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ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

To: Councillor Greig, <u>Convener</u>; Councillor Mennie, <u>Vice Convener</u>; Councillors Allard, Blake, Brooks, Buchanan, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Fairfull, Grant, MacGregor and McLeod; 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, 8 September 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, 16 SEPTEMBER 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

JENNI LAWSON
CHIEF OFFICER - GOVERNANCE

B U S I N E S S

NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS

1.1 <u>There are no items of urgent business at this time</u>

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

2.1 <u>Members are requested to determine that the exempt business be considered with the press and public excluded</u>

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

3.1 <u>Members are requested to intimate any declarations of interest</u>

DEPUTATIONS

4.1   There are no requests for deputation at this time

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5.1   Minute of Meeting of 24 June 2025 - for approval (Pages 5 - 16)

COMMITTEE PLANNER

6.1   Committee Business Planner (Pages 17 - 24)

NOTICES OF MOTION

7.1   There are no Notices of Motion

REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL, COMMITTEES & SUB COMMITTEES

8.1   There are no referrals

PERFORMANCE AND RISK

9.1   Performance Management Framework Report - CORS/25/214 (Pages 25 - 50)

9.2   Inspection Reporting - F&C/25/215 (Pages 51 - 94)

9.3   Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan - F&C/25/210 (Pages 95 - 174)

9.4   Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan 2025-30 - F&C/25/212 (Pages 175 - 280)

EDUCATION

10.1   Music Service Update - F&C/25/125 (Pages 281 - 304)
        Please note, a short video will be shown prior to consideration of this report

10.2   Northfield Area Asset Review - Strategic Outline Business Case - F&C/25/216 (Pages 305 - 330)

EXEMPT INFORMATION - EDUCATION

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

PUBLIC INFORMATION - CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Impact Assessments for this Committee can be viewed here:- Impact Assessments | Aberdeen City Council

Service Updates can be viewed here:- Education & Children's Services Committee service updates

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

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 24 June 2025.   Minute of Meeting of the EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Greig, Convener; Councillor Mennie, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Allard, Blake, Hazel Cameron, Fairfull, Farquhar (as substitute for Councillor Brooks) (articles 1 to 12), Grant, MacGregor, Malik (as substitute for Councillor Mrs Stewart), McLeod, McRae (as substitute for Councillor Buchanan) and Radley. External Members:- Ms Danielle Barclay (Parent Representative - Nursery / Primary) (articles 1 to 18), Mr Doug Haywood (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools) (articles 1 to 18), Ms Jacqueline Munro (Teacher Representative - Secondary Schools) (articles 1 to 18), Dr Alison Murray (Parent Representative - Secondary) (articles 1 to 18), Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative) (articles 1 to 12), Mr Madhav Regmi (Third Religious Representative) (articles 1 to 13) and Mrs Hilda Smith (Church of Scotland representative) (articles 1 to 18).

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be located here.

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

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

1.   The Convener proposed that the Committee consider items 11.1 (Bucksburn and Dyce Long Term Secondary School Provision: Outline Business Case – Exempt Appendix) and 11.2 (ABZ Campus – Exempt Appendix) with the press and public excluded from the meeting.

The Committee resolved:-
in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the above items so as to avoid disclosure of information of the class described in the following paragraphs of Schedule 7(A) to the Act – paragraph 8 (item 11.1) and 5 (item 11.2).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

2.   The following transparency statements were intimated:-

- The Convener made a transparency statement in respect of item 9.3 (Inspection Reporting) as he was an elder at Fountainhall Church, which owned the building where Queens Cross ELC was based;
- Councillor Blake also made a transparency statement in respect of item 9.3 as both her children attended Broomhill Nursery at Cults which was part of the report before Committee;

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- Councillor Grant made a transparency statement in relation to item 10.2 (Free School Meals Annual Update) as he had children at primary and secondary school;
- In relation to item 10.6 (Review of Spaces for Additional Support Needs), the Vice Convener, Councillor Grant and Dr Murray all made transparency statements as they had children with additional support needs;
- Councillor Grant made a further transparency statement in relation to item 10.8 (ABZ Campus) as he had children at primary and secondary school.

None of the above-mentioned Members considered that these amounted to interests which required declarations to be made.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF 29 APRIL 2025

3.   The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 29 April 2025 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-
(i)   to note that reasons given for the consideration of urgent items of business would be recorded in future minutes; and
(ii)   to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

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

The Committee resolved:-
(i)   in relation to items 22 (Northfield Asset Review) and 25 (Northfield Academy, Northfield Primary Schools and Wider Asset Review - approval of Outline Business Case and consultation proposal) to note that these had now been combined on the planner into one item;
(ii)   to agree to remove item 28 (School Age Childcare Policy) from the planner; and
(iii)   to otherwise note the business planner.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK/MARCH 2025 INSIGHT RELEASE SUMMARY REPORT - CORS/25/161

5.   The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Corporate Services which presented (a) the status of key annual/annualised performance and service standard measures relating to the Education and Lifelong Learning and Children's Social Work and Family Support Clusters, and (b) a summary analysis of school leaver attainment and achievement derived from the Insight release in March 2025.

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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)   to note that the Chief Officer – Children's Social Work and Family Support had advised that officers would review the learning from the recent Scottish Government campaign to increase the number of foster carers and provide an update in Autumn to Committee on any work being undertaken locally as a result; and
(ii)   to otherwise note the report.

APPROACHES TO QUALITY IMPROVEMENT - F&C/25/151

6.   The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which detailed how Aberdeen City schools and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings would be supported to improve performance against the Core Quality Indicators used by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and The Care Inspectorate.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a)   note the content of the report;
(b)   instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to immediately implement the approach detailed in the Aberdeen City Council Early Learning and Childcare Quality Improvement Framework;
(c)   instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to implement the approach detailed in the Aberdeen City Council Quality Improvement Framework across all schools from August 2025;
(d)   instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to review the impact of arrangements on evaluations of core Quality Indicators over school session 2024/25, amending approaches as required, and report back to Committee with any proposed changes to arrangements in advance of the 2025/6 school session; and
(e)   instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong learning to narrow the focus of the National Improvement Framework Plan for session 25/26 in order to focus more extensively on leading, learning, teaching and assessment in order to realise further improvement.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

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INSPECTION REPORTING - F&C/25/154

7.   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.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a)   note the content of the report; and
(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 the Quality Improvement Frameworks being considered by Committee today.

The Committee resolved:-
(i)   to request that officers review the formatting of the action plan appendices for future reports; and
(ii)   to approve the recommendations.

2024/25 EDUCATION CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT - F&C/25/144

8.   The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which provided an update on key events which had taken place within schools to educate children and young people about Climate Change, Biodiversity and the drive towards Net Zero during the school session 2024-25. The report also outlined work undertaken by the Youth Climate Change Group over the school session.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a)   note the summary of events that took place in schools to educate children and young people about Climate Change, Biodiversity and the drive towards Net Zero in session 2024-25;
(b)   note the work of the Youth Climate Change Group; and
(c)   instruct the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to report back on progress through Service Update within one calendar year.

The Committee resolved:-
(i)   to agree recommendations (a) and (b);
(ii)   to thank the pupils for their significant efforts in promoting and actioning environmental work in schools and citywide;
(iii)   to agree that this important area of focused activity should continue;
(iv)   to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to support the Youth Climate Change Group to collate and share a yearly summary of the most

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impactful projects in our schools, through means to be determined by the group, to inspire other young people across the city;

(v)   to invite representatives from the Youth Climate Change Group to present the report to Committee in subsequent years; and

(vi)   to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to report back on progress by committee report within one calendar year.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS ANNUAL UPDATE - F&C/25/092

9.   The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which presented an annual update on Free School Meals.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a)   note the progress in Free School Meal provision and actions to continue increasing uptakes;
(b)   note the Scottish Government's decision to stop data collection via the annual Healthy Living Survey, and the move to collecting data on school meal uptakes and free school meals registrations via the Local Financial Return;
(c)   note the successful implementation of the Pre-order app in Secondary Schools and the positive impact it has had on both customer numbers and Revenue; and
(d)   agree the pilot scheme to expand free school meals to pupils in S1 to S3 whose families were in receipt of the Scottish Child Payment was to be welcomed.

The Committee resolved:-
(i)   to note that officers would share any update on discussions with the Scottish Government about the expansion of free school meals to eligible S1 to S3 pupils to Members via email outwith the meeting, and to request that officers discuss with the Scottish Government how to successfully follow on from the test of change to ensure there was no drop off once the test of change ended; and
(ii)   to approve the recommendations.

WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH TO HEALTHY WEIGHT - F&C/25/152

10.   With reference to article 12 of the minute of its meeting of 2 July 2024, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which set out progress on the work to increase the number of children and young people who were of a healthy weight by taking a Whole System Approach.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a)   note the work undertaken to date;
(b)   continue to endorse the Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight known as Healthy Weight Aberdeen; and

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(c)   instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to report progress on the service's delivery of the Whole Systems approach, Healthy Weight Aberdeen, through a Service Update within 12 calendar months.

The Committee resolved:-
(i)   to request that officers continue to review the language used in future reports to ensure appropriate terminology was used; and
(ii)   to approve the recommendations.

INCIDENTS AND BEHAVIOUR ACTION PLAN PROGRESS - F&C/25/153

11.   The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which provided an overview of the preventative work undertaken to tackle behaviour in school; progress made against the national behaviour plan; and a comparison of incidents reported across other local authorities.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a)   note the content of this report; and
(b)   instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to continue to plan preventative professional learning and report progress against the local Behaviour Plan through regular National Improvement Framework updates.

The Convener, seconded by the Vice Convener, moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

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

That the Committee:-

(a)   note the content of this report;
(b)   note the guidance issued by the Scottish Government on 17 June Schools: Fostering a positive, inclusive and safe school environment;
(c)   agree while any measures that can effectively tackle disruption in classrooms is welcome, parents will be sceptical of the approach being taken if this is the best that SNP ministers can come up with;
(d)   agree teachers and staff in schools will not feel reassured by a laminated list of bullet points when they are having to deal with violent incidents involving pupils;
(e)   agree Aberdeen Labour is serious about supporting teachers and staff in schools by tackling violence in our schools, and to repair the damage done by the SNP during their 18 years in power nationally and 3 years in power locally; and
(f)   instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to continue working with trade union colleagues to plan preventative professional learning and report progress against the local Behaviour Plan through regular National Improvement Framework updates.

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On a division, there voted:- for the motion (11) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillors Allard, Hazel Cameron, Fairfull, MacGregor, McRae and Radley; and Ms Barclay, Dr Murray and Mrs Smith; for the amendment (5) – Councillors Blake, Farquhar, Grant, Malik and McLeod; declined to vote (4) – Mr Haywood, Ms Munro, Mr Murray and Mr Regmi.

The Committee resolved:-
(i)   in relation to the report recommendation to report back through National Improvement Framework updates, to note that the Executive Director and Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning would liaise outwith the meeting in respect of whether a full report back on the behaviour plan was to be provided, and the timescales for this;
(ii)   in relation to the recently issued Scottish Government document on consequences in schools, to note that the Executive Director would look to share this more widely with staff;
(iii)   to note that the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning would provide a service update to Members outwith the meeting in relation to how many schools had not used the incident reporting system and whether that number had declined since the previous year;
(iv)   to note that there was missing text at action 15 in the behaviour action plan appendix, and the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning would provide the detail of this to Members; and
(v)   to adopt the motion.

HEALTH & WELLBEING REPORT - F&C/25/155

12.   The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which set out the findings of the Health and Wellbeing surveys undertaken within Aberdeen City Schools in December 2024.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a)   note the content of the report;
(b)   acknowledge the hard work of secondary schools, and the wider support staff in Education and Lifelong Learning in supporting S5 Girls to improve their mental health outcomes;
(c)   instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to consider the findings of the report and plan next steps as part of work being taken forward to develop the next Local Outcome Improvement Plan and associated National Improvement Framework Plan; and
(d)   instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to report the findings of the next Health and Wellbeing surveys to Committee following the next survey point.

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The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

REVIEW OF SPACES FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS - F&C/25/158

13. With reference to article 12 of its meeting of 17 September 2024, the Committee had before it a report which presented the findings of a recent review of the use of space in Aberdeen's schools for supporting pupils with additional support needs.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a)   note the findings of the review as outlined in this report;
(b)   instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to continue providing support to head teachers and staff in schools to make best use of the space available to them for supporting pupils with additional support needs, to reflect existing and emerging policies and guidance in this area; and
(c)   instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to ensure that the Council's specification of spaces for additional support needs in future new school buildings and school refurbishment projects continues to be regularly reviewed and updated, to reflect ongoing feedback received locally, and any relevant national and local guidance on the design of spaces for additional support needs.

The Committee resolved:-
(i)   to approve the recommendations;
(ii)   to note the current provision of spaces offered across the whole school estate and instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to (a) identify any opportunities for sharing good practice in order to develop support for ASN for the benefit of pupils and school communities and (b) to bring back a report as soon as possible based on the adequacy or otherwise of spaces for Additional Support Needs within each School within the city, in order to truly understand the actual requirements for each school; and
(iii)   to note that the Executive Director had undertaken that officers would provide an interim service update on the above in September.

BUCKSBURN AND DYCE LONG TERM SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVISION: OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE - F&C/25/159

14. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – Families and Communities which presented a completed Outline Business Case detailing options for ensuring appropriate long term secondary education provision to serve the communities of Dyce and Bucksburn and sought approval for discussions to be undertaken with Aberdeenshire Council on catchment area adjustments for Dyce Academy. The Outline Business Case was included in the papers to Committee in the exempt section of the agenda.

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The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a)   note the preferred option for ensuring appropriate future provision of secondary education at Dyce and Bucksburn, as detailed within the Outline Business Case at Appendix A of the report; and
(b)   instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord in consultation with the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to consult with officers at Aberdeenshire Council on proposals for adjusting the Dyce Academy catchment area to align with the City boundary, therefore removing all areas of Aberdeenshire including Newmachar and Kingseat from the catchment area, and to report back to this Committee on the outcomes of these discussions and recommendations for next steps, within the next two committee cycles.

During questioning of officers, the Committee agreed to move briefly into private session to enable Members to ask questions on the exempt appendix (item 11.1 of the agenda)

The Convener, seconded by the Vice Convener, moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

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

That the Committee –

(a)   agree that there was no preferred option at this stage for ensuring appropriate future provision of secondary education at Dyce and Bucksburn, as detailed within the Outline Business Case at Appendix A of this report at this stage; and
(b)   instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord in consultation with the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to consult ON A WITHOUT PREJUDICE BASIS with officers at Aberdeenshire Council on the option to adjust the Dyce Academy catchment area to align with the City boundary, therefore removing all areas of Aberdeenshire including Newmachar and Kingseat from the catchment area, and to report back to this Committee on the outcomes of these discussions for next steps, in two cycles.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (11) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillors Allard, Hazel Cameron, Fairfull, MacGregor, McRae and Radley; and Ms Barclay, Dr Murray and Mrs Smith; for the amendment (3) – Councillors Blake, Grant and Malik; declined to vote (3) – Councillor McLeod and Mr Haywood and Ms Munro; absent from the division (3) – Councillor Farquhar and Mr Murray and Mr Regmi.

The Committee resolved:-
to adopt the motion.

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ABZ CAMPUS - F&C/25/150

15. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which provided an update on progress with ABZ Campus, with particular reference to levels and achievements of participants and of plans in place for 2025-26. The report also included a full review of the impact of the role of the Pathways Advocate.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a)   note the progress made in delivering ABZ Campus which aimed to further broaden the curriculum offer for young people in the Senior Phase in Aberdeen City Council schools;
(b)   instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to support the roll out of Phase 3 ABZ Campus; and
(c)   instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to continue to report the progress of ABZ Campus to Members through a yearly service update.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

UKRAINIAN SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT - INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL - F&C/25/128

16. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which sought approval for a teacher from Ferryhill School to travel to Krakow in Poland as part of the British Council UK-Ukraine School Partnerships project on Reading for Pleasure.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee approve travel for a teacher to attend Krakow in September 2025, with the purpose of the visit being to help teachers from partnered schools to get to know each other and guide them along the journey of developing their partnership and project (travel funded by the British Council, with no cost to the local authority).

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendation.

BUCKSBURN AND DYCE LONG TERM SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVISION: OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE - F&C/25/159 - EXEMPT APPENDIX

17. The Committee had before it an exempt appendix relating to the Bucksburn and Dyce Long Term Secondary School Provision (Outline Business Case). (Article 14 of this minute refers).

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The Committee resolved:-
to note the information contained within the exempt appendix.

ABZ CAMPUS - F&C/25/150 - EXEMPT APPENDIX

18. The Committee had before it an exempt appendix relating to ABZ Campus. (Article 15 of this minute refers).

The Committee resolved:-
to note the information contained within the exempt appendix.

At this juncture, the External Members left the meeting.

BAIRNS HOOSE UPDATE - F&C/25/157

19. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which provided an update on progress in relation to Aberdeen City's Pathfinder activity to develop the Bairns Hoose.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a) note the update of progress made by the Aberdeen City Pathfinder to deliver a Bairns Hoose and the Scottish Government grant award for 2025/26 to support delivery of Aberdeen's Bairns Hoose;
(b) note that an incremental approach to opening the Bairns Hoose would commence from the Summer of 2025;
(c) instruct the Chief Officer – Children's Social Work and Family Support / Chief Social Work Officer to arrange a visit for Committee Members to the Bairns Hoose upon completion of the build; and
(d) instruct the Chief Officer – Children's Social Work and Family Support / Chief Social Work Officer to provide a service update in June 2026.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK STATISTICS, SCOTLAND 2023-24 - F&C/25/160

20. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which shared the Children's Social Work Statistics, Scotland 2023-24 report and provided commentary on the performance of Aberdeen City Council compared with the national position.

