for developmentally appropriate play, developmentally appropriate learning experiences, success in their learning, and creating healthy connections to adults and their mainstream home school will all be prioritised in line with what was shared through our learner consultation process.

- 3.29 These proposals are fully in keeping with the recommendations from the Morgan Review. An update of local and national progress against the Morgan Review recommendations is available in Appendix D. We have also carefully considered the local resources and practices against the Audit Scotland Review recommendations to ensure these are aligned to the needs of the service and Aberdeen's learners. The proposals in this report are fully in line with the Audit Scotland Review of Additional Support for Learning recommendations.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 every education authority must make adequate and efficient provision for the additional support required by each child or young person having additional needs and monitor and review that support. This Report addresses how these duties can be fulfilled more effectively.

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?
Strategic Risk	Risk of young people not being appropriately supported and unable to achieve positive destinations	Training for staff and appropriate supports in place for young people. Test of change will reduce potential risk	L	Yes
Compliance	Risk of not complying with legislation and legal challenge (tribunals)	Mitigated by young people receiving the appropriate level of support	M	Yes
Operational	Staff feeling overwhelmed leading to low morale	Mitigated by offering high quality professional learning to ensure staff can meet their statutory	L	Yes

		duties under The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010.		
Financial	Risk of not having sufficient resource	Mitigated by realigning current services to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City today.	L	Yes
Reputational	Risk of not effectively meeting the needs of all learners	Services realigned to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	Risk of environmental factors inhibiting positive outcomes for learners	Single service realignment will strengthen universal/targeted support and sharing of best practice, thus preventing escalation of need through strengthened practice and reasonable adjustment.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>Council Delivery Plan 2024</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following ACC Priorities:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise attainment and achievement • Support improvement in the health and wellbeing of children and young people • Maximise the impact Of Early Learning and Childcare
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 3 - 95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27-30 month review by 2026. Through offering support to all parents and sharing parenting opportunities we will create networks of support for families of children with additional support needs.</p> <p>The proposals within this report also support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 6 – 95% of children living in our</p>

	<p>priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026. Through developing partnerships and working with families to ensure all young people have access to a positive destination</p> <p>The proposals within this report also support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 8– 100% of children with Additional Support Needs /Disabilities will experience a positive destination by 2026. Through developing partnerships and working with families to ensure all young people have access to a positive destination. Through improving support for parents and supporting young people with an early intervention model.</p>
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals in this report seek to ensure the best use of resource in the system, promoting an understanding of the circumstances of individual children and young people to ensure that appropriate and timely personalised support is available to them.</p> <p>Effective use of resources will help to ensure all initiatives and interventions impact positively on all children and young people and are particularly targeted at those who are adversely affected by poverty.</p> <p>Specific links to:</p> <p>Stretch Outcome 4 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026</p> <p>Stretch Outcome 6 95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026</p> <p>Stretch Outcome 7 83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.</p>
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	<p>Underpinning the work of all schools in Aberdeen City is reducing the poverty related attainment gap and achieving excellence and equity for all.</p>
Community Empowerment Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 16 – 50% of people report they feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026.</p> <p>There will be consultation with parents as part of the process for allocating additional support through the early intervention setting</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	
Other	

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Behaviour Action Plan, -[F&C/24/322](#)

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A Consultation with Language Support Provisions
Appendix B Consultation with Parents
Appendix C Operational Guidance for Proposed Early Intervention Service
Appendix D Progress against the Morgan Review

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Appendix A – Consultation with Learners in Language Support Provisions

Rationale:

Considering the transitional model of the proposed Early Intervention Service, with children spending time away from their mainstream home school it was felt important to consult with the demographic closest to this experience. The set-up and successes of the Language Support Provisions in providing language support and interventions for time limited periods before the learners' transition back to their mainstream home school seemed a good demographic match.

Learners were first selected by each Language Support Provision. Learners then gave their informed consent before participating in the activities with the Educational Psychology Service. This was sought by explaining, using visuals, the task and the purpose of the activity. All learners participated positively, without distress and showed and expressed enjoyment in the activities.

The Educational Psychology Service utilised tools from the Mosaic Approach (Clark & Moss, 2001) for engaging learners in meaningful data collection. This approach is now used with all ages but is recommended for early stages of education, and due to the language development stages of the settings this felt appropriate. The learners in each setting were anonymised and not identified. The two approaches chosen were visual, active and practical approaches that could be supported with visual aids that the learners were familiar with in each setting. They were not language heavy activities. The two approaches were "Photography Walk" and "Learning Map". These two learner-led approaches were used alongside EPS observation (for triangulation purposes). This EPS observation comprised of the recording of - spoken phrases, emotional presentation, and engagement of learners.

The Mosaic approach brings together a range of methods for listening to learners about their experiences and what matters to them. This approach was felt to gather more meaningful and rich data from the learners, given their support needs around expressive (spoken) and receptive (understanding) language as opposed to asking direct questions or interviewing the learners. These tools were also viewed as being engaging and enjoyable for the learners involved. This was confirmed by the engagement, enthusiasm and enjoyment of learners evident in both parts of the consultation.

Process:

The Educational Psychology Service consulted with 10 (11 initially but 1 was absent at the 'Maps' stage) learners across the two Language Support Provisions in Aberdeen City. This was over 50% of learners who were currently attending these

provisions. The roll of these provisions is fluid as learners transition back to their home schools anytime from their 6-week assessment period to a few years after starting in the provision. The Language Support Provision has learners of a range of ages from Nursery Stage to Primary 3/4.

The learners directly engaged in two activities that were learner led, they had ownership of each activity, and the Educational Psychologist researchers were there to facilitate their experiences but not direct or lead them. The Educational Psychologists asked questions using visual prompt cards, such as “Where”, “Who”, “When” & “Why”? They also asked, using visuals, about emotions experienced. The learners used a picture-taking device independently and moved around their learning space, taking pictures of areas, activities, people and things that were important to them, and important for others to know about their school.

All the pictures each learner took were printed out, and the second part of the data gathering was for an Educational Psychologist to facilitate a map-making activity with each learner where they could create a “map” of their school. Learners liked the analogy of making a “treasure map” of their learning areas. Further visual aides were introduced at this time, including board maker symbols to support how activities or space were interacted with, and emotions experienced.

Data:

The table below shows the variety of themes gathered through the data. All items selected by the learners to use in their ‘learning maps’ were coded based on their responses, their previous photography walk, and the EP’s observation. Each label or code applied to their choices is presented in a different colour to aide distinction. The labels were then merged and collapsed into themes. Three groups of labels were not themed, due to their reduced frequency of occurrence. The themes are shown below, with five themes identified that had more than 2 codes attached.

The five themes (in numerical ranking) were:

- Developmentally Appropriate Play
- Acknowledging Success in Literacy & Communication
- Interactive & Accessible Displays
- Connection
- Food (snack time)

Developmentally appropriate play	Acknowledging Success in Literacy & Communication	Interactive & Accessible Displays	Connection	Food			
Toys (Traditional)	Own Work (literacy)	Whiteboard	Teachers	Snack Table	Jigsaw	Clock	Painting Over-all
Pretend Play	Books	Wall Displays	Friend	Food	Maths Activity	Bath-room	
Computer	Spelling	Phonics Wall	Funny	Snack Board			
Games	Communication Supports	Feelings wall	ME				
Tools	Colours		Outdoor Area				
Open Play Space	Learning Objects (soft toys)		Kitchen				
Sand Pit							
Construction Materials							
Lego							
Art/Craft Resources							

Example Learning Maps (faces and names have been obscured to keep the data anonymous):



Analysis and Reflections:

Learners told us through their actions and choices in those sessions that the following things are important to them:

- Opportunities to play – access to a wide range of appropriate (for their developmental stage) play opportunities - this could be imaginative, symbolic, sensory, arts and crafts, pretend, construction or toys
- Opportunities for success in their learning
- Their successes being recognised and acknowledged – e.g. displayed visibly or listened to, and/or rewarded with feedback and positive attention
- A learning space that supports their needs, with accessible work, shared targets and activities, and visible supports and help, including key adults to help them
- Connections are important to them
 - with key adults, including (for some) teachers from their mainstream home-schools
 - to have friends – access to appropriate peers' matter to them
 - to have access to spaces that support these connections, outdoor spaces, and play outside, alongside spaces internal to schools with friendly adults, e.g. dinner hall
- The opportunities for 'social snack' and food within their learning environment

Some learners the Educational Psychology Service engaged with, are in the process of transitioning back to their home schools. Three learners across the two provisions, and one pupil who has already transitioned back to his home mainstream setting but returns as a helper to the Language Support Provision. They shared excitement around having more friends and showing what they have learned during their time at the language support provision. One learner shared some anxious feelings around returning to their mainstream home school.

Next Steps:

The Educational Psychology Service will follow-up with three pupils who are transitioned back to their mainstream home-schools this term. This will take place in term 1 of the new academic year to allow for time to settle back into their new provision. The Photography Walk and Maps Activity will be repeated for them back in their mainstream home school to capture their important experiences and aspects of their learning and learning environments. This will give us data to compare, which can feed into the test of change regarding the transition of learners back to their mainstream home school. A further three other pupils will be selected who have historically transitioned back to their mainstream home school. This will give longer term data to consider.

Appendix B – Consultation with Parents

Method

The Quality Improvement Manager for ASN & Wellbeing and the ASN Outreach Complex Needs Service teacher hosted a parental consultation session. Despite going through a variety of different sources to attract interest, number of parents engaging was lower than hoped (4).

What would ultimate success look like for Service?	What would enable this to happen?
Varies from child to child – personalised outcomes	Multi-agency meetings in place
Reviews are regular	Regular and flexible – 6 weekly?
Key workers – consistency around child	Timetable staff – who's who ?
Open communication between school and families	See Saw
Short term shared goals.	Being clear on who 'leads' each goal but making sure that everyone is on board so shared Trust
Meetings that are focussed on the issues of the day	Dealing with immediate issues – Trust Staff who know our children
Children achievements are understood and celebrated in a meaningful way for the child. Identify with child what success looks like	Diverse culture is embraced and celebrated
Children to not be labelled as difficult	Dealing with the issues causing challenges
Children to be seen and heard	
Children in the new service feel they belong and feel safe	Allowing children to be
Child to feel that they belong to their mainstream home school, and they feel safe there	Trust
Not to be 'put home'	Problem solving together. Risk assessment which has been written by all including family
Empower parents to have a voice	Goals for families Consider generational trauma
Access to interpreters to support parents understanding when ESL needs	
Being transparent	No blame, trust what is said
No need to 'fight' to get heard	Being respected and listened to
What would failure look like	What needs to be put in place to ensure this doesn't happen?

Too scared to go in	Trust
People getting hurt	Risk assessment which has been written by all including family
Being lied to	Transparency

Top 3

- Personal growth for each pupil – experiencing success
- Provide resources and training for staff/service/parents
- Recognition of success and ‘feeling’ it

Must have:

- Consistency
- Structure – familiarity

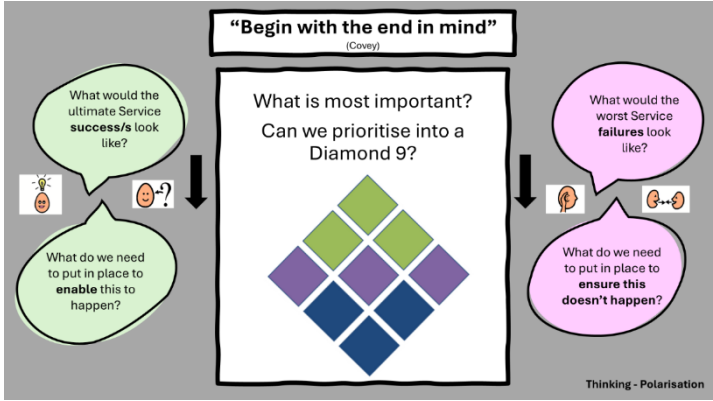
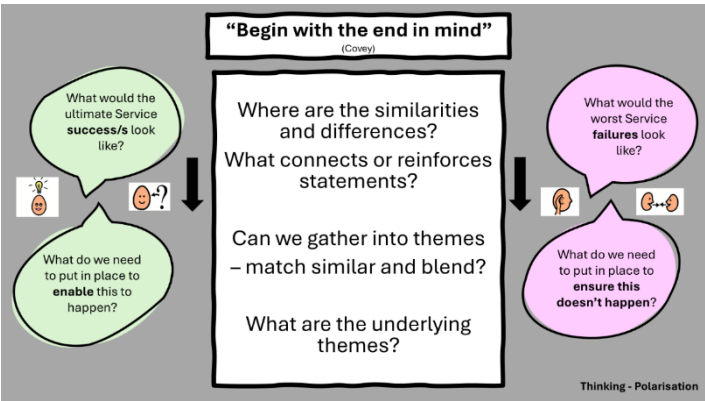
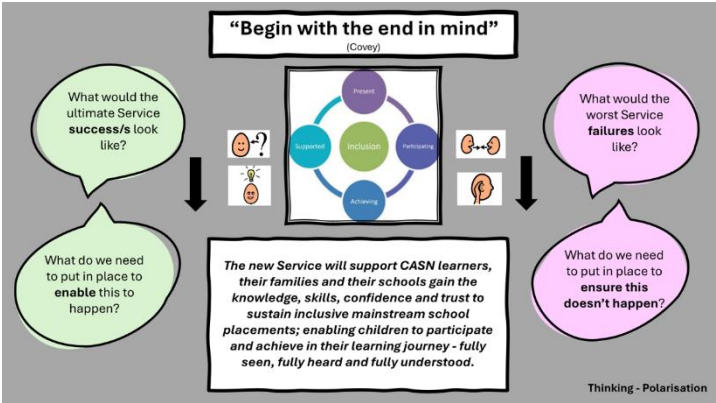
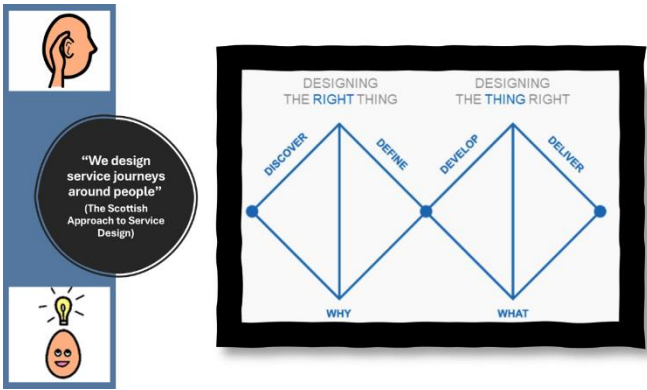
What Values are at the root of the above?:

- Community – togetherness & belonging
- Honesty
- Safe
- Happy
- Valued for being themselves
- Cared for

General Comments from Parents separate to the above:

- Observe children getting picked up after a very short time in school e.g. 1 hr - need to extend the children’s time in school through better problem solving together.
- Lot of behavioural impact – need to reduce this
- Need to increase honesty across schools – need more transparency
- Parents will benefit from support – they have their own unmet needs – help them via sign posting to get their needs met too. e.g. lighthouse in Tillydrone

Exemplar slides used:



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The Bridge (Participation) Service at Riverbank School

“bridging the gap to sustainable participation”

Supporting P1 - P4 complex Additional Support Needs learners, their families and their schools gain the knowledge, skills, confidence and trust to sustain inclusive mainstream school placements; enabling learners to participate and achieve in their learning journey - fully seen, heard and understood.

Contents

Introduction	3
1. Why was the Service conceived?	3
2. What is the vision for the Service?	3
3. Why a test of change?	4
4. Which learner is the Service intended for?	5
5. What evidence base will the Service use to underpin offer and practice?	5
6. What will the Service offer?	7
7. What are the intended outcomes?	8
8. Who will deliver the service and how have costs been considered?	9
9. What are the criteria for accessing the service?	11
10. Are there implications for the learner's mainstream home school?	12
11. What happens if the Service does not make the desired impact for the learner?	13

Introduction

Following a period of co-design with key stakeholders, this document contains a proposed operating model for the Early Intervention Service.

Within the document Service and School refer to:

Service – The new service at Riverbank (The Bridge)

School – The learner's mainstream home school

1. Why was the Service conceived?

Aberdeen City Education and Children's Services Committee instructed officers to develop an early intervention provision to support learners in the early stages. This instruction was given as a result of in-depth analysis undertaken which determined a rising number of younger learners displaying dysregulated and distressed behaviour in city schools. The national and local implementation of the Morgan Review recommendations, and current policy of a presumption of mainstreaming have heavily influenced planning.

A rights-based approach guides Aberdeen City's response to these challenges, valuing that with appropriate intervention, almost all learners belong in mainstream schools, gaining valuable skills for learning, life and living, alongside their peers. By providing a raised level of connected early intervention (learners/home/school), these learners will find the regulation and resilience they need. This alongside the Early Intervention Service's appropriate participation and engagement opportunities will allow these learners to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.

2. What is the vision for the Service?

"Scotland's education system is based on children's rights and inclusion for all learners. This ensures that every child and young person receives the support they need to benefit fully from the opportunities provided by the Curriculum for Excellence" (Education Scotland Website)

A draft vision, underpinned by Education Scotland's Inclusion pillars (figure1) has been developed to guide the development of the Service. Work to co-construct finalised vision, values and aims continues.



Figure 1

Draft vision:

Supporting P1 – P4 complex Additional Support Needs learners, their families and their schools gain the knowledge, skills, confidence and trust to sustain inclusive mainstream school placements; enabling learners to participate and achieve in their learning journey - fully seen, heard and understood.

3. Why a test of change?

Given this is a new service offer, it requires rigorous testing and challenge; the impact of the Service will be scrutinised through a test of change lens, time limited to academic year 2025/26. In doing so, the results will ascertain if the Service has merit in helping to address some of the challenges faced by learners and therefore determine future form and sustainability considerations.

A range of measures are proposed to capture the impact of this project. These include measures for individual learners – before, during and after their period of engagement, feedback from families, and outcomes on return to school. Progression indicators relating to the family and school will also be sought. Indicators will be finalised and documented when the cohort of pupils who will benefit from the Test of Change has been identified.

4. For which learners is the Service intended?

The Service will provide bespoke packages for up to 10 P1- P4 learners within the Services designated classrooms situated in the new Riverbank school. These learners share a need for a specialist level of support and understanding to bridge the gap to sustainable mainstream school placement. Although the learners will have a range of personalised factors influencing their limited participation in their current school offer, common to all will be high levels of dysregulation and/or distress. Placements will not be defined by diagnosis however; current data has indicated that learners are likely to have neurodivergent conditions and/or trauma.

5. What evidence base will the Service use to underpin offer and practice?

UNCRC: The Service will be built and guided by strong evidence-based foundations rooted in the rights of the **learners**.

There are four articles in the UNCRC that are seen as special. They are known as the “General Principles” and they help to interpret all the other articles of the Convention. These articles are considered to be so essential that if they are violated, this will have an impact on all other rights. These “General Principles” are:

- Non-discrimination (Article 2)
- Best interest of the child (Article 3)
- Right to life, survival and development (Article 6)
- Right to be heard (Article 12)

The Convention is built upon the three hard Ps; provision, protection and participation. These will be used to underpin values and direct practice, with the learner at the centre. Child friendly plans and learner voice will be key to the delivery of the service.

The Lundy participation model: The Lundy Model, developed by Professor Laura Lundy at Queens University Belfast in 2007 **helps us understand the conditions that need to be present, if we are to deliver on Article 12 of the UNCRC with transparency and integrity.**

The model clearly sets out four criteria that must be fulfilled to help inform understanding of participation and support improvements in practice. The concepts within the Lundy Model are interrelated and do more than identify strength and weaknesses in practice; they can help improve it. Each of the four elements must be considered, in order. If any one of the elements is missing, it undermines the process itself and will impact on the final outcome.

It will be used to ensure learners voice is not only elucidated but also carries influence, leading to person-centred planning approaches and responses (Appendix 1).

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC): The GIRFEC principles and established practice will guide the multi-agency team process. GIRFEC is about enhancing the wellbeing of all children and young people as well as building a flexible scaffold of support: where it is needed, for as long as it is needed. This is delivered through the core components of:

- a key person who is a clear point of contact for children, young people and families to go to for support and advice. A key person can also connect families to a wider network of support and services so that they get the right help, at the right time, from the right people;
- a shared and holistic understanding of wellbeing and a single model of how this can be considered and supported; and,
- a single, shared and rights-based approach to planning for children and young people's wellbeing where support across services is needed, co-ordinated by a lead professional.

The Nurture Principles: Nurture as a practice means relating to and coaching children and young people to help them form positive relationships, build resilience and improve their social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing. When adopted in school, nurture improves attendance, behaviour and attainment, and ensures every child is able to learn. A solid understanding of The Six Principles of Nurture will be implicit in guiding the Service delivery model.

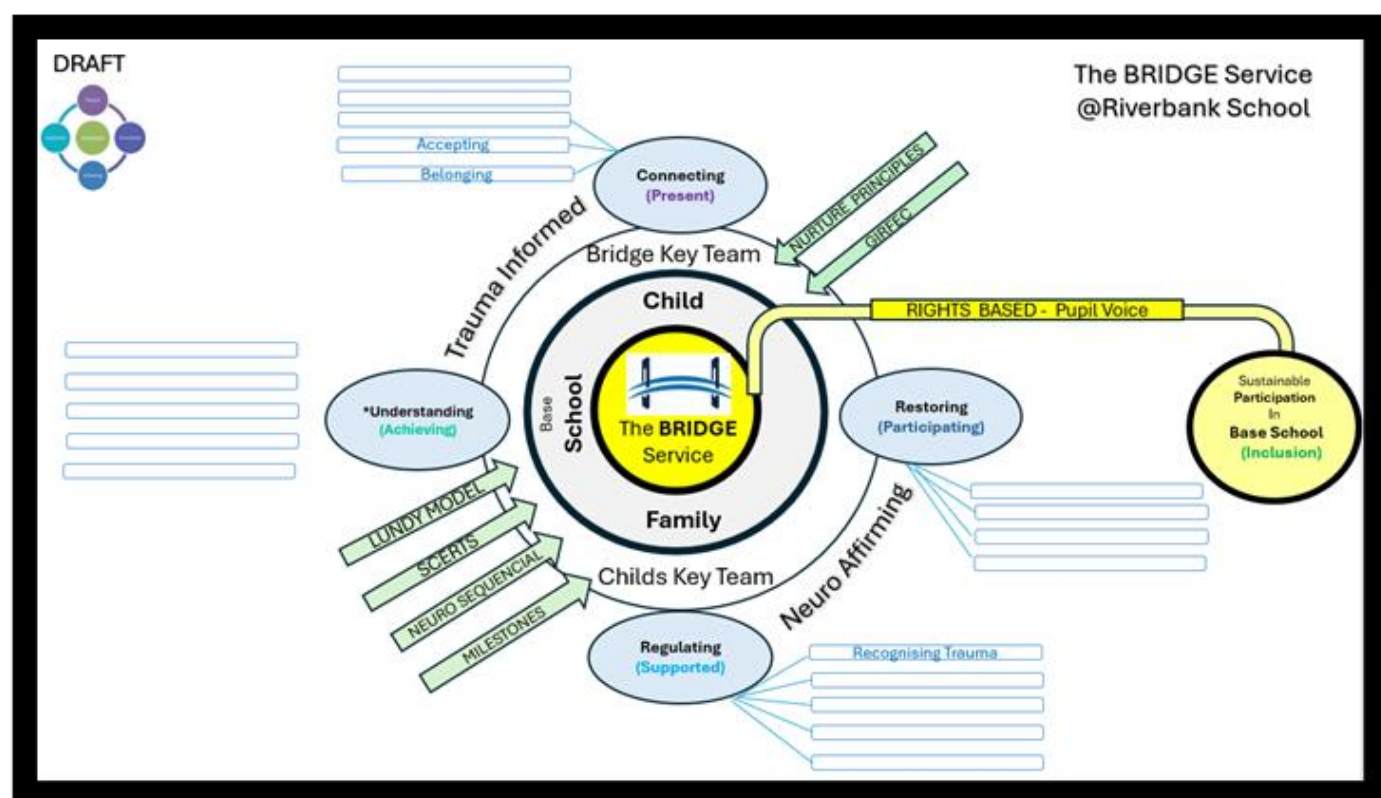
1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transitions in children's lives

These will inform our set-up of the learning environment as well as planning and assessment for individuals.

Assessment and intervention plans will be directed by **trauma informed practice** including the Neuro Sequential model. Neuro affirming approaches will be embedded across the Service, assessment and plans informed by the Social Communication Emotional Regulation Transactional Support (SCERTS) approach. Other assessment approaches will be used to understand and measure progression.

6. What will the Service offer?

The Service will offer a bespoke 12/14 week core programme of assessment, intervention, support, training and transition (Appendix 1). This core programme will include intensive work with the learner and in parallel, direct work with the learners primary care givers and key mainstream school staff. The explicit objective, to equip all three with the knowledge, skills, confidence and trust to gain the learner's' sustainable participation in their designated mainstream school, establishing a sense of belonging and felt safety. A rights-based approach will guide all work, learner voice will be central to this.



A multi-disciplinary core team of skilled and enhanced level professionals will work together across three key environments: the learner's mainstream school, home and the Service provision at Riverbank School. A diagnostic assessment and multi-disciplinary planning meeting will provide clarity on the factors impacting upon the learner's ability to participate in their education offer. Person-centred plans will detail intensive interventions delivered through specialist and therapeutic work. These will also include the development of knowledge, skills, confidence and mindset of the key adults around the learner.

The Service will work on a 12-week model with further weeks embedding interventions within the learner's home school (see Appendix 2). If, after 12 weeks the core team do not believe sufficient progress has been made, then a further period of intervention will

be planned. If after continued intervention cycles the learner continues to require such support levels, other pathways require to be considered.

The Service will provide a supported transition back into the mainstream school when the core team agree the learner, their primary carers and the key school staff have secured the outcomes required. This support will include staff directly working in the mainstream school and a range of person-centred key documents including personal learning plans, Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets, sensory profiles, communication profiles, Person Centred Risk Assessment (PCRA) and personalised learning resources. The learner's extended key team will then take over the continued support for the learner and their family. The Service will conduct formal check ins over the next year at 3 monthly intervals. The ACC ASN support hub will be available as an ongoing support for staff.

7. What are the intended outcomes?

PROJECT OUTCOMES	
For Learners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The improved levels of attendance during intervention will be maintained or increased at their mainstream home school. 2. The learner will be able to successfully maintain or increase the time they spend in their mainstream class 3. Increased frequency, intensity and duration of engagement and connection with the learning environment and reduced frequency, intensity and duration of periods of disengagement and distress 4. Positive reductions of risk will be recorded through Person Centred Risk Assessments 5. Increased number of intervals where the learner is engaged in mainstream experiences 6. Increased number of intervals where the learner is fully included in mainstream experiences 7. Increased sense of belonging at their mainstream home school following transition period back from Early Intervention Support
For Families	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Families report having evidence of achievements, successes, and personal growth for their children 2. Families report feeling informed about their child's experiences in the setting, and report being actively involved in the transition planning back to the mainstream home school 3. Families report they have been able to access support and information sharing from a range of sources 4. Families report they are clear on the structures and roles of those working with their child 5. Families report feeling included in decision-making

For School Staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members of staff in the home school report an increased confidence in supporting the learner when distressed 2. Members of staff in each home school report having an increased number of strategies to draw on to support learners 3. All members of staff will be able to identify at least two aspects of practice they have developed as a result of this pilot
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8. Who will deliver the service and how have costs been considered?

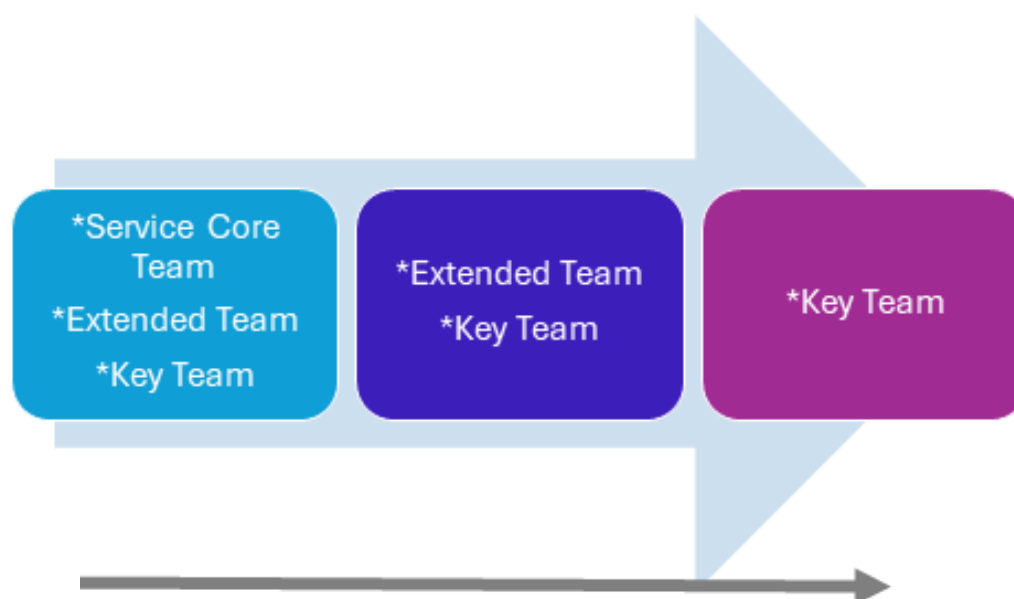
The Service has been designed to function in a cost neutral mode as much as possible whilst matching the enhanced level of intervention required to tackle the barriers impacting the learner. The learners for whom the Service is intended, demand that those delivering the Service have skilled and enhanced levels of professional knowledge and practices across a broad range of specialisms. This can only be achieved by connecting a team of multi-agency professionals.

The service will run on a three-tiered model of professional support:

- **Service Core team** – specific to the service
- **Learner's Key team** – the home school key team around the child (out with the service core team)
- **Learner's Extended team** – the additional services identified to support

In order that the Service reach is maximised, the role of other services, such as Autism Outreach or the Health & Wellbeing team, is critical. The learner's extended Key team will be identified to focus on embedding and maintaining mainstream participation and attendance. This tiered support will offer a planned and co-ordinated approach, with the aim of the learner's Key team having the capacity to support the learner as they continue on their educational journey.

Planned reduction in support as capacity develops



The Service team will be made up as follows:

Focus	Agency	Role	Activity
Quality	ACC/ED	Quality Improvement Manager	Quality assurance of the service/Support and supervision across the processes /Data collection
Quality/ Strategic	ACC/ED	Principal Educational Psychologist	Evaluation, Consultation, Part of panel
Strategic	ACC/ED	Orchard Brae Executive Head Teacher	Quality assurance /Ensuring consistent practice /Resources
Operational	ACC/ED	Principal Teacher Autism Outreach	Request for assistance chair Support and supervision of staff Learning and Teaching
	ACC/ED	Teacher	Learning and Teaching Learning and Care Plan lead Individual Educational Plan/Childs Plan

	ACC/ED	'CALM' Specialist & Trainer	Building capacity – Support Staff training Person Centred Risk Assessment support Behaviour support strategies
	ACC/ED	2 x Early Years Practitioners	Learners support Care support Mentoring of Early Years Practitioners of mainstream home school
	ACC/ED	2 x Pupil Support Assistants	Learners support Mentoring of Pupil Support Assistants of mainstream home school
	ACC/ED	Educational Psychologist(s) from the mainstream home school's locality team	Trauma & Learning Environment, Staff Support /Consultation
	3 rd sector - SensationALL	Occupational Therapist	Direct family support Contribution to Assessment /Planning /Impact /Evaluation Implementation of plans in the home Supporting primary carer regulation Family group work
	NHS	Speech & Language Therapist	Contribution to: assessment /planning /evaluation of Child's Plans Providing communication aides

Weekly team meetings attended by all the Service core team, are imperative to the success of the project, therefore this time has been factored into the weekly delivery programme. In addition, a supervision model will be provided to the Service Core team by the Executive Head Teacher of Orchard Brae School and the Principle Teacher Autism Outreach.

9. What are the criteria for accessing the service?

Learners with the following profile will be considered for access to the Service:

1. *Learners at risk of missing out on education due to no/limited participation, and high levels of dysregulation leading to distressed behaviours which are frequent and intense, causing harm to the child and or others.*
2. *Have a neurodivergence and/or a history of trauma*
3. *Factors impacting the learner's ability to participate are multiple, complex and enduring, despite the range of interventions the home school have put in place*
4. *The learner's family/primary caregiver agree to work alongside the Service to develop their own skills etc., making adjustments and changes as per intervention plan*
5. *The learner's school staff agree to work alongside the Service to develop their own skills etc., adjusting and changing as per intervention plan*

Given the limited places available and the implications of group dynamics within the Service, the process of ascertaining appropriate offers is rigorous (see Appendix 3). A streamlining of request for Service placements will be undertaken by delegated core team members. This will lead to a series of observations, which will inform the Service admission group decision on final placement. This process will take place twice in the test of change year – once in June in anticipation of an August start and in December in anticipation of new learners attending the service in spring 2026. At both these points learners who have not been allocated a Service space, will be kept on a monitoring list. Should a space become available, these learners will be re-evaluated and assessed for a space.

10. Are there implications for the learner's mainstream home school?

The process of requesting assistance from this Service asks schools to provide a rigorous profile descriptor and documentation detailing the range of actions, interventions and strategies undertaken to support the learner and, include data such as attendance summaries.

The learners attending the Service will very much belong to their home schools, indeed ensuring this connection is paramount. Schools will be central to the planning process, intervention will be undertaken 'with' schools and not 'to' however, they will be required to be open to improvement suggestions and support staff to maintain growth mindsets, whilst they further develop new skills and understanding. If a learner has an allocated staff member, they will attend the Service alongside the learner, when appropriate.

If any breakdown in communication between schools and families had been a feature of the past, schools will be supported to regain positive working relationships with the learner at the centre of all practice.

11. What happens if the Service does not make the desired impact for the learner?

If, after continued rounds of intervention the learner continues to require such support levels, other pathways require to be considered. If, after rigorous support schools are not able to match the skilled or enhanced levels of intervention required to support a learner with such a level of need, or if the environment cannot be reasonably adjusted to reduce dysregulation, again alternative pathways are to be considered.

Transportation

Parents will be requested to transport their learner to and from this Service. One session per week will also be for parents to attend to meet with the wider team, attend information sessions and have access to supportive networks. Transport may be provided if there are exceptional circumstances; this can be discussed with the Quality Improvement Manager Additional Support Needs, where supportive measures will be put in place. Attendance at this Service does not automatically qualify for transport.

Appendix 1: Logic Model [OBJ] *Logic model shown below is the draft example for learners at The Bridge and will be updated as the test of change evolves. Further logic models will be developed for families and staff/home school.*

Draft

Self-Evaluation & Improvement Plan

Learners



Resources and Context	Outputs		Outcomes - Impact		
	Activities	Outputs	up to 14 weeks	up to 6 months	up to 12 months
<p>Service has been developed in response to the rising number of younger learners displaying dysregulated and distressed behaviour in city schools.</p> <p>The national and local implementation of the Morgan Review recommendations, and current policy of a presumption of mainstreaming have heavily influenced planning.</p> <p>The Aberdeen City Education and Children's Services Committee instructed officers to develop an early intervention provision to support learners in the early stages.</p> <p>By providing a raised level of connected (learners /home/school) early intervention, these learners will find the regulation and resilience they need to embrace the opportunities to fully participate in their school offers to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.</p>	<p>The Service will offer a bespoke 12/14 week core programme of assessment, intervention, support, training and transition for up to 10 learners.</p> <p>Analysis of attendance patterns (including overall attendance, trends in lateness, and number of exclusions where this applies).</p> <p>An overview of instances of dysregulation – including patterns of frequency, intensity and duration.</p> <p>Details of personalised timetable, including the proportion of time within their mainstream class.</p> <p>Details of any exclusions, with accompanying PCRA.</p> <p>Supports which have been implemented, and the impact these have had.</p> <p>An overview of any additional support needs, to include care experience and/or child protection status.</p> <p>A list of previous schools attended, and the dates of these. Information on any medical condition/medication required</p>	<p>100% of learners accessing the service will have a bespoke learning and care plan.</p> <p>100% of learners will have an identified key person and participation team.</p> <p>100% of learners will have a bespoke assessment suite in place</p> <p>Multidisciplinary Meetings will be held regularly to monitor progress and review interventions.</p>	<p>Learners are engaging and attending.</p> <p>Learners are involved in creating their plan.</p> <p>Learners can identify strategies to regulate their behaviour.</p> <p>Learners can identify their key adult at The Bridge.</p>	<p>Learners are engaging and attending.</p> <p>Learners can use strategies to regulate their behaviour.</p> <p>Learners have increased social connectedness and a sense of belonging.</p> <p>Learners are spending increased learning time in their mainstream home school.</p>	<p>Initial cohorts of learners are engaging and attending back in their mainstream home-school</p> <p>Have clear progression plan informed by their experiences and outcomes in The Bridge in place Mainstream Home-School's</p> <p>Mainstream Home-School of Learner's report improvements in suite of measures</p> <p>Mainstream Home-School shows improvements in suite of measures</p>

Appendix 2: Lundy Model of Learner Participation

THE LUNDY MODEL OF PARTICIPATION

Lundy's model of participation aims to provide a **conceptual framework for understanding and bringing to life children's right to participation**. It's the model we use and LOVE!

The model is designed around **four dimensions**, each which exist in a particular sequential order:



Participation
People

PLAYFUL IN PRACTICE
SERIOUS ABOUT SOLUTIONS

LUNDY'S MODEL IN PRACTICE

Questions to ask yourself and of your work:

SPACE

- Have young people been asked for their views?
- How many opportunities have there been?
- Is the venue accessible, friendly and safe?
- Are the staff team trained and supported appropriately?
- Have young people been proactively recruited to take part from a variety of backgrounds?

VOICE

- Have young people been provided with the information they need to form a view?
- Do young people know their participation is voluntary?
- Are creative and fun activities being used to support young people to express their view on topics?
- Is there enough time scheduled to delve into the topics?
- Are workshop resources accessible to young people, youth proofed, and youth friendly?

AUDIENCE

- Are appropriate decision makers involved and engaged?
- Is there a clear and agreed process for communicating back young people's voices and views?
- Do young people know who their views are being shared with and what will happen to them afterwards?
- Do decision makers know how young people's views will feed into their decision making processes?
- Is the person 'receiving' young people's views the person with the power to make (or influence) decisions?

INFLUENCE

- Were young people's views considered in the decision-making process, and how is it recorded?
- Have young people been told about how their views have impacted a decision – and if not, why?
- Are there procedures in place for young people to hold decision-makers to account for their decisions?
- When and how will young people know or see the impact of their participation?



Participation
People

PLAYFUL IN PRACTICE
SERIOUS ABOUT SOLUTIONS

Accessed from <https://participationpeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Compressed-PP--Lundy-Model-Explained-2.pdf>

APPENDIX 3: 12 week core programme

Focus	Pre Placement	Transition In	Assessment		Plan	Intervention						Evaluation	Review	Transition Out	
Activity															
Week	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14

APPENDIX 4: Service criteria and process for request of assistance

In advance of the intervention beginning, a profile to be compiled to include:

- Analysis of attendance patterns (including overall attendance, trends in lateness, and number of exclusions where this applies)
- An overview of instances of dysregulation – including patterns of frequency, intensity and duration
- Details of personalised timetable, including the proportion of time within their mainstream class
- Details of any exclusions, with accompanying Person Centred Risk Assessment
- Supports which have been implemented, and the impact these have had
- An overview of any additional support needs, to include care experienced and/or child protection status
- A list of previous schools attended, and the dates of these
- Information on any medical condition/medication required

Documentation to be provided by the school to include:

- Individual Education Plan and/or Co-ordinated Support Plan
- Child's Plan (or equivalent)
- Chronology
- Any assessments of need which have been carried out (sensory profiles, dyslexia screeners etc.)
- Copies of letters which confirm diagnosed conditions (those which may impact on learning)
- Details of other professionals and organisations who are involved with supporting the learner

APPENDIX 5: Request for Assistance Model

A multi-disciplinary planning meeting will take place prior to the Bridge intervention beginning, and again when the intervention is nearing the final stages. This shared assessment of need will clarify which intervention aims to meet which need, and who will lead on each. During the period of intervention, a range of assessments will be completed in collaboration with the member of home school staff who know them best, creating a learning profile for each learner. This will support an understanding of strengths and areas for focus. At the end of the period of intervention, the assessments and learning profile will be updated and shared with the school team. In the third term after the intervention has taken place, this will be updated once again, with feedback shared with the Bridge case-holder. This will allow tracking of changes over time.