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The report recommended:-
that the Committee –
(a)   note that care experienced children and those children who need protection in Aberdeen City, were, predominantly, receiving care and protection in line with national averages;
(b)   note that where performance differed from national averages, and it required it, there were improvement plans in place; and
(c)   instruct the Chief Social Work Officer to update the Education and Children's Services Committee on the 2024/25 Statistical Report following its publication in Spring 2026.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.
-   **COUNCILLOR MARTIN GREIG, Convener**

	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		**16 September 2025**							
4	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		
5	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		
6	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	D	One of the key recommendations from this Thematic Review is in relation to the transition from children's to adults services and therefore the Chief Officer intends to bring a combined report to the November meeting, with an update on transitions and the Thematic Review together (see line 22 of the planner)
7	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 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 E&CS 24/06/25 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to continue to plan preventative professional learning and report progress against the local Behaviour Plan through regular National Improvement Framework updates.		Eleanor Sheppard	Families and Communities	Families and Communities	1.1.1		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
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**
8	School Estate Plan Annual Update	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. 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 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 E&CS 29/04/25 - to instruct 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		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 1.1.5		
9	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 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		
10	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		
11	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		

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12	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		
13				**25 November 2025**					
14	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Franework	To present the regular performance update		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		
15	Expanding & Strengthening Youth Participation in Global Decision-Making (Notice of Motion by Cllr Macdonald)	Council 28/04/25 - to endorse the spirit of the Pact for the Future; and to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to bring a report to a future meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee outlining what the Council can do to promote the involvement of our young people in expanding and strengthening youth participation in global decision-making.		Shona Milne	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	TBC		
16	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		
17	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		
18	Bucksburn & Dyce Secondary Provision - Outline Business Case (NA2) - Discussions with Aberdeenshire Council	E&CS 24/06/25 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord in consultation with the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to consult with officers at Aberdeenshire Council on proposals for adjusting the Dyce Academy catchment area to align with the City boundary, therefore removing all areas of Aberdeenshire including Newmachar and Kingseat from the catchment area, and to report back to this Committee on the outcomes of these discussions and recommendations for next steps, within the next two committee cycles.		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		
19	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		

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20	Thematic Review - Disabled Children and Young People's experiences of Social Work Services / Transitions from Children's to Adults Services	E&CS 29/04/25 - to note that a report would be brought to a future committee with information on child to adult transitions, which would summarise the work that had been progressed. (This report will be combined with the report at line 6 of the planner)		Graeme Simpson	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	2.1		
21	Report on Options to Rationalise Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)	To provide an update		Louise Beaton	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
22	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		
23	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		
24					17 February 2026				
25	Early Learning and Childcare Concession Agreements	E&CS 24/01/23 - to instruct the Chief Education Officer to continue to monitor the concession contracts and report back to Committee at the end of the first 3 full years of the current concession agreement.		Louise Beaton / Fiona Lawrie	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
26	Action to Reduce Incidents in Schools	CHPP 27/08/25 - to instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to bring a report to Education and Children's Services Committee as soon as possible outlining an analysis of both Council and Police Scotland data with regard to use of offensive weapons in schools and what actions our schools are taking to reduce incidents involving weapons		Shona Milne	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
27	Progress on Early Intervention Service Test of Change at Riverbank School	E&CS 29/04/2025 - (i)to instruct 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; (ii)to instruct the Chief Officer Education & Lifelong Learning to report back on progress in 2 committee cycles from commencement of service		Emma Powell	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
28	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Franework	To present the regular performance update		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		
29	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		
30					28 April 2026				
31	Corporate Parenting Annual Report / Progress on Promise Plan	E&CS 29/04/25 - to instruct the Chief Social Work Officer to update Committee on progress against the High Level Promise Plan within one calendar year		Graeme Simpson	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	2.1		
32	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.		Eleanor Sheppard	Families and Communities	Families and Communities	1.1.1		

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33	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Franework	To present the regular performance update		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		
34	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		
35					**23 June 2026**				
36	Children's Social Work Statistics	E&CS 24/06/25 - to instruct the Chief Social Work Officer to update the Education and Children's Services Committee on the 2024/25 Statistical Report following its publication in Spring 2026	June 2026	Graeme Simpson	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	2.1		
37	Approaches to Quality Improvement	E&CS 24/06/25 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to review the impact of arrangements on evaluations of core Quality Indicators over school session 2024/25, amending approaches as required, and report back to Committee with any proposed changes to arrangements in advance of the 2025/6 school session	June 2026	Shona Milne	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
38	Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2024-26 / 2026 28	E&CS 02/07/24 - to instruct the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to report on the progress and outcomes of the Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2024-26, and to prepare an updated Delivery Plan for 2026-28, in June 2026, in line with our statutory duties under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014	June 2026	Louise Beaton / Fiona Lawrie	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
39	Health & Wellbeing	E&CS 24/06/25 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to report the findings of the next Health and Wellbeing surveys to Committee following the next survey point	June 2026	Emma Powell	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
40	Free School Meals Annual Update	EOD Committee 19/04/18 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Early Intervention and Community Empowerment to bring a report to Committee prior to the close of each school year (a) detailing the numbers registered for and taking free school meals by school and (b) assessing the progress made by implementing the new workstreams and detailing any required adjustments for the following school year.	June 2026	Andy Campbell	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
41	Early Intervention Service Test of Change - Full Evaluation	E&CS 29/04/25 - (iii) to instruct the Chief Officer Education & Lifelong Learning to report a full evaluation of the Test of Change within 4 committee cycles from commencement of service	Possibly June 2026	Emma Powell	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
42	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Franework	To present the regular performance update		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		
43	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		
44					**15 September 2026**				
45	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, should no changes be needed to policy		Louise Beaton	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1 and 1.1.5		

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46	Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan (NIF)	To present the plan		Eleanor Sheppard	Families and Communities	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
47	Education Climate Change Annual Report	E&CS 24/06/25 - (i) to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to support the Youth Climate Change Group to collate and share a yearly summary of the most impactful projects in our schools, through means to be determined by the group, to inspire other young people across the city; (ii) to invite representatives from the Youth Climate Change Group to present the report to Committee in subsequent years; and (iii) to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to report back on progress by committee report within one calendar year.		Matt Reid	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
48	School Estate Plan Annual Update	To present the annual update		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 1.1.5		
49	Accessibility Plan	E&CS 12/09/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Education to present an updated Accessibility Plan to the Education and Children's Services Committee within 3 calendar years.		Mhairi Shewan	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.5		
50	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Franework	To present the regular performance update		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		
51	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		
52	**17 November 2026**								
53	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Franework	To present the regular performance update		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		
54	Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps	To report on the cluster risk registers		Graeme Simpson / Shona Milne	Families and Communities	Families and Communities	1.1.4		
55	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		
56	**2027**								
57	Children's Social Work - Workforce Development Plan	E&CS 26/11/24 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Children's Social Work and Family Services to present an evaluation of progress against the workforce plan to Committee in 2027		Ali McAlpine	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	2.1		
58	**REPORTING DATE TO BE CONFIRMED**								
59	Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill	ODC 17/01/19 - To instruct that annual reports be submitted on the progress of implementation of the Autism Action Plan. Reported 5 March 2020 and will then be annually, however 2021 was delayed to May due to pandemic impact. Was reported to former Operational Delivery Committee on 31 August 2022, thereafter annually. E&CS 02/07/24 - to instruct the Chief Officer Children's Social Work and Family Support to provde an update on progress of the Bill as appropriate		Graeme Simpson	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	2.1.1		An update will be provided to Committee once the Bill has concluded Stage 2 of the Parliamentary process. Officers are unable to provide a date for reporting back at this time as it is dependent on Parliament

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60	ASN Spaces	E&CS 24/06/25 - to note current provision of spaces offered across the whole school estate and instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to (a) identify any opportunities for sharing good practice in order to develop support for ASN for the benefit of pupils and school communities and (b) to bring back a report as soon as possible based on the adequacy or otherwise of spaces for Additional Support Needs within each School within the city, in order to truly understand the actual requirements for each school		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities			A service update will be provided in the interim in September 2025
61	The Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024	E&CS 18/02/25 - 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		Graeme Simpson / Andrea McGill	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	2.1		
62	**SCHOOL ESTATE PROJECTS CURRENTLY ON HOLD / NOT YET STARTED**								
63	Grandhome / Oldmachar / Bridge of Don Secondary Provision - Outline Business Case (NA1) / Oldmachar ASG primary school provision	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. 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. E&CS 20/02/24 - Approval of revised School Estate timeline E&CS 19/09/24 - Annual School Estate Plan update advised project had not yet commenced. Reporting dates to be confirmed		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)
64	Consultation on proposed new school at Bucksburn / Newhills	EC&S 04/07/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out a statutory public consultation on the proposal to establish a new primary school at Bucksburn / Newhills, and on propsed changes to the existing school catchment area for Brimmond School, to create a new catchment areas which would be served by the proposed new school; to provide Members with a firm date for the statutory consultation and to report the date to the next Committee meeting; and to report back to the Committee on the outcomes of the consultation at the first available meeting following conclusion of the consultation process. E&CS 12/09/23 - 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 E&CS 20/02/24 - approval of revised School Estate timeline - dates for carrying out the consultation to be confirmed E&CS 17/09/24 - approval of School Estate Plan		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

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65	Loirston Loch Additional Primary Provision - Outline Business Case (L1)	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) E&CS 20/02/24 - Revised school estate timeline approved. No immediate requirement for this, revisit post 2024 E&CS 17/09/24 - Project currently on hold (as per annual School Estate Plan update)		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	16 September 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Performance Management Framework Report
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/25/214
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS	Andy MacDonald/Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICERS	Martin Murchie/Shona Milne/Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR(S)	Alex Paterson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.3

1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To present Committee with the status of key quarterly performance and service standard measures (and annual Statutory Performance Indicators) relating to the Education and Lifelong Learning and Children's Social Work and Family Support Clusters.

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 2025/26 was approved at the meeting of Council on 20th August 2025.

3.2   Performance Management Framework Reporting (PMFR) 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 Council Delivery Plan 2025/26 (the Plan) that was agreed by Council on the 16th April 2025.

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.

Citizen

KPI's common to all Clusters

Cluster specific KPI's

Commissioning Intention KPI's

Regulatory/Statutory KPI's

Process

KPI's common to all Clusters

Cluster specific KPI's

Commissioning Intention KPI's

Regulatory/Statutory KPI's

Staff

KPI's common to all Clusters

Cluster specific KPI's

Commissioning Intention KPI's

Regulatory/Statutory KPI's

Finance and Controls

KPI's common to all Clusters

Cluster specific KPI's

Commissioning Intention KPI's

Regulatory/Statutory KPI's

Report Content

3.4   Appendix A reflects current performance against the Plan, including corporate service level measures, and Service Standards for 2025/26, alongside nationally benchmarked datasets from more recent data releases.

3.5   In some instances, the frequency, and presentation of reporting of measures and standards within corporate PMF reporting for 2025/26, in collaboration with services, have been adjusted to align with the learnings gained from the refresh of the Framework noted above. These are, and will be, reflected in both this and future reports to this Commiittee.

3.6   It also incorporates commentary and reflection against, and metrics aligned to, annual Statutory Performance Indicators set for the 2024/25 financial year. These data, at this point in time, are provisional metrics, pending conclusion of the Council's quality assurance and audit phases.

3.7   Presentation and analysis of the wider range of operational, and strategic, level performance measures covering the work of both Clusters will be contained within:

- the standing Council Delivery Plan Annual Report proposed for Council in October, and;

- the 2025/26 National Improvement Framework Plan being considered at this meeting, and;

- the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report to a future meeting of this Committee.

3.8   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

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

8. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Partnership Agreement Improving Educational Choices Creating Better Learning Environments Caring for Young People	This report supports the following key Council priorities: - 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. - Work to ensure that every school community provides a safe and respectful environment for young people and staff. - 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 Refresh

Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes (Children and Young People)	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: **3. 95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27–30-month review by 2026.** **4. 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026.** **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.** **6. 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.** **7. 83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026** **8. 100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/disabilities will experience a positive destination**

Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes (Adults)	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** *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 ;* *Reduce the % of 13–15-year-olds reported as using each sub group of drug by 50% and cannabis by 20% by 2026.*
Community Empowerment Stretch Outcomes	The detail within Performance Management reporting to this Committee evidences how Families and Community service delivery leads, though the Improvement Project Aim; *100% of decisions which impact on children and young people are informed by them by 2026* contributes to, or influences Outcome 16: **50% of people report they feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026.**
Regional and City Strategies	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. 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.

9.   IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	It was confirmed by Chief Officer, Martin Murchie, on 12th August 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 2025/26 -CORS/25/189, 20th August 2025
Council Delivery Plan 2025/26 – CORS/25/038, 16th April 2025

11. **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Education & Children's Services Committee Corporate Performance Summary Dashboard

12. **REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS**

Alex Paterson
Strategic Performance and Improvement Officer
apaterson@aberdeencity.gov.uk

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

Education and Lifelong Learning

| 1. Citizen |

Table 1. Service Level Measures – 2025/26 Service Standards (Education – 12 months rolling Year)

Performance Measure	Year to Date Value	2025/26 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 ^	98.6%	100%	✅	⬆
% of Primary, secondary, and special schools achieving an average evaluation of 'Good' in formal inspections of core Quality Indicators by Education Scotland ^	90.0%	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%	✅	▬

^ Data to end of July 2025 * Based on national data release for 2023/24 – official data release for 2024/25 is pending

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Service Commentary – Table 1

Care Inspectorate

There was a further publication of inspection of ACC funded provision in June 2025, which achieved gradings of 'Good' across the four Organisers, and five publications of inspections of funded providers that, in combination, produced an average score of 96.8%. This has maintained the average % of gradings meeting Standard to above 98% on a rolling 12-month trend.

Education Scotland

With a further inspection having been included in the dataset since the June meeting of this Committee, the % of evaluations with an average grading of Good over the rolling period has fallen marginally to 90.0%. (see below at Table 3). The detail around this inspection was presented within the Inspections Report to that Committee, At the comparative academic year point in 2024, the rolling figure was 84.4%.

It is also worth bearing in mind that Education Scotland inspections are paused substantially over the course of the Summer, and that with a limited number of inspections across the year, variations in the % average grading reported to each meeting of this Committee can be materially influenced by the extent and scope of the inspection activity itself.

Table 2. Corporate Measures – 2025/26 Cluster Level Indicators (Monthly) – Complaint Handling

Performance Measure	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	2025/26 Target	Status	Long Trend - Monthly
	Value	Value	Value			
Total No. complaints received (stage 1 and 2) - Education & Lifelong Learning	10	17	13	📈		⬆️
% of complaints resolved within timescale (stage 1 and 2) – Education & Lifelong Learning	40.0%	59%	77%	75.0%	✅	⬆️
No, of complaints resolved within timescale (stage 1 and 2) -Education and Lifelong Learning	4	10	10	📈		⬆️
% of complaints with at least one point upheld (stage 1 and 2) – Education & Lifelong Learning	Data Pending	Data Pending	Data Pending	📈		NA
Total No. of lessons learnt identified (stage 1 and 2) – Education & Lifelong Learning	Data Pending	Data Pending	Data Pending	📈		

Service Commentary - Table 2.

Currently, data around the % of upheld complaints and Lessons Learned is under additional manual validation because of a technical issue with data generation linked to the digital system connectivity. These data will be made available, and backdated, in future PMF reporting. As an additional consequence of this issue, and as an exception to normal reporting timelines, data on complaints is presented monthly in this specific report.

Table 3. Service Standard Measure – Average Evaluation Scores from Education Scotland Activity (Primary and Secondary) 2024/25 Academic Year

Year	Core Quality Indicator Scope	Education Scotland Core Quality Indicators – Academic Years				
		Leadership of change	Learning, teaching and assessment	Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Raising attainment and achievement	Overall Quality Indicator Outcome
2024-25	% of Primary, secondary, and special schools achieving an average evaluation of 'Good' in formal inspections of core Quality Indicators by Education Scotland	87.5	87.5	100.0	90.6	90.0
2023-24	% of Primary, secondary, and special schools achieving an average evaluation of 'Good' in formal inspections of core Quality Indicators by Education Scotland	91.7	75.0	112.5	79.2	84.4
2022-23	% of Primary, secondary, and special schools achieving an average evaluation of 'Good' in formal inspections of core Quality Indicators by Education Scotland	80.0	85.0	75.0	75.0	86.3

Service Commentary – Table 3

The pattern of Education Scotland (ES) inspections across the academic year has been predicated on the use of the short inspection model where additional focus has been placed on assessments of the two core Organisers Learning, Teaching and Assessment, and Raising Attainment. Of the 8 inspections carried out, only 2 used the full model which meant that the Leadership of Change and Wellbeing organisers were under-represented in the outcomes.

Both of these Organisers traditionally have been particular areas of strength for the city so, although the overall quality score for 2024-25 has risen, and the improvements in both pupil orientated learning and attainment organisers are welcomed, given the limited number of evaluations of the Leadership of Change and Wellbeing (2 establishments assessed), there is less confidence in this data.

Nothwithstanding this incomplete assessment overview from ES inspection activity, the Overall Quality Indicator Outcome for 2024/25 of 90% is the highest recorded by the education authority over the lifetime of the current inspection framework, against a background of increased activity by the agency.

Table 4. Service Standards (Lifelong Learning)

Performance Measure	Year to Date Value	Status	Long Trend
We will ensure library Item Requests are satisfied within 21 days – 12 month rolling value (to June 2025)	73.0%	✅	⬇

Table 5. Service Level Quarterly Measure – Library Item Requests

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26 *	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	
% of library Item Requests satisfied within 21 days (Financial YTD)	74.3%	74.1%	69.8%	⬇

Service Commentary – Table 5

The data for Quarter 1 is as yet incomplete as a result of an issue around changes to the digital platforming, and compatibility of the Crystal data source with current ACC reporting infrastructures. Colleagues in Digital and Technology and Data Insight are presently working on a solution to this technical fault so this data should be regarded as provisional

Errata. Within the commentary around the annualised version of this metric, within Table 6 of the report to June Committee, it was noted that in 2022/23 there were 'just over 4,000' Request submissions. This should have read that there were just over 46,600 Request submissions.

2. Process

Table 6. Statutory Performance Indicator 2024/25 – Early Learning Provision

Performance Measure	2023/24^	2024/25^	Status	Long Trend - Annual
	Value	Value		
% of eligible population of 3- and 4-year-olds registered for Early Learning Provision	83.9%	86.3%	✅	⬆

Service Commentary – Table 6.

In total, 3,876 3- and 4-year-olds resident within the city were registered within Aberdeen City Council managed and/or funded Early Learning placements, a marginal drop of 2.3% on the previous year but representing a higher proportion of the eligible population which rose by 2.4% against 2023/24.

Underlying this combined figure, the number of 4-year-olds placed has fallen marginally from 2,175 to 1,991 consistent with eligible population projections, whilst the number and % of placements of 3-year-olds has risen by nearly 8 percentage points to 86.4% because of a combination of a fall in the eligible population and rising registration levels.

Independently of this specific measure but influential to the experience of both our young children, and the contribution of early learning services in the city, some 490 deferred entries were accommodated within ELC placements, a figure which has been on a continuous upwards trend in recent years. In 2023/24, Deferred Entries accounted for 17.4% of all eligible five year-olds, and in 2024/25 this had risen to 19.6%.

Alongside this, the proportion of eligible 2-year-olds registered for placement in an ELC setting has risen to 254 children (202 in 2024/25) representing 48.3% (+ 10 percentage points above 2023/24) of those children understood to be potentially eligible based on the comprehensive local data availability at the final registration survey point for the year.

^ Mid-year population Estimates for 2023 and 2024 have been used as denominators. In the context of widely fluctuating migration patterns in the past 3 years, Estimate data are presently a more reliable population information source than 2018-based Population Projections, against which % data has been calculated previously. As a consequence, these data are not directly comparable with prior year outcomes.
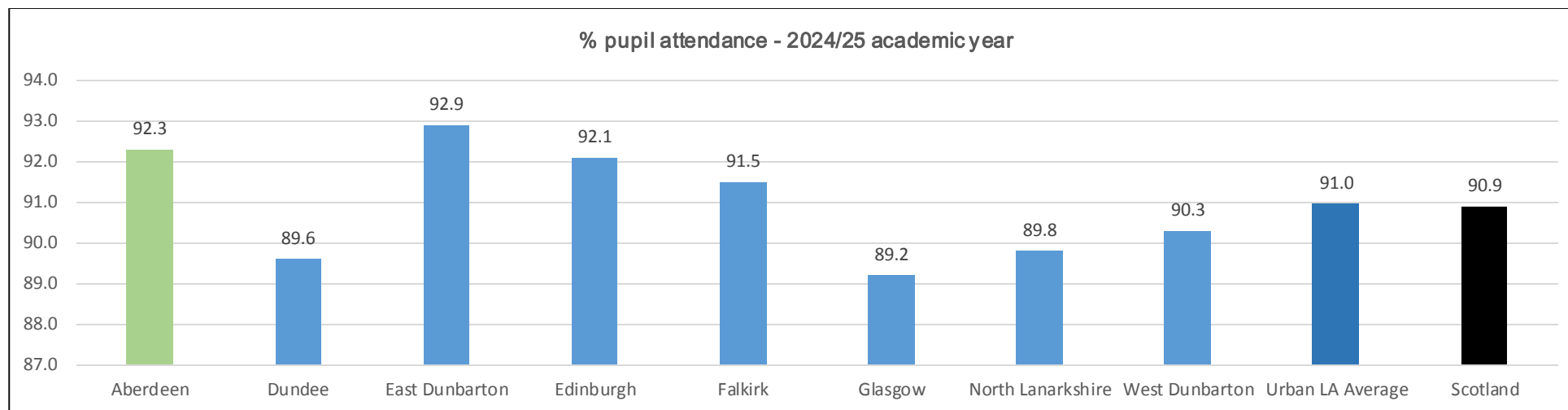
Table 7. Service Level Quarterly Measure - Visits in Person to Library Service Premises

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	
Number of visits in person to library service premises	140,027	139,917	136.860	⬇

Service Commentary – Table 7

The Quarter 1 2025/26 outcome, although below that of the two previous quarters, (a pattern consistent with historical precedent) continues a strong pattern of growth in visits to library settings, representing a sixth consecutive quarter where the number of visits exceeded that of the same period in the previous year.

Chart 1. National School Attendance Measure - Percentage of attendance (Urban Local Authorities) 2024/25 Full Academic Year

% pupil attendance - 2024/25 academic year

Local Authority	%
Aberdeen	92.3
Dundee	89.6
East Dunbarton	92.9
Edinburgh	92.1
Falkirk	91.5
Glasgow	89.2
North Lanarkshire	89.8
West Dunbarton	90.3
Urban LA Average	91.0
Scotland	90.9

Service Commentary – Chart 1

Pupil attendance across the full academic year has sustained the pattern prevalent at each of the snapshot points previously reported to this Committee with the city performing well in comparison with its benchmarks, and some additional positive distances being recorded against the National and Urban Average at the conclusion of the year.

In 2023/24, the city figure for this Management Information was 92.2% whilst the Urban comparator and National figures were 91.3% and 91.2% respectively, On this basis, the city's attendance in 2024/25 is slightly improved on both comparators.

By this particular measure, overall, the city is positioned 4th among all Scottish Local Authorities, marginally behind Aberdeenshire and East Dunbartonshire, with East Renfrewshire recording the highest level of attendance at 93.6%

Underlying the overall figure of 92.3%, attendances at each phase, (Primary, Secondary and Special schools) was better than the National figure, with Secondary attendance being >2 percentage points higher at 90.5% (National 88.3%) with Special School attendances (90.6%) being almost 3 percentage points better. Primary attendances were closer to the National figure at 93.6% in comparison with 93.1% for Scotland.