During the test of change period the Educational Psychology Service will be using an Applied Trauma Classroom tool – individually with learners, this will be carried out by an Educational Psychologist from the mainstream home school Educational Psychology Service Locality Group. During the test of change process, others will be upskilled in using the tool to ensure longer-term sustainability and capacity building. The Applied Classroom tool will also be used – as a learning environment measure. Again, capacity will be built by supporting others to utilise and understand the tool and use it independently during and beyond the test of change period.

Diagnostic assessment may also take place to identify specific barriers to learning relating to language, literacy or numeracy.

Proposed evaluative measures will include objective and subjective measures, plus observations of learners' and opinions of key stakeholders

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Appendix D: Progress towards Angela Morgan Recommendations

A full report on national progress towards implementing the Morgan recommendations from 2020 was [published](#) in late 2024, and an [updated action plan](#) established to help track progress moving forward. Progress against the current Action Plan is summarised below.

Summary of Morgan Recommendation/Theme	Key highlights of Aberdeen City Council Progress	Summary of National Progress (this column is at it appears nationally)
<p>Vision and Visibility</p> <p>Children and young people must be listened to and involved in all decision making relating to additional support for learning. Co-creation and collaboration with children, young people and their families will support more coherent, inclusive and all-encompassing policy making which improves implementation, impact and experience</p>	<p>The vision for education services - ‘Inspiring communities to learn and grow together’ along with the values of Equality, Ambition, Respect and Nurture were developed in consultation with all staff, parents and young people and underpins the work of the cluster.</p> <p>The local working vision for the ASN and outreach services was established following both universal and targeted consultation.</p> <p>All ASN policies and guidelines are refreshed in consultation with young people and parents/carers. The refresh of Supporting learners: A relationship and rights focused approach to physical intervention and seclusion guidance has just been refreshed in line with the national update of included, engaged and involved part 2. This was completed in consultation with our staff Safeguarding Group, parents/carers and headteachers. A child friendly version will be created in consultation with our ASN Ambassador Group.</p>	<p>Action to develop a national overarching Vision Statement for success is complete and work is underway to look at how this can inform the broader work and communications plan. Remaining actions (8) are ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work continues with the Ambassadors for inclusion including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ review of the vision statement established in 2022. ○ an approach to highlighting achievement and success which has been incorporated in national undergraduate and post graduate courses. • ASL Board continues to engage with policy makers to ensure the needs of young people with ASN are reflected in any policy development

	<p>A local Ambassador Group has been established to support further collaboration with young people across the city.</p> <p>Children and representative parents /carers have helped co-design the Early Intervention Test of Change, now known as 'The Bridge' and their voice is a feature of the model proposed.</p> <p>The Local Authority Behaviour Plan has been agreed with the City-Wide Parent Forum and with individual Parent Councils.</p> <p>PowerBI dashboards and the new tracking system in place allow us to track and analyse the achievements of young people with ASN ensuring interventions are in place to support.</p> <p>Young people with severe and complex needs from Orchard Brae are invited to attend the celebration of achievements following the issue of the SQA results in the Marischal Quad.</p> <p>Achievements of all Care Experienced young people are celebrated annually.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is ongoing to produce a national measurement framework for ASL. The ASL Project Board subgroup has prepared a business case to establish a draft dashboard. Work is also ongoing with Education Scotland to look at developing pupil profiling to ensure celebration of all achievements of young people. • The Pupil Support staff working group has shared their options for accredited qualifications and registration for Pupil Support Staff and this is being considered by Ministers
<p>Mainstreaming and Inclusion</p> <p>The independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence must fully integrate the findings of this to ensure there is focus on</p>	<p>All schools have a CIRCLE coordinator who is supporting the ongoing adoption of the programme in their own schools. This work is strengthening both environment and curriculum design and is supported by colleagues in NHS Grampian.</p>	<p>2/3 of the actions are complete, with the Independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence integrating the findings of this review and focus on the experience of all children, affording equity to those with additional support needs.</p>

<p>children with additional support needs.</p> <p>To fully achieve this, the independent Review of the Curriculum for Excellence must maintain a strong central focus on the experience of all children, young people, parents and carers and the professionals in closest connection with them.</p>	<p>As part of headteacher meetings best practice from each sector is showcased to help develop consistency across all schools. Improvements in environments are evident during quality improvement visits.</p> <p>Secondary HTs worked with central officers to run intensive training sessions on curriculum design and learning, teaching and assessment. This has seen an increase in the number and range of courses being offered by both individual schools and ABZ Campus, ensuring all young people have access to qualifications at an appropriate level.</p> <p>Central officers meet regularly with ASN Third Sector Groups to build relationships and share resources and updates.</p> <p>Specialist provisions have hosted information evenings for families with children who have complex additional support needs. These sessions support families to connect with other families and with helpful services. Attendance at these sessions has been high and feedback very positive.</p> <p>ABZ Campus continues to offer senior phase learners greater access to a higher number of flexible pathways and planning for Phase 3 in at an advanced stage.</p> <p>ABZ#WHATIF offers young people a range of inputs while working towards Personal Development Award</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work of the ASL Project Board continues to show a clear line of sight to the Scottish Education Council as well as the International Council and other strategic groups.
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	<p>and National Progression Awards providing access to employability qualifications.</p> <p>A detailed analysis of a range of data sets has triggered work to develop a Test of Change at the new Riverbank School. Learning from this Test will be used to inform next steps.</p>	
<p>Maintaining Focus, but Overcoming Fragmentation</p> <p>There must be clear values-driven leadership, shared communication, support and challenge at all levels of the system to ensure that the experiences and achievements of children and young people with additional support needs are visible and continue to be improved.</p>	<p>Our local authority quality improvement framework is reviewed annually to ensure central officers undertake robust evaluation of approaches.</p> <p>Focus groups of young people now form part of Quality Improvement visits to schools providing the opportunity for our young people to share feedback and ideas.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to improve the content and accessibility of support websites for families and young people.</p> <p>All schools identify armed forces families at the application stage and offer support at local level. Funding opportunities for projects will continue to be shared with all schools supporting armed forces children.</p> <p>Considerable work has been undertaken to locally join up policy areas as exemplified through the Children's Services Board Annual Report.</p>	<p>All 4 actions are ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of professional learning resources to be used across education, health and CLD. • Continue to review evidence around relationships between parents and professionals. • Continued engagement with ASN Children and young People's Network • Policy leads are exploring how to gather more data on ASL provision through the inclusion of additional questions in the Children's Service Planning Questionnaire. • The Scottish Government receives Children's Strategic Planning

	<p>External support and challenge (through ADES) is now integrated in the practice of the Education Service.</p> <p>Induction programmes for new Head Teachers and for support staff are now established.</p> <p>The values of the service underpin the work undertaken. Leaders regularly work together to maintain a culture of collaboration and respect. There is clear communication and a shared purpose between central team and school leaders, and this leads to innovative solutions to improve the curriculum and the support available for our young people.</p>	<p>Partnership Annual Reports. Policy leads are considering how the information from these reports could be utilised to inform the work delivered through the ASL Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to highlight how planning incorporates and makes visible the implications for ASL. • ASL Project Board members continue to engage proactively with young people to ensure they are involved at the earliest stage of policy development
<p>Resources</p> <p>Audit Scotland must use the key themes in this report and the associated findings from Audit Scotland's audit of educational outcomes to inform the scope of their national performance audit on outcomes for children and young people with additional support needs. This must include assessing spend on additional support for learning across services, its impact on attainment and</p>	<p>Quality improvement activity within the ASN & Outreach Service is being driven by the use of data. This is closely monitored through regular data reviews at local authority, service and school level and Local Authority Quality Improvement activity.</p> <p>Local Authority monthly, termly, and yearly data reviews, in addition to the insight gleaned from Head Teachers, helps inform the programme of Head Teacher, Associated School Group and school level meetings.</p> <p>We continue to offer secondments for teachers to both Orchard Brae and Bucksburn Wing providing</p>	<p>1 action has been completed, Audit Scotland recently published their audit of Additional Support Needs. The 2 other actions are ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A trial of up to 6 special school placements of depute head teachers from mainstream provision is being developed to run in the 2024-25 school year. The evaluation of the trial will inform future decisions regarding the inclusion of a special school placement element to existing teacher leadership programmes and the potential for the opportunity to be

<p>outcomes for children and young people at all stages; highlighting good practice and gaps.</p>	<p>an opportunity for mainstream staff to experience teaching in a more specialist setting.</p> <p>A Quality Improvement Manager (ASN) (previously Head Teacher at Orchard Brae) is in post and leading on ASN within the local authority. She is currently reviewing the training offered to staff working in both specialist and mainstream settings.</p> <p>Early Intervention Consultations are undertaken with all headteachers to identify trends and areas of best practice. This, along with the data held by the service and evidence from external scrutiny, is already being used to inform current service improvements and will feed into future service planning and design.</p> <p>The Service commissioned the Educational Psychology service to undertake an Exploration of Learners' Needs to gain a further understanding of how the learning needs of children and young people are met across schools. During the Exploration of Learners' needs, the Educational Psychology Service highlighted best practice across our schools and case studies have been shared with Headteachers. The Quality Improvement Manager plans to use the case studies as part of the professional learning offer for schools.</p> <p>The service continues to amend the use of resource to reflect emerging needs, for example through the establishment of The Bridge.</p>	<p>made available to a broader range of the education workforce.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modules for into headship to be reviewed in 2024-25 to consider inclusion of enhanced content on additional support needs.
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	<p>Head Teacher groups have been established to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support a review of how ASN resource is best allocated to support learners • update our Pupil Centred Risk Assessment (PCRA) guidance and procedure • review our processes for managing unsafe behaviours in secondary <p>The ASN Head Teachers Group are currently working to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish the 'Riverbank' support service for primary aged pupils in the 2025-26 academic year. Review the effectiveness of this provision to inform potential secondary school equivalent for 2026-27. - Map the services and organisations that support ASN. Detail what they provide and how effective the provision is based on feedback and outcomes. Check for crossover of services and thresholds to create a support directory for schools. - Redesign the Child's Planning Support Forum. 	
<p>Workforce Development and Support</p> <p>Teacher recruitment, selection, education and professional development and learning processes must align with the</p>	<p>The impact of the Lead Teacher is evident in the schools she has supported and this is now beginning to show in inspection outcomes.</p>	<p>4 actions have been completed. These relate to the workforce understanding their role, staff understanding of how to access support, parity of career progression for teachers who specialise</p>

<p>changed and changing profile of children and young people in Scotland.</p> <p>Innovative and partnership approaches to practice learning should be developed including delivery and participation of children, young people, parents and carers.</p>	<p>Approaches to teacher recruitment and professional development mirror the refreshed General Teaching Council Scotland Standards.</p> <p>Recruitment of all teachers in sensory service roles within ACC is undertaken in conjunction with Scottish regulations.</p> <p>The One Good Adult Profile is used in recruitment across Education and Lifelong Learning, to ensure Learners are centred at the heart of every role.</p> <p>Following robust testing by Bucksburn Academy, all school staff have been trained in Maybo de-escalation training, and this is now part of annual mandatory training.</p> <p>A refreshed HT induction programme provides opportunities for leaders new to the city to become familiar with local policies and partners.</p> <p>Parents are offered support through the Stronger Families series which has a specific focus on supporting children with ASN. Partners and settings across Education and Lifelong Learning, including Educational Psychology Service and Third Party Sector colleagues contribute to this programme.</p> <p>A PSA induction programme has been developed in consultation with key partners providing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • de-escalation training and • specific training related to ASN 	<p>in additional support for learning and work on Pupil Support Assistant roles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Education Scotland Inclusion Wellbeing and Equalities (IWE) Professional Learning Framework is now live and available on the Education Scotland website. IWE Officers continue to deliver sessions through the 4 themes. 1. Inclusion, 2. Relationships, 3 Rights and Equalities, 4. Wellbeing and care • HM Inspectors are systematically reviewing their scrutiny frameworks and inspection activities to ensure they align closely with the expectations set out in the ASL Action Plan. • Teacher development is ongoing with all teacher education having specific practice in supporting ASL needs. • ADES alongside Education Scotland continue to work with its members on Collaborative Improvement. All 32 local authorities have worked with this programme to explore the challenges and consider the possible solutions through visits and discussions with colleagues from
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • input from the Educational Psychology Service on brain development <p>Our Educational Psychologists offer a menu of training for all staff. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional Literacy Support Assistants • Emotion coaching • Executive functions • Emotionally based non-attendance • Seasons for Growth (including new parental and adult programmes) • Teenage brain development • Ready Steady, Two • Bespoke training for schools, ASG's or Locality's for example Nurture, Trauma, or Mediated Learning. <p>A range of professional learning has been offered to support the local behaviour action plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybo de-escalation training • Keeping trauma in mind and understanding trauma • Restorative practice <p>All schools have a CIRCLE coordinator who is part of an authority wide network receiving regular training and support to improve learning and teaching environments and approaches.</p>	<p>across Scotland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADES continues to engage with partners on approaches to self-evaluation and improvement and offer regular opportunities to share and promote ongoing work at the ADESASN Network. • Attainment Advisors and Education Scotland continue to consider how improvement methodologies could be extracted to develop knowledge of improvement methodologies on an ongoing basis
Relationships Between Schools and Parents	Through work on the established Parent Involvement and Engagement Plan, all ACC web-	One action around transition is complete, all four others are ongoing.

<p>Schools and local authorities must work in partnership with parents and carers to develop, and deliver, ways of working together that support and promote positive relationships, communication and co-operation.</p> <p>Parents and carers must be involved as equal partners in the development of key guidance, to contribute their knowledge and lived experience.</p>	<p>based information will be reviewed to ensure it is up to date, in line with current legislation and accessible for families. Parent and young people focus groups will be created to support this work.</p> <p>All parent councils have signed up to Connect which provides a national offer including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training and resources to support families • help sheets to support greater understanding of education <p>Parents have worked with officers to co-design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Early Intervention Provision • a local Behaviour Plan • our Parent Engagement and Involvement plan • and contributed to the Exploration of Learners' Needs carried out by the Educational Psychology Service <p>We have run the Stronger Families series to support families. Following feedback from families, topics have included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance awareness • Self-Harm • Managing anxiety • Understanding Teenage Brain Development • Supporting Exam Stress <p>There are plans for specific inputs on ASN as part of the programme for session 25/26 based on feedback from participants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Scotland continues to work on Collaborative Improvements (CI) with ADES and local authorities. All 32 local authorities are engaged and 7 include a focus on Additional Support for Learning. • The ADESASN network is currently considering how to share information through a core resource which showcases good practice and highlights how improvement could be made through engagement with parent councils. • Parents/Carers are represented on all stakeholder groups associated with the ASL Review. • Enquire will continue to work with partners to make sure that parents and carers are signposted to their wealth of information about additional support for learning, and that they can also signpost on to other relevant sources of information. • The Scottish Government has increased annual funding to services that provide support advice and representation to parents, carers, children and young people on
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	<p>The ASN and Outreach service continues to operate a Parent Forum providing opportunities for parents from across the city to support each other.</p> <p>Officers are part of the ADESASN network attending meetings with representatives from all other local authorities.</p> <p>Individual schools have set up support groups for parents of children with additional support needs. This is good practice which will be shared across the city.</p>	<p>Additional Support for Learning needs by £219,000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A subgroup of the Project Board are currently exploring how the parent Club Platform can share information from Enquire.
<p>Relationships and Behaviour</p> <p>The remit of the Scottish Advisory Group on Relationships and Behaviour in Schools (SAGRABIS) must be reviewed and widened to bring it up to date and in line with emerging knowledge and recommended practices, including the findings of this Review. The membership of the group must be reviewed in line with the refreshed remit.</p>	<p>A safeguarding group has been established to oversee the implementation of the local Behaviour Plan. To date they have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed the guidance flowchart to further exemplify expectations Updated reporting arrangements to allow reporting of prejudice incidents Reviewed the local plan in relation to the national plan and ensured all actions are relevant Co-designed mandatory training for staff in how to record and support following and incident. Updated school health and safety policies in line with latest guidance Established a programme of local health and safety meetings in schools 	<p>One single action is complete and the other on-going.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The latest Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research (BISSR) was published in November 2023. A joint action plan on Relationships and Behaviour was published in August 2024. The ASL Project Board will work with SAGRABIS to consider the evidence from the report and will consider the actions within the joint action plan, to agree on those that need to be taken forward.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided training for staff in risk assessment, managing bullying and supporting parents and pupils in line with the national plan • Refreshed the Engaged and Involved part 2 guidance to schools • Created a generic risk assessment for all schools • Updated the Pupil Centred Risk Assessment (PCRAs) guidance • Developed short health and safety guidance modules for PCRAs, Exclusion and Bullying • Regularly reviewed and analysed the data in relation to incidents recorded. • Using the data and visits to schools identified areas of good practice which are shared at HT meetings. 	
<p>Understanding Rights The incorporation of UNCRC, and its impact on Additional Support for Learning legislation and processes, must be fully anticipated and planned for to ensure children's rights are embedded and effectively underpin the implementation of the Additional Support for Learning legislation. The planned review of Coordinated Support Plans (CSPs) must take the findings</p>	<p>Progress made to date in incorporating UNCRC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive training has taken place across the Local Authority • Children's rights are embedded in our integrated impact assessment arrangements ensuring children's rights are considered in all political decision making around budget and policy • Children's rights underpin the work of the Children's Services Board • Rights are central to the work that is ongoing to support asylum seekers, delivery of the Promise, the development of the Bairn's 	<p>The 3 actions are ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scottish Government is undertaking work to establish any UNCRC related issues in the ASL system and will implement any changes where required. • ADES continue to engage with members and partners on the incorporation of UNCRC. • Enquire continue to provide support and guidance for families and support

<p>of [Morgan's] Review into account.</p>	<p>Hoose and the work of our Family Support Model, Future Library Model and whole system approach to Healthy Weight.</p> <p>Work has been undertaken to ensure children have meaningful engagement in decision making e.g. master planning at the beach and for ABZ Campus. A clear plan is in place to continue to embed children's rights across the local authority.</p> <p>Systems in place to monitor CSPs are digitised allowing for more effective monitoring of the eligibility of requests. All CSPs and IEPs meet current guidelines.</p>	<p>the development of the refreshed code of practice building on their expertise in presenting information on ASL to different audiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of guidance to understand the purpose of Coordinated Support Plans and content is in development.
<p>Assurance Mechanism</p> <p>Local authorities must take account of the findings of this report to review and align their quality assurance processes. This must drive improvements in processes, practice and outcomes at all levels in the system.</p> <p>Education Scotland must take account of the findings of this report and take action to ensure that their scrutiny frameworks, and inspection activities, are in line with it.</p>	<p>Our quality assurance mechanisms take account of the recommendations with a clear focus on the quality of learning and teaching available for all learners.</p> <p>Officers review the quality of planning in place for individuals during Quality Improvement Visits and work with staff to review support arrangements for those with ASN.</p> <p>These are reviewed annually to take account of changes in national guidance and local trends. The work of the trios allows schools to share best practice and offer support.</p>	<p>All 4 actions are ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ASL Board continues to meet every 2 months to monitor progress having agreed on timeframes, ownership and reporting schedules. • Good outcomes have been achieved across all recommendations with more actions progressed and completed since the last Progress Report in 2022.

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	29 April 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	International Travel – Music Service Trip to Regensburg
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/082
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne
REPORT AUTHOR	Beth Edwards
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.1.1 and General Delegation 5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for travel to Regensburg by officers to support pupils in June 2025.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Approves travel for two officers to attend Regensburg in June 2025, and the estimated spend set out at section 4.1 of the report, with the purpose of the visit to support pupils to perform in Regensburg Citizen's Festival.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Representatives of Aberdeen City Music Service have been invited to Regensburg to perform at the 70th anniversary celebrations of the Aberdeen-Regensburg twinning partnership. This would be an experience for the pupils that would enrich their cultural experiences and allow them to share some of the strong musical work taking place in Aberdeen City schools.
- 3.2 The event takes place from June 19th – 22nd 2025. The Lord Mayor Gertrud Maltz-Schwarzfischer's office would arrange accommodation for two members of Music Service staff and six pupils in a hostel.
- 3.3 The pupils have been asked to perform at a Scottish-Barvarian Music event on the evening of the 19th of June and to represent Aberdeen at this event. They would be playing alongside local young musicians and dancers from Regensburg. The musicians have also been invited to perform at Bürgerfest.
- 3.4 The Music Service is currently working on the Aberdeen Big Sing 2025. This event will see the service working to renew Aberdeen City Council's ongoing friendship and partnerships between our Education and language departments in Clement-Ferrand. These reciprocal partnerships enrich pupil learning and

allow them to use their language skills in 'real life' contexts. The proposed trip to Regensburg would help further develop this work with officers from Clement-Ferrand, who will be in attendance, but also more broadly with the other cities that are twinned with Aberdeen.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Committee approval is required in relation to the proposed travel to Regensburg in recommendation 2.1 which is estimated at £2,500. This cost will be met via the approved Music Service budget for 2025-26.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to secure best value in terms of section 1 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. The Council has travel policies for both members and officers. All travel should be booked in accordance with these policies to ensure cost-effective travel arrangements.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The report recommendations have a negative environmental impact, namely an increase in carbon emissions due to air travel. To minimise this the itinerary will be full and valuable. Consideration could also be given to minimising the carbon footprint when booking travel e.g. booking a train rather than flight for any in-country connections where possible and the itinerary allows or booking 'green' airfares only.

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	Failure to maintain and foster international relationships may negatively impact reputation and relationships.	Aligning international activity with local partners to maximise impact of Aberdeen's attendance, reputation and messaging.	I	Yes
Compliance	Travel and accommodation bookings, and subsistence arrangements, not being in line	All travel and accommodation arrangements made via the Travel Team to ensure accordance with the Council's	L	Yes

	with Council policies.	travel policies for members and officers.		
Operational	Safety and security risks of travel to certain locations.	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) travel advice and country entry requirements adhered to. A thorough risk assessment exercise is completed prior to any travel outside of the UK. This forms part of the pre-travel briefing. The Council has sufficient travel insurance in place.	L	Yes
Financial	Actual costs exceed those estimated in this report.	A recent costing exercise has been undertaken to inform those costs estimated in this report. No travel will be booked if it exceeds total approved budget.	L	Yes
Reputational	Reputational risks if the city does not actively maintain and participate in international events and networks, which could diminish the city's global profile.	Close working relationships with officers in Regensburg to ensure benefits maximised from all outgoing international activity.		Yes
Environment / Climate	Carbon footprint of air travel.	The number of officers to attend this trip as been streamlined to ensure it is at a minimum.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>Council Delivery Plan 2024</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<p>The proposed travel/event attendance, and rationale of establishing and maintaining international connections and networks supports the delivery of: The Arts Matter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to make Aberdeen a premier destination for festivals, productions, conferences, bands and events <p>This is because this travel/event attendance will showcase the musical skill demonstrated by the young people in Aberdeen and will support future partnership work taking place.</p>
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p>This report supports the LOIP Key Driver within Stretch Outcome 8 - Improving pathways to education, employment and training for identified groups (including disability, ASN, term time leavers and those from priority neighbourhoods) because it supports the Music Service giving additional musical opportunities for children and young people through more rehearsal and performance opportunities led by the Music Service and in conjunction with partners.</p>
Regional and City Strategies	<p>This travel/event attendance will support the Music Service Improvement Plan to further develop the Big Sing event with the inclusion of pupils from cities twinned with Aberdeen.</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Yes - Completed
Data protection impact assessment	Not required
Other	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Finance and Resources
DATE	29 April 2025 07 May 2025
EXEMPT	The report is public, but the Appendix is exempt under Paragraph 8: <i>Estimated expenditure on Contracts</i> . The appendix refers to the potential acquisition or supply of goods/services where disclosure to the public of the amount to be spent would be likely to give an advantage to a person or organisation seeking to enter a contract with the Council.
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Victorian Schools Programme: Outline Business Case
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/080
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Stephen Booth
REPORT AUTHOR	Andrew Jones
TERMS OF REFERENCE	ECS: 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2, 1.3 F&R: 1.1, 4.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the completed Outline Business Case for the proposed Victorian Schools Programme, detailing options and estimated costs and timescales for improving the suitability of the city's Victorian school buildings.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Education and Children's Services Committee :-

- 2.1 Notes the preferred option for taking forwards the Victorian Schools programme, as detailed within the Outline Business Case at Appendix A of this report; and:
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to incorporate the preferred option and programming and cost implications for the Victorian Schools Programme into the development of the School Estate Plan annual update report, to be presented to this Committee in September 2025.

That the Finance and Resources Committee :-

- 2.3 Notes the preferred option(s) for taking forwards the Victorian Schools programme along with the associated costs all as detailed within the Outline Business Case at Appendix A of this report; and :

- 2.4 Notes the decision of the Education and Children's Services Committee on 29th April 2025 to include the programme of work into the School Estate Plan and instruct the Chief Officer Corporate Landlord to present the costs and programme of works for inclusion in the capital budget setting process for 2026/27.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 At its meeting on 8 September 2022, the former Education Operational Delivery Committee approved the Council's School Estate Plan, and instructed the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to take forwards a detailed action plan to develop and improve the school estate. This included an instruction for officers to carry out a feasibility study and options appraisal, to improve the suitability, accessibility and capacity levels of Victorian schools within Aberdeen City, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with recommendations and estimated costs.
- 3.2 The outline business case, included at Appendix A of this report, sets out the full findings of the feasibility study, and provides an analysis of the options available for improving the suitability of the ten in-scope Victorian school buildings.
- 3.3 The buildings included within the scope of this project are:
- Aberdeen Grammar School
 - Ashley Road School
 - Broomhill School
 - Culter School
 - Gilcomstoun School
 - Kittybrewster School
 - Skene Square School
 - St Joseph's RC School
 - Sunnybank School
 - Woodside School
- 3.4 Whilst some improvement and reconfiguration works have been undertaken in a number of these buildings over the years since they were built, the overall design and layouts of the buildings continue to present significant challenges for successfully delivering the modern curriculum.
- 3.5 Some of the common suitability challenges affecting many of the schools include: accessibility issues; lack of breakout spaces for small group work and pupil support; limited space for outdoor learning; lack of space for dining and PE provision; and inadequate toilet facilities. In addition, several schools are at or already exceed their available pupil capacity, and space within the school sites for extending the buildings is severely limited.
- 3.6 The outline business case seeks to provide opportunities to address these challenges, along with others which are more specific to each school building, so that their overall suitability for curriculum delivery can be improved, and so that any issues with lack of capacity can be resolved. Where possible,

opportunities to improve elements of the condition of the building have also been included, such as improvements to heating and ventilation systems, and the replacement of obsolete light fittings.

Other Victorian Schools

- 3.7 The Victorian school buildings in Aberdeen City which are outwith the scope of the project are:
- Harlaw Academy, Ferryhill School and St Peter's RC School - separate capital projects are currently under way to make improvements to the suitability of these buildings.
 - Hanover Street School - whilst this is a Victorian school building, it was extensively refurbished in 2009, and as a result each element of the school's suitability has been scored at either A (Good) or B (Satisfactory). No further significant suitability improvements are required for Hanover Street School at this time.

Feasibility Study and Stakeholder Engagement

- 3.8 A feasibility study was undertaken between January and October 2024. Officers and specialist consultants visited each school site to assess current building layout, the way in which spaces are used, and to consider opportunities for reconfiguring and/or extending spaces to improve their functionality and suitability.
- 3.9 In tandem with the feasibility study, a stakeholder engagement exercise was undertaken, in which parents, pupils, staff and the wider communities associated with each of the schools were invited to review the brief for the feasibility study, and to provide their comments and feedback on what they felt to be the priorities for improvement for their school building.
- 3.10 Information gathered from the site visits and from the stakeholder engagement was then used to produce sketch designs for a range of potential options for each building, and estimated costs were obtained. The individual options for each school are described in the outline business case at Appendix A.

Programming Constraints

- 3.11 Given the scale and complexity of this programme, and the nature of the works which would require to be undertaken across multiple school buildings, consideration needs to be given to how best to programme the works, to help ensure that the necessary improvements to school buildings can be made, whilst also minimising disruption to learning and teaching.
- 3.12 Each individual school project would require significant construction work to be undertaken on site, much of which would require pupils and staff to be displaced from parts of their building, or the entire school site, until the works are completed, which for a number of the schools would be for many months. This would require temporary classroom accommodation to be provided, or in most

cases an alternative school building to be made available, for decanting pupils and staff whilst the work is carried out.

- 3.13 If the decision is taken to proceed with the Victorian Schools programme, it is proposed that the former Walker Road School building (to which pupils and staff at Ferryhill School are due to be temporarily relocated later this year prior to the refurbishment of the Ferryhill building) is retained for use as a decant building to support the Victorian Schools programme. This would provide an alternative building for schools to be relocated to, whilst the refurbishment of their buildings is carried out.
- 3.14 The Walker Road building would only become available after the Ferryhill School refurbishment is completed, and following this it would only be possible to decant one school at a time to it, so any projects requiring a decant would need to be run consecutively, so that the Walker Road building can be used to support each of them.
- 3.15 Consideration would also need to be given to the capacity of Corporate Landlord and Capital teams to deliver the programme, which would involve an extensive amount of work over an extended period of time. This would be an additional resource commitment, over and above that required for the delivery of the Council's existing priorities for developing other parts of the school estate, which are set out within the School Estate Plan . Current team capacity within the Corporate Landlord cluster is limited, and relying on existing staffing capacity alone would further extend the length of time required to fully deliver the programme. The appointment of an additional project manager within the Corporate Landlord team would help to increase the capacity of the team and ensure the programme can be delivered in a shorter period of time. Salary costs for an additional project manager have therefore been included within the costs section of the outline business case.
- 3.16 It should also be noted that the availability of contractors to undertake works in each of the schools may limit the potential for any projects to be run concurrently, and this would also have an impact on the timescales for delivery of the programme.
- 3.17 Taking all of the above points into consideration, it is proposed that the recommended improvements to the Victorian School buildings are programmed over an extended period of up to fifteen years, with works to the buildings deemed to be highest priority for improvement being undertaken first.
- 3.18 The scheduling of individual projects within the programme would be reviewed on an annual basis, with updates on the anticipated timescales for project delivery, and any recommendations for changes to the programme, being reported for Committee consideration through the annual School Estate Plan update report. This would allow for some flexibility in the delivery of this long term programme, for example to account for any future emerging priorities for other parts of the school estate which may need to be dealt with during the same time period, and it will provide an opportunity to take advantage of any external funding streams made available over the lifetime of the programme.

- 3.19 An indicative high level programme, which reflects the above considerations, is set out within the outline business case at Appendix A.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The approved capital programme, agreed by Council on 5th March 2025, includes an initial allocation of £2.4m for the Victorian Schools programme, with £400k allocated for 2025/26, and a further £1m in 2028/29 and in 2029/30.
- 4.2 The estimated capital costs for making the necessary improvements to the Victorian schools, which are set out within the outline business case, far exceed this initial allocation, and if a decision was taken to proceed with the Victorian Schools Programme, a significant re-prioritisation of the capital programme, over an extended period of time, would be required to fund it, alongside accessing any external funding streams made available in the future. Members should note that the costs presented in the outline business case are indicative of the Victorian Schools Programme taking 15 years to deliver, and that shortening or lengthening the delivery of the programme will either reduce (in the case of a shortened programme) or increase costs, due to the impact of annual inflation increases, which have been accounted for within the estimated costs.
- 4.3 The outline business case also sets out additional revenue costs associated with the programme, with one-off revenue costs over the life of the programme estimated at £14m, to cover project management, decant and transport to alternative premises, and the hire of temporary classroom accommodation for the duration of construction works. In addition, with some projects adding additional floorspace to school buildings to provide extra capacity, higher running costs for those buildings are anticipated, and this would require an overall uplift to annual revenue budgets of up to £590k. There is currently no provision within the Council's revenue budgets to cover these costs.
- 4.4 Given that the Victorian Schools Programme would require significant capital and revenue funding for which budgets have not yet been identified, it is recommended that, should Members be minded to proceed with making improvements to the Victorian schools, then the programming and cost implications of that decision should be incorporated within the School Estate Plan update report, due to be presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee in September 2025. Officers will also continue to be alert to funding opportunities that may help support delivery of the programme.
- 4.5 This would allow for the programme to be fully considered alongside other new priorities which may be identified in the School Estate Plan update, and in turn would allow for a comprehensive overview of plans for the school estate and their financial implications to be included within the budget setting process for 2026/27.

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.

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?
Strategic Risk	No significant risks identified			
Compliance	Failure to plan effectively for the Victorian schools leading to the Council being unable to fulfil its duty to make adequate and efficient education provision	The recommended option as set out within the business case would help to ensure that adequate and efficient provision will be available at the Victorian schools for the foreseeable future	L	Yes
Operational	The preferred option doesn't meet the	Building users will be consulted and	L	Yes

	needs of building users	engaged with throughout the design development to ensure their views and requirements are highlighted		
Financial	Inability to deliver the Council's desired outcomes within the available budget	The recommendation to refer cost implications alongside those of other school estate priorities to the annual budget setting process will provide an opportunity for an appropriate budget to be identified. Officers would then work with cost consultants and designers during design development stage.	L	Yes
Reputational	Failure to engage with stakeholders on the planned changes to the schools could lead to reputational damage for the Council.	Ongoing dialogue and engagement with staff, parents and pupils would continue throughout each project.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	Impact from school transport emissions resulting from decants to other buildings, and concurrent operation of buildings, may result in short term fluctuations in emissions.	Officers will work with environmental planning colleagues at the planning stage to identify opportunities to mitigate any short term negative impacts	M	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

Council Delivery Plan 2024	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<p>The recommendations within this report support the delivery of the following policy statements:</p> <p>A City of Opportunity</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 presents options for making improvements to the city's Victorian school buildings.</p>
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Prosperous People: The project will support Stretch Outcome 8 in the LOIP - <i>Childfriendly city where all decisions which impact children and young people will be informed by them by 2026</i> . Ongoing stakeholder engagement will help ensure that the views of children and young people will be taken into account.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The updated School Estate Plan supports the delivery of Stretch Outcome 16 in the LOIP – 50% of people report they feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026. The proposed improvements to the school site will assist in reducing carbon emissions from the school estate.
Regional and City Strategies	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
Integrated Impact Assessment	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Stephen Booth, Chief Officer Corporate Landlord on 24 March 2025.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	No other assessments required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Education Operational Delivery Committee, 8 September 2022: [Agenda Item 14: School Estate Plan 2022](#).

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Exempt Appendix A: Outline Business Case – Victorian Schools Programme

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Exempt information as described in paragraph(s) 8 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

Document is Restricted

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education & Children's Services Committee
DATE	29 April 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Corporate Parenting Annual Report
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/083
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR	Graeme Simpson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Committee with an overview of Corporate Parenting activity not reported previously and present a High Level Promise Plan which takes account of expectations within Plan 24-30 and reflects the voices of our care experienced children and young people.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:

- 2.1 Note the findings of the Bright Spots Report (October 2024);
- 2.2 Approve the High Level Promise Plan in Appendix A; and
- 2.3 Instruct the Chief Social Work Officer to update Committee on progress against the High Level Promise Plan within one calendar year.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 named specific public bodies as "corporate parents". Each has a range of responsibilities to care experienced children and young people, some more than others. Effectively, they form the "corporate family", and all of them need to fulfil their responsibilities if children and young people are to get the support they need from across the system. Specially the act notes the following six duties:

- To be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of looked after children and young people and care leavers,
- To assess the needs of care experienced children and young people for services and support provided,
- To promote the interests of care experienced children and young people,
- To provide opportunities for care experienced children and young people to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing,

- To make sure care experienced children and young people can access opportunities and make use of services and support,
 - To strive to improve the way our organisation functions in relation to care experienced children and young people.
- 3.2. Our Corporate Parenting responsibilities are reflected in our Local Outcome Improvement Plan (2019-2026), Stretch Outcome 5 *“By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026”*.
- 3.3 Considerable work has been undertaken to align Plans for children and young people, where possible, to the Children’s Services Plan. This alignment is helping to gain a deeper understanding of the needs of different groups, including those we have Corporate Parenting responsibilities for. As a result of this alignment, our Corporate Parenting Plan and work towards delivery of The Promise has been driven and reported through the Children’s Services Board.
- 3.4 The current Children’s Services Plan runs to 2026 and work will soon commence on the next iteration of that statutory Plan. Given that the needs of children are inextricably linked to the needs of their parents and carers, the development of the next Children’s Services Plan will be fully aligned to the development of the next Local Outcome Improvement Plan. This alignment will help us take the preventative whole family approach described in Plan 24-30.

Plan 24-30

- 3.5 In June 2024 the Promise Scotland team started to publish [Plan 24-30](#). Over the last few months the website has been populated with details of the proposed route map for Scotland to fulfil its commitment to deliver the Promise by 2030.
- 3.6 Plan 24 – 30 builds on the progress made through Plan 21 – 24. Aberdeen City’s significant progress to delivering on Plan 21 – 24 was last reported to Committee in November 2024 ([F&C/24/337](#)).
- 3.7 Plan 24 – 30 retains a focus on the 5 Foundations of **Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding**. It reinforces that change must be rights led, trauma informed and underpinned by the Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) policy.
- 3.8 For each of the Foundations, Plan 24 – 30 provides a series of high level changes to be achieved by 2030. In some cases the cultural shift is required across multiple Corporate Parents, in others the change sits predominantly with one, and in a few cases the change may require a significant change through for example legislation to be progressed. Plan 24-30 acknowledges the complex nature of much of the required change and the multiple interdependencies, including the need for legislative change, and as a result Plan 24—30 will be regularly updated.
- 3.9 Having articulated the change required to deliver each of the Foundations, Plan 24 – 30 breaks down the responsibilities of individual Corporate Parents to deliver the change, reinforcing that it is everyone’s responsibility to deliver the

Promise. While helpful it continues to be recognised that to deliver the noted changes will require Corporate Parents to work collaboratively with each other and with care experienced young people. The changes outlined in Plan 24-30 take account of a range of documentation recently published.

Promise Progress Framework

- 3.10 In December 2024 The Scottish Government, Promise Scotland and COSLA published the [Promise Progress Framework](#). This framework will provide a national reporting mechanism to more effectively and consistently demonstrate the extent to which Scotland is keeping the Promise. The first National report will be published at the end of 2025.
- 3.11 It is anticipated that the Framework will be an iterative reporting tool. This recognises that reporting requirements are likely to change over the next five years but also that we need to move beyond qualitative data to explore how the 'stories' of children, young people and families can further demonstrate how The Promise is being delivered.
- 3.12 The Children's Services Board has agreed to adopt the Promise Progress Framework as its reporting tool. This will ensure a level of benchmarking can be undertaken with the national position as well as identifying areas where increased level of change and improvement activity is required. Initial data collection has been included in the Children's Services Board Annual Report also being considered by Committee, and over time it is thought that this will allow a level of benchmarking.

Promise Oversight Board Year 3 Report

- 3.13 In February 2025 The Promise Oversight Board published their 3rd [report](#). This sets out their evaluation as to the extent to which Scotland is delivering on the intentions of the Independent Care Review and The Promise. The timing of this report marked the halfway point by which The Promise must be kept. It was the assessment of the Oversight Board that Scotland is not halfway towards keeping its promise.
- 3.14 The Oversight Board's report highlighted two 'Priority Areas' that nationally need to be given more attention, Whole Family Support (which will be supported locally through both our Future Libraries Model and Fairer Futures Partnership with Scottish Government, and Supporting the Workforce (which has been supported through the establishment of the Children's Social Work Workforce Development Plan presented to Committee in November '2024).
- 3.15 Whilst acknowledging the impact of unexpected events since the publication of the Independent Care Review in 2020, the Oversight Board remain clear that Scotland is heading in the right direction but that pace needs to increase and that all Corporate Parents must play their active part. The Oversight Board highlighted their view that some leaders do not see how delivering for care experienced young people not only improves the lives of their families and communities, but society as a whole.

Scrutiny, Assurance and Legislation

- 3.16 In November 2024 the Care Inspectorate published a Thematic Inspection Report in relation to Care Experienced Young People's [Transition from care](#). The report acknowledges that the findings of the Thematic Review are not new. This Thematic Report mirrors the findings of The Promise Scotland's [100 days of Listening Report](#).

The Thematic report identified 8 areas of 'Consideration for Future Practice'. In examining these there was clear and strong alignment to the responses from our own care leavers who contributed to Aberdeen City's Bright Spots activity (see below). The findings also have alignment to Aberdeen City's participation in the Royal Foundation Homewards programme aimed at eradicating homelessness.