In the context of the city's benchmarks, whether by geography/or affluence models, attendance at each phase in Aberdeen was higher than the overwhelming majority of the 32 Scottish local authorities.

Source: Education Analytical Services, Scottish Government, Confirmed data as at 4th July 2025

3. Staff

Corporate Measures – Service Level Indicators

Table 8. Establishment (Education and Lifelong Learning)

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value		
Establishment actual FTE – Education and Lifelong Learning)	3.258	3,270	3,268	📈	⬆️

Table 9. Accidents and Incidents (Education and Lifelong Learning)

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value		
H&S Employee Reportable Accidents/Incidents by Cluster – Education and Lifelong Learning	2	4	5	📈	⬇️
H&S Employee Non-Reportable Accidents/Incidents by Cluster – Education and Lifelong Learning	403	479	341	📈	⬆️

Service Commentary - Table 9

The level of Non-Reportable Accidents/Incidents in Quarter 1, representing a fall on that recorded in Quarters 3 and 4, is consistent with that experienced in previous years, and although higher than that in the same quarter in 2024/25 (286) initial analysis of the data suggests that this change is in large part due to the impacts of improvements in reporting processes introduced within schools in the course of the academic year.

The report considered at the meeting of the Staff Governance Committee on 25th August 2025 outlined the detail around accident/incident reporting across the Families and Communities Function, including that within Education and Lifelong Learning.

Table 10. Absence Due to Illness (Education and Lifelong Learning) 12 month rolling average

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Quarter 1 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)	5.41	3.59	3.63	4.98	✅	⬆
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE – Primary and Secondary Schools (12-month rolling figure at quarter end)	4.70	3.95	3.98	4.98	✅	⬆
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE – Early Learning and Childcare (12-month rolling figure at quarter end)	5.04	5.05	4.95	4.98	✅	⬆

Service Commentary – Table 10

Although absence levels in Early Years settings are above those of the Cluster and those recorded within schools, the rate of improvement, and sustained direction of travel in the 12-month rolling period is stronger than that of both comparators, with more than a full year of consecutive long term improvements in absence levels, and a stable position over the course of Winter, Spring and Summer terms.

This is the first quarterly dataset, since May 2023, that places Early Years absence levels marginally below the directly comparable average corporate figure

4. Finance & Controls

Table 11. Staff Expenditure (Education and Lifelong Learning)

Performance Indicator	Quarter 1 2025/26		Quarter 2 2025/26		Quarter 3 2025/26		Quarter 4 2025/26	
	Value	Status	Value	Status	Value	Status	Value	Status
Staff Expenditure – % spend to YTD budget profile – Education and Lifelong Learning *	25.91%	✅						

Service Commentary - Table 11

Although, as reflected in the Quarter 1 accounts presented to the Finance and Resources Committee meeting of 6th August 2025, the Cluster continues to experience demand led pressures relating to the size and pupil profile of school rolls, staff expenditure was within approved budget lines for this period, and is within tolerances set for period 3 of the financial year.

Conclusion of the 2025/26 registration timeline, confirming the predictive school roll for the academic year, and the scope of support needs from this new intake, will assist in comprehensively defining/validating the likely end of fiscal year forecast but there are fewer indications, at this point in time, that in year placements, and inflation of the school roll will place the same levels of pressure on these budget lines as has been experienced in recent years.

Children's Social Work and Family Support

Corporate Measures – Cluster Level Indicators (Quarterly)

5. Citizen

Table 12. Complaints Handling

Performance Measure	April 2025 Value	May 2025 Value	June 2025 Value	Status	2025/26 Target	Long Trend Monthly
Total No. of Complaints received (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	8	5	2	📈		⬆️
% of Complaints resolved within timescale (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	75%	80%	100%	✅	75%	⬆️
No. of Complaints resolved within timescale (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	6	4	2	📈		⬆️
% of complaints with at least one point upheld (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	Data Pending	Data Pending	Data Pending	📈		NA
Total No. of lessons learnt identified (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	Data Pending	Data Pending	Data Pending	📈		

Service Commentary – Table 12

Currently, data around the % of Upheld complaints and Lessons Learned is under additional manual validation because of a technical issue with data generation linked to the digital system connectivity. These data will be made available, and backdated, in future PMF reporting. As an additional consequence of this issue, and as an exception to normal reporting timelines, data on complaints is presented monthly in this specific report.

Table 13. Service Level Standards 2025/26 (Children's Social Work)

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2024/25 Value	Quarter 4 2024/25 Value	Quarter 1 2025/26 Value	Status	2025/26 Target	Long Trend Quarterly
% 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%	▬

6. Process

Table 14. Statutory Performance Indicator 2024/25 – Looked After Children and Young People Placements

Performance Measure	2022/23 Value	2023/24 Value	2024/25 Value	Long Trend - Annual
Percentage of looked after and accommodated children with 3 or more placements in the past year	4.4%	2.8%	5.0%	⬇

Service Commentary – Table 14.

The data over this reporting period reflects an increase for children and young people having experienced 3 or more placements. As noted in the previous reporting period there has been a decrease in the number of children/young people in placements away from home. The data also reflects the combination of young people arriving via the National Transfer Scheme and spontaneous arrivals who all have a looked after status.

Of the 26 children/young people who had placement moves, it is positive to report that 6 children moved to adoptive placements. Several of the children have experienced fragility within their foster placements resulting from their complex trauma profile and this has necessitated changes of foster care provision. There has been a group of young people in this period where their adoption has been disrupted, and this necessitated temporary moves until a suitable residential option was identified. We have reunited 3 separate siblings into placement together, which is a priority of the service in our commitment to brothers and sisters. Several of the children who experienced temporary moves have since been placed with family in kinship arrangements and are reported to be flourishing and will be secured formally by the relevant legal order.

The service is committed to taking steps to place children with family if it is no longer safe for them to be cared for by their parents, there are occasions where extended family are not immediately available, and this means children require to be looked after in alternative care until either an assessment of kin is progressed, or family are in position to make the necessary adjustment to care for them.

The instability of care experiences does not allow for children to develop a sense of belonging and forge relationships of significance with their primary care givers which can support them into adulthood. Moves of care placement often necessitate changes of schools providing a disrupted pattern of education commonly resulting in poorer outcomes in attainment or securing employment.

A continuing priority is to ensure that adequate supports are available from within our services and with the agencies that we commission. Contract and monitoring meetings are held regularly with independent fostering agencies to ensure service delivery is of the expected standard. Within our Fostering Service we have identified a social work post to be the link with our external fostering agencies, and this has proven successful particularly when there have been concerns identified in a placement. The intervention has coordinated and influenced closer collaboration that stabilises placements thus avoiding in further move for a child/young person.

The investment in our Kinship care service is significant and is contributing to positive outcomes for kinship families, ultimately impacting on our balance of care and commitment for children to remain within their families where possible. The numbers of children who have secured a legal order with their kinship families is increasing and this removes them from being formally looked after which is the desired outcome.

Table 15. Statutory Performance Indicator 2024/25 – Families at Risk

Performance Measure	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Long Trend - Annual
	Value	Value	Value	
Percentage of looked after young people and families at risk supported to stay together or in their own communities	44.8%	43.1%	42.4%	⬇

Service Commentary – Table 15

The data contained in this measure indicates that over the past 3 years the number of children and young people being cared for in their family or a kinship placement has remained largely stable.

This reflects the fact that more kinship carers are being supported to secure children and young people legally (kinship carer orders) through court and as a result these children are no longer considered looked after. This means that they are no longer counted. These children and young people and their carer(s) do however continue to receive the same level of multi-agency support. The static data may also be a consequence of intensive support being available when children have identified needs and when their parents/care givers reach out and ask for help. This support is responsive and designed to wraparound the whole family, meeting the needs of the child and their parents. In line with the principles of the Promise this has resulted in children being able to remain with their parents with individual support packages.

The focus for the partnership over the coming year is to continue to embed a whole family support model. We will continue to work alongside children and their parents/care givers to gain an understanding of their experiences of using local services and act on feedback given to make improvements. We will continue to embed the principles and ethos of the Promise to ensure that children and their families can remain together.

Table 16. Statutory Performance Indicator 2024/25 - Children on the Child Protection Register

Performance Measure	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Long Trend - Annual
	Value	Value	Value	
Number of children on the child protection register	244	237	227	⬆

Service Commentary – Table 16

The children whose names are recorded on the child protection register are at risk of abuse and neglect, as identified and supported by the Children's Social Work Service, in collaboration with agencies across Aberdeen City. By registering children deemed to be at risk of harm and through continuous evaluation of support and intervention put in place to reduce this, we can ensure provision in Aberdeen is as effective as possible.

The number of children whose names feature on the child protection register in Aberdeen has remained stable, only slightly exceeding the national average rate of 2.1 per 1000 children from the Child Protection Statistics for Scotland 2023/24, which was published in April 2025 (revised June 2025.) The primary reasons for registration in line with previous years, were neglect, parental mental health issues, domestic abuse and emotional abuse. These reasons align with national trends and reflect the priorities of the Child Protection Programme for 2024-2026.

We strive to ensure through appropriate interventions, that children do not return to being at risk of significant harm and thereby requiring registration again. Re-registration affects a small number of children and also reflects that parental alcohol/drug use continues to feature prominently in the reasons for registration. We know that the cycle of recovery for adults with problematic alcohol/drug use often involves relapse which can result in child protection registration being required again.

Of the 227 children on the child protection register over this year, 13 children had had a previous registration within a 2 year period. Whilst this is slightly higher than the national average, Aberdeen aligns with the national picture when considering the percentage of those who have any registration history (21%)

Table 17. Service Level Standards 2024/25 (Children's Social Work)

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2024/25 Value	Quarter 4 2024/25 Value	Quarter 1 2025/26 Value	Status	2025/26 Target	Long Trend Quarterly
% of children open to Children's Social Work supported to live at home, where safe to do so	75%	75%	76%	✅	80%	⬆
% of initial screenings undertaken, and action decided, on new referrals within 7 days.	98%	97%	99%	✅	100%	⬆
% Initial Child Protection Planning Meetings held within timescale	50%	80%	68%*	⚠	80%	⬆
% of Care experienced children and young people with three or more placements in 12 months	4%	4.5%	4.2%	✅	5%	⬆

Service Commentary - Table 17.

Child Protection Planning Meetings

* Quarterly reporting is now directly aligned with Child Protection management information gathering timelines which moves the quarterly reporting period one month forwards from the standing fiscal quarter. This limited change in methodology is signified by highlighting of the data for Quarter 1.

Of the 19 scheduled meetings in the first quarterly recording period, (May-July 2025) 13 were held within timescale. The availability of stakeholders during the Easter school holidays predominantly, along with changes in children and young people/family status arising from on-going CSW supervision, affected the meetings which were not held within timescale.

The rolling 12 month figure from May 2024 to July 2025, based on this management information, including a total of 63 scheduled IPPM meetings, was 70% - just outside the standard target tolerance set for reporting against this measure. Over the same timescale, of those months least affected by traditional holiday periods, where stakeholder availability (including family members) was an influencing factor, the % of meetings held within timescale averaged 76.6%.

Chart 2. Service Level Measures – Number of Looked After Children and Young People by Placement Type/ In Continuing Care

Average Number of Looked After Children and Young People by Placement Type/Average Number of Children and Young People in a Continuing Care Placement

Legend:
- Number in Continuing Care
- Number living in a Kinship Arrangement
- Number of Looked After Children and Young People
- Number living in a Fostering Placement
- Number living in a Residential setting

Data points:

Period	Number of Looked After Children and Young People	Number living in a Fostering Placement	Number living in a Kinship Arrangement	Number living in a Residential setting	Number in Continuing Care
Q1 2023/24	498	226	119	60	
Q2 2023/24	515	228	125	61	
Q3 2023/24	539	222	131	65	
Q4 2023/24	497	213	115	60	
Q1 2024/25	483	209	110	64	38
Q2 2024/25	495	207	95	64	39
Q3 2024/25	445	202	90	60	41
Q4 2024/25	445	206	91	61	43
Q1 2025/26	449	207	95	62	44

Table 18. Balance of Care -% of Looked After Children by Placement Type – Quarterly Comparisons (Quarter 1)

Period	% Looked After living in a Kinship Arrangement	% Looked After living in a Fostering Placement	% Looked After living in a Residential setting

2023/24	23.9%	44.7%	11.9%
2024/25	22.4%	43.4%	12.7%
2025/26	21.2%	46.1%	13.4%

Service Commentary.

Chart 2 – Looked After Children and Young People and those in Continuing Care

The long term trends for a reduced number of Looked After Childre and Young People (LAC&YP) 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 and Young People whilst the number of those in Residential placements remain largely static. The number of children in Continuing Care, although representing a relatively small % of young people supported by the Service, is beginning to show an upwards direction of travel.

Table 18 – Looked After Children by Placement Type

At Quarter 1, there was a marginal positive shift in the % of LAC&YP living in a Kinship Arrangement (21.2% of all LAC&YP) as compared with 20.4% in Quarter 4 of 2024/25) and a marginal % reduction in those living in a Fostering Placement. The number of placements in a residential setting tend to be more extended in nature and are less subject to variation in quarterly cycles, The % of placements in this particular setting is equally influenced by changes in the denominator, (the overall number of Looked After Children and Young People) which is on a reducing numerical trend, and therefore inflates the % of Looked After Children and Young People in this setting.

Staff

Corporate Measures – 2025/26 Service Level Indicators

Table 19. Establishment (Children's Social Work)

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2024/25	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value		
Establishment actual FTE – Children's Social Work	354.22	351.10	348.62	📈	⬇

Table 20. Accidents and Incidents

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2024/25 Value	Quarter 4 2024/25 Value	Quarter 1 2025/26 Value	Status	Long Trend Quarterly
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	1	1	1	📈	▬

Table 21. Absence Due to Illness (Children's Social Work) 12 month rolling average.

Performance Measure	Quarter 3 2024/25 Value	Quarter 4 2024/25 Value	Quarter 1 2025/26 Value	Quarter 1 2025/26 Corporate Figure	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE – Children's Social Work	3	3.7	3.6	4.98	✅	⬆

Service Commentary - Table 21

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 positive when contrasted with the corporate value. At the same point in 2024, the 12 month rolling average sickness absence in CSW was 5.4 working days per FTE.

8. Finance & Controls

Table 22. Staff Expenditure (Children' Social Work)

Performance Indicator	Quarter 1 2025/26 Value	Quarter 1 2025/26 Status	Quarter 2 2025/26 Value	Quarter 2 2025/26 Status	Quarter 3 2025/26 Value	Quarter 3 2025/26 Status	Quarter 4 2025/26 Value	Quarter 4 2025/26 Status
Staff Expenditure – % spend to YTD budget profile – Children's Social Work *	27.1%	🔺						

Service Commentary - Table 22

Expenditure at Quarter 1 was marginally outwith the YTD budget profile as services continue to support the fluctuating levels of case management and extended identified needs of children and young people under the remit of both Children's Social Work and Child Protection teams.

Whilst the Cluster continues to work stringently within the staff expenditure mitigation framework overseen by the Establishment Control Board to recruit only to essential positions, and limit agency and overtime expenditure, demand arising from a number of sustained drivers (cost of living, homelessness presentations and the national dispersal and resettlement programmes) are increasing the extent of interventions necessary to meet our statutory obligations to children and young people.

* 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

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	16 September 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Inspection Reporting
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/215
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; and

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.

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   **Link Inspector**

The Link Inspector is a new role within Education Scotland. We have agreed to be a pilot Local Authority to help shape this development and have been allocated an Inspector to work alongside the central team.

Following planning meetings and introductions to Senior Leaders in the centre and in schools, monthly visits have been arranged which include attending Head teacher events where the Inspector will be given an opportunity to share national best practice and offer guidance. This work will support leaders across the system to have a greater understanding and insight into the national standard.

3.3   EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTIONS

3.3.1 Further Inspection of Northfield Academy

A first HMIE inspection took place at Northfield Academy in January 2023, with a letter published in March 2023. A further visit was made in January 2025, with inspectors visiting classes, gathering the views of young people, parents/carers and staff, and working closely with the headteacher and senior leaders. A set of five priorities were identified for securing improvement. A summary of progress reported against each priority by HMIe is noted below.

Area for improvement 1: Senior and middle leaders should work to improve the strategic leadership of all areas of the school. Review and update the school's vision and values. There should be a clear and shared understanding of the expectations, direction and identity of Northfield Academy. Ensure plans for improvement are agreed with young people, teachers and parents.

Inspectors noted strong progress in this area highlighting the headteacher's inspirational leadership and clear direction for school improvement underpinned by the school values of nurture, flourish, achieve. Also noted was the increase in correspondence with parents/carers about their children's learning resulting in improved parent satisfaction with the school.

Area for Improvement 2: Develop a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment. Build positive relationships across the school. Young people should be central to discussions about behaviour expectations and feeling safe in school.

Inspectors noted progress in this area including how young people are welcomed into class. The implementation of the mobile phone policy was seen to be helping remove distractions during learning. Inspectors commented that new approaches to reporting bullying allows young people experiencing bullying to report the issues confidentially. Staff are running an increasing number of lunchtime and after school activities and these are being appreciated by young people.

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Area for Improvement 3: Agree with staff a shared understanding of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. Develop effective processes to plan, track and monitor young people's progress.

Positive progress had been made in this area with the creation of a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework to support teacher development. There is increased consistency in how lessons are delivered across the school with clear expectations for young people. The Crew experience has been rolled out to S3 and is continuing to support the development of skills. The tracking and reporting schedule is providing parents/carers with regular updates on their child's progress.

Area for improvement 4: Ensure the wellbeing needs of all young people are a key part of all school activities. Clarify procedures relating to pupil attendance and time keeping.

The school vision and values are promoted throughout the school giving young people an increased sense of belonging. Work with partners continues to provide interventions to support small groups and individuals to progress in their learning. Tests of change in S1 and S2 to support attendance have had positive impact and learning will now be spread across the rest of the school.

Area for improvement 5: Urgently improve attainment from S1 to S6. Review the number of young people who leave school in S4 and S5, and those who do not go to a positive destination. Make plans to support broader achievements for all young people. The school should demonstrate how young people on reduced timetables are included, educated and safe.

The introduction of Crew in S1 and S2 has led to improvements in literacy and numeracy in the Broad General Education (BGE), with work ongoing to increase presentation numbers, broaden the curricular offer and support young people to achieve positive destinations. However, at the time of inspection, it was recognised that limited progress had been made in raising attainment overall and therefore this area of work continues to have the highest priority for the staff team at Northfield Academy.

Appendix A shows the action plan to continue to develop each of these priority areas.

Whilst pleased with the findings of HMIE during this most recent visit, school leaders are determined to continue the pace of further improvements, with support from the wider local authority.

Noting strong and positive progress in some of the areas for improvement, HMIE inspectors have agreed that the school would now benefit from a period of time to further progress the actions and will carry out a further inspection within 18 months of the publication of the letter.

A copy of the letter to parents/carers can be found here.

Northfield will remain in **Category 3** of the Quality Improvement Framework

Northfield Advisory Group

The Northfield Advisors were asked to reflect on the experience of working with Northfield Academy. Although not all Advisors responded, the majority provided feedback. They commented on the importance the support of the education and children's services committee and felt that the level of involvement of the Education Convenor was unusual but important to support school improvement. All advisors were impressed with the quality and understanding of data available and how this was being used to support the school and wider community identify the right priorities.

Advisors reported that they found it hugely beneficial to scrutinise and participate up-close with the process and were impressed with how well the Service understood the context of the school. Advisors were also pleased to see how the Service mobilised and utilised a wide range of resources, including secondary Head Teachers, to support the school's improvement journey.

The group felt that the quality of discussion which took place helped the team to challenge their collective understanding. They noted that the entire process of change aligns with the key principles of implementation science especially on values-driven culture and leadership. They felt the voices of the young people were at the heart of the work being undertaken and could see the young people's confidence and resilience grow during their involvement. It will be crucial to maintain the established ethos as the school continues on its improvement journey.

Advisors welcomed the time invested in establishing processes to ensure they were able to access a wide range of stakeholders and the level of honesty from both the school and central officers allowing sensitive and difficult issues to be raised. This commitment and openness, alongside unsupervised and unmoderated discussion with families and young people was the initial attraction to become involved. Advisors commented that this approach allowed them to see beyond the data and understand the aspirations of young people and families.

Advisors reported that they valued the opportunity to be part of the Northfield Improvement journey and commented on the significant progress made between each of their visits to the school. They all expressed confidence in the leadership of the headteacher, commenting on how he has led the school in removing the boundaries between school and local community. The Advisors wish the Northfield community well in the future and have expressed an interest in being involved in future projects where appropriate.

3.3.2 Further Inspection of Harlaw Academy

Harlaw Academy was originally inspected in November 2019 with a report published in February 2020. Four further visits have been made in the intervening period, with the most recent being during the week of 17th March 2025. Three key priorities have been consistently scrutinised by HMIE colleagues during visits.