- 3.17 The Scottish Government have begun to consult on the delivery of a Promise Bill. This piece of legislation is anticipated to be wide ranging and will consider aspects of the Independent Care Review that require legislative change. This will include but is not limited to:

- Reform of the Children's Hearing System
- Furthering the needs of care leavers, including the provision of life long advocacy
- Defining the term 'care experienced'
- Changes to support the recruitment and retention of foster carers

- 3.18 The timeline for the proposed Promise Bill is currently uncertain, but legislative change in itself will not deliver the cultural and transformative change required if Scotland is to truly deliver on its commitment to keep the promise by 2030.

Additional Corporate Parenting Activity

- 3.19 [The Loop](#) tells the story of our Corporate Parenting Activity over the course of 2024 with the audience being those we have Corporate Parenting responsibility for. Feedback from our young people has been exceptionally positive. It will be critical that we continue to share with our care experienced community, the progress Corporate Parents make addressing the areas they highlighted could be better. We now plan to enable young people to contribute to its future development and design.

- 3.20 The Loop highlights our focus has been on participation and central to this was our engagement with the Bright Spots programme. The Bright Spots programme is a research project that helps local authority areas to use children and young people's voices to inform service development and strategic thinking.

A Changing Inspection Regime

- 3.21 Aberdeen City's last strategic inspection of Children Services was in 2019. It is anticipated that Aberdeen City will again be the subject of a strategic inspection in the coming 12 – 24 months. In January 2025, the Care Inspectorate announced their intention to shift the focus of strategic inspections. Going forward these will focus on:

- children in the 'care system' living at home with their parents or who have recently been subject to compulsory supervision orders with a condition to remain at home,
- the impact of services and the difference made
- taking account of The Promise and incorporation of children's rights

3.22 It will therefore be incumbent on all local Corporate Parents to ensure a renewed commitment to improving the outcomes of care experienced young people and give full effect to their voices as articulated in the Bright Spots Report.

Bright Spots Programme

3.23 At the start of 2024 Aberdeen City's Children and Family Support services sought to understand what life was like for Aberdeen's care experienced children and young people. We asked all 'looked after children' aged 4 – 17 and all care leavers aged 16 – 26 to complete an online survey called Bright Spots. There was an exceptionally high response rate of circa 70% from our young people (the highest percentage of all local authority areas in Scotland). This amounted to over 400 young people sharing their views. The analysis of the survey responses was undertaken by CELCIS (Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection). Their findings were shared with the local authority in Autumn 2024 with a multi-agency presentation to the City's Corporate Parents in November 2024.

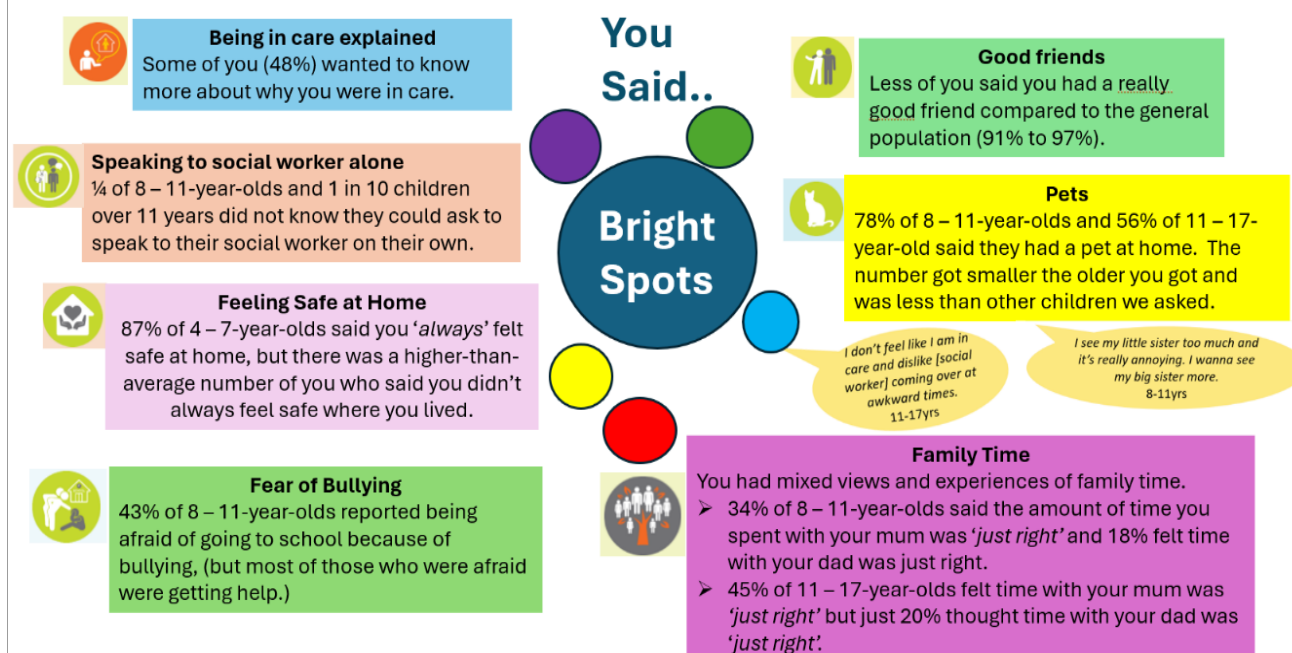
3.24 The responses from Aberdeen City's children and young people were benchmarked against other local authority areas from across the UK who have participated in the Bright Spots programme. The analysis allowed for "Bright Spots" to highlight the support provided by Corporate Parents to Aberdeen City's children and young people as well as areas where support "could be better".

3.25 The key findings from the **Your Life our Care** survey for 4 – 17 year olds who are looked after were:

What is working well for children in care aged 4 – 17 in Aberdeen City?



What could be better for children 4 – 17 years in care in Aberdeen City?

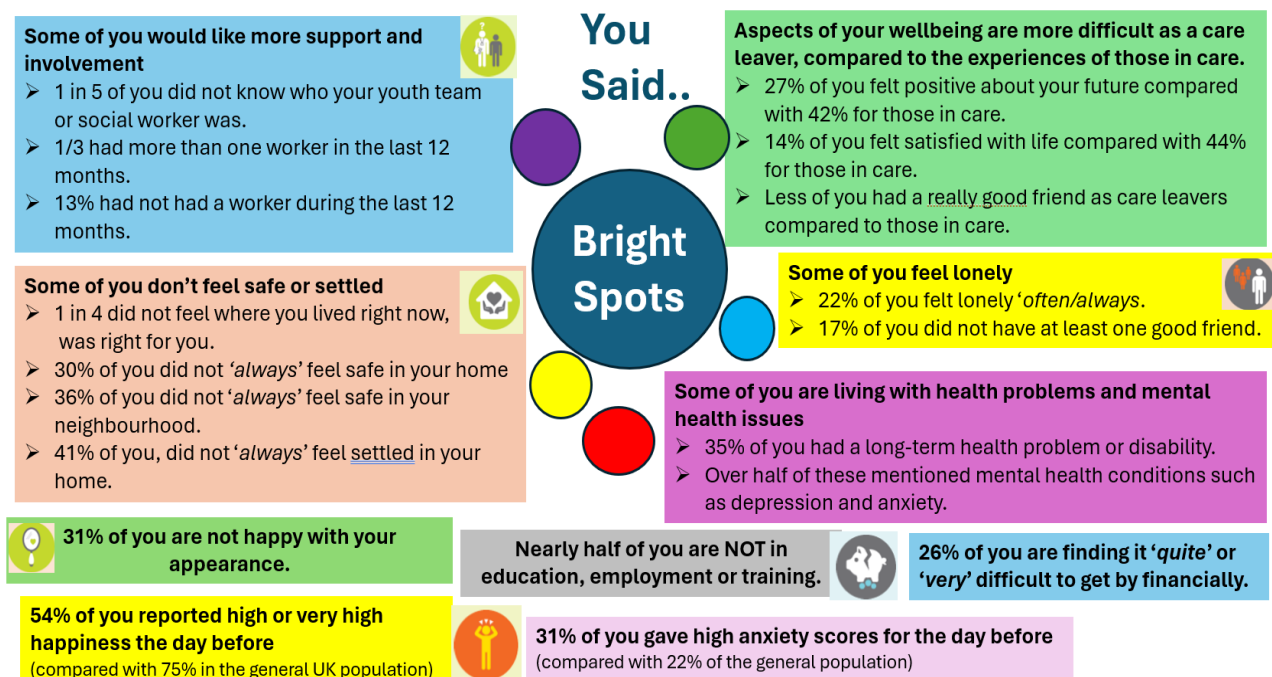


3.26 The key findings from the **Your Life beyond Care** survey for 4 – 17 year olds who are looked after were:

What is working well for care leavers in Aberdeen?



What could be better for care leavers in Aberdeen?



- 3.27 The CELCIS analysis culminated in four recommendations for Corporate Parents:
- I. Increased planning, activity and measurement of activity relating to infants and children particularly under 5's.
 - II. Increased recognition, understanding and attention to diversity between children and young people with planning and activities.
 - III. Increased collaboration between corporate parents to:
 - a. Increase knowledge and understanding of responsibilities
 - b. Maximise opportunities/resources for children and young people.
 - IV. Greater involvement from health boards and special NHS Boards in their role as corporate parents.
- 3.28 Given the depth of learning that the Bright Spots programme has enabled, multi-agency partners have agreed that the findings from this will form the basis of our Corporate Parenting improvement activity over the coming years and be incorporated into the Children's Services Board Plan from 2026. This learning has also been added to our High Level Promise Plan in Appendix A.

The High Level Promise Plan

- 3.29 Unsurprisingly, some areas of change outlined in our High Level Promise Plan are relatively straight forward with systems and practice already in place to reflect the commitment made in The Promise. These areas require to be maintained and ownership of the maintenance is detailed. Others however are more complex and will require a series of iterative changes to be made. In almost all cases a programme of work is already in place to address this complexity, and the progress of these programmes of work will require to be routinely monitored against the commitments made in Plan 24-30..
- 3.30 As outlined earlier, The Promise cannot be kept by a single service or organisation, it will only be delivered by all of those with Corporate Parenting responsibilities working together. As a result, multi-agency work to deliver The Promise will continue to be coordinated by the Children's Services Board, the Child Protection Committee and other multi-agency governance structures.
- 3.31 From a Local Authority perspective, The High Level Promise Plan evidences how the Promise will not be kept by a single Cluster alone, with actions from Children's Social Work, Education and Life Long Learning, Housing and others required. As an organisation each Cluster benefits from close working with others. In order to ensure sufficient focus on how our own Local Authority actions are helping to keep The Promise, and ensuring that we give sufficient time to exploiting the benefits of our relatively new organisational structure on this vulnerable group, an Internal Promise Board will be established the actions that require to be driven by Aberdeen City Council.
- 3.32 All specific actions have been drawn into a single High Level Promise Plan. (Appendix A) and a RAG rating has been applied to give Members a sense of our progress against each commitment. A green RAG rating suggests that the standard exemplified is already in place and requires to be maintained and the owner identified to maintain that work is detailed. Where work is already progressing (amber) this has been referenced to ensure that Members have an

understanding of how work already in train will support delivery of The Promise. Areas in red will need to commence and those in grey do not require any immediate response from the Local Authority. Time has also been taken to check that the next steps identified through our Bright Spots survey are set out within our Plan.

3.33 With Committee approval, this plan will now be presented to the Children's Services Board so that additional Corporate Parents can add their contributions to enable the Children's Services Board to have full oversight of progress and an Internal Board will be established to monitor Local Authority progress.

3.34 It is proposed that Committee receives a yearly update on progress towards delivery of The Promise.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. The Corporate Parenting duties included in Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 are designed to ensure that the attention and resources of various organisations are explicitly focussed on the task of safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of looked after children and young people, and care leavers. This part extends the duties of corporate parents and the reporting responsibilities of local authorities.

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) <small>*taking into account controls/control actions</small>	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Many of the requirements of Plan 24 – 30 are already built into a variety of strategic plans. It is expected that gaps will emerge as the legislation and policy intentions become	The Children's Services Board and Community Planning Management Group have oversight of the delivery of the relevant	M	Yes

	clearer. As such our planning will continue to be iterative.	strategic plans in this respect.		
Compliance	The Council has responsibility to comply with its statutory corporate parenting responsibilities.	The Children's Services Board and the Corporate Parenting Group has responsibility for the Corporate Parenting Improvement Activity. This has increasingly been incorporated into the Children's Services Plan.	L	Yes
Operational	Care experienced children and young people are a vulnerable cohort whose needs require to be recognised and met. Competing resources demands may have an impact	These are duties that are incorporated into existing structures and will be consolidated into practice.	L	Yes
Financial	No significant risks identified		N/A	Yes
Reputational	A failure of Aberdeen City Council to comply and meet its Corporate Parenting responsibilities would reflect negatively on the Council.	The Council and partners are committed to keeping The Promise and implementing Plan 24-30.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No significant risks identified		N/A	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	<p>Plan 24-30 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"> • 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. • 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. • 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
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Plan 24-30 has direct relevance to the following stretch outcomes in the LOIP and will help support delivery of these:

	<p>3. 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>4. 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all the time by 2026.</p> <p>5. 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>
Regional and City Strategies	Plan 24-30 is relevant to Aberdeen City Council's Delivery Plan, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, the Children's Services Plan and the Corporate Parenting Plan.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	<p>Ensuring the effective planning for children and young people is central to the planning for all children and young people open to Children's Social Work.</p> <p>Implementation of Incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots Law; The Children (Care & Justice) Act and the impending "Promise Bill" (which will incorporate legislation in relation to the Children's Hearing system) are all relevant to our collective commitment to #KeepthePromise.</p> <p>This wide ranging and ambitious programme impacts on 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 - Children (Scotland) Act 2020.</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	It is confirmed that no Integrated Impact Assessment is required.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	Not required.

10. APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix A – High Level Promise Plan

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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[Plan 24-30](#) (link)

Plan 24-30 builds on the five foundations (**Voice; Family; Care; People & Scaffolding**) of The Promise mirroring the structure of Plan 21-24. Aberdeen City Council, Children's Social Work; Housing & Education Services all have a contribution to make to delivering the change as set out in the Plan 24 - 30. Given our journey towards delivery of the Promise, many of the commitments are now firmly embedded in other programmes of work. The proposed ownership of each commitment is outlined below and a RAG rating applied to help Members understand our progress towards delivery of the 24-30 Plan.

Key: **Already in place and requires to be maintained**

In progress, but more to do

Not yet started.

VOICE Ensuring the voice of children, young people, their families, principal caregivers and care experienced adults is prioritised. When <u>the promise</u> is kept, voice will always be heard and no decision will be taken about lives without clear, documented evidence of views being taken into account	Documenting Decisions <i>By 2030, Scotland will have changed the language of care. Language will be easily understood, positive and not create or compound stigma.</i>	
	There will be a shared language of care and approach between services and professionals so that families are not navigating between competing standards and expectations.	The Write Right about me project stresses the importance of de-professionalising our language when writing about children. Progress is being made but a further cultural shift is required to fully embed. This will be led by Children's Social Work.
	Professionalised language will not be used to describe meetings and experiences. The words 'respite', 'placement' and 'contact' will not be used and changes will be made to stop using similar 'system language'.	
	Society and the media will be mindful of how individual care stories are talked about and publicised. Care experienced people's experiences will not be sensationalised and everyday examples of real-life scenarios will be promoted instead.	This is being taken forward through the use of a range of 'personas' in strategy documents. This will continue to be overseen by The Council Strategy Board and influence all Council Strategies and Plans.
	Scotland will understand that "language creates realities." Those with care experience will hold and own the narrative of their stories and lives.	Our work driven by the 'Write Right About Me' project focused on these outcomes. Case file reading evidences improvement. Children's Social Work Quality Assurance arrangements are in place to maintain this. This will continue to be led by Children's Social Work.
	Simple, caring language will be used in the writing of care files.	
	The workforce will be considerate and write reports in a clear, relatable way, using plain English. Reports will be written with the assumption the young person will read them later.	
	All reports and submissions to a Children's Hearing will be accurate, of high quality with all information that decision-makers require. Historical information that is not the focus of the reasons for the Hearing discussion will only be included where there is a need to provide context. Decision making in relation to any sibling separation will be accurately recorded and reviewed.	
	Listening <i>By 2030, the way Scotland listens to children, families and the workforce will look vastly different. Scotland will be better at listening, reflecting on and doing what children want and need.</i>	

	Scotland will listen to, and keep listening to, its children.	Our self-evaluation against the UNCRC evidences that good progress is being made. Continued delivery of the agreed Council wide UNCRC Delivery Plan will support the Council to continue to embed and enhance our arrangements.
	Listening will have fundamentally shifted the balance of power and will provide a basis for shared language and understanding. Active listening and engagement will be a fundamental part of how Scotland makes decisions and supports children and families.	Voice is increasingly driving Corporate Parenting Improvement Planning and is fully embedded in child protection arrangements. The Corporate Parenting Group (predominantly children's social work and education) will oversee this on-going work.
	Effort will be made to ensure that quieter voices are listened to and understood, including infants and nonverbal children and those with learning disabilities. No one will be considered 'hard to reach'. The challenges of listening to babies, infants and young children will be recognised. Trusted adults who interpret their voices and behaviours will do so with care and consideration. The overall context of their care and the assets of their parents will be actively considered.	Participation & Engagement activity continues to identify quieter voices including pre-school; those with disabilities; UASCYP. There is evidence that quieter voices are being amplified. The Corporate Parenting Group will continue to oversee this work.
	Decision-makers will listen with an expectation that what they hear will form the basis of their decisions. Listening will start with the expectation that it will lead to change.	Bright Spots activity will drive our Corporate Parenting Improvement activity and the LOOP has been established as our feedback loop. Children's Social Work will continue to oversee this work.
	The pain associated with the telling and retelling of stories will be recognised. Listening will be therapeutic and provide opportunity for healing. Children will not have to describe the most painful parts of their lives at every turn if they do not want to.	This area will, in part, be developed further through our Fairer Futures Partnership. Children's Social Work will oversee this work for those under statutory measures.
	The workforce and decision-makers will be given time and space to really listen to what children want and need. They will be supported to listen and be provided with age and stage appropriate resources with creative and thoughtful options to meet a diverse range of needs through meaningful relationships.	Bright Spots has enabled care experienced young people to articulate what is important to them and their sense of wellbeing. The Community Planning Partnership is committed to on-going and active listening. The Corporate Parenting Group will oversee this on-going work.
	Scotland will listen to care experienced children, young people and care experienced adults in the delivery, inspection and continuous improvement of services and care. Services will be creative in their listening.	