Area for Improvement 1: Streamline approaches to improvement so that self-evaluation activities clearly identify priorities which will make the biggest difference to outcomes for young people.

Inspectors noted a substantial amount of work had been completed in relation to this area for improvement. Staff are now working well together and being given the opportunity to lead change through involvement in improvement groups. Processes and systems within the school have been strengthened and this is leading to more accurate self-evaluation and identification of actions to improve the school.

Area for Improvement 2: **Continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment so that young people's experiences engage them and meet their needs. Develop more fully an ethos for learning with high expectations and mutual respect.**

The refreshed professional learning offer is supporting the sharing of effective practice across the school. The delivery of learning and teaching is more consistent with staff and learners being clear of expectations for learning and engagement across the school. There remains a need to improve pace and challenge to ensure all learners experience learning matched to their needs

Area for Improvement 3: Strengthen approaches to monitoring young people's progress across all subject areas so that staff at all levels have a clear overview of learners' progress. Continue to raise attainment of young people at all stages.

The new tracking system being implemented will enable the school to gather an overview of a young person's attainment enabling staff to identify interventions to support where necessary. Inspectors noted that staff and senior leaders are continuing to widen the curriculum in the senior phase to give learners more options to succeed, and encouraged the school to progress plans within the senior phase curriculum to allow young people to improve the quality of passes.

The school was in **Category 3** of the Quality Improvement Framework and will remain there following the inspection to ensure the HT and SLT have the support required to continue to realise improvement.

Inspectors have referenced progress made across the priority areas and recognise that more time is needed to allow the school to demonstrate that this improvement is sustained. They will make a further visit within eighteen months to allow for this time to be given to the school.

Members will be pleased to note that the strategy of change in the senior phase curriculum has realised improvements in the quality of A-C passes at key stages of SQA attainment.

A copy of the letter to parents/carers can be found here and the action plan can be found at Appendix B

3.4 **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.

3.4.1 Kirkhill ELC, a local Authority setting, received an unannounced Inspection which took place on 26th and 27th May 2025. Inspectors noted that children

received nurturing approaches from staff that helped them feel emotionally safe and secure. Children experienced safe, unhurried mealtimes and enjoyed a variety of play and learning experiences. Children's health and wellbeing was enhanced through daily access to outdoor play.   The environment was comfortable and resources were well-maintained. Quality assurance and self-evaluation had resulted in changes which promoted positive outcomes for families. Effective staff deployment supported positive outcomes for children.

All three of the areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been met.

Aspect being inspected	Previous evaluation May 24	Recent Evaluation
How good is our care, play and learning?	Adequate (3)	Good (4)
How good is our setting?	Good (4)	Good (4)
How good is our leadership?	Adequate (3)	Good (4)
How good is our staff team?	Adequate (3)	Good (4)

The new nursery manager has worked hard to implement the necessary improvements, and staff are pleased that their improvement journey has continued to impact positively on children and families.

The setting will move from **Category 2** to **Category 1** of the Quality Improvement Framework.

The full report can be read here

3.4.2 **The Kindergarten Nursery,** a funded provider setting in the Midstocket area of Aberdeen, received an unannounced inspection the 10th and 11th June 2025. Inspectors noted that children were very well supported by staff who were consistently responsive to their needs. Good quality child led play, learning and development opportunities were available to children throughout the day. Outdoor play and learning was enhanced by the regular use of resources in the community including a variety of green spaces and walks to local shops and libraries. Some improvements had been made to the environment to support a more welcoming and inviting space. Strong leadership and a whole team commitment to improvement had led to the continued development of the service which impacted positively on children's wellbeing, play and learning. There was a good mix of skills and experience across the staff team which contributed to positive outcomes for children.

Aspect being inspected	Previous evaluation Aug 24	Recent Evaluation June 25
How good is our care, play and learning?	Adequate (3)	Good (4)
How good is our setting?	Weak (2)	Good (4)
How good is our leadership?	Adequate (3)	Good (4)

How good is our staff team?	Adequate (3)	Good (4)

The team at The Kindergarten are delighted that the improvements made had been observed by the Care Inspectorate. The team will continue to develop their identified priorities for improvement.

The setting will move from **Category 2** to **Category 1** of the Quality Improvement Framework.

The full report can be read here

3.4.3 **Thrive Childcare and Education Happitots Cove Bay,** a funded provider in the Cove area of Aberdeen, received an unannounced inspection between the 3rd and 4th June 2025. Inspectors noted that children experienced warm and caring interactions, helping them to feel settled and secure. Children's play and learning experiences had improved. The environment was comfortable and resources were well-maintained. Quality assurance and self-evaluation had resulted in changes which promoted positive outcomes for families. One requirement and three areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been met. Management and staff were committed to the continued development of the service. Inspectors identified that further work was needed to ensure play experiences were consistent and challenging for all children. as staff were not always effectively deployed to meet the changing play and personal needs of children throughout the day. Management and staff will create an action plan to address these areas for development.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation July 24	Recent Evaluation June 25
How good is our care, play and learning?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)
How good is our setting?	Weak (2)	Good (4)
How good is our leadership?	Weak (2)	Good (4)
How good is our staff team?	Weak (2)	Adequate (3)

Staff and management are pleased that the improvements made have been recognised and have had an impact on children and families. They will continue to address the areas for further development. Happitots will move from **Category 3** of the Quality Improvement Framework to **Category 2**

The service improvement plan can be found at Appendix C.

The full report can be read here.

3.4.4 **J.Puddleducks@Victoria Street**, a funded provider in the Dyce area of Aberdeen, received an unannounced inspection between the 9th and 11th June 2025. Inspectors spoke with staff, children and parents and observed practice. Inspectors noted that although children were having fun as they played there was a need for staff interactions to improve in order to extend children's play and learning experiences. Children are safe within the setting however there

is a need to review environments to ensure they are consistently inviting and stimulating for children.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation May 24	Recent Evaluation June 25
How good is our care, play and learning?	Adequate (3)	Adequate (3)
How good is our setting?	Good (4)	Adequate (3)
How good is our leadership?	Good (4)	Good (4)
How good is our staff team?	Adequate (3)	Good (4)

The setting is currently carrying a number of vacancies and is using this as an opportunity to redeploy staff to work with different age groups. Managers are aware of the need to provide professional learning for some of the relocated staff.

The setting was in **Category 3** prior to the inspection and will remain in **Category 3**. The locality lead will continue to undertake unannounced visits to ensure the plan is being actioned.

The setting's action plan can be found at Appendix D.

The full report can be found here

3.5 School Age Childcare Inspections

Registered school age childcare provisions are inspected regularly by the Care Inspectorate. All inspections are unannounced.

3.5.1 **Mile End Out of School Care** is run by Aberdeen City Council and is registered to provide care to a maximum of 50 children of primary school age at any one time, with no more than 40 during school term time. The service, which provides before school, after school and holiday care provision, received an unannounced inspection between 15th and 16th July 2025. Inspectors spent time with children attending the service, spoke with parents and carers, staff and management.

Inspectors noted that children were cared for by staff who knew them well. Children benefitted from opportunities to develop their life skills. Daily access to outdoors supported children's health and wellbeing. Children's interests were promoted through their play and learning experiences. Staff were mostly well deployed and worked well together to meet children's needs. As a result of feedback, quality assurance processes will be further embedded to continue to support quality care and experiences.

Staff and management are exceptionally proud of the service delivered at Mile End and welcome the positive feedback and inspection evaluations.

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

How good is our setting?	Good (4)
How good is our leadership?	Good (4)
How good is our staff team?	Good (4)

The full report can be accessed here

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**

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN	
	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.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
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 - Northfield Academy Action Plan
Appendix B – Harlaw Academy Action Plan
Appendix C - Thrive Childcare and Education Happitots Cove Bay Action Plan
Appendix D – J.Puddleducks Action Plan

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Northfield Academy
Action Plan following HMIe Further Inspection

Further Inspection Date	28/01/25 – 30/01/25
Letter Publication Date	3 June 2025
QI Grading (at March '23)	1.3 - Unsatisfactory
	2.3 - Unsatisfactory
	3.1 - Unsatisfactory
	3.2 - Unsatisfactory

Areas for Improvement (as identified in March '23)

1: Senior and middle leaders should work to improve the strategic leadership of all areas of the school. Review and update the school's vision and values. There should be a clear and shared understanding of the expectations, direction and identity of Northfield Academy. Ensure plans for improvement are agreed with young people, teachers and parents.

2: Develop a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment. Build positive relationships across the school. Young people should be central to discussions about behaviour expectations and feeling safe in school.

3: Agree with staff a shared understanding of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. Develop effective processes to plan, track and monitor young people's progress.

4: Ensure the wellbeing needs of all young people are a key part of all school activities. Clarify procedures relating to pupil attendance and time keeping.

5: Urgently improve attainment from S1 to S6. Review the number of young people who leave school in S4 and S5, and those who do not go to a positive destination. Make plans to support broader achievements for all young people. The school should demonstrate how young people on reduced timetables are included, educated and safe.

QIs 2.1 (Safeguarding & Child Protection) and 3.1 (Wellbeing, Equality & Inclusion))

Areas for Improvement 2 & 4

Areas for Improvement (taken from SIF)	Desired Outcomes for Learners	Actions Required	Measures of Success (evidence – how will we know?)	Resources (who, what, by when)	RAG	Next Steps
Build positive relationships across the school.	Young people experience a nurturing environment, relational practice,	Building on work and CLPL undertaken in 24/25, increase the use of restorative practices, both universally and targeted.	Reduce BGE exclusions by 10%.

Reduce exclusions for verbal abuse by 7.5%. | C. McDermott (HT)

All staff | | |

	and can increasingly take accountability for their actions.	Utilise the skill/expertise developing in the 'targeted group' to continuously review relational approaches across the school. Roll Crew into S3, thus further-embedding underpinning principles (such as Appreciations, Apologies and Stands) throughout the BGE. At the same time, plan 'Senior Crew' ahead of session 26/27. Implement refreshed *Positive Relationships Policy*, which encapsulates all of the above.	LT&A Trios and Faculty QA (see QI 2.3 below) will evidence nurturing relationships are present in **almost all** learning spaces.	Specifically trained staff (x 16) Community Justice Scotland SACRO Resources	
Young people should be central to discussions about behaviour expectations and feeling safe in school. Ensure the wellbeing needs of all young people are a key part of all school activities.	Improved culture, and sense of expectation and ambition.	Further-embed the use of the Glasgow Motivation and Wellbeing Profile (GW) by extending implementation (from P7) to S3. Use GWP data, combined with local intelligence, to ensure House Assemblies and Community Meetings target directly relevant and current issues. Use the same data to inform the Personal and	GWP 'key questions' will evidence improving views and attitudes amongst young people: ▪ Work Hard: ≥ 7.8 ▪ Understanding expectations (school rules): ≥ 8.0 ▪ Safety in school: ≥ 6.8 ▪ I like school: ≥ 7.0	S. Angus (DHT) House Teams Crew Team School Partners	

Areas for Improvement	Desired Outcomes for Learners	Actions Required	Measures of Success	Resources	RAG	Next Steps
		Social Education (PSE) and Crew Curricula.			🟧	
Develop a calm, safe and purposeful learning environment.	Improved attitudes towards gender-based bullying.	Further-extend Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) training to groups and cohorts across the school.	Reduce exclusions for physical assault/fighting by 10%.	F. Adair (DHT) MVP Implementation Group	🟧	
Attendance and time keeping. Ensure the wellbeing needs of all young people are a key part of all school activities.	Improved attendance.	Activate new school day configuration from 2 June 2025, including the removal of traditional 'Registration'. Implement ASG-wide approach to tracking attendance and 'every day counts'. Review approaches to targeted support to ensure they are directed towards the needs of young people, including those for whom attendance is a barrier to learning.	Increase cohort attendance by: S1 – 2% S2 – 4.5% S3 – 3% S4 – 3% S5/6 – 4%	C. McDermott (HT) F. Adair (DHT) House Teams Targeted/Pupil Support ASG Primary Schools ASG HSLO	🟧	

QI 2.3 (Learning, Teaching & Assessment)

Area for Improvement 3

Areas for Improvement *(taken from SIF)*	Desired Outcomes for Learners	Actions Required	Measures of Success *(evidence – how will we know?)*	Resources *(who, what, by when)*	RAG	Next Steps
Learning and engagement, and quality of teaching.	Improved engagement and understanding of	Continue the implementation of 'Feedback	LTA Trio and Faculty Classroom Visit data will evidence improved	M. Guthrie (DHT) Teaching staff	🟧	

	next steps in learning	Fundamentals' (carried forward from 24/25), introducing a new fundamental on a monthly basis.	engagement across the **majority** of classrooms.	Learning & Teaching/Excelerate Working Group INSET/CT etc.		
Learning and engagement, and quality of teaching.	Improved engagement and ability to articulate learning	Further-embed oracy principles in classroom practice.	**Majority** of learners' voice will evidence increasing opportunities to participate in engaging and relevant learning.	M. Guthrie (DHT) Teaching staff Learning & Teaching/Excelerate Working Group INSET/CT etc.		
Learning and engagement, and quality of teaching.	Improved consistency in young people's experience across classrooms	Implement consistent whole-school (LT&A Trios) and faculty level approaches to quality improvement of learning, teaching and assessment.	**Most** staff will report and increased sense of autonomy and ownership of quality improvement of LT&A.	M. Guthrie (DHT) Extended Leadership Team Teaching staff		
Planning, tracking and monitoring.	Improved access to support, challenge and appropriate intervention.	Dedicate professional learning towards upskilling staff in the analysis and use of tracking data. Utilise the Working Time Agreement (WTA) to ensure staff have time to plan for using data to inform interventions. Improve young people and parent/carer		M. Guthrie (DHT) Extended Leadership Team Teaching staff INSET/CT etc. City-wide DHT Group pupiltracking.com		

		understanding of tracking information.			 	

QI 3.2 (Raising Attainment & Achievement)

Area for Improvement 5

Areas for Improvement *(taken from SIF)*	Desired Outcomes for Learners	Actions Required	Measures of Success (*evidence – how will we know?*)	Resources *(who, what, by when)*	RAG	Next Steps
Raise attainment.	Improved attainment in Numeracy, BGE ACEL and Senior Phase	Continue the implementation of 'BGE Mathematics' (carried over from 24/25) through joint working between Crew and Maths & Numeracy Faculty Staff. Extend Literacy/Numeracy Pitstops to include S2 and S5 to ensure coherence, progression, and to support robustness of teacher judgement.	Level 3 achieved (S3) – Maintain or exceed national average (90%). Level 4 achieved (S3) – Maintain or exceed national average (64%). SCQF 4 (S4) – increase by 15%. SCQF 5 (S4) – increase by 25%. SCQF 6 (S5) – increase by 5%.	C. McDermott (HT) M. Guthrie (DHT) M. McGhee (PT) R. Nicol (PT) Teaching staff	 	
Raise attainment.	Improved attainment in Literacy, BGE ACEL and Senior Phase	Continue the implementation of 'BGE English' (carried over from 24/25) through joint working between Crew and Maths &	Level 3 achieved (S3) – Increase by 10% (average across Reading, Writing and Listening/Talking). Level 4 achieved (S3) – Increase by 15%	C. McDermott (HT) L. Gray (DHT) C. Bain (PT) R. Nicol (PT) Teaching staff	 	

Northfield Academy
Action Plan following HMIe Further Inspection

		Numeracy Faculty Staff. Extend Literacy/Numeracy Pitstops to include S2 and S5 to ensure coherence, progression, and to support robustness of teacher judgement.	(average across Reading, Writing and Listening/Talking). SCQF 4 (S4) – increase by 10%. SCQF 5 (S4) – increase by 10%. SCQF 6 (S5) – increase by 15%.			
Raise attainment.	Improved attainment for the 'Middle 60%' (S4 based on S4)	Curriculum Reviews Planning for Choices & Change Evaluate the effectiveness of the 'Meaningful May' pilot (May '25) and build on this to further-maximise SCQF 4 and 5 presentations for identified groups in May '26).	Maintain or exceed an average of 3 SCQF 5 qualifications per young person in S4. Increase National 5 A-D pass rate by 2%. Increase S4 Breadth & Depth measures: 5@3 – 10% 5@4 – 10% 1@5 – 13%	C. McDermott (HT) L. Gray (DHT) A. Dean (PT) Extended Leadership Team House Teams Teaching staff		
Improve positive destinations.	Increased % school leavers entering a positive, sustained destination	Introduce 'pathway evenings' in conjunction with 'traditional 'parents' evenings, starting with a pilot in S2. Build on work undertaken in 24/25 to further develop partnership work with Skills Development	**Most** young people will report increased confidence and understanding of their individualised pathway. Tracking and course choice data will evidence increased relevance and coherence in respect of	L. Gray (DHT) L. Ritchie (DHT) House Teams School Partners All Faculties		

| | | Scotland (SDS), Station House Media Unit (SHMU), WorkingRite, Growing2Gether.

In conjunction with all stakeholders, in conjunction with business partners, gather information to support the development of a Northfield *School Leaver Profile* (skills framework). | young people's pathways.

Increase positive destinations by 2.5% (matching increase achieved in 24/25). | | |

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Harlaw Academy
Action Plan following HMIe Inspection 18ᵗʰ March 2025

Inspection Date	18/03/25 – Revisit (original HMIE visit 2019)
Report Publication Date	28/06/25
QI Grading (from 2019)	1.3 - Weak
	2.3 - Satisfactory
	3.1 - Satisfactory
	3.2 - Weak

Areas for Improvement identified by HMIe (all):

1. *Streamline approaches to improvement so that self-evaluation activities clearly identify priorities which will make the biggest difference to outcomes for young people.*
2. *Continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment so that young people's experiences engage them and meet their needs. Develop more fully an ethos for learning with high expectations and mutual respect.*
3. *Strengthen approaches to monitoring young people's progress across all subject areas so that staff at all levels have a clear overview of learners' progress. Continue to raise the attainment of young people at all stages.*

Priority 1 (QI 1.3)

Streamline approaches to improvement so that self-evaluation activities clearly identify priorities which will make the biggest difference to outcomes for young people.

Areas for Improvement *(taken from SIF)*	Desired Outcomes for Learners	Actions Required	Measures of Success *(evidence – how will we know?)*	Resources *(who, what, by when)*	RAG	Next Steps
	Learners experience a more coherent and consistent learning environment underpinned by strong collaboration and trust.	Continue building trust through consistency and visibility of leadership. Further embed working groups to support distributed leadership.	Staff surveys to show sustained improvement in perceptions of leadership and change. Increase the percentage of staff reporting positive or strongly positive perceptions of leadership and change in staff surveys by 13%. Increased engagement in working groups and the understanding of the improvement cycle.	SLT lead oversight of working groups (termly). Link DHTs to specific leadership outcomes. PTs and working group leads to report in term 2 and term 4 of session 25-26.		Review leadership roles to ensure clarity and equity. Continue with the positive practice and moves that have been made within the school during session 24-25.

	Young people are able to articulate their role in school improvement and feel valued in shaping their learning environment	Enhance clarity of leadership roles for young people in the school. Expand pupil and parent/carer involvement in school evaluation and planning.	Regular feedback from young people and families shapes planning. Clear, tracked improvement outcomes linked to working groups and pupil group actions. Increase the percentage of positive responses from young people feeling their views are listened to by 16%. Increase the percentage of positive responses from parents/carers in surveys regarding school leadership and direction by 11%.	Pupil Leadership Forum revised (by September 2025). Parent Forum feedback included in Term 1 SQUIP.		Audit effectiveness of current working groups. Conduct learner and parent focus groups in Term 1.

Harlaw Academy
Action Plan following HMIe Inspection 18ᵗʰ March 2025

<u>**Priority 2**</u> **(QI 2.3)**	
Continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment so that young people's experiences engage them and meet their needs. Develop more fully an ethos for learning with high expectations and mutual respect.	

Areas for Improvement *(taken from SIF)*	Desired Outcomes for Learners	Actions Required	Measures of Success (*evidence – how will we know?*)	Resources *(who, what, by when)*	RAG	Next Steps
	Learners experience consistently high-quality, differentiated, and engaging learning.	Continue embedding Learning and Teaching Framework. Reintroduce planned peer and SLT-led learning visits. Strengthen questioning and oracy.	Increased staff confidence in delivering differentiated lessons. More evidence of higher-order questioning in learning visits. Increase the percentage of staff reporting young people being engaged in their learning by 9%. Increase the percentage of young people reporting that their work in school is hard enough by 8%. Increase the percentage of lessons evaluated as 'good' or better during formal class observations by 10%.	L&T Working Group coordinate training and toolkit updates. SLT/Faculty Leads carry out observations (Terms 2 & 4 of session 25-26). Oracy development team lead CPD on questioning strategies.		June 2025 Whole School observations continued as planned. Delivered May INSET on BGE pace/challenge. Pilot YP feedback tools in at least two faculties in Term 2 of Session 25-26. Expand confident use of oracy strategies across BGE curriculum.
	Young people are more confident, challenged, and able to describe how they are progressing.	Develop whole-school student feedback process. Use BGE as key focus for improved differentiation and pace.	Learner surveys and focus groups show improved understanding of their progress. Increase the percentage of young people who report understanding how they are progressing in learning	YP Feedback model piloted in May–June.		

			(via learner surveys) by 9%.		
			Increased BGE attainment and engagement.		
			Increase the percentage of young people achieving expected levels within the Broad General Education (BGE) curriculum by 15%.		

Priority 3 (QI 3.2)
Strengthen approaches to monitoring young people's progress across all subject areas so that staff at all levels have a clear overview of learners' progress. Continue to raise the attainment of young people at all stages

Areas for Improvement *(taken from SIF)*	Desired Outcomes for Learners	Actions Required	Measures of Success (*evidence – how will we know?*)	Resources *(who, what, by when)*	RAG	Next Steps
	Learners feel safe, supported and have access to appropriate support and pathways.	Fully embed whole-school tracking and monitoring system in all year groups. Strengthen staff confidence in data use and response.	Attainment improves, especially in S4 and for learners in the highest 20%. Increase the percentage of S4 pupils achieving 5 or more qualifications at SCQF Level 5 or better by 5%. Increase the average complimentary tariff points of learners identified as being in the highest 20% so that this is above the virtual comparator. Increase the percentage of S5 pupils achieving 1 or more qualifications at SCQF Level 6 or better by 5%. Increase the percentage of S5 pupils achieving 3 or more qualifications at SCQF Level 6 or better by 5%. Increase the percentage of young people achieving Literacy and Numeracy at	SLT/Guidance/PTs to track and analyse attainment and wellbeing data (termly).		Improve faculty access to and understanding of ACEL/SNSA data. Continue to update presentation policy and link to responsive planning.

			Level 5 and above by S4 roll by 12%.			
	Young people are to demonstrate improved confidence and attainment especially in Level 5 and Level 6 courses.	Review support systems: part-time timetables, referrals, and behaviour strategies.	Reduction in part-time timetables and N5 No Awards.	PEF-supported interventions targeted via data analysis.		Clarity of interventions linked to tracking. Continue to build on a wider range of subject and curricular options in Level 5 and Level 6 courses for young people.

Harlaw Academy
Action Plan following HMIe Inspection 18ᵗʰ March 2025

Additional Priority Area (QI 3.1)
Living Our Motto: A Renewed Focus on Courtesy
We are embedding courtesy into our daily practice, leadership and learning.

Areas for Improvement *(taken from SIF)*	Desired Outcomes for Learners	Actions Required	Measures of Success (*evidence – how will we know?*)	Resources *(who, what, by when)*	RAG	Next Steps
	Learners experience a respectful, inclusive and safe environment.	After consultation with all stakeholders in Term 1 of session 25-26 launch school-wide Courtesy Charter. Maintain progress on safeguarding and support plan rollout.	Increased positive referrals linked to values. Increase the percentage of young people staying on at school in S5 by 5% and in S6 by 10%. Increase the percentage of school leavers entering a positive, sustained destination by 6%. Surveys from stakeholders report greater levels of satisfaction and safety. Increase the percentage of parents/carers reporting satisfaction and feeling their young people are safe at school (via parent/carer surveys) by 14%. A significant decrease in the number of reports of anti-social behaviour in the wider community as evidenced in complaints and compliments records.	SLT and PTG Teams coordinate charter and awards (by October 2025). Continue PTG moderation of Child Plans (ongoing). DHT Inclusion to audit support systems by June 2025.		Launch Courtesy Charter by October 2025. Link values into Positive Relationships policy refresh.

			More robust evidence in planning folders and child plans and planning around each child. Increase the percentage of student well-being surveys reporting they have an adult they can speak to by 11%.			
	Young people demonstrate increased responsibility, empathy and engagement with school values.	Integrate courtesy expectations into assemblies, charters and displays. Reward respectful behaviour visibly and regularly.	Reduced incidents of disrespect or relational low-level disruption. Positive pupil survey responses on ethos. Increase the percentage of young people reporting that staff encourage them to do the best they can by 6%.	Pupil groups co-develop visuals and charters. Termly review of reward system.		Build courtesy tracking into school improvement review. Plan stakeholder feedback on anti-bullying, safety, and support.

Improvement Action Plan

Action Plan   **Name of Setting: Happitots Cove Bay**

Appendix C

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					
Develop personal plans to include more detailed information to support individualised care. **Documents used** **PDSA cycle** **'what do I see' forms** **Audit/monitoring forms** **Frameworks consulted**	1. Review current personal plans to identify gaps in information. 2. Provide training or guidance to staff on what detailed information is required. 3. Engage more frequently with families to update personal plans.	Review and update personal plans- started immediately and ongoing by Nursery Manager (NM)and Deputy Manager (DM). Staff training within 6 weeks - Inhouse and using external companies if necessary. Ongoing team audit using '*Quality improvement framework for the early learning and child care sectors'.*	Children receive consistent, individualised care from staff who know them well, helping them feel safe, secure, and emotionally supported. Children's health and wellbeing needs are met through accurate, up-to-date personal plans, and their development is effectively	Discussions already held within nursery rooms between practitioners, NM, and DM regarding personal plans: <u>What information do we need? Who can give us this? How can we make it easier to access information to provide individualised care and learning?</u>. We are looking at strategy sheets to go at the front of each child's personal plan.	

Realising the Ambition **Quality improvement framework for the early learning and child care sectors.**		Within 12 weeks regular parent/carer person plan and development meetings to be held by the child's key person. NM and DM will support and monitor parents uptake on meetings and will audit through questionnaires the ease of attendance or if any barriers to attending.	supported with appropriate strategies. Children's voices, preferences, and routines are respected, ensuring continuity of care between home and the setting.	Staff meeting on 4th September – key person/team further discussions and review of personal plans. Training audit completed by NM. and 1:1 meetings taking place 5 – 9th of September. Identified training will be organised by NM. The team is planning events and family engagement strategies. Aim is to invite parents in to update their child's personal plan, and provide an achievement /development update.	
Enhance continuity of play experiences throughout the day	Review room layout and routines to minimise disruption to play, particularly where sleep	Within 4 weeks - whole team input.	Play becomes more immersive and meaningful as team skills and	Alternative arrangements for sleep have been introduced. There is ongoing evaluation by	

	and play spaces are shared. Explore alternative arrangements for rest periods.		practice support sustained engagement. Focus, creativity, and enjoyment are enriched through fewer interruptions.	the team using the sleep areas, and regular management audits of sleep routines There is clear evidence play is uninterrupted and continuous play is supported throughout the day. The impact of this is evident during observations of the room, audits, and monitoring. We are gathering the children's and team thoughts, ideas and feelings towards this change of sleep area.	■
Strengthen staff responsiveness and use of effective questioning	Provide staff training on responsive interactions and open-ended questioning. Use peer observations and reflective discussions to build skills and confidence.	Training within 12 weeks with peer observations ongoing.	Thinking and communication are encouraged through responsive adult interactions. This nurtures curiosity, confidence, and	DM is organising "Mini Training Sessions" with staff to support use of responsiveness and effective questioning. Discussions are ongoing regarding these questions	■

| | | | developing problem-solving skills. | and how to use them in learning discussions and interactions.

Nursery Support (NS) to monitor and support the team as they put training into practice; this will be throughout the rooms when she is based at the setting.

NM will monitor digital journals with a focus on adult/child learning discussions and outcomes on children's learning. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Support consistent access to outdoor learning | Monitor and ensure daily outdoor learning opportunities are offered across all playrooms. Adjust routines as needed to support this. | Immediate and ongoing | Children benefit from regular fresh air and physical activity, which supports their physical development, wellbeing, and connection with nature. | Free flow garden play is within the 'shining stars' room - 3 to 5 years.

Outdoor learning opportunities are provided in all areas. This is monitored by room leads. | |

				There is ongoing development of the outdoor environments being monitored by NM, DM, and room leads.	(green)
Develop consistency in observation, assessment and planning for learning	Deliver refresher training on meaningful observations and next steps. Regular monitoring of online learning journals and encouraging parent involvement in learning goals.	Within 12 weeks Monitoring ongoing monthly	Children experience learning that is tailored to their interests and stage of development, helping them make meaningful progress. Families are better informed and more engaged.	The planning cycle will be reviewed in each room. NM will oversee planning in the moment, medium and long term planning. The DM will ensure the key person has next steps identified for each child. Planning will include them, along with children's interests. NM & DM to regularly audit Iconnect learning journals to ensure that these are being completed and progression is evident.	(orange)
How good is our setting? 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities					

Further development of quiet and cosy areas	Enhance story corners and rest areas with additional soft furnishings, including adult-sized seating for shared reading and comfort.	Within 6 weeks	Emotional security is nurtured in calming, inviting spaces where children can rest or enjoy one-to-one time with adults.	Management to support staff with using Realising the Ambition as a reflection tool for environments. Management to source additional soft furnishings for areas i.e adult seating.	
Ongoing evaluation of play spaces to meet children's evolving needs	Continue regular audits of indoor and outdoor areas. Involve staff and children in evaluating what is working well and what can be improved.	Monthly monitoring	Learning environments continually evolve to support independence, curiosity, and decision-making. Children benefit from accessible and stimulating spaces.	Indoor and Outdoor environment audits ongoing from NM, DM and NS. Children, team and parental involvement will be the way forward.	
Expansion of community-based learning opportunities	Plan regular outings to local places of interest. Gather feedback from staff, children, and families to identify new experiences.	Begin planning within 4 weeks. Ongoing implementation	Children build a stronger connection with their local community and learn through	Library and local shop visits. Partnership with another nursery. Daily Mile will be embedded in practice.	

			real-world experiences.		
How good is our leadership? - 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well					
Develop vision, values, and aims that are specific to the nursery	Consult with parents, children and staff to develop visions, values and aims that reflect our individual setting and our families.	Within 8 weeks	A clear and meaningful ethos creates a consistent, purposeful environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging and direction.	Consulted with children, parents and staff. Created a "Graffiti Board" at front door for this. Cove bay nursery have their own specific aims, values and visions. They are in the entrance area for all to see. The team will ensure practice is driven by these statements. Team meeting discussions and evaluations will evidence linked practice.	**Green**
Strengthen staff deployment to ensure consistent support across the day	Review current staffing patterns and room routines. Adjust deployment at key times to ensure children's needs are met consistently. Monitor impact through observations.	Ongoing monthly monitoring and deployment checks	Transitions and busy periods are smoother, with children experiencing stability and attentiveness from staff	DM and NM currently working on this through basing themselves in the rooms, supporting staff deployment, training on this has begun through discussions.	**Green**

			throughout their day.	Rotas have been refined to match room routines. Consistency for positive attachment is important. We focus on transitions and are guided by Realising the Ambition.	(green)
Support staff reflection and use of improvement tools	Provide training and support on reflective practice and use of quality improvement tools. Create regular time for team reflection and feedback.	Begin within 4 weeks Ongoing thereafter	Children benefit from a continuously improving setting where staff are reflective and responsive to their needs	Introducing reflective questions, policy of the month discussions at staff meetings, lunch time surgeries. Access challenge questions from Care Inspectorate publications eg mealtimes, choking.	(orange)
How good is our staff team? – 4.3 Staff deployment					
Improve staff deployment to ensure consistent support for children's needs	Review staff deployment patterns throughout the day. Ensure staff are positioned to support both care routines and high-quality play experiences (including outdoors).	Review within 4 weeks Monitor monthly	Rich learning experiences and responsive care are more consistently delivered, thanks to staff being well-positioned and available when needed.	DM and NM are currently working on this through basing themselves in the rooms, supporting staff deployment through communication and team discussions.	**Green**

Continue building staff skills to meet learning and development needs	Provide targeted training on child development and play behaviours. Use scenario-based discussions, peer observation, and mentoring to embed learning into everyday practice.	Ongoing, with key focus areas reviewed every 12 weeks	Developmental needs are better understood and met, supporting more intentional planning and individualised learning outcomes.	Ongoing training, Personal Development Plans, lunchtime surgeries, policy of the month, staff meetings, senior meetings. SSSC hub bite size learning will be looked at together as a team for CPD. Training matrix audited by NM. Identified training will be organised for each individual.	

This plan is ongoing and will change in the moment. This is at 02/09/2025.

Alison Stephen

Nursery Manager

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Improvement Action Plan

Action Plan 1   **Name of Setting: J.Puddleducks Childcare**

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? - 1.3 Play and learning					
• In order to promote progression in children's learning and development, the manager should ensure that all staff have sufficient skills and understanding of children's learning and development. This will include increasing competence and confidence in skilled interactions to extend learning and play.					
Ensure that all staff are skilled at extending play experiences.	• Have new staff complete basic induction training as all new staff would to introduce them to child development and the basics of high quality interactions.	Management, Staff, Room Leads – Ongoing	Children will be supported and educated by confident, knowledgeable practitioners who can extend play experiences to deepen learning and provide a variety of outcomes and experiences which cover all areas of the curriculum.	Completed common induction resource and our own induction packs for all staff. Training checklists completed.	(Green)
	• Staff who are confident in extending play experiences will be encouraged to share this with new staff who are still training and have not yet built these skills, this will be in a range of ways from formal training with staff, to just pointing out how they have extended play regularly to staff so that staff who are training build a natural awareness of this and it begins to become second nature.	Room Leads, Staff		Monitoring evidence.	(Amber)
	• Locality lead to provide training on quality interactions.	Locality Lead, Management, Pre-School Staff		To be arranged with Carol when she returns from annual leave.	(Amber)

KEY:

R = Red – No progress

A = Amber – Partial progress

G = Green – Good Progress

	Offer further training opportunities for staff to deepen their understanding of aspects of play and learning, such as schemas.	Management, Room Leads, Assistant Room Leads		Staff to share their learning and implement this. Whole room monitoring's, peer monitoring's etc showing improvements in this area.	
	• Look at ways to improve staff retention, meaning having less new staff who require training. Discuss this at staff meeting on 13th August. • At this meeting also look at ways to improve peer monitoring so that extending play is the focus of this and that staff are giving honest, constructive feedback and suggestions. Build a schedule for this so that staff who may need extra support in this area are monitoring/being monitored by and experienced and skilled staff member at extending play.	Management		Staff meeting minutes. Improved and focussed peer review paperwork. Staff retention records. Staff were understanding and discussed the challenges they feel with peer monitoring, there was a good chat about how it is not criticising others it is helping to improve and that we want to foster an ethos where staff and management can support each other and can discus improvements, make recommendations etc without staff feeling it is a bad thing. Staff with more experience, who have been here longer and know the children well can help to guide less experienced staff in learning the children's individual learning styles so	

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				that we can ensure that when we extend learning it suits that individual child's needs. As this is a skill that mainly comes with experience and trial and error to see what works best for each child it is important that staff are comfortable communicating and sharing their knowledge of these things to ensure the best outcomes for the children. That if we aren't doing this peer monitoring is a pointless exercise, staff seemed to really understand this and were keen to move forward in an environment where we can discuss things that don't work be that staff or management and that everyone has an input int what is happening in the nursery. These improvements and constructive discussions will help to support and improve the knowledge of our practitioners which will then in turn lead to more effective learning and teaching for the children	

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				as staff build and increase their own knowledge.	🟩
	• New assistant manager will be spending one day per week in each room to provide support and guidance for staff, this will allow them to be regularly monitored as a whole class and individually and targeted support given to any staff who are struggling with in the moment planning or extending play.	Manager/Assistant Manager.		Room monitoring, peer monitoring. Planning sheets.	🟧
How good is our setting? 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities					
In order to promote children's wellbeing and engagement, the manager and staff should consider ways to ensure that the environment is well organised and inviting for children's play at all times of the day.					
a) Ensure all staff are aware of the importance of keeping areas tidy and clutter free.	• Area audits to be improved, with staff having specific responsibility for areas to ensure that they are reviewed, stocked and improved to meet the children's interests, needs, next steps and learning goals.	Manager	Children will have high quality environments that are consistent throughout the nursery and are regularly audited and improved based on the children's needs, interests and learning goals at that time.	Meeting minutes, area audits	🟩
b) Develop areas to look more inviting and	• Area audits to be reviewed at staff meeting on 13th August to ensure that these are effective and that we can see they are having a positive impact on the environment and children's experiences.	Manager. All staff	The nursery will be clutter free with appropriate storage areas for staff paperwork and equipment	Meeting minutes, area audits. Staff report these are being used and are proving effective but that they possibly could do more with them, we have said we will support and	🟧

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			to ensure these things are not left in children's play areas.	continue to review progress, look at obstacles.	🟧
stimulating for the children.	• Toddler room review to be carried out, we have already discussed how the room feels quite empty, lots of the larger furniture had been removed and it doesn't have the same level of real life resources as the other rooms.	Manager, Room Lead, Toddler Staff		Room reviews, whole room monitoring, planning docs	🟩
	• Garden plan to be discussed at staff meeting, rooms having responsibilities for areas does not seem to have been effective so we need to devise a new plan for improving the garden and discuss maintenance of the garden, ensuring that it is tidied, resources put away etc before children come inside.	Manager, all staff		Meeting minutes	🟩
	• Regular reviews on area improvements and garden improvements.	Manager/ Assistant Manager		Room monitoring, garden monitoring	🟧
	• Reminding staff of the importance of keeping areas tidy and not leaving clutter around the nursery which could affect the children usage or enjoyment of areas.	Manager/Assista nt Manager		Meeting minutes	🟧
	• Arrange visits for room leads to CopperPots and Fersands so that they can get inspiration and ideas from other settings.	Manager/Assista nt Manager/ Room Leads			🟧
	• Assistant manager will be in each room weekly to monitor and support them with improvements so regular consistent support should eliminate the reactive cycle that we have been stuck in.	Assistant Manager.		Monitorings, room reviews	🟧

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Improvement Action Plan

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	16 September 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/210
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne
REPORT AUTHOR	Shona Milne
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks approval to implement the refreshed Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan for 2025/26 following submission of the Self-Evaluation and Plan to the Scottish Government.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

2.1 notes the content of the service Self-Evaluation and Plan contained in Appendix A;

2.2 instructs the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to implement the proposed Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan 25/26; and

2.3 instructs the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to maintain a review of the 25/26 Plan in light of any impacting national legislative or policy provisions and advise Committee of any required changes in due course.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 The Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan is a statutory submission to the Scottish Government that requires to be provided by the end of September each year. The document presents an analysis of performance and a plan for improvement in keeping with the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 legislation and guidance. The analysis is informed by and informs School Improvement priorities and the Children's Services Plan.

3.2 There is considerable evidence that the Aberdeen City Council Quality Improvement Framework is improving central oversight of the quality of provision and clarifying expectations. There is evidence that inspection outcomes are improving but there remains some variation. There is a need to

continue to review arrangements, and drive the consistent application of the Framework, on a yearly basis.

3.3   Most school leaders make effective use of data dashboards and most staff have increased confidence in identifying the gap at class, faculty and school level. Our work in this area will continue given the importance of data in driving improvement.

3.4   There is evidence that some middle leaders seeking headships have not fully developed their skills in the leadership of change. Middle leaders in both Primary and Secondary need to be clearer of their responsibilities in relation to school improvement. This learning has been factored into the Plan for 2025/26.

3.5   Challenges in recruiting staff to some secondary specialisms continues to require creative approaches to timetabling and a reliance on city campus to provide course choices. The service will continue to work with national partners to address these challenges.

3.6   There is early evidence that the work being undertaken around the Northern Alliance Learning, Teaching and Assessment Toolkit is beginning to have a positive impact on quality. There is also evidence that taking a focussed approach to Learning and Teaching across Early Learning and Childcare is helping realise gains. An increased use of the Toolkit, clearer focus on Learning, Teaching and Assessment in our National Improvement Framework Plan and broader use of Associate Assessors should help accelerate progress in schools over the next school session.

3.7   The service is pleased to see continued improvements in mental health and wellbeing among pupils, with reductions in loneliness, low mood, and risk of depression. This work will be maintained.

3.8   Work on developing the curriculum at school level and through ABZ campus has ensured almost all young people have access to a curriculum which meets their needs and are supported well in order to achieve. A reducing number of young people are currently on a flexible pathway. Tracking systems established and tested over 2024/25 will now be fully implemented. These systems will allow greater scrutiny of attainment throughout the year ensuring support can be targeted timeously and should help realise further improvement.

3.9   Data across ACEL (Achievement in Curriculum for Excellence Levels) is generally improving, however there is a dip at P1 this session, driven in part by the increase in the number of children with identified additional support needs in this year group. Individual schools have interventions in place to address this, however there is some evidence that this issue may be apparent in other Local Authorities. We need to work with our Early Learning and Childcare settings and partners to address this.