	Participation and Engagement <i>By 2030, children and families and care experienced adults will participate in decisions that affect them. Where children can no longer live with their family of origin they will be supported to understand the narrative of their lives in ways that are appropriate and have meaning for them.</i>	
	The voice of every person with care experience will be heard in their care journey.	In addition to well established arrangements to capture the voices of young people subject to statutory measures, the Bright Spots survey has enabled care experienced young people to articulate what is important to them and their sense of wellbeing. This approach will be maintained. Children's Social work will oversee this work
	Children will be appropriately involved in decision-making about their care, with all those involved properly listening and responding to what they want and need.	
	Children will be provided with all the support they need to fully participate and be heard in Hearings.	The Advocacy Service and Children's Rights Service support young people to attend hearings. This will be maintained and overseen by Children's Social Work.
	Decision making will take into account what those closest to the children report rather than relying on a professional hierarchy.	Better Hearings, Better Outcomes activity is ensuring those closest to the child and family are empowered to attend the child's hearing and share their professional assessment, Children's Social Work and SCRA will oversee this on-going work
	A concerted effort will be made to hear more from parents and wider family members with children who are on the edge of or in care.	
	Care experienced children, young people and adults will have ownership over their own stories and personal data so that they can understand and influence how their stories are shared.	Further thought is required on how to best effect this outcome. Potential solutions will be co-designed with those with lived experience. This work will be owned by Children's Social Work.
	Life story work will follow the lead of a child or young person and will not create or compound stigma.	This is currently established practice and can be evidenced. This will continue to be overseen by Children's Social Work.
	Adoptive families will be aware of their responsibility to support their children to understand their life history.	The Care Inspectorate's inspection of Adoption Services confirms full information is shared with adopters prior to placement. This will continue to be overseen by Children's Social Work.
	If a child or adult wishes to access their care records they will be properly supported through that process.	Learning from the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry has enabled a more trauma informed

		approach to supporting adults access their care records. This will be maintained. This will be overseen by Customer Feedback.
	Intensive Family Support <i>By 2030, whatever issues families face, intensive family support will be available, proactive and characterised by 10 principles: community-based; responsive and timely; work with family assets; empowerment and agency; flexible; holistic and relational; therapeutic; non-stigmatising; patient and persistent; and underpinned by children's rights.</i>	
	<p>The purpose of intensive family support will be explicitly understood across Scotland as being to:</p> <p>(1) Keep families together and avoid children going into care wherever it is safe to do so;</p> <p>(2) Interrupt and address intergenerational cycles of trauma; and</p> <p>(3) Sustain meaningful and loving relationships.</p>	<p>Our Fit Like Hubs and the practice of commissioned services already focus on delivering these commitments.</p>
	If families require intensive support they will get it. They will not be required to fight for it.	<p>The Bairns Hoose will also help deliver against this commitment when operational later in 2025. This work is being overseen by the Child Protection Committee.</p>
	The scaffolding of the system will have shifted from managing risks and needs to supporting families to find their own solutions.	<p>The Fairer Futures Partnership (FFP) project will adopt these principles as our Family Support Model develops.</p> <p>Closer alignment of Public Protection arrangements is currently underway. This work is being overseen by the Chief Officers Group.</p>
	Holistic family support and individualised planning with the principles of 'one family one plan' wraparound support will be available for all families in and on the edges of care.	<p>This is currently in place through our Fit Like Service and Edge of Care Pilots. The FFP project will work to embed this way of working across all organisations and services.</p>
	Multi-agency partners will plan strategically for both family carers and child services, based on outcomes from aggregated individual family and child plans. This will include robust concurrency planning for carers.	<p>This will be progressed as Public Protection arrangements are more closely aligned and through the Fairer Futures Partnership work.</p>
	There will be recognition that there are some families experiencing particular issues who are much more likely to come into contact with the 'care system'. Their rights will be upheld and their needs will be met. In particular:	<p>Work is progressing and on-going to enhance our planning and responses to many of the undernoted groups including for:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support will be available for all families caring for disabled children and those with additional support needs. ○ Care planning (where a parent has a learning disability) must be specific and supportive, working with their assets to build on their capabilities as parents. ○ The imprisonment of those with parenting responsibilities will be prevented wherever possible. The presumption against short custodial sentences will be progressed and the needs, views and rights of children will be taken into account as part of sentencing decisions. ○ If parents are imprisoned, there will be wraparound support for families affected. Parents facing imprisonment will be supported to make plans for their children in a way that avoids emergency removal and a panicked response. ○ Criminal Courts will actively consider the impact on children and ensure proper dialogue between services for joined up planning. Where it is safe to do so, the relationship between child and parent will be supported, and children of imprisoned parents will find the experience of prison visiting is as positive and non-stigmatising as possible. ○ The imprisonment of pregnant mothers will be avoided. For mothers who are in prison at the time of giving birth, there will be support for them to care for and remain with their babies for as long as possible where it is safe to do so. They will be fully involved in all decisions about their baby and be given all the support they need to nurture. Support will follow them when they leave prison so there is a smooth transition of care. ○ Services supporting parental substance use and statutory children's services will compassionately collaborate with each other, ensuring supports are in place that holistically assess children within their families and support them to stay with families whenever it is safe to do so. Access to rehabilitation and support will be more readily available. ○ There will be no penalisation of parents who are experiencing domestic abuse and there will be a recognition that violence and abuse within the home happens across Scotland. Early, intensive and domestic abuse informed support will be available for families. There will be consistent practice across Scotland which holds perpetrators of domestic abuse to account and enables effective interventions to create opportunities for change and all children wherever they live, are protected from all forms of violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children with a disability/Additional Support Needs through the Children's Services Plan ● Working to find alternatives to imprisonment for pregnant mothers (led by Criminal Justice) ● Utilising our Bairs Hoose as an alternative location to the Court for those who are more vulnerable (led by the Child Protection Committee) ● Promoting safe sleeping arrangements and planning for parents with substance support needs (a collaboration between the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership and the Child Protection Committee) ● Continuing support to kinship and foster families through the Children's Services Plan ● The on-going roll out of Equally Safe by the Violence against Women and Girls Partnership ● A focus on domestic violence both by Homewards and as part of the Fairer Futures Partnership ● Our planned enhanced partnership with SAMH <p>This work will be further progressed through our FFP project and our Children's Services Plan.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ There will be availability of services to support parents and carers' mental health at all stages of their parenting journey.○ There will be recognition that kinship, adoptive and foster families may need ongoing, intensive support. The principles for intensive family support that wrap around a family must be accessible to these families too.○ Families will not be abandoned if children are removed from their care. They will be provided with therapeutic support, advocacy and engagement in line with principles of intensive family support.	
Poverty <i>By 2030, there will have been a significant, ongoing and persistent commitment to ending poverty and mitigating its impacts for Scotland's children, young people, families, adults and communities.</i>		
Poverty will have significantly reduced.		The focus of Aberdeen City's Child Poverty Action Plan has been incorporated into the statutory Children's Services Plan . There is evidence that this approach is more impactful and this will be maintained. These commitments will also influence the next Local Outcome Improvement Plan and delivery of our agreed Locality Plans . There is a recognition that care experienced adults are among the most vulnerable to experience the impact of poverty and a range of policies and procedures are in place to provide support, for example with housing. The strength of these policies should be assessed to determine next steps. This will be overseen by our Internal Promise Board.
Universal and early help and support services for families will be supporting and assisting families sensitively where poverty is the underlying problem.		
The evidence around poverty and child neglect will have been considered and openly discussed to support all children to grow up loved, safe and respected.		
Scotland will have worked to break intergenerational cycles of trauma and the link between persistent poverty and intergenerational interaction with the 'care system'.		
Universal Family Support <i>By 2030, the commitment to early intervention and prevention will be realised through holistic support for all families that need it.</i>		
The underlying universal support system will support all families and identify those who need support. Universal services will recognise the role they play as adjacent parts of the wider scaffolding of care.		Considerable work has been undertaken to develop universal family support by the universal services and Third Sector organisations.
Scotland will support a broad understanding of the importance of the early years of parenting. Preparation for birth will give parents the opportunity to		High quality Locality Plans are in place.

	access universal attachment based parenting education to sit alongside antenatal care.	There is now a need to look at how we can offer the proportionate universalism described by Marmot to ensure that there is an enhanced level of support for those most at risk of disadvantage, in order to prevent the needs identified in Locality Plans from occurring. This work will be progressed through the Future Libraries Model Schools will continue to develop local models of family support.
	Support will be provided for all families to care and to nurture their pre-school children, beyond the provision of nursery.	
	There will have been a significant upscaling in universally accessible family support services.	
	Families will be provided with support that lasts as long as required. There will be a collective acceptance that for some families this will be a long-term commitment, extending beyond previous standard practice.	
	All communities will have supportive, universally accessible places out of the home where parents and carers can build relationships, share their parenting experiences and be supported to stay and play with their children.	
Care Ensuring the structures of the 'care system' care and work, and children, young people, and families experiences it as positive and supportive. When <u>the promise</u> is kept, the relationships that are important to children will not be affected by their experience of care and they can keep in touch wherever it is safe to do so. When children move on from care, the support they have will not end.	Advocacy and Legal Advice <i>By 2030, all children, young people and families in contact with the 'care system' and care experienced adults will have access to independent advocacy support and legal advice and representation if required.</i>	
	Families will be supported to understand and advocate for their rights and entitlements.	ACC Children's Rights Service is positively received by children and young people. The approach utilised is fully consistent with the UNCRC. The parameters of advocacy are made clear in the information shared with children and young people. Children's Social Work will continue to oversee this service.
	The purpose of advocacy and representation will be clear. Advocacy will not replace rights to legal representation but advocacy and legal representation will have a separate, distinct purpose.	
	Care experienced children, young people and adults will have the right and access to independent advocacy, at all stages of their experience of care and beyond. There will be no upper age limits for accessing advocacy and it will be available for as long as it is needed.	The Scottish Government are exploring the provision of life-long advocacy within the Promise Bill.
	There will be consistent advocacy standards across Scotland that are subject to inspection and regulation.	Standards require to be developed nationally.
	Independent advocacy organisations will have been commissioned to ensure that advocacy is structurally, financially and psychologically separate from statutory organisations and service providers.	Out with scope of ACC

	Groups and providers of peer advocacy will be supported to provide meaningful support to families.	
	There will be no upfront or hidden charges associated with engaging an advocacy worker.	No charges are applied to accessing local advocacy services.
	Advocacy workers will be skilled and knowledgeable about the rights and entitlements of children. Specialist advocacy workers will be available to support disabled and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.	Local advocacy services are highly skilled and are well connected to national advocacy services for UASCYP.
	Children and their families will have a right to legal advice and representation if required. This includes unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who will have access to legal support, advice and advocacy to navigate the Home Office asylum procedures. Legal advice will also be accessible to children with additional support needs, those living in rural communities and those for whom English is a second language.	Children are already entitled to access independent legal representation. Locally there are challenges to do so given the lack of solicitors willing to accept legal aid clients. UASCYP do access independent legal advice, although need to travel to Glasgow to do so. The Asylum and Dispersal team (Housing Cluster) will oversee progress in this area.
	Lawyers will act in a way that is accessible, understandable and not overtly adversarial.	Out with scope of ACC
	Scotland will have considered the creation of an accredited legal specialism to set standards for legal professionals representing children. Those standards will uphold children's rights, understand trauma and attachment and how to operate in a setting that seeks to uphold children's wellbeing.	
	There will be ready access to legal advice and representation when aspects of the 'care system' go wrong. There will be clarity about where care experienced children and young people can turn to for legal redress. All care experienced children and young adults will have access to justice legal remedies such as appeals, reviews and judicial reviews. Access to justice will include access to legal advice for children with additional support needs, those living in rural communities and those for whom English is a second language.	Legislative change is required to deliver this.
For children and families where decisions are made alongside them	Decision Making By 2030, there will have been a culture change in key institutions responsible for decision making.	
	Decision making will be based, first and foremost, on what children and care experienced young adults need and want.	Child centric practice is core to the GIRFEC practice model and social work practice. While accepting there is always room for improvement, feedback from children and young people via the Bright Spots reflected
	The starting point for any decision will be how to best protect relationships that are important to children. Secure attachments, based on loving, consistent relationships, will be the bedrock of every decision made about children.	

	Listening and decision making will be honest and transparent so that everyone understands what has been decided and why.	positively on the connections children and young people had with their social worker. It also reflected positively on the planning for brothers and sisters. Data reporting in relation to brothers and sisters is a growing national focus. This will continue to be overseen by Children's Social Work.
	Decision making must take account of the dynamics of sibling relationships and all sibling voices must be heard. In Children's Hearings, attention must be paid to the rights of brothers and sisters to ensure that they have all the necessary legal rights to have their voice heard. That must include the notification of forthcoming Hearings about their brothers and sisters and speedy rights of appeal if required.	
For families	Family Group Decision Making and mediation will be a common part of decision making.	The concept of Family Group Decision making is being considered within the proposed Promise Bill. Children's Social Work will oversee developments in this area.
	Kinship family decision making will be supported by and characterised by family group decision making, to explore the breadth and consequences of decisions about where children should live.	
	Scotland will have challenged power dynamics within all decision making processes to achieve a balance which ensures all decisions taken are in the best interests of the child. There will be a balanced approach to decision making that primarily listens to and focuses on children and their families.	
	Family Carers can make routine parenting decisions within set guidelines without needing permission each time. Bureaucracy will not be getting in the way of day to day decision making.	Further work required to ensure there are no unintended barriers. Legal framework for the placement may impose conditions. This will be overseen by Children's Social Work.
For children and adults seeking information ownership	In order for decision-makers to make effective decisions alongside children and families, the right information will be shared at the right time and that those close to children will be heard.	Further work is required to identify the digital tools that support children, young people and key adults in their lives to have more input in terms of when and how their information is shared. Empowering the workforce who undertake direct work will need to come with planned development that supports this outcome. Our work on Write Right About Me will support delivery of this. This will be overseen by Children's Social Work.
	There will have been investment in the development of digital tools that incorporate the principle of information ownership. These will be operating at a scale that allows care experienced children, young people and adults to have control over their information and how it is shared.	
	The importance of the judgement and knowledge of the workforce who have regular, direct contact with children will be acknowledged. Those working with and alongside children will know where to report information and be confident it will be taken seriously.	
For children and families engaged in the Children's Hearings System	The principles underpinning the Children's Hearings System will be upheld and understood across Scotland's services.	Local improvement activity is driven by a Panel Liaison Group (SCRA/CHS/CSW). The change noted will however require legislative change to implement the Children's Hearings System Review findings.
	Children, young people, and families will be the focus of the whole of the Children's Hearings System and their legal rights will be upheld and respected.	
	There will have been active consideration and testing of underlying structures, so that the Children's Hearings System is best placed to truly listen and uphold	

	<p>the legal rights of children, young people, and their families in accordance with what the Independent Care Review heard. This reconsideration will have been done in an evidence- based manner. Options for change will have been piloted.</p> <p>The extension of enforcement and compulsion powers will have been tested to support parents and ensure local authorities are fulfilling their obligations to children.</p> <p>The role of volunteers in the decision making structure of Hearings will have been comprehensively assessed. There will have been a thoughtful, evidence based exploration of alternative models of decision making.</p> <p>The Children's Hearings System will have shrunk and specialised and planning will have taken place to facilitate this, including full and proper consideration of implications for the operating model—including the dependency on volunteers.</p>	
	<p>Moving on and life long support</p> <p><i>By 2030, Scotland's care experienced young people will feel safe, happy, loved and prepared as they move from childhood to adulthood and care experienced adults will be able to access help and support when they need it.</i></p>	
	<p>Comprehensive thematic reviews of 'transition services' will have taken place; and all those with ongoing parenting responsibility will have explained how they plan to deliver integrated services from childhood to adulthood.</p>	<p>Work is ongoing to improve the transition planning for children with complex disabilities or ASN's.</p> <p>This needs to be expanded to consider the needs of all care leavers and how they are enabled to access adult services appropriate to their needs.</p> <p>The intention to further develop a co-located multiagency Throughcare & Aftercare service will support this outcome.</p>
	<p>There will be 'no wrong doors' for care experienced people. Scotland will support young people as they enter adulthood and this support will be life long and holistic for the children, young people and care experienced adults it cares for, acting at all times like a good parent for whom it has parenting responsibility.</p>	<p>Brights Spots tell us there is more we need to do to prepare young people for life beyond care.</p> <p>We currently support young people who have moved on from a local children's home to return where possible. Capacity however can limit the extent of this offer.</p>
	<p>Scotland will support young people in becoming independent, stable and self-reliant, while also recognising there may be a need to stay or come home at times. Those under Scotland's care will have the right to return to care and will be able to access supportive services and nurturing people.</p>	<p>Aberdeen City has embraced "Staying Put" and the numbers in continuing care reflect this. However this can mean the needs of one child are prioritised over another child as</p>
	<p>Young people will be also encouraged to stay in their setting of care for as long as they need or want to. Rules, processes and culture will support that</p>	

	approach. There will be no regulatory or financial barriers for young people to stay with foster carers for as long as is required.	demand for care settings outstrips capacity. This requires to be considered across both the children's and adult system more fully.
	When young adults move on to independent living or need to return to a caring environment, all decisions will be made in their best interests and not on the strict application of age criteria.	
	Residential Care settings will be supported and resourced to keep places open for children and young people in line with 'continuing care' legislation. This will not end when children and young people do not want, and are not ready, to leave. Aftercare will be person-centred, with thoughtful planning so that there are no cliff edges out of care and support.	This is the current model and will be maintained by Children's Social Work.
	Scotland will have considered and made changes to ensure greater equity and opportunity for care experienced children, young people and adults. That includes increased opportunities for care experienced adults to access employment, training, stable housing and support.	Children's Social Work already actively support care experienced young people beyond 26. However to expand further is not possible within the current service capacity. Work is ongoing to improve our support offer to care leavers to access financial support and pathways. This will be discussed more fully as we refresh the Local Outcome Improvement Plan in 2026.
	Older care experienced people will have a right to access supportive, caring services for as long as they require them. Those services and the people who work in them, will have a primary focus on the development and maintenance of supportive relationships that help people to access what they need to thrive.	
	There will be clear communication and streamlining of the range of financial supports available to those with care experience.	
	All those with ongoing parenting responsibilities for young adults work towards a shared set of aims, values and knowledge.	
	Relationships <i>By 2030, Scotland will have broadened its understanding of risk to ensure a more holistic understanding that includes the risk of children being removed from their family and of not having loving, supportive, ongoing relationships</i>	
	There will have been a shift in focus from the risk of possible harm to the risk of not having stable, long term, loving relationships. This includes the risk to the child of removing them from their family.	Further work is required to for all partners to better appreciate the harm caused by removing children from their family. This will be overseen by the Child Protection Committee.
	Children who have been harmed through relationships have supportive relationships in order to heal.	In addition to the enhancing of the skills of Children's Social Work staff, the trauma recovery element of our Bairns Hoose will support delivery of this outcome. Our Bright Sports survey highlighted our progress to enable Social Workers to build enduring relationship with the children and young people we care for.

	All children will be supported to continue relationships that are important to them, where it is safe to do so. This includes with birth families, siblings, carers and members of the workforce.	ACC has no policies preventing the workforce from maintaining relationship. Planning processes actively support children and young people to identify who is important to them to enable these to be maintained when safe to do so. This will be maintained by Children's Social Work.
	The workforce will be able to maintain relationships with young people who leave a particular care setting and understand that as part of their role. Blanket policies that prevent the maintenance of relationships between young people who leave residential care and workers will have been removed.	
	Where families wish to maintain relationships with their children, but that contact is prevented, they will be supported to maintain their details so that they can be contacted at a later stage if the young person wishes.	Although we support a growing number of parents to maintain 'letterbox contact', capacity limits our ability to support family members to maintain current contact details which can enable contact at a later stage.
	<p>The presumption that children will stay together with their brothers and sisters, wherever it is safe to do so, will be fully implemented. The following will be in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An expansive understanding of siblings that includes half, step and adoptive siblings and reflects children's experience of their family lives. ○ Public service planning and commissioning strategies and procurement that is attuned to the needs of brothers and sisters to promote those relationships and prevent separation. ○ Robust management processes facilitate and support good practice relating to sibling relationships and addresses any sibling estrangement. ○ High quality assessments undertaken by the social care and health workforce of the relationship needs of siblings. ○ Recording practices that reflect the value placed on sibling relationships as a right and a source of well-being. Decision making in relation to any sibling separation is accurately recorded and reviewed. 	<p>ACC has agreed a position statement that affirms our commitment to support brothers and sisters to stay together. Practice guidance supports the recording practices. Finding care for very large sibling groups is challenging.</p> <p>Where brothers and sisters are separated for safety or resource reasons then we actively plan to ensure relationships are promoted. We have supported carers to extend homes to reunite a sister with her 2 brothers. The complexity of family life can mean some children and professionals don't always know some brother & sisters. This will continue to be overseen by Children's Social Work.</p>
	There will be active consideration about the breadth of adult relationships available when a child is placed in a care setting, so that time away from home feels natural, normal and a good place to be. All short breaks will mirror those routinely in place in wider family networks (with recognised continuity of relationship), and take place in ways that do not create or compound stigma, and help children continue to feel part of the family.	Assessments of f/carers look to explore who within their extended adult relationships can support the care of children. This ensures that for a child care breaks feel natural and normal. We recognise this is not always possible. The use of IFA providers limits our influence and varies the experience for children. This will continue to be overseen by Children's Social Work.

	<p>The workforce will have time to develop, focus and reflect on relationships. As well as strengthening supportive networks and valuing the roles of varied people in children's lives. There will be increased trust in them to make meaningful connections based on instinct and judgement.</p>	<p>Staff utilise the use of genograms to understand family relationships important to children/young people. Building on this we are exploring how data held by Registrars can support building this understanding. This will continue to be overseen by Children's Social Work.</p>
	<p>Stability <i>By 2030, Scotland will have limited the number of moves that children experience and carers will be supported to continue to care.</i></p> <p>When it is not safe for children to remain at home, they will be with consistent caregivers and children will be supported to maintain relationships that are important to them.</p> <p>Children will not experience unnecessary moves and will always be in a safe, loving environment where all their needs are met.</p> <p>Scotland will have processes to learn from things not working out, to avoid children being moved multiple times and to improve the maintenance of relationships.</p> <p>If a move is unavoidable, the repair to the rupture of that relationship and the impact of any subsequent move will be well thought through. Relationships will be maintained in different capacities, if safe to do so.</p> <p>Any transition in a child's life will be limited, relational, planned and informed. Support will wrap around families and the settings of care, so that carers and families are supported, and children experience consistent, safe and loving relationships.</p> <p>Transitions will not take place in a hurry or feel like an emergency. Children will have time to collect personal items that are important to them in a way that is safe, appropriate and rights respecting.</p> <p>Everyone involved in a transition - the child, the family from which they are being removed and the family or safe, loving environment to which they are going - will have as much information as possible to help ensure the child feels safe, loved and informed.</p>	<p>Planning processes ensure key relationships are identified and maintained when children cannot remain at home.</p> <p>Data in relation to the number of moves children experience is recorded and reported. Our data tells us very few children experience 3 or more moves in a year.</p> <p>We want to further reduce the instances children move on an unplanned basis to allow for adequate preparation and planned time to be factored in so all involved are clear what is happening and how a child's needs can be best met. This will include providing the new carer/care setting full information about the child and the reasons for the move. This will continue to be overseen by Children's Social Work.</p>
	<p>Where children live <i>By 2030, fewer children and families will have interactions with the 'care system'. Where living with their family is not possible, children will stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home. The focus of their care will be on building childhoods underpinned by loving, consistent relationships, fun, play, education and opportunity.</i></p>	

	There will be strategic, needs based planning for children so that they are provided with warm, relational, therapeutic, safe, loving homes when they are required.	There is a national shortage of foster carers particularly carers who can care for large sibling groups. Our support to them includes provision of therapeutic training and support. This has been extended to include kinship carers. This will continue to be overseen by Children's Social Work.
	There will be sufficient availability of safe, loving homes for children removed from their families, and these must be able to accommodate sibling groups where it is safe to do so.	
For children cared for by family or friends	Children living in kinship care will get the support they need to thrive.	The support offer to kinship carers has grown in recent years. Feedback from them has been positive about the changes made. There is more we would like to do given the growing complexity of need children are presenting. Current capacity limits our ambition. Increased investment is required to provide kinship carers with the therapeutic support that equips them to meet the lifelong needs of the child they care for. This will continue to be overseen by Children's Social Work.
	Kinship is actively explored as a positive place for children to be cared for.	
	Kinship care is valued. Families will have access to the support and services needed, which is offered freely without kinship carers having to fight for it, including financial support to provide the best care.	
	Kinship carers will not need to professionalise their role in order to access support. They will be considered part of the broader workforce with access to ongoing supervision, space for reflection and support.	
For children who are adopted	Prospective adopting families will have access to all available information and will be supported to make sure children receive the best environment for them to grow up and thrive.	The Care Inspectorate's inspection of Adoption Services confirms full information is shared with adopters prior to placement. This will be maintained by Children's Social Work.
	Time and care will be taken to place children appropriately.	
	Adoptive families will receive the support and attention required to love and care for their children, particularly where the ongoing impact of trauma and broken attachment is felt by the child and the family. This includes reflective practices, supervision and peer support so that, wherever possible, adoption breakdown is avoided.	The support offer to adopters has grown in recent years, but there is more we would like to do given the growing complexity of need children are presenting. Current capacity limits our ambition. Increased investment is required to provide adopters with the therapeutic support that equips them to meet the lifelong needs of the child they care for and to recover when adoptions break down. This will continue to be overseen by Children's Social Work.
	Families who experience an adoption breakdown are supported and the impact of this is recognised.	
For children living with foster carers	Foster care is valued. Foster families will have access to the support and services needed. Foster carers are cared for and supported to care, including financial support.	Our preparation to foster training sets the context of care we expect. It also provides therapeutic training to foster carers

	Foster carers know that their primary purpose is to develop nurturing, patient, kind, compassionate, trusting and respectful relationships so that the children in their care feel loved and safe.	(Theraplay) to support them to deliver on our ethos of care. Our capacity to provide carers with support to contend with vicarious trauma is limited due to current resources & capacity. This will continue to be overseen by Children's Social Work.
	There will have been consideration of a national register for Foster Carers.	National decision required.
For children living in residential homes	Residential settings will operate with a cohesive set of values that uphold the rights of the children they are caring for. Those values will be therapeutic, recognising that children require thoughtful, supportive relationships as a basis on which to heal and develop as young adults.	The outcomes from the inspections of our Children's homes evidence an embedded practice model that reflects these expectations. We don't utilise physical restraint as a means to manage children's behaviour and distress. This will continue to be maintained by Children's Social Work.
	The needs of the children living in a residential home at the time will inform rules as opposed to a blanket set of instructions and restrictions.	
	Children and young people will have supportive, kind relationships with all staff. The residential provider will be supported in finding the right balance between having consistent core staff along with the flexibility of additional support that works for the children and young people.	
For children and young people living in secure care	The purpose, delivery and infrastructure of secure care will change. Scotland's response to the small number of children who need this level of security, care and protection will look radically different in 2030 compared to 2020. The contradictions between settings and in the overall provision of Secure Care will have been collectively addressed.	Implementation of the Reimagining Secure Care plan needs to be delivered
	Fewer children will live in Secure Care. Children will only be placed in highly restricted environments when necessary and not simply as an escalation when other interventions have failed.	National planning required.
	Planning and provision of Secure Care will reflect the needs of children in Scotland to ensure there are sufficient places for those that need them. Children will not be held in Secure Care due to inadequate community options, as there will be accessible and available alternative community-based support, aligned with the principles of intensive family support.	Locally numbers in secure care remain low however there is a national shortage of resources that can care for children with complex ASN who need a safe and contained environment.
	The underlying principle of Secure Care will be the provision of therapeutic, trauma-informed support. A range of therapeutic interventions will be available within Secure Care in Scotland and all children will receive all that they need to support healing and rehabilitation. This will include access to support for the high numbers of children who have additional support needs to achieve the highest possible standard of health.	The noted intention does not always meet the reality of the offer from secure care providers.

	Children in Secure Care will have access to education services to support and enhance their learning, rather than disrupt it.	Current practice – as evidenced via the Thematic Review and the Children's Commissioners audit. This will continue to be maintained by Children's Social Work.
	Where safe to do so, children in Secure Care will be supported to maintain good contact with their family.	
	The use of Secure Care will always uphold children's rights. Children will be involved and listened to. They will be given the chance to express their views and are told about their legal rights of appeal through a culture of care that meets their needs and helps them understand their legal protections.	
	Specific residential, therapeutic settings will be available for girls who have been sexually abused and exploited.	National planning required
	All children who have been sexually abused and exploited will have the specific, therapeutic care and support they need to recover and be kept safe. Their rights are recognised and upheld in a trauma informed way, so that their pain is not exacerbated by where they live.	Secure care providers are not always able to provide a sustainable level of therapeutic supports appropriate to the young persons needs.
	There will be greater scope to remain in Secure Care for those who have turned 18. Children leaving Secure Care will receive support. There is investment in supportive intermediate settings so that young people leaving Secure Care are able to access the support they need.	National planning required
For unaccompanied asylum-seeking children	Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children will have their rights upheld and receive the same care and support as any other child. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children will be treated as 'looked after' children and they are placed in caring, supportive settings with access to education, health services and other appropriate services as required. There are no barriers to their participation.	Already in place and being driven through our Asylum and Dispersal Plan . This will continue to be overseen by the Housing and Children's Social Work Service.
	When the age of an unaccompanied child is unclear there may be circumstances where a health assessment is required. This should only be when necessary and done so in a way that limits trauma and distress.	
	The workforce supporting asylum seeking children will understand their religious and cultural contexts. Those traditions and cultural needs will be respected by all those involved in their care to ensure their rights are upheld	
	The workforce will be alive to the issues of human trafficking. When a child is suspected of being the victim of trafficking they will be given protection.	Increased confidence in recognising human trafficking and modern slavery. This will be overseen by the Child Protection Committee
People Supporting the workforce and the system around them. When <u>the promise</u> is	Leadership <i>By 2030, there will be strong leadership across all of Scotland's workforce that models and supports the values and principles of the broader workforce.</i>	
	Values-based leadership will exist at all levels and in all settings of the 'care system'	Council leaders are committed to delivery of The Promise and ensuring the voice of

kept, people across the workforce will have the support and skills they need to do what is required of them in their day-to-day jobs and will be able to build relationships and make decisions based on listening and compassion	Strong leadership will be evident across and throughout the entire 'care system.' This leadership will support and embed the changes made to nurture and support families to stay together.	children and young people are central to our improvement journey. On the back of our Bright Spots survey we are revisiting the structure and delivery of our Champions Board. Taking account of UNCRC we are developing a shadow board to directly influence and support the strategic planning of our Children's Services Board. We recognise the extent to which local Corporate Parents have embraced the findings of the Promise is not equally shared. Reports from the Care Inspectorate recognise that a rights based approach is core to the leadership of our C/Homes. This work will continue to be driven by the Children's Services Board.
	Leaders will model an approach that encourages a culture of speaking up and recognising the judgment of the workforce. There will not be an over reliance on the confidence and leadership of individuals to go beyond boundaries. There will be a reassessment of professional guidelines and boundaries to make kind and loving behaviour the norm.	
	Leadership will value the voice and opinion of children and the workforce and will nurture a culture of appropriate information sharing.	
	Settings of care will have established a leadership culture that upholds children's rights and applies the values of care, attachment, attunement and co-regulation in day to day life.	
	Leadership will be based on a broader understanding of risk and of the importance of natural, warm human relationships.	
Recruitment & Retention <i>By 2030, Scotland will have established a new way of thinking about the workforce, from definition, learning and training and recruitment through to supervision and retention. Measures will be in place to support and enhance recruitment and retention of those who care for Scotland's children.</i>		
	There will be enough skilled and confident members of the unpaid and paid workforce to meet the needs of Scotland's children, families and care experienced adults. That workforce will be supported to develop the space within which loving care and nurturing relationships can evolve.	Establishment of the NASW agency will support to raise the profile of social work and give effect to the recommendations of the "Setting the Bar" report. Locally we have approved a Workforce Development Plan which sets out how we will support and nurture our workforce. This workforce incorporates the needs of foster carers and kinship carers. There are significant challenges recruiting to key posts – residential staff, social workers, health visitors. We also recognise challenges in relation to succession planning for senior posts. There are also challenges locally and nationally in relation to the recruitment of
	The ability of the workforce to act with care and compassion will be prioritised and they will be supported to develop the space within which loving care and nurturing relationships can develop. Barriers to that, such as workload, environmental conditions, and unnecessary bureaucratic processes, will be mitigated.	
	Anyone working alongside children, families and care experienced adults, including midwives, health visitors, family support workers and social workers, will be well resourced and supported and have sufficient capacity to care in the way the promise demands.	
	Employment conditions will allow people involved in the care of children to flourish and feel valued. This includes with respect to workload, remuneration, secure employment status and environmental conditions.	

	<p>The number and quality of kinship, foster carers, adopters and other carers available to meet the needs of sibling groups will exceed the needs of the children experiencing the 'care system'.</p>	<p>foster carers. We welcome the announcement by the SG to provide national leadership to support the drive to recruit more carers.</p> <p>We will continue to explore how technology can enable a reduction of bureaucracy and explore how flexible working can support retention and recruitment which reflect the needs of the workforce the vast majority of whom are women.</p> <p>Although many aspects will be led by Children's Social work other agencies will need to identify their own workforce needs.</p>
	<p>The workforce, including foster carers, will be recruited on the basis of their values. When things get difficult, values will be revisited both individually and organisationally.</p>	
<p>Rules, Processes & Culture</p> <p><i>By 2030, it will be clear that the primary purpose of care is to develop nurturing, kind, compassionate, trusting and respectful relationships so that children feel safe and loved. Relational practice with children and families is valued and every care setting facilitates a relationship-based approach. Rules and regulations that get in the way of this will have been removed and the workforce will have been trained and supported to be attuned to children's physical and emotional states.</i></p>		
	<p>It will have been acknowledged that the previous system of rules and safeguards did not serve children well. Children's safety means having real, loving, and consistent relationships, which will be prioritised over rules and processes that fail to keep children safe.</p>	<p>Feedback from the Bright Spots Report highlights the extent of the relational practice being delivered by Children's Social Work. We know that we need to build on this to go further.</p> <p>The induction and support provided to care staff and carers reinforces our ethos of care which emphasise respectful, kind and loving relationships. We have empowered those with day to day care of children to make the decisions about children visiting friends in the manner we would expect any parent to do.</p> <p>The understanding of risk needs to be broadened across our workforce. Some still see risk narrowly resulting in a push for crisis interventions which fail to take full cognisance of the context and background of children, young people and their families. We recognise a sense of anxiousness some in</p>
	<p>Scotland will have broadened its understanding of risk. Risk will be contextualised with the differentiation between risk associated with crisis and risk associated with other behaviours.</p>	
	<p>Children will be included in a meaningful loving way within their foster family without barriers. Rules and regulations support children to be fully included with the life of their foster carers.</p>	
	<p>There will be no structural, systemic or cultural barriers, including regulatory barriers, for children and young people to have regular, positive experiences. For example, staying over at a friend's house, going on holiday or having a relationship.</p>	
	<p>Every care setting will facilitate a relationship-based approach and the workforce will have received appropriate support and training to work in this way alongside children and families.</p>	
	<p>Children will not be further stigmatised, and any rules that do so .</p>	
	<p>There will have been a reassessment of professional guidelines and boundaries to make kind and loving behaviour the norm. All caregivers will know that their primary purpose is to develop nurturing, patient, kind,</p>	

	<p>compassionate, trusting and respectful relationships so that children in their care feel loved and safe.</p> <p>The workforce will have a different conception of risk taking, where risk taking is seen as a normal part of care. This shift in mindset will be underpinned by developing the confidence of the workforce.</p> <p>There is support for the workforce to bring their whole selves to their work, to have a strong understanding of themselves, and to act in a way that feels natural and not impeded by a professional construct. Scotland will support and resource the workforce to put theory into good practice by supporting and building relationships with children.</p> <p>The workforce is supported and trusted to make sensible, thoughtful, caring judgments. Sometimes carers will make decisions to not allow a child or young person to do something. This will be understood as a normal part of growing up and will not need to be explained within the language of professional risk assessments. It is understood that those decisions come out of and are based on a relationship of trust, respect and love.</p> <p>A strong 'national values framework' will be in place for all of Scotland's workforce. These values will be multidisciplinary, and fundamental for people who work with children in any capacity including all those with ongoing parenting responsibilities for young adults.</p> <p>All of Scotland's institutions, organisations, national bodies and Local Authorities are aware of, understand and fully implement all their parenting responsibilities.</p>	<p>our workforce hold about "getting it wrong". We know we need to further support and empower our workforce to be autonomous and confident.</p> <p>We want to continue to reduce the need for crisis intervention and move to more planned responses that take account of the child and relevant adults voices. This will be driven by Children's Social Work, but all partners have a role in overseeing the change required.</p> <p>As a local authority we fully recognise our parenting responsibilities however also appreciate that the understanding of our workforce is variable. A revamped online module as well as the Promise Award scheme continues to support improvement.</p> <p>More broadly a National Response is required from national organisations.</p>
	<p>Workforce Support</p> <p><i>By 2030, Scotland's workforce will be able to provide the loving and attentive care all children, young people, families and care experienced adults need. There will be a recognition that the workforce includes anyone involved in the care and/or support of children, young people, families and care experienced adults. Children and young people will thrive and feel loved because the workforce is nurtured and supported to create a sense of home, family, friends, community, and belonging for those they care for.</i></p>	
For the workforce	<p>All those working with and alongside care experienced children, young people and adults will be supported to create a rights respecting environment where children feel they can raise concerns and complaints and receive comments and feedback.</p> <p>All members of the workforce will experience reflection, supervision and structured support, which will be recognised as an essential part of practice.</p> <p>Feedback will be a routine component of development.</p>	<p>The professional training and development of CSW is grounded in rights based approaches. Staff can access development opportunities to further embed the UNCRC into practice. All CSW receive regular professional supervision. We prioritise development support to our team managers to enhance</p>

	There will be recognition that Scotland's workforce includes survivors of trauma. Those with lived experience will be supported to be part of the workforce so that they can nurture their instinct to contribute whilst also acknowledging the pain that may come from their involvement.	their knowledge and skills to deliver reflective supervision to better meet the needs and resilience of the workforce. As a partnership we will continue to develop our capacity to learn from experiences where practice could have been improved as well as incorporating feedback.
	Support for the workforce will be available, effective, flexible and regular. It will ensure the workforce will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Present and emotionally available to the children in their care. ○ Able to work autonomously so that they can make decisions that are natural and thoughtful, and given the tools to exercise effective judgement. ○ Supported to care for children who have had deeply troubling experiences. 	Professional supervision is also offered to health visitors. We are aware that other professions don't offer "supervision" but do provide enhanced support to key staff whose role requires them to support and plan young people who have experienced early life trauma.
Kinship carers and foster carers will be recognised as part of the broader workforce. In particular, they will:	Be confident that they will receive the support they need to care for children and young people in their care. That will mirror the principles of intensive family support so that care is supported, encouraged and resourced to maintain lasting relationships with children, young people and care experienced adults.	We value the contribution and role made by foster carers and kinship carers. Our preparation and support to f/carers training sets the context of care we expect. It also provides therapeutic training (Theraplay) to f/carers to support them deliver on our ethos of care. F/carers have a supervising social worker who (who have access to DDP training) provide supervision to f/carers and space for them to reflect on the role they are undertaking and the impact of this role on them. Our capacity to provide specialist support to f/carers who have experienced vicarious trauma is limited due to current resources & capacity. We have worked with partners to enhance our support offer to kinship cares. There remains room for improvement but this enhanced support has been well received. Included in this is developing our relationship with CAMHS and the role of Psychologist Assistant within the team. Kinship carers have
	Take breaks. Like all families, carers will have opportunities for babysitting and short breaks, so that they, and the children and young people they care for, can benefit from time away. Short breaks will support children and young people to continue to be part of the family.	
	Be supported and have ongoing supervision and time for reflection to prevent overwhelm. This includes recognition that foster carers may experience secondary trauma whilst supporting children and young people with their own trauma.	
	Learning and training will have been redesigned to ensure the workforce is well supported and confident to work across disciplines and alongside different types of carers and professionals. This redesign will mean that:	
	The way Scotland cares is underpinned by the guiding principle of attachment and is informed, responsive and reflective about the nature and impact of trauma.	
	Role-appropriate access to initial and lifelong learning is provided, focusing on attachment theory, trauma-responsive care, wellbeing, and children's rights.	

		access to the same training and development opportunities as f/carers.
	Everyone involved in the Children's Hearings System, including legal representatives, is properly trained in the impact of trauma, childhood development, neurodiversity and children's rights.	National response required
	Gaps in workforce training in sectors, such as education, justice and health, have been addressed.	
	Child development is part of essential foundation learning for anyone working with children.	Child development forms a key part of our L&D offer for staff and carers it is also central to recognising and understanding the impact of trauma. We recognise that there is more we can do to enhance the emotional competence and resilience of carers and there is a role for multi-agency professionals to contribute to this. We will, as capacity allows, review our support offer to all carers based on their needs and our data
	There has been active consideration of the development of multidisciplinary foundation learning for a range of professionals, covering basic principles of human development and children's rights.	
	There are clear learning pathways at all levels of the workforce to foster self-awareness, emotional competency and human connection through relationships. This encourages joint learning through informal education, mentoring, coaching and support networks, as well as opportunities for shared reflective practice.	
For children, young people and care experienced adults	Reflective practice for the workforce (coaching, mentoring, and supervision) will include things that matter to children, including how loved they feel, how their rights are upheld and how stigma is being reduced. This will emphasise support for the worker and their relationship with the child over evaluation of performance.	We recognise there is more to be done to support the workforce to develop their capacity to deliver reflective practice. We are providing training to managers to develop their capacity and confidence.
	Care experienced adults will feel supported through their lives and will not experience barriers to this support because of challenges with the workforce.	Many of our care experienced adults choose to remain in contact with our service beyond 26 years of age. We would want to build on this but capacity limits the extent of this offer.
Scaffolding The ways in which the 'care system' relates to, and is dependent on, other systems and structures that although may be considered as separate, often have a significant impact on lives. This includes organisations and	Data & Information <i>By 2030, Scotland will be taking a different approach to how it collects data and information.</i>	
	Scotland will be collecting data that shows what matters to children, young people and care experienced adults rather than data that only matters to the system.	We want to build on the learning from our participation in the Brights Sports programme. We want to explore how this can be repeated on a planned basis going forward.
	Improvements will have been made to how data is used in decision-making. Those who collect data will proactively listen to the experiences of children, young people, families, and care experienced adults, and those who support them, and that information will be treated as valuable evidence. Data will enable holistic support instead of being a barrier to that support.	