3.10   There has been a significant increase in presentations at the Senior phase. There is also evidence that breadth and depth is improving. Attainment at the senior phase will be further reviewed when Insight is published in September

given the broader range of courses now available to young people in our schools.

3.11   The work undertaken on the Behaviour Plan has improved the professional learning on offer to staff, ensuring all staff are aware of how to report an incident. A targeted approach has been developed to support schools or staff members where there is an increase in the number of incidents being reported. There is evidence staff are now confident in reporting an incident.

3.11   Our mandatory training has been refreshed and now ensures all staff have access to de-escalation training. The recent Additional Support Needs Festival was well attended with staff valuing inputs from practitioners. This is beginning to increase readiness to learn in the targeted group. Systems are now in place to track the impact of professional learning through gathering data 6 months after the original input to determine if confidence levels remain high   This data will allow us to ensure learning is impacting practice in the classroom. This approach will continue to be developed further over 2025/26.

3.12   The Northern Lights programme has seen a complete refresh of digital resources for staff and learners as well as upgrades to the teaching boards in classrooms.   This investment, along with the work done with Aberdeen Computing Collaborative, has been welcomed by the service and will provide our learners with access to state of the art equipment to develop the skills to them to fully engage in the digital curriculum.

3.13   The significant increase in pupil population has presented challenges, but the school roll is now stabilising, with primary school rolls seeing a very slight decrease and secondary school rolls increasing slightly as young people move through the system. As a result of the changed cohort, the service is unlikely to meet its Stretch Aims set in 2022.

3.14   Members will note that officers have streamlined the number of areas identified for improvement/ development over session 2025/26.   This mirrors the approach taken in ELC where a concentrated focus on leadership and pedagogy has ensured improvement across all settings.

3.15   Priorities for improvement have been scrutinised by Education Scotland who have endorsed the direction of travel.

3.16   The Strategy Board has reviewed the Plan to ensure the interconnection of Council business is reflected in the final Plan presented for Committee approval.

3.17   Officers propose to continue to keep members of the Education and Children's Services Committee sighted on progress through the now well established tracking appendix linked to Performance Reports.

4.   **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1   There are no financial implications arising from this report. The costs of all improvement actions will be undertaken within existing budgets and grants

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000 requires that, as the Education Authority, Aberdeen City Council has a duty to:
- Enhance equity and promote a reduction in inequalities of educational outcome experienced by pupils because of socio-economic disadvantage.
- Endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework.
- Undertake annual planning and reporting and annual school improvement planning to address the four priorities of the National Improvement Framework
- Ensure strategic decisions are taken with due regard as to how they will address, or help to address, the disparity of educational outcomes which exist between the most and least disadvantaged and at the same time raise attainment for all.

5.2 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 ("the 2014 Act") places further duties on local authorities and other bodies to more actively collaborate and take action to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Only positive environmental impacts have been identified. On-going promotion of pupil voice and their participation in decision making will help develop citizens who consider environmental implications in later life.

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	Changes to our provision and service delivery will enable primary prevention and early intervention thereby reducing potential risk.	L	Yes
Compliance	Non-compliance with legislation, financial	Mitigated by services being	L	Yes

	claims, and legal challenge (tribunals).	realigned to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City and prevent escalation of need.		
Operational	Staff are overwhelmed, which leads to low morale as staff feel unable to meet the educational and well-being needs of young people.	Mitigated by staff engagement on the draft National Improvement Framework and the ongoing commitment to delivering high quality professional learning for staff to ensure that they meet their statutory duties under the relevant Acts.	L	Yes
Financial	Risk of not having sufficient resource.	Mitigated by realigning service delivery and resource through the National Improvement Framework to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City and make best use of Officer time.	L	yes
Reputational	Risk that poor quality of provision will present a reputational risk to the Council	Data scrutiny and reporting enhance the Council's reputation for transparency and accountability	L	Yes

Environment / Climate	Risk of lack of awareness of environmental/climate issues.	Mitigated by breadth and scope of Curriculum for Excellence.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement Our partnership aims to ensure that every young person in our city is provided with educational opportunities and support that will give them the best possible start in life.	The education service self-evaluation and improvement plan is well positioned to support a closing of the poverty related attainment gap.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous People	The detail within this report supports the delivery of Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes 4 to 9 in the refreshed Local Outcome Improvement Plan.
Regional and City Strategies Children's Services Plan National Improvement Framework Plan	The universal provision of education is fully aligned to the Prevention Strategy and a key partner to the Children's Services Plan.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	NA

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

All Committee papers presented over the 2024/25 school session.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A–Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Evaluation and Plan

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Education & Lifelong Learning

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BON ACCORD

ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

**Aberdeen City Council
Evaluation of the National Improvement
Framework Plan 2024-25**

CONTENTS

CONTEXT

The Scottish Government launched the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education in January 2016. The Framework is central to the Scottish Government's commitment to raising attainment for all and closing the poverty related attainment gap. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 Act amended the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 ("the 2000 Act") to place the National Improvement Framework (NIF) on a statutory footing and introduced requirements for local authorities and schools to plan and report on the measures that they are taking to address the key priorities of the NIF. This evaluation and plan has been structured to take account of the associated statutory guidance.

This evaluation and plan has drawn on the Community Planning Population Needs Assessment and aims to complement our partnership Children's Services Plan which acts as the children's section of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and our shared Strategic Plan. Our Children's Services Board routinely takes stock of and reports progress, through, for example, our Children's Services Plan Annual Report and evaluation of progress against The Promise.   This evaluation and plan draws from all data sources, including published reports, in order to establish priorities for the school session 2025/26.

In order to set priorities with confidence, the service has first reflected on the key achievements and challenges of the 2024/25 school session, articulated progress against local and national priorities, considered governance and emerging risks and then reflected in detail at the performance of different groups. This comprehensive approach has helped the service validate the priorities for the 2025/26 school session.

LOOKING BACK ON THE 2024/25 SCHOOL SESSION

The **significant increase in pupil population** over the last few years has continued to present challenges. As a result, the service has continued to prioritise work to maximise and optimise the use of available physical space. After a period of steady growth there is now evidence that the school roll is stabilising with young people moving through the system. As a result of this our primary school rolls have seen a very slight decrease, alleviating some pressure from our primary schools.

Total Number of Pupils and Percentage of Roll by Sex

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
13,353	13,704	13,923	13,999	13,915	13,963	14,084	14,573	15,135	14,968
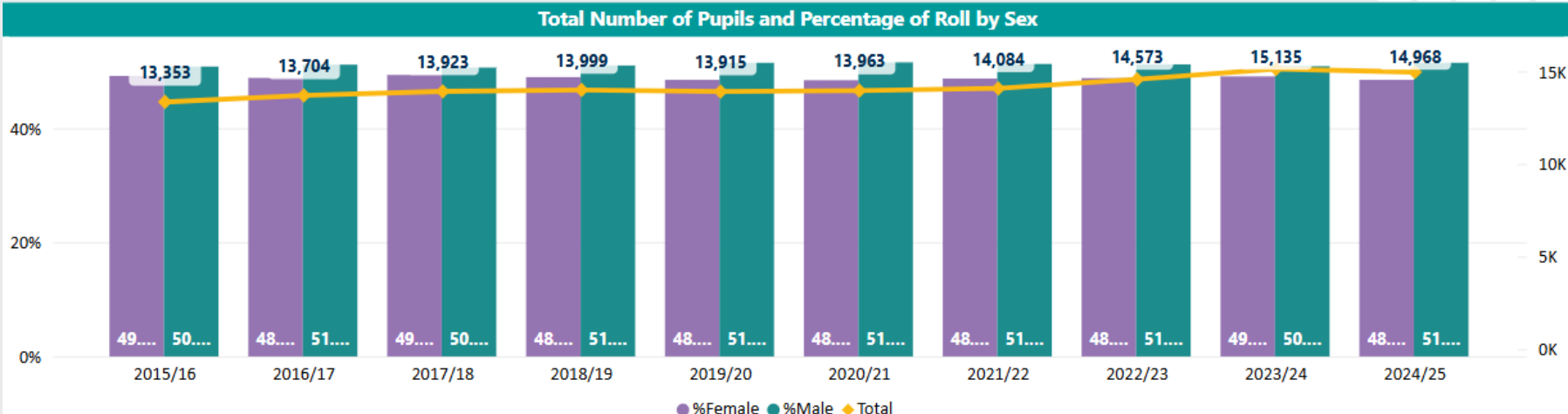
Given the movement through the system, secondary school rolls have increased slightly, bringing further challenges around secondary school placements, staffing and the use of physical space.

Total Number of Pupils and Percentage of Roll by Sex

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
8,753	8,655	8,667	8,925	9,106	9,596	10,041	10,430	10,897	11,209
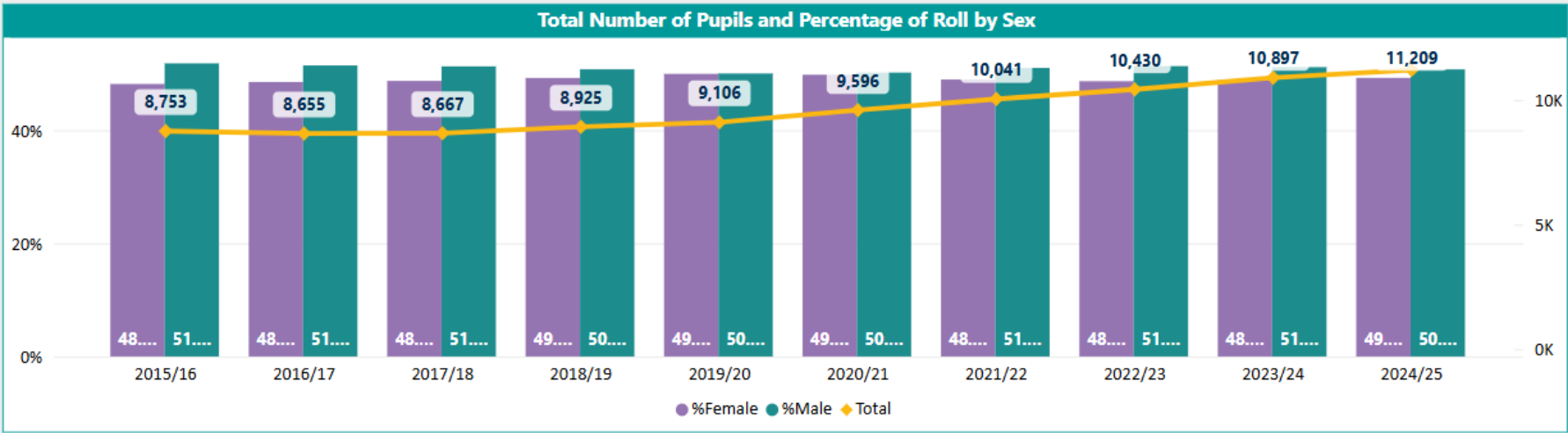
Schools continue to respond positively to this challenge, working closely with the central team to maximise space and resources. Secondary schools increased their S1 intake levels for 24/25 and where necessary, this has been repeated for session 25/26.

All schools are benefiting from the most diverse pupil population to date in terms of ethnicity and need.

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Given the change in school roll, the Education Service continues to work closely with Corporate Landlord to ensure that the **School Estate Plan** provides adequate and efficient provision of school placements in the immediate and longer term. This highly successful collaboration is supporting our agility to respond to the rapidly changing context.

The unexpected increase in school roll made longer term forecasting challenging and a drop in the child population is predicted in the longer term. In light of this, an updated methodology has been successfully developed and used to help improve the accuracy of our predications. The next iteration of the School Estate Plan will be presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee in September 2025. We will continue to keep methodologies under review.

As a result of our shared work with Corporate Landlord, the new Riverbank School opened its doors for the first time in May 2025 providing excellent facilities for the families of Tillydrone. St Peter's School will make good use of the old Riverbank building for session 2025/26 whilst work gets underway to allow them to return to their new and refurbished building the start of school session 2026/27.

Ferryhill School has been decanted to the old Walker Road site to allow upgrades to their Victorian building. The Ferryhill school community also look forward to a return in August 2026. Work on the new Ferryhill Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision has been ongoing throughout this school year and is now complete, allowing the ELC provision to be fully operational from August 2025 and enabling the youngest Ferryhilll learners to watch the school building works progress.

The Early Years team has continued to effectively review the **delivery models for Early Learning and Childcare** (ELC) services in order to meet demand from parents and to ensure efficiency, being mindful of a falling birthrate. From August 2025, a further 2 ELC settings moved to a term-time model (Monday – Friday 9am-3pm) in response to how families are choosing to access their entitlement. Close monitoring of attendance during holiday periods evidences an increase in attendance during school holiday periods in 2024/25 compared to previous years, however, attendance remains below that recorded during term time. We continue to work with parents to look at how this could be increased further to maximise the use of resources. We will continue to review delivery models annually given the success of the now established approach.

88.5% of our eligible pre-school population and 83.8% of our eligible ante pre-school population were placed in ELC over 2024/25. Following the ELC application and admissions process from January 2024, 1,283 new children were offered ELC places for session 24/25, a slight decrease on the 1418 places offered the previous year and the first indication of the falling birthrate. In response, the service will pilot a system to allow families to pay to top up their allocation of 1140 hours in two more settings, where capacity allows, to help determine next steps.

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Following a focussed drive and better sharing of data, the service has successfully increased the number of **eligible 2s** accessing ELC provision with an impressive 22% increase in the number placed over the last year. Furthermore, the percentage of eligible 2 year old children taking up their funded ELC entitlement has increased by 10% (from 38.3% in 2023/24 to 48.3% in 2024/25). Our focus on those who need us most will continue and we proactively look for opportunities to join data sets to help improve outcomes for learners.

There remain challenges in **recruiting quality ELC staff** at all levels due largely to the volume of staff required an on-going basis. In order to mitigate this risk, the service is continuing to work closely with the Employability team to support placements for those returning to work, as well as continuing to deliver successful Foundation and Modern Apprenticeship programmes. This highly successful collaboration will continue.

At ELC senior level, 11 of our Senior Early Years Practitioners have successfully completed a BA Degree in Childhood Practice over 2024/25, helping to build more resilience in the leadership of our ELC provisions. This work will continue.

The slight dip in primary school roll has helped to partially mitigate concerns around staffing availability in the primary sector. The Service will continue to monitor recruitment carefully.

We continue to face challenges in **recruiting to secondary STEM subject specialists.** This is mirrored across many of the northern Local Authorities. We continue to engage with national partners to help address this and are utilising ABZ Campus to help mitigate risks to the curriculum.

Access to **quality supply staff** across all sectors remains limited. As a result, school leaders are often covering classes for long periods of time. Officers continue to routinely recruit to the supply bank to mitigate this issue.

Throughout the school session there has been a change in **leadership** in over 17% of our schools, a slight reduction on the 20% seen over session 23/24. Although this mirrors what is being seen nationally, the issue is more acute in the north. In response we have further developed our Middle Leadership, Readiness for Headship and Into Headship courses to try to increase the number of quality applicants for leadership positions. Despite this proactive approach central team members are still occasionally required to cover some vacant school posts, and this can impact on the capacity available to drive improvement across the service.   There is some evidence of the positive impact of these courses on the calibre of applicants for Head Teacher posts within the city but there is further work to do in collaboration with national agencies and head teachers. We continue to monitor the impact of our work designed to develop leadership capacity and capability.

Looking forward to 25/26, our Associate Assessors will be supporting the development of networks and regular training for learning and teaching leads, including re-establishing central-led curriculum networks, beginning with Maths.

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We have had a significant focus on addressing the variation in learning and teaching and leadership across our ELC settings and schools and continue to evaluate the impact of quality improvement arrangements prior to a new school session.   Despite our efforts, there remains more to do.

Our evaluation shows that although there remains some variation in the quality of provision across our ELCs, there has been significant improvement over the last school session as a result of limiting our **improvement activity** to the core vulnerabilities of learning, teaching and assessment and leadership. As a result of this focus, the majority of our Local Authority settings now meet the standard of good or better in all areas. All of our settings are able to demonstrate continuous improvement, suggesting that the focus on leadership and pedagogy over the past 2 sessions has had a positive impact. There is a need to continue this focus to ensure standards are maintained or improved and this is evidenced in our updated 25/26 ELC Quality Improvement Framework.   There is learning from the focussed approach taken across our ELC settings which should now be spread to our approach to supporting schools.

Our Early Years team supports 53 Local Authority ELC provisions, 41 Funded Providers and 63 childminders. Following our analysis of our vulnerabilities around quality, over 2024/25 Central officers worked with Education Scotland to deliver training on pedagogical leadership for all school leaders, with an individual offer of coaching made to participants. There is evidence, through recent inspection gradings, that this along with the input on leadership, has had a positive impact on the quality of ELC provision in our settings.

The service welcomes the introduction of the shared ELC inspection framework from August 2025 and hope it helps alleviate the reported mixed messaging from different inspection agencies. One of our funded providers has been inspected using the model and central officers benefitted from being part of the process. This involvement will support the development of training and guidance to be offered locally from August 2025 as the joint framework goes live. We will carefully monitor the implementation of the new framework and hope that it helps realise greater alignment of expectations across inspection agencies.

How well are our Early Learning and Childcare settings performing against the national quality indicators?

There is clear evidence of continued improvement.

Average Organiser Grading

7
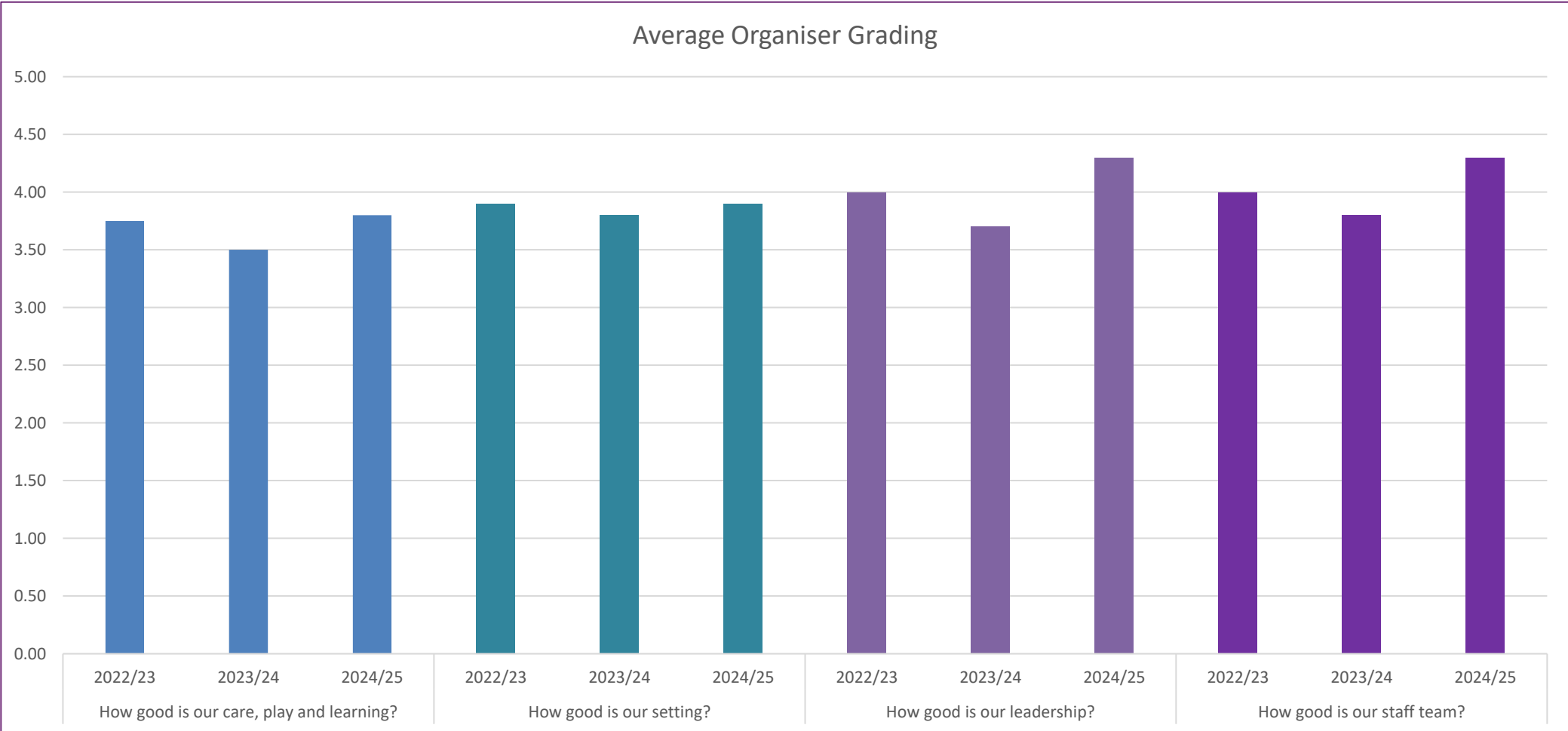
Over the last year the Education Service, along with our Local Authority Quad, undertook self-evaluation against the Quality Indicators in the ADES **Framework for Improvement** in order to set shared next steps to secure collaborative improvement. Working groups have been established to take these shared priorities forward. Collaborative work with other Local Authorities continues to provide a helpful opportunity to look outwards, widen networks and learn for the successes of others.