sectors that may not consider themselves directly related to children and families, but on which the work to #KeepThePromise is dependent. When <u>the promise</u> is kept, care experienced children and adults will be people first and foremost and will not have to be defined by their care experience in every service and support they have.	The data Scotland collects will be of high quality and as close to complete as possible. Common gaps, such as a lack of equalities information, information on brothers and sisters, and data on adoption breakdowns will be addressed. Data on the extent and reasons for adoption breakdown must be collected, which must follow the experience of children whose adoption has broken down, recognising the prevalence of and impact on late teens and early adulthood.	A review of the data will be undertaken to ensure we actively address any gaps. As capacity allows we will make adjustments to D365 to enable reporting. Data needs to be collated for more than reporting reasons but how they are used to actively inform service planning and design. Opening this data up to the broader workforce will support our use of the data.
	Incomplete data will no longer be a barrier to data linkage or use. Data will be joined up, allowing people and organisations to see entire journeys and changes over time. Joined up data will also improve accountability for outcomes instead of just activities or inputs.	
	The workforce will be supported to capture and use data and information on experiences and relationships in addition to outputs and outcomes. They will have the capacity and skills to use this high quality, holistic data in decision making and not just in reporting and research.	
	Services will be designed on the basis of need - backed by diverse, strong data and evidence - rather than on an acceptance of how the system has always operated.	
	Education <i>By 2030, schools and educational establishments in Scotland will be ambitious for care experienced children and young people and ensure they have all they need to thrive, recognising they may experience difficulties associated with their life story.</i>	
For children and young people, including those at risk of, or experiencing, seclusion or exclusion:	All barriers for young people who have had parenting responsibility to continue their education will have been removed. They will be supported to enter education at any age.	This area is not a known areas of vulnerability, but will be explored to test the strength of current arrangements. This will be owned by the Education Service.
	They will be entitled to repeat year funding (if they are required to repeat a year), and year round funding to include the holiday period.	
	Children and young people will have opportunities for mentoring support throughout school, college and university	Thought to be already in place, but the strength of arrangements should be evaluated by the Children's Services Board.
	Students will be prevented from getting into significant debt and universities and colleges will act on their responsibilities.	This will be flagged to Further and Higher Education Partners
	The formal and informal exclusion of care experienced children from school will have ended. Care experienced children will not be excluded from education or find their timetable has been reduced to such an extent they are denied their right to education	The exclusion of care experienced young people has reduced significantly, however there are still occasions and this will remain an area of focus and be overseen by Education.
	Where children's educational experience has been disrupted it will be understood that some children may require additional or different support to	ABZ Campus, curricular work at school level and our Edge of Care Pilots continue to

	realise their potential. Learning pathways will be accessible and promoted to all with appropriate funding routes to build a diverse workforce.	prioritise this area. This will continue to be overseen by the Education Service.
	Schools will not exacerbate trauma of children by imposing consequences for challenging behaviour that are restrictive, humiliating and stigmatising. This includes seclusion or restraint and can include certain use of behaviour reward systems. Seclusion is not an acceptable part of trauma informed care.	Updated guidance on seclusion and restraint, in keeping with national guidance has been issued to all schools. Implementation of the guidance and quality assurance checks are on-going. Updated national guidance on consequences is anticipated and will be responded to positively. This will continue to be overseen by the Education Service.
For schools and educational institutions:	The workforce will be properly supported and resourced to step in to put theory into good practice by supporting and building relationships with care experienced children and young people.	Training and development opportunities are in place, for example adoption of CIRCLE and delivery of Maybo training. A Behaviour Plan, agreed with Trade Unions is in place. arrangements will continue to be kept under review and strengthened by the Education Service within allocated budgets.
	Schools will ensure that pupils and parents understand 'care experience' as part of their communities and as another type of family.	
	There will be engagement from the broader workforce around children and young people's educational attainment, achievement and sustained positive destinations.	Attainment is already overseen by the Children's Services Board. This will be maintained.
	Schools and Local Authorities will be doing everything required to support children to build positive relationships at school and maintain attendance, engagement and learning in a meaningful and supportive way.	This is a focus of the education service. Attendance of those with care experience is trending upwards. This will be maintained by the education service.
	Teachers and school staff must be supported to be aware of the issues facing care experienced pupils so they can best engage and encourage them.	Work on our Fairer Futures Partnership will help amplify work in this area.
	Schools and educational institutions will support care experienced children and young people to receive all they are entitled to, via the consistent application of legal requirements.	Practice complies with current legislative framework. This will be maintained by the education service.
	Governance <i>By 2030, governance arrangements around the 'care system' will be fully established. The rights of children, young people and their families, and care experienced adults will be placed at the centre, complexity will have reduced, and accountability mechanisms will be in place. The resetting public services report sets out five principles that should be built into a reset of how Scotland's public services are governed to keep the promise:</i>	
1. Leadership to improve lives	Leaders will state a conscious commitment to improve the lives of care experienced people	Leadership through Community Planning is already in place. these areas will be taken

	How leaders will improve the lives of care experienced children and families will be built into their objectives.	into the refresh of the LOIP and associated Children's Services Plan in 2026.
	Leaders will be held to account for their part in partnership working and their contribution to care experienced people's lives	
2. Bespoke frontline services:	Services will give space to understand the unique lives of children, young people and their families and will protect long-term relationships.	This is already in place through for example our Fit Like Hubs and Edge of Care Pilots. This work will now be mainstreamed through the development of our Family Support Model.
	Staff will be empowered to do what will improve lives.	
3. Sharpen accountability for outcomes	Scottish Government and COSLA will agree an accountability framework for keeping the promise at a national level.	Promise Progress Framework has been agreed and adopted by the Children's Services Board.
	Data will focus on outcomes	
	The reporting burden on public bodies will be minimised.	
	Public bodies and partnerships will be held to account for their collective contribution.	
	Scrutiny bodies will prioritise what matters to children, young people and their families.	
4. Focus money on prevention and link it to outcomes		National Response required.
5. Simplifying public services and streamline scrutiny and inspection.		National Response required.
	Health By 2030, all children, young people, families and care experienced adults will have access to all the physical and mental health support they need, including thoughtful, trauma informed therapies.	Information has been shared with Health colleagues to enable an initial self-assessment to be completed.
	Scotland will stop creating extra, stigmatising processes for children and young people simply because they are care experienced.	
	All children and young people will have access to regular check-ups, such as dentist and health appointments.	
	The workforce, and in particular family carers, will know that they have a role in supporting children and young people to have good overall health including dental, physical, mental and sexual. That must be done through caring,	

	nurturing relationships that model good habits and a healthy approach to life (Pg 89).	
	The model for mental health support for children in care will operate effectively. Access to timely, appropriate therapies will be available to, but not limited to, those who have experience of care.	
	Children and young people will not require a significant mental health diagnosis to be able to access support. Scotland will have a range of timely, trauma-informed, and thoughtful support (mental health) therapies available to those that require it, regardless of diagnosis.	
	There will be timely access to mental health support before crisis point, to avoid hospitalisation. This will be available as long as it is needed and available for children who are in hospital so that services and families can plan for return to the community.	
	There will be appropriate and sufficient provision of inpatient (mental health) services for children across Scotland.	
	There will be criteria-free, community-based access to therapies that do not stigmatise, but instead help and support children, young people, families, and care experienced adults to work through difficulties they are facing.	
	There will be greater availability of family therapy, for all families (kinship, foster, adoptive, family of origin) so that accessing support is not stigmatised, but seen as something that a range of families may require throughout their lives. This includes services to support parents and carers' mental health at all stages of their parenting journey.	
	There will be effective and flexible collaboration between services supporting adult mental health and statutory children's services.	
	Scotland will recognise its responsibilities to those who have spent significant time in hospital through the decisions of the State and ensure they are properly supported to access all they need. Support will be continuous and ensure services and families can plan for a return to the community.	
	Justice <i>By 2030, Scotland will have developed a more progressive, rights-based youth justice approach that builds on the Kilbrandon principles and makes them a reality for all.</i>	National Response required. At a local level work is progressing to mitigate the criminalisation of care experienced young people. The extent of this is limited without national change.
	Care experienced children and young people will not be criminalised.	
	Children who have often experienced the failures of the state in the provision of their care will not be locked up.	
	The workforce will be supported to behave and treat children in a relational way, rather than procedural and process driven.	

	<p>The totality of children's cases will be dealt with in environments that uphold their rights and allows them to effectively participate in proceedings. It will have been accepted that traditional criminal courts are not settings in which children's rights can be upheld and where they can be heard and alternative approaches will have been developed.</p> <p>When children and young people are before the courts on offence grounds, they will be dealt with in a way that is appropriate, proportionate, age-sensitive, trauma-informed and responsive .</p> <p>More efforts will have been made to keep children within the Children's Hearings System. If cases are tried in formal criminal courts, disposal (for the vast majority of offences) will occur within the Children's Hearings System.</p> <p>The minimum age of criminal responsibility will be in line with the most progressive global Governments.</p>	National Response required.
	<p>16 and 17-year-olds will be accommodated within Secure Care rather than Young Offenders Institutions and the prison estate, including children who are on remand and who have been sentenced</p>	Legislative change provides for this.
	<p>Young people who turn 18 while in Secure Care will not be automatically transferred to a Young Offenders Institution.</p>	National Response required.
	<p>Children will only go to Secure Care when all other options have been fully explored and for the shortest possible time.</p>	National Response required.
	<p>Secure Care will be small, secure, safe and trauma informed that upholds the totality of children's rights.</p>	National Response required.
	Legislation By 2030, Scotland will have a clear legislative, enabling environment that keeps the promise.	
	<p>Legislation will be in place that supports families to stay together wherever safe to do so, that protects and allows relationships to flourish and children to thrive and that enables care experienced adults to access lifelong support</p>	National Response required.
	<p>A strong legal framework will be in place that acknowledges, protects and promotes brother and sister relationships in and on the edges of care. Those legal protections will include the right to time together, meaningful participation in decision making about their relationships and clear, simple rights to appeal</p>	
	<p>There will have been full consideration of the legislative environment that governs data to ensure Scotland is able to measure and collect what it needs to ensure it understands what is happening and how services are working.</p>	
	<p>The UNCRC will be the bedrock upon which all legislation is based to ensure that children's rights are upheld as a matter of course</p>	
	Money & Commissioning	

<p><i>By 2030, Scotland will be taking a different approach to how it invests in children and families. Children in Scotland will not feel the monetisation of their care and the money Scotland spends on its 'care system' will be invested in effective services that meet the needs of its children, young people, families and care experienced adults.</i></p>		
<p>Prevention will be the primary focus of services and therefore also of investment. Acute and crisis services will be phased out. An approach to systematically disinvest in the services and processes that are no longer meeting need will be in place to ensure funding is available for investment.</p>		<p>At local level our investment in services like Fit Like and the Fairer Futures Partnership focus on preventative support. How we transition to lessen the demand for crisis and intensive support models of family support needs careful planning to mitigate unintended consequences including harm to children and young people.</p>
<p>There will be no place for profiting in how Scotland cares for its children. Scotland will be avoiding the monetisation of the care of children and the marketisation of care will be prevented. Regulatory bodies will scrutinise any presence of profit to ensure that funds are properly directed to the care and support of children.</p>		<p>National Response required.</p>
<p>Services within the 'care system' will not profit from care. Any presence of surplus funds generated within any part of the 'care system' will be directed to the care and support of children and young people. There will no longer be targets associated with adopting children and young people, including financial and profit based targets. Processes of regulation, scrutiny and commissioning will support the removal of profit from the care system.</p>		
<p>Strategic planning will reflect the needs of children in local authorities and the challenges in the management of places and sustainability of settings of care will have been discussed and addressed.</p>		<p>Changes required to approach of Scotland Excel who deliver large commissioning contracts. These currently feel weighted to the needs of the provider over the needs of the young person.</p>
<p>Services will have changed according to need to get away from a systemisation of care. A process to identify investment and disinvestment opportunities across the whole system will have been undertaken with a strategic approach to funding embedded into organisational and budgeting processes across Scotland in place. That process will have involved organisations working together to align and pool budgets to enable investment. There will have been a decisive shift in emphasis towards early intervention and prevention across all services. As the number of children and families requiring a service reduces, the service will become obsolete or be refined so that it meets current and future need.</p>		<p>National Response required.</p>

	Children and their families' voices will be heard and taken into account when Scotland commissions services so that they are the centre of decision-making. The views and voices of people who services work alongside will be actively involved and included in the work to shape, create and evaluate them.	The voice of children, young people and families currently influence commissioning activity however we recognise more could be done to enhance their voices.
	Scotland will ensure public service planning, commissioning strategies and procurement are attuned to the needs of brothers and sisters to promote those relationships and prevent separation.	
	When services are meeting standards and making a positive impact, ensuring stability will be key to funding decisions. Longer-term commissioning, grant programmes and contracts will be the norm, rather than the exception.	Changes to procurement legislation required as well as amendment to ACC's procurement processes if longer term funding is made available to the Local Authority.
	Commissioning of services for children and families will not be undertaken on a 'cost and volume' basis, but instead will be based on principles that underpin relational working and longer-term partnerships, breaking down silos, systems and organisational interests. Levels of payment will not determine where and who are the best people to care for a child.	Changes to current Scot Excel contractual arrangements required
	Wherever in the best interest of the child, and when it reflects their needs and wishes, the focus of caring for Scotland's children and young people must remain the responsibility of Local Authorities in Scotland, and children and young people will remain within their communities.	Aberdeen City is committed to supporting children to remain within their family network where it is safe to do so. Where this is not the case then it is hoped children and young people can remain close to their family, friends and community. To enable this to happen it will require health, educational and care services that can meet their needs. There are service gaps in all of these areas which does mean that children are at times placed out with the City. For some children given their unique needs there will also be instances when we will need to access resources out with the local authority areas.
	It will be widely acknowledged that accepting children and young people from outside Scotland is a breach of their fundamental human rights. As such, Scotland will no longer sell care placements to Local Authorities outside of Scotland.	National Response required.
	Rights By 2030, Scotland will respect, uphold, champion and defend the rights of children and recognise that their rights are most often realised through relationships with loving, attentive caregivers.	

	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) will be fully incorporated and upheld.	We welcome the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots Law and have been proactive in planning for its implementation. We also recognise the parameters of this remain unclear. The professional training and development of Children's Social Work staff is grounded in rights based approaches. Staff can access Learning and development opportunities to further embed the UNCRC into practice.
	If children are removed from their families, their rights will be upheld as a minimum standard for their care. There will be a culture of care in place where the whole of the workforce respects, upholds, champions and defends the rights of children for whom they are responsible.	
	Children and carers will have access to information about their rights and entitlements at any point in their journey of care.	
	All children and young people, whatever their educational setting, will learn about their rights in a developmentally appropriate way.	Already in place and being overseen by the Education Service.
	The system will revolve around the rights of the child so their health, education and right to play are never compromised by contact with the 'care system'.	Thought to be in place across the Local Authority, but will be taken into the Children's Services Board for robust testing of our self assessment.
	Scotland will be upholding the rights of the child in a way that does not reinforce a focus on policy, process and procedure but supports the ability of children and those around them to connect and develop relationships and cultures that uphold their rights as a matter of course .	
	There will be a universal, commonly understood, definition of care experience as it relates to rights and entitlements and it will reflect the ongoing responsibility to those affected, recognising that parents seek to provide care and support for their children beyond the age of 18.	The SG are consulting on this as part of the Promise Bill.
	Scotland will have ensured current definitions that act as the access point for rights and entitlements are inclusive enough to benefit all young people for whom Scotland has had parenting responsibility and whose family life has been disrupted by the decisions of the State.	
	The system will recognise and mitigate the impact that failure to provide for the needs of vulnerable adults, through the social security system, access to services and support, has on their ability to care and provide nurturing, loving relationships.	National response required.
For children at risk of or who may experience restraint:	Scotland will be a nation that does not use restraint on its children unless the only option is to ensure their safety. and in those cases will always follow a model which focuses on co-regulation, so that the workforce reflects on their responses. The right of children to be protected from violence is the primary consideration.	Restraint is not utilised in Aberdeen City's care settings. We do however place children in other care settings where restraint is utilised. Clearer guidance is required from the Care Inspectorate as to the recording and reporting of such instances but more critically how children are supported to make sense of such experiences. We are active members of
	Scotland will have created environments which actively reduces the likelihood of restraint which is as important as responding appropriately to individual children in crisis.	

	<p>Settings of care will have established a leadership culture that upholds children's rights and applies the values of care, attachment, attunement and co-regulation in day to day life. The workforce will be nurtured and supported, recognising that children may exhibit challenging behaviours that may at times make them feel scared.</p> <p>All restraints and use of seclusion will be recorded and reported so Scotland understands its use and monitor progress towards its cessation. Reports will reflect what children and the workforce say about their experience of restraint and prioritise a full understanding of the impact of restraint not only on just one child but on others living and working in a location where restraint takes place.</p>	<p>SPRAG ensuring learning and influence at a national level.</p> <p>We know that restraint of care experienced young people occurs in other settings i.e. schools, hospitals and through police contact. Procedures, in keeping with national guidance are in place across our schools.</p> <p>Scotland requires clearer guidance on the recording and reporting of such instances.</p>
	<p>Scrutiny & Inspection</p> <p>By 2030, Scotland will have undertaken a complete overhaul of regulation and scrutiny that centres on listening to children about how they are cared for, their ability to flourish and thrive and that measures the things that matters to them.</p>	
For the workforce:	<p>The way that services for children are inspected and the way the workforce is regulated and supported will have been altered and reoriented to uphold relationships so children feel loved, safe and respected.</p>	<p>These changes will be led at a national level by inspection and regulatory bodies</p>
	<p>There will have been significant decluttering and streamlining of professional codes, procedures and processes with a clear focus on enabling relationships—above anything else.</p>	
	<p>There will be established, consistent care standards across all providers, subject to independent scrutiny and accreditation that values what children and families value.</p>	
	<p>There will be consistency across all regulators, which will align the evidence base to avoid duplication and ensure shared values and focus between those with inspection responsibility.</p>	
	<p>Accreditation to provide services will follow the application of Scotland wide, core standards and principles. All those providing care will comply with Scotland's agreed and stated ambition for care.</p>	
	<p>The Care Inspectorate, the SSSC and other regulators will have come together to create a new, holistic framework that values what children value. The framework will apply to the entirety of care journeys, including 'aftercare' and advocacy services, focused on children's experiences and their ability to find and sustain safe and nurturing relationships. The rights of children will be at the heart of this framework, so that all services, settings and professionals understand that it is their responsibility to uphold and promote children's rights.</p>	
	<p>There will be meaningful involvement and collaboration between the Care Inspectorate, the SSSC and regulators across prisons, education and the third</p>	

	sector to ensure all professionals share a language of care and support to uphold the rights and relationships so important to children.	
	Inspection processes will support organisational reflective practice and continuous improvement. There will be a collaborative and appreciative enquiry approach to the inspection of services.	
	Inspectors will take a person-centred approach that values and understands relationship-based practice and will be skilled at working with providers.	
	System analysis will form part of inspection, providing clarity about processes in relation to the overall commissioning of services and how that impacts on delivery.	
	Scotland's services will have time collectively to reflect on and understand learning from all Significant Case Reviews.	
	Professional regulation and fitness to practice regimes will reflect the value of workforce relationships with children. Investigations into alleged misconduct will seek to uphold not only compliance with policy and procedure but the overall ethos of care and importance of cherishing relationships with children.	
For children and young people:	Regulation and scrutiny will focus on listening and ensuring that children and young people feel loved, safe, and respected, and that families and care experienced adults feel supported.	
	Children's voices and their experiences will be the focus of inspection and investigation processes. There will be significant emphasis on listening and responding to what they are reporting about service and professional provision.	
	Inspection and investigation processes will have integrated meaningful participation methodologies into how they assess the quality of services and understand how to listen, present and collate the voices of children into the inspection process.	
	Inspection in settings where children live will focus on the children's experience of the relationships and will be led primarily by what children say and how they feel they are being cared for.	
	When 'young inspectors' are used as part of inspection processes they will receive significant support and training.	

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