In September 2024 the service was inspected as part of HMIe thematic inspection of Approaches to Quality Improvement. 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 for 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. HMIe recognised that our Head Teachers 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 was used to inform priorities for the service and the wider Council, validating our arrangements to secure continuous improvement.

The now well-established **Quality Improvement Framework** for schools has been updated for session 2025/26 based on inspection feedback, officer observations and feedback from Head Teachers. Next session, there are clearer roles identified for Associate Assessors to make use of their national knowledge and experience to support and build capacity within the system and help mitigate some of the reduced capacity experienced by the central team when covering key school vacancies which has been mitigated to date through the use of short-term secondments for Head Teachers with strong middle leaders. Moving forward Associate Assessors will have a clear role in quality improvement beyond their own schools.

External evaluations of schools by HMIe continue to be variable with 4 expecting return visits in session 25/26, 2 being signed off to the local authority for reports and further information in 12 months and 6 receiving positive reports with no further involvement. Although the sample size for comparison is small, there is evidence of improved inspection outcomes in all QIs for session 24/25. There is now a need to utilise the learning from our improvement work across ELC and reduce the number of priorities in order to secure more rapid improvement in Learning, Teaching and Assessment across schools.

How well are our schools performing against the national quality indicators?
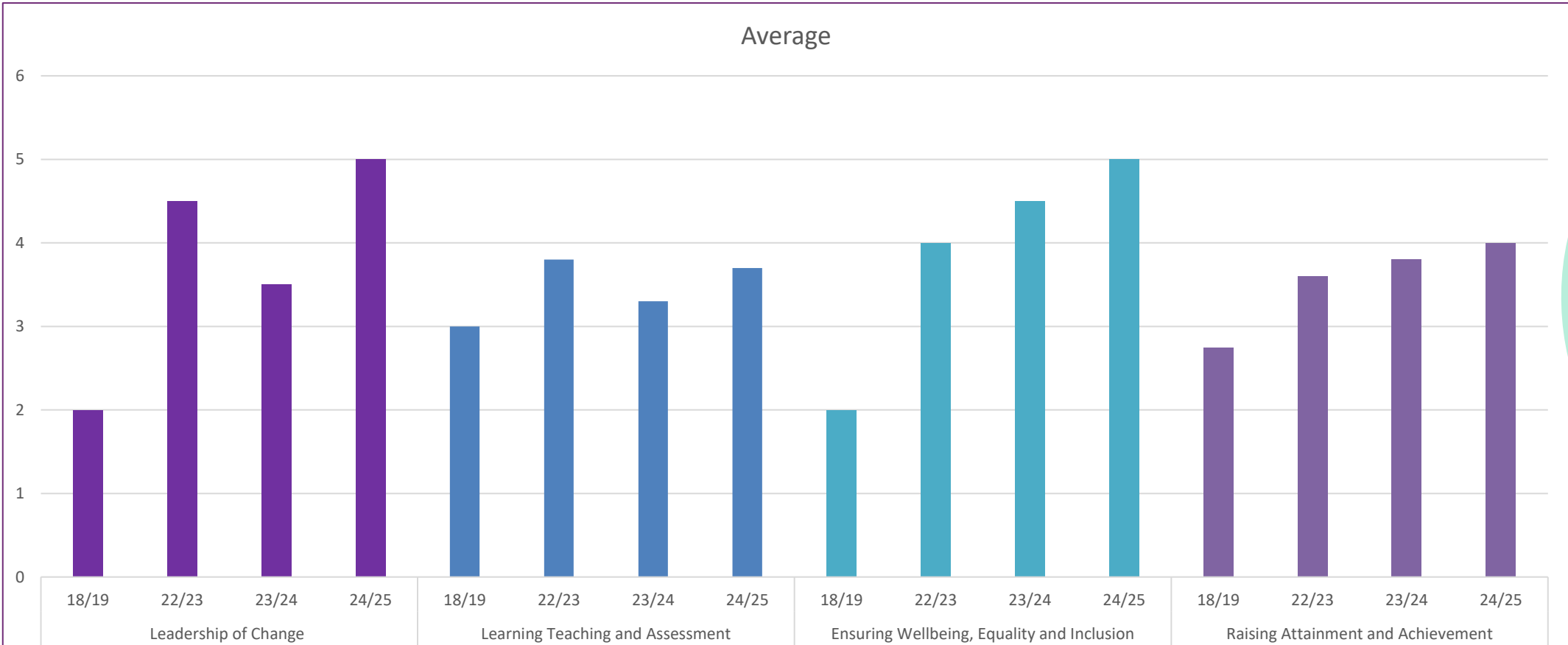
There is evidence of continued improvement, but we need to accelerate the pace of improvement around Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

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There continues to be positive movement in the support categories allocated to schools, although the evidence is less compelling than that available for ELC.   There are still schools who require support in order to achieve gradings of good or better. We now need to restrict the number of improvement priorities to allow a near exclusive focus on professional learning for leaders and on learning, teaching and assessment for classroom practitioners to increase the rate of change.

During session 24/25 a Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher were seconded one day a week to support the development of the Northern Alliance Learning and Teaching Toolkit. This work has focused on ensuring senior leaders are aware of the content of the Toolkit and how to navigate through each of the sections (further information is included later in this evaluation.)   Given our need to focus on, teaching and assessment, the use of the Toolkit has been added to the Quality Improvement Framework for session 25/26.   Secondments will continue for session 25/26 with engagement and impact continuing to be measured.

The Exploration of Learners Needs successfully undertaken by the Educational Psychologists (EPS) identified settings where, despite the challenge of changing needs and rapid increase in school roll, effective systems were in place and were supporting learners well (detailed later in this report). The greater involvement of EPS in strategic analysis and decision making is welcomed and allowing the service to benefit more fully from the unique skills set of the team.

In response to the findings, officers have been working to create an early intervention provision (The Bridge) to support children and young people (P1 – P4) struggling to access learning in their home school. The model, which will involve the whole family supporting the child or young person, will run as a test of change in session 25/26 and be closely monitored and evaluated. We look forward to our first cohort starting in August 2025 and reporting our learning to the Education and Children's Services Committee and look forward to considering a secondary model in 2025/26.

The linked Supporting Learners Festival, held in February 2025, saw over 250 staff from across the Education Service attend to further develop their knowledge and skills. The first day had input from education staff, focusing on understanding and supporting dysregulated behaviour.   Data shows that following the inputs, all staff noted an increase in both knowledge and confidence in supporting dysregulated or distressed young people.

Throughout session 24/25 additional resources have been developed for both universal and targeted aspects of Child Inclusion Research Curriculum Learning Education (CIRCLE). Over 200 participants attended a workshop on day two of the Supporting Learners Festival in February, indicating a progressive shift to meeting learners' needs. CIRCLE approaches will continue to be developed and shared through the CIRCLE Leads' network and our professional learning offer for session. 25/26.

There is clear evidence that our improvement work is improving inspections outcomes, but there is a need to focus more exclusively now on developing both the leadership of improvement and on sharpening the focus on high quality learning, teaching and assessment.
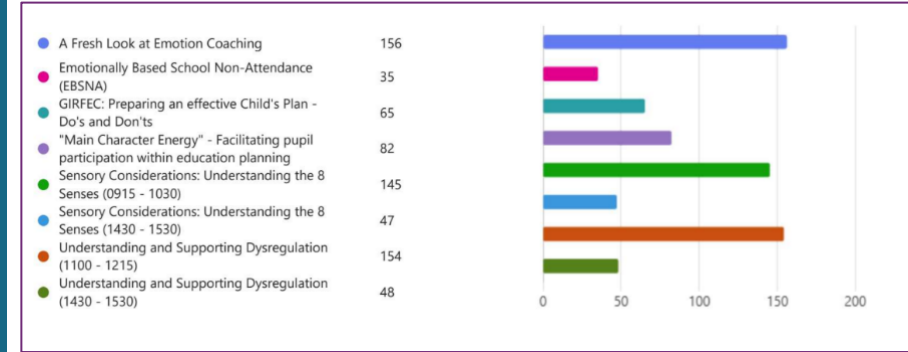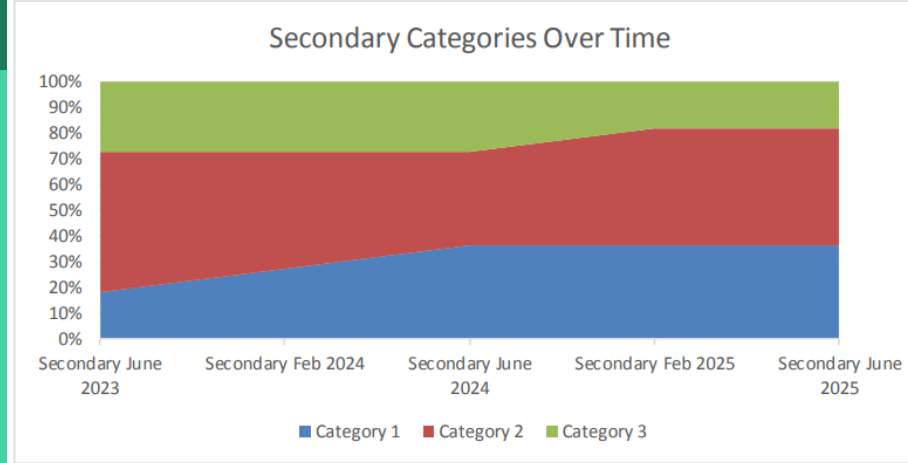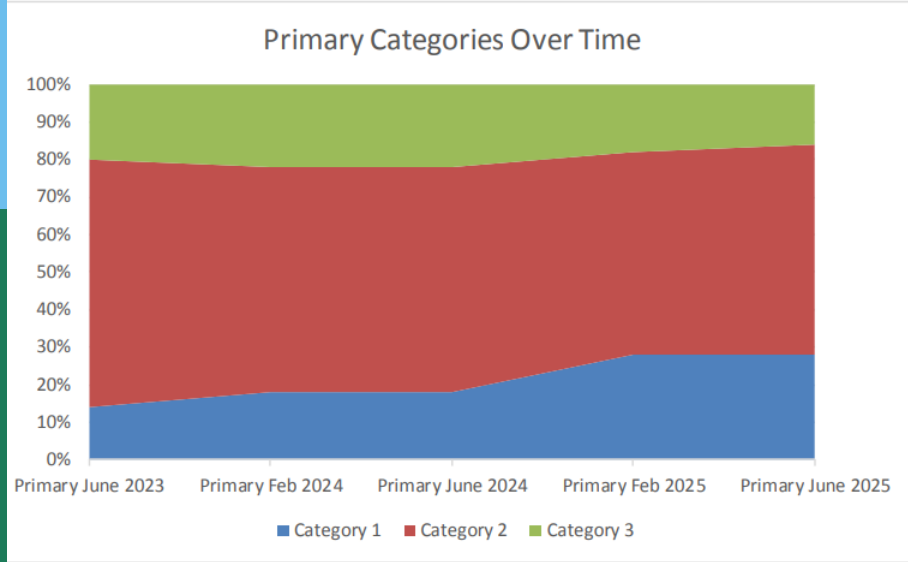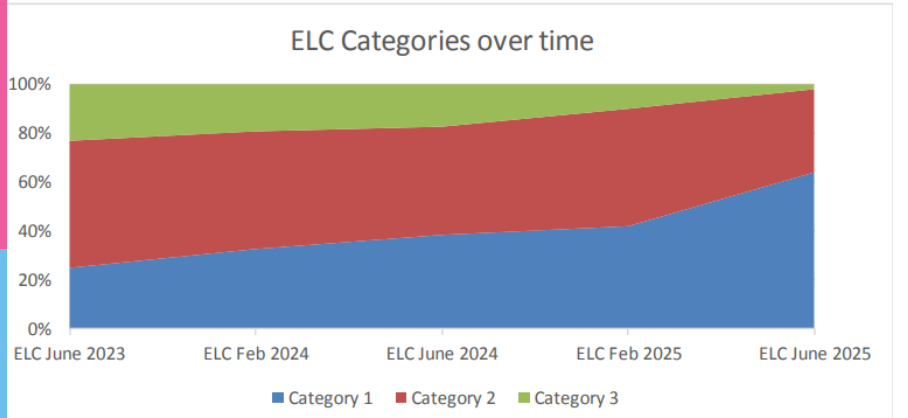
The Service continues to benefit from the expertise of the **Data and Insights** Team who help ensure school staff and central officers have access to data to support improvement. **Dashboards** are evaluated annually to ensure they remain fit for purpose. There continues to be a training need for staff who are newly promoted and this is being addressed by central staff. Central officers make good use of the dashboards to support regular data discussions.

There are highly effective governance arrangements in place. Members scrutinise the work of the Service against agreed Plans at the Education and Children's Services Committee.

Planned work to broaden the curriculum at school and Local Authority level has continued during session 24/25 and signs of increasing breadth can now be seen, in addition to widening of growth sectors covered (example from **ABZ Campus** courses below). Now that confidence in the model has grown, we have seen an increase in the number of applications for ABZ Campus courses, from over 1200 in session 23/24 to over 1500 for session 25/26. There is a recognition that partnerships must now be maximised with fellow local authorities and wider organisations to give young people the best possible range of certified experiences in the senior phase in a sustainable manner.

Phase 3 of ABZ Campus will see closer links with partner local authorities and organisations in order to work together to increase the offer to our young people. In addition to this, we will be working to develop a suite of work placements for young people as part of our Phase 4 offer for session 26/27. There is clear evidence from 2024/25 attainment data that ABZ Campus is effectively improving breadth and depth. More detail on ABZ Campus is provided later in this report.

Session	Courses	L4	L5	L6	L7	Agriculture	Childcare	Construction	Digital	Energy	Financial & Business	General	Healthcare	Life Science	Tourism & Hospitality	Providers	In Person	Virtual	Anytime	Twilight
2023-24	36	1	2	15	18	0	4	0	2	5	5	7	4	4	5	10	35	1	0	0
% 2023-24		2.8	5.6	41.7	50.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	5.6	13.9	13.9	19.4	11.1	11.1	13.9	27.8	97.2	2.8	0.0	0.0
2024-25	70	1	14	30	25	6	5	4	5	9	6	12	6	6	11	16	55	1	12	2
% 2024-25		1.4	20.0	42.9	35.7	8.6	7.1	5.7	7.1	12.9	8.6	17.1	8.6	8.6	15.7	22.9	78.6	1.4	17.1	2.9
2025-26	78	4	14	30	30	5	5	3	5	10	8	20	5	4	11	18	57	1	16	4
% 2025-26		5.1	17.9	38.5	38.5	6.4	6.4	3.8	6.4	12.8	10.3	25.6	6.4	5.1	14.1	23.1	73.1	1.3	20.5	5.1

Wider Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) - Level	Attainment by number of courses from Aberdeen City Council young people in 2024	Attainment by number of courses from Aberdeen City Council young people in 2023	Attainment by number of courses from Aberdeen City Council young people in 2022
SCQF 4	595	400	360
SCQF 5	940	685	480
SCQF 6	730	435	160

ACC Wider Courses	2025	RANK	2024	2024 Rank	2023	2023 Rank	2022	2022 Rank	# change from 2021
L5	1495	9	940	12	685	14	625	17	980
L6	1095	7	730	9	435	10	160	20	880

ABZ CAMPUS

Learning to shape your future

We continue to carefully monitor the wellbeing of our young people and gather annually self-reports from P6 to S6 learners on their mental health and wellbeing and of their physical wellbeing.

This has provided us with robust evidence that our arrangements are effective for almost all of our pupils. The most recent Mental Health and Wellbeing Surveys demonstrate continued improvements in almost all areas across the 4 data points and compared to our baseline. We have a reduction in levels of pupils reporting loneliness, low mood and being at risk of depression and see increases in self-confidence levels, and ratings of school support (detailed exploration contained later in this report). We continue to either track alongside national data or are performing better than the reported Scottish average. Schools report challenges in identifying those who need targeted support from the SHINE data, and options will be scoped over 2025/26 with a view to making changes in 2026/27.

Promoting positive behaviour has been a key focus for the session with a wide range of professional learning being offered to staff through mandatory training, our Educational Psychology Service Universal Professional Learning and Leadership Support Offer, and our Learning Festival in February 2025.

Our e-module on reporting incidents has ensured all staff know the process to follow should they wish to report an incident. The majority of children and young people continue to behave well in our schools. We have worked with Trade Union colleagues to update our local plan in line with the National Behaviour Plan.

We continue to update local guidance to align with updated national guidance in keeping with our Behaviour Plan to support improved behaviour in our schools.

All staff have received de-escalation training and designated trainers are in place for each Associated Schools Group (ASG) to ensure sustainability. Progress against the updated plan will continue to be reported to the Education and Children's Services Committee.

% of Secondary Pupils who Feel Lonely Most or all of the Time
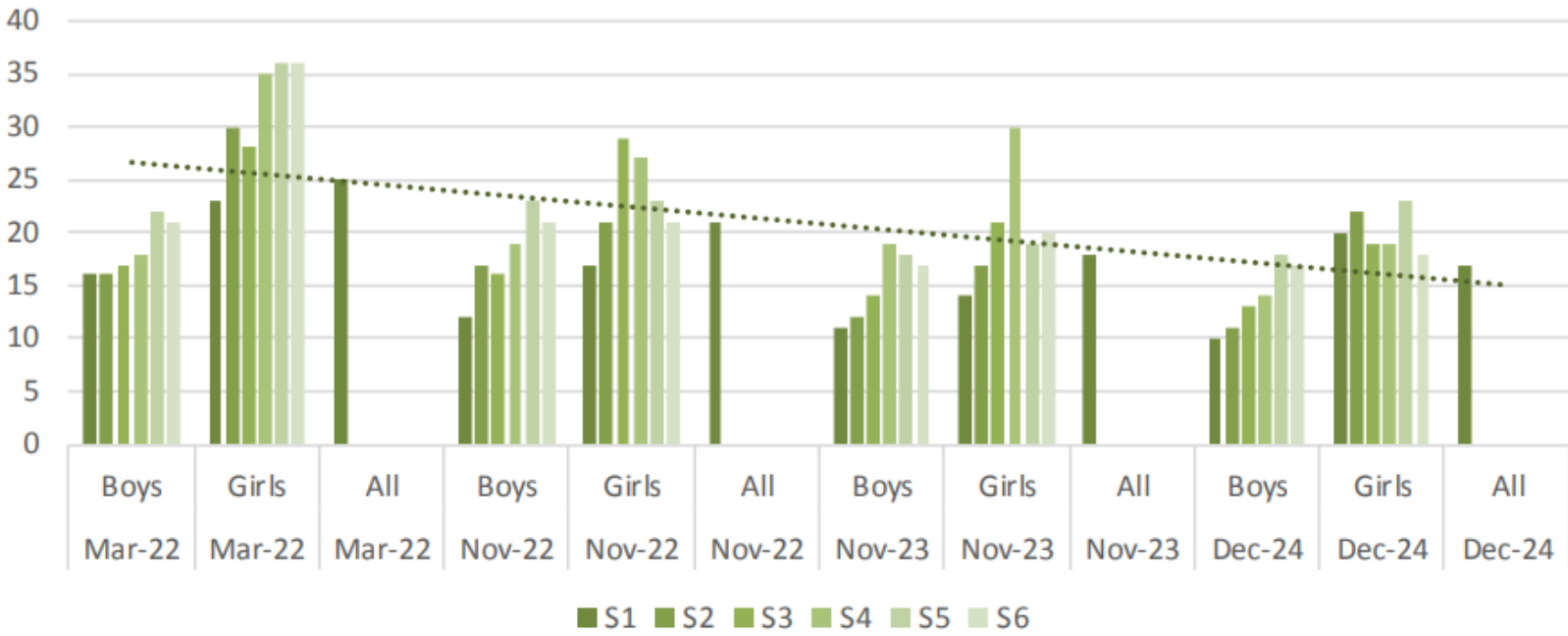
Behaviour Action Plan Training Calendar — 2024 to 2025
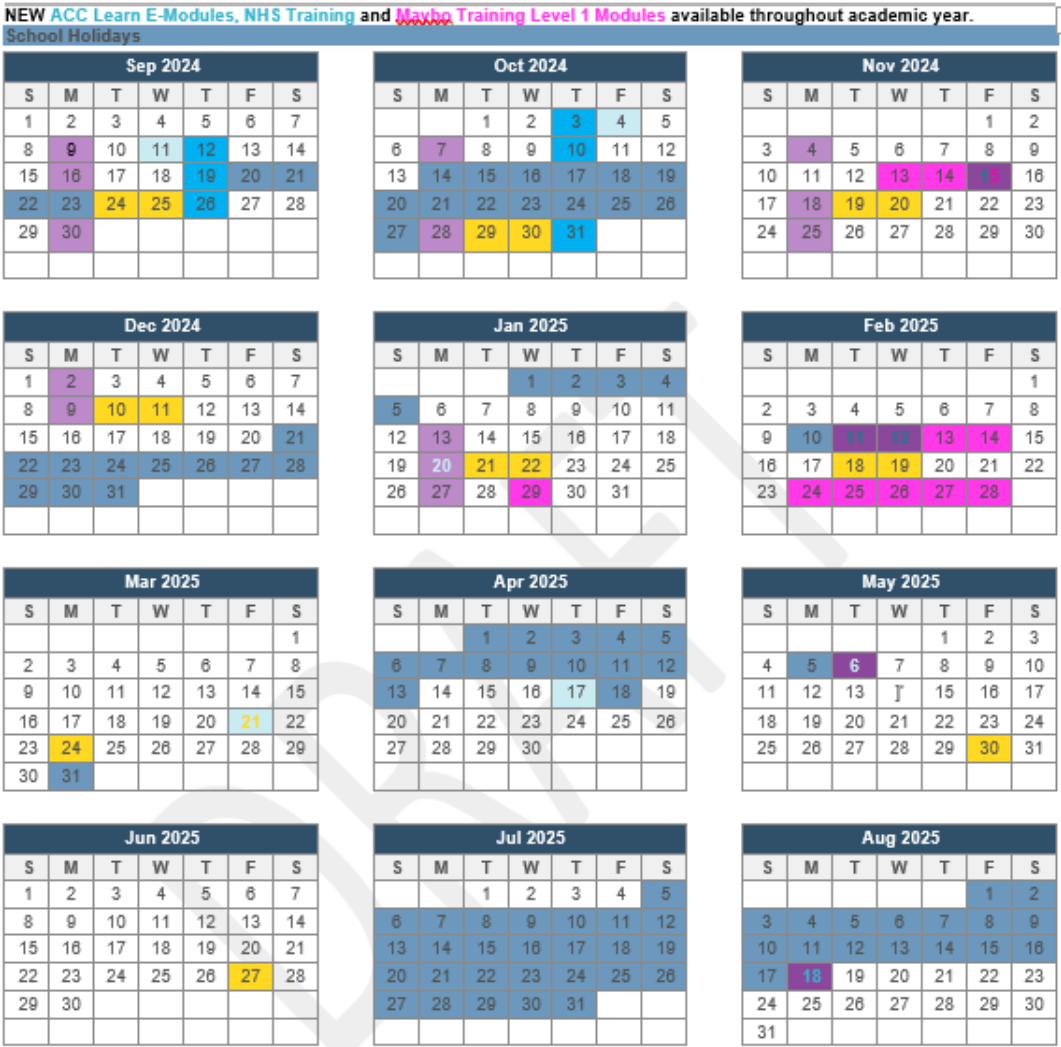
Our lead officer for **armed services covenant** continues to update schools on any changes to legislation or best practice guidance. Families can now access the section on the ACC website which signposts to any funding available.   This work will be maintained.

Ensuring the effective **participation of children and young people** remains a key focus for the Service. The Youth Climate Change Group continues to represent the voice of young people of Aberdeen at national and local events. The Group has set up processes for schools to bid for funds and report their achievements to committee.

The service continues to support the wider organisation to reap the **benefits of eliciting pupil voice** and is becoming more ambitious in approach. Aberdeen Youth Movement has supported young person consultation as part of the Aberdeen City Council budget process and city-wide consultation on Your Place , Your Plan, Your Future with over 500 young people contributing across 4 secondary schools.

 School teams have ensured pupil voice is evident in school policies and procedures and provide child friendly versions of policies and plans. Following our early adoption of a child friendly complaints process, we are well positioned to implement the agreed national approach.

The Education Service continues to work well with officers from across the organisation and local partners to plan and deliver popular '**In the City' holiday programmes** to support families during Summer, Autumn and Easter school holidays. Evaluations from children and young people are consistently positive, with an average enjoyment rate of 9.4/10. Priority groups were well represented, and an accessibility adjusted programme was delivered by partners.   This will be maintained subject to on-going funding.

Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future

summer in the city 2024

8,742 bookable opportunities (1,501 universal spaces)

9.7/10 enjoyment rating from our children and young people

25% of attendees were from lone parent families

33% of attendees were from ethnic minority families

6% of children and young people were from families with a child under 1 year old

3% of attendees were from families with a young parent (under 25)

24% of attendees were from families with a disabled adult or child (or those with additional support need)

27% of attendees were from large families (3+ children)

Over 3,600 meals were offered

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

autumn in the city 2024

2,450 bookable opportunities (375 universal spaces)

9.4/10 enjoyment rating from our children and young people

38% of children & young people were from lone parent families

21% of childre & young people were from ethnic minority families

11% of children & young people were from families with a child under 1 year old

8% of children & young people were from families with a young parent (under 25)

16% of children & young people were from families with a disabled adult or child (or those with additional support need)

22% of children & young people were from large families (3+ children)

Over 1,670 meals were offered

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easter in the city 2025

2,412 bookable opportunities (266 universal spaces)

9.3/10 enjoyment rating from our children and young people

32% of attendees were from lone parent families

38% of attendees were from ethnic minority families

10% of children and young people were from families with a child under 1 year old

10% of attendees were from families with a young parent (under 25)

17% of attendees were from families with a disabled adult or child (or those with additional support need)

25% of attendees were from large families (3+ children)

Total number of meals offered: 1,536

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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The Music Service has continued to expand opportunities for children and young people to perform, offering concerts for parents at two points during the year as well as working with partners to expose young people to a range of genres of music. Progress is reported to Committee on a yearly basis.

This year's **Big Sing** built on the successes of previous years and saw over 3000 P4 pupils singing together at Duthie Park. An added feature this year was the involvement of young people from our twin town of Clermont Ferrand. The event had a nautical theme to link with the Tall Ships arriving in July and there was a surprise appearance from Dory the Dolphin which delighted children and adults alike. The weather was definitely on our side this year and the event was well received by parents and families who came along to watch. Plans have already started for Big Sing 2026 which will be even bigger and better!

As part of our preparations for the **Tall Ships**, the Music Service supported our children to launch the Tall Ships Anthem at the Cowdry Hall and perform on the main Tall Ships stage. Some of our young people also benefited from an international trip to Regensburg.

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We continue to be humbled by the **considerable achievements of our young people**, some of which are noted below.

Bucksburn Wing has successfully run a **pop up charity shop** in George Street for the second year. The Senior Phase pupils in the Wing were learning about retail in their pathways classes. Running the Charity Shop in George Street alongside Friends of the Bucksburn ASN Wing provided the learners with real life experiences ensuring they learned about advertising, sorting, cleaning clothes, folding and hanging as well as pricing and how to use a till and a card reader.   The project created a buzz of excitement as the young people had the opportunity to practise their skills for real.

Our young people have been successful in **national competitions** during session 24/25. Chizoba Ekeke, representing St Peter's RC School and Aberdeen City in VoiceBox, had the Scottish Parliament in stitches with his joke. This national joke telling competition for primary school children developed by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) was designed to raise awareness of the fun and importance of communication.

Manor Park School Sports Captains secured a **Sports Scotland Gold Sports Award** for the school community, to celebrate all the sporting opportunities provided for young people. These included encouraging and supporting young people and families to participate in the Balmoral 5K run.

Young people have excelled in **language competitions** for the second year running.

The Primary 4 class from Danestone won first prize in their age category in the Concours de la Francophonie/French speakers Competition for the French Film Festival. After watching the French film called 'Drôles d'oiseaux', they recorded their own video review, presented by them in French, which showcased their artwork.

Pupils who attend the weekly Languages Club at Aberdeen Grammar School participated in the SCILT Our World Film Awards and were winners of the Award for Best Content in the S5/6 category for their film, 'Planning for Success'. The team were also jointly awarded a special commendation for Most Creative Use of Language.

You can view the film here: AGS – Planning for Success Film

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Blake Brewster from Northfield Academy is the Scottish winner of the **French Film Festival film** review prize. This is the second year running Northfield has had a winner. Prizes for this competition were awarded by the Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland.

There are 156 separate **Duke of Edinburgh** groups across all of our 13 centres which includes 11 secondary schools, Orchard Brae, and our Virtual school. Our DofE participants have volunteered 11,154 hours of their time to a variety of causes over the last year which includes charities, social programmes, the library service, sports clubs, after school clubs.

The hours of dedication, effort and achievement of young people making an impact within their community has been calculated by DofE to have a social value of £71,375.
The DofE programme in Aberdeen city is fully inclusive using funding streams to ensure an equitable offer for young people.

Duke of Edinburgh

- 21/22: 648
- 22/23: 848
- 23/24: 929
- 24/25: 992
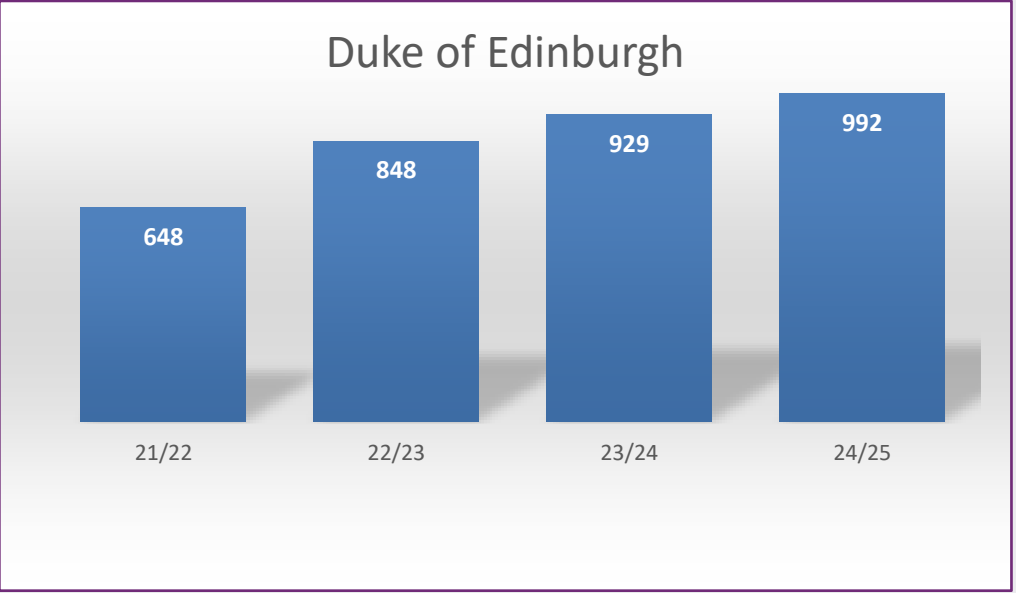
The Service has supported the **Tall Ships** with 48 primary schools adopting a Tall Ship and following the journey to Aberdeen, communicating with the crew and learning about life on the ship.   Each primary school received a treasure box of resources to support learning around a seaside theme. Dory the Dolphin has visited schools ensuring he brings smiles to all he meets. There were 2490 entries for the Art competition from 34 primary and 5 secondary schools.

I am very proud of our Service, the opportunities available for our young people, and how it continues to improve. Decreasing Council resources mean that there is an ongoing need to work more collaboratively towards a self-improving system and maximise the impact of the resources at our disposal. I appreciate the skills and expertise of staff across the Service, across the wider organisation and partners who have committed, and continue to commit to the our children and young people.

Shona Milne (Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning)

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KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Northern Lights programme being successfully implemented with schools receiving upgraded interactive whiteboards and new devices for both staff and learners

- School attendance rates continuing to increase and now sitting above the national average

- The continued roll out of CYPIC writing programme resulting in an increase in attainment at P4 and P7

- Securing funding to establish and expand free Breakfast Club provision at 10 schools in session 2025/26

- The continued development of the Northern Alliance and Teaching Toolkit and as a result, augmenting professional learning for senior leaders in Leadership and Learning and Teaching

- Implementation of the agreed Behaviour Plan by working collaboratively with Trade Union colleagues and leaders in schools

- Successfully providing universal access to staff training in de-escalation techniques and strategies

- Supporting the Tall Ships through the development of an education pack for schools and creating opportunities for young people to demonstrate their creative skills and perform the Tall Ships Anthem

- Improved gradings in Local Authority ELC settings with almost all now sitting in support category 1

- ELC central officers worked with Education Scotland to deliver professional learning for ELC leaders on leadership and pedagogy resulting in improved learning environments and inspection outcomes

- Creation of the early intervention service, 'The Bridge' pilot, in Riverbank School to support children struggling to access education in the early primary years

- The delivery of ABZ Campus Phase 2 and preparations for Phase 3 to be implemented from August 2025

- More ambitious presentation policies resulting in an increased number of presentations for SQA courses. Wider courses (all SCQF) have increased at all levels

- The successful development of progressions and portals to support delivery of Numeracy and Mathematics

- Increased number of learners participating in DofE Awards from 848 in 2022/23 to 992 in 2024/25

- The Educational Psychology Service presenting nationally on approaches to data analysis

- Our children and young people directly shaping the future of their city, through their active engagement in Masterplanning

GOVERNANCE

Each Quality Improvement Manager oversees a strategic remit and retains operational oversight of the performance of a group of education settings/targeted services in collaboration with the Quality Improvement Officer team.

Partnership improvement work is predominantly coordinated through the Attainment and Transition to Adulthood Improvement Group which reports to the Children's Services Board. In real terms however, this encompasses a range of healthy partnerships including those with the Wood Foundation, Developing the Young Workforce Board and with Further and Higher Education partners, as we respond to the Logan Report through the Aberdeen Computing Collaborative and continue our development of ABZ Campus.

As well as external scrutiny from inspection agencies, the Corporate Board structure monitors data and seeks assurance on education performance. The Performance Board is currently carefully monitoring the attainment of our Senior Phase learners who live in SIMD 2 and 3. Elected Members and external members scrutinise performance through Council Committees. In addition, partnership scrutiny is available through Community Planning Aberdeen and the Aberdeen City Executive Group (Chief Officers Group) for Public Protection.

Throughout session 24/25, 28.8% (an increase of 10.4% on session 23/24) of all schools benefited from engagement with His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and all schools were subject to internal scrutiny arrangements.   External scrutiny ranged from ongoing engagement, return inspection visits, engagement through short and full model inspections and thematic reviews. A healthy appetite for scrutiny is believed to be a key strength of the service. During session 25/26 we will be working with a link HMIe Inspector as part of an HMIe pilot.

In addition to this, we undertook self-evaluation using the Association of Directors of Education Scotland How Good is Our Education Authority? Framework. We worked with our QUAD local authorities, sharing our evaluation of the outcome indicator and being open to challenge and interrogation of approaches and strategies. Feedback from colleagues was invaluable in supporting the setting of next steps and offering opportunities for central teams across the QUAD to work together on shared priorities. During session 25/26 we will meet again to share evaluation of the remaining quality indicator.

The service welcomes and responds positively to scrutiny.
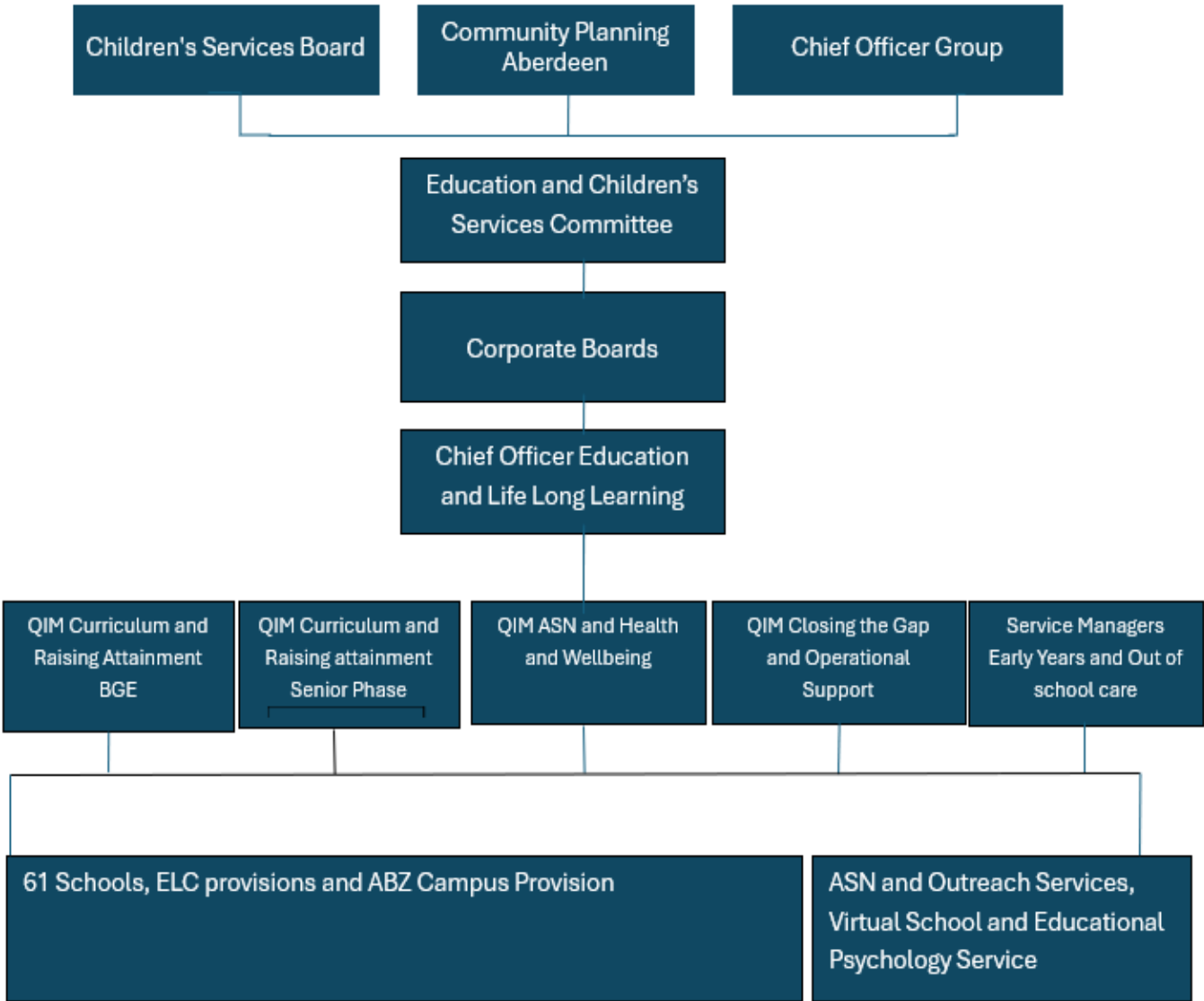
ACC FOUNDATIONS: ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN

The Council organisational structure continues to drive innovation and more integrated working practices. A refreshed organisational structure, agreed by Council in March 2024, saw the Library and Information Service and Community Learning and Development Service welcomed into the Education and Lifelong Learning Cluster. Sitting within the Communities Function alongside Children's Social Work, Housing and Corporate Landlord, has provided opportunities to further consider the determinates of population health on our families and communities and start to progress our shared work as part of the Fairer Futures Partnership.

The combination of services in the Education and Lifelong Learning Cluster now provides the opportunity to look at the learning needs of children and families more holistically, as we develop our model of Family Support. Staff across the education cluster have invested time to develop a shared understanding of roles across the service and pooled expertise to help shape Council strategies and Plans. Workshop sessions are planned for session 25/26 to explore opportunities to enhance collaborative working and increase efficiency further across the cluster.

ACC FOUNDATIONS: PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Head teachers continue to work well collaboratively, taking responsibility for improvement beyond their own school. This was noted as a particular strength by HMIe in 2024. During session 24/25 we have had an increased number of Associate Assessors appointed which has provided all schools with a greater insight in the national standards around the core quality indicators.

All Head teachers have participated in a Quality Improvement visit in at least one other school while many have supported visits in multiple schools. Almost all **Depute heads** have also had the opportunity to participate in a visits and this is building confidence in recognising quality learning and teaching and a greater understanding of evidence of the quality indicators. There is evidence that schools have increased the level of challenge being offered during quality improvement visits from both peers and central staff. There is a need to continue provide support in evaluative writing for middle leaders.

The increase in school roll has led to an **increase in staff new to the authority** and the majority of these being newly qualified, there remain challenges in recruiting to some secondary specialisms. Although there are challenges nationally these are more acute in the Northern Alliance. We continue to be one of the local authorities with the lowest average age of staff - Primary (37) National (40.2) Secondary (40) National (40.9). Having a high number of newly qualified teachers can present challenges in secondary schools with small departments and in primary schools with a higher turnover of staff. We will continue to monitor this.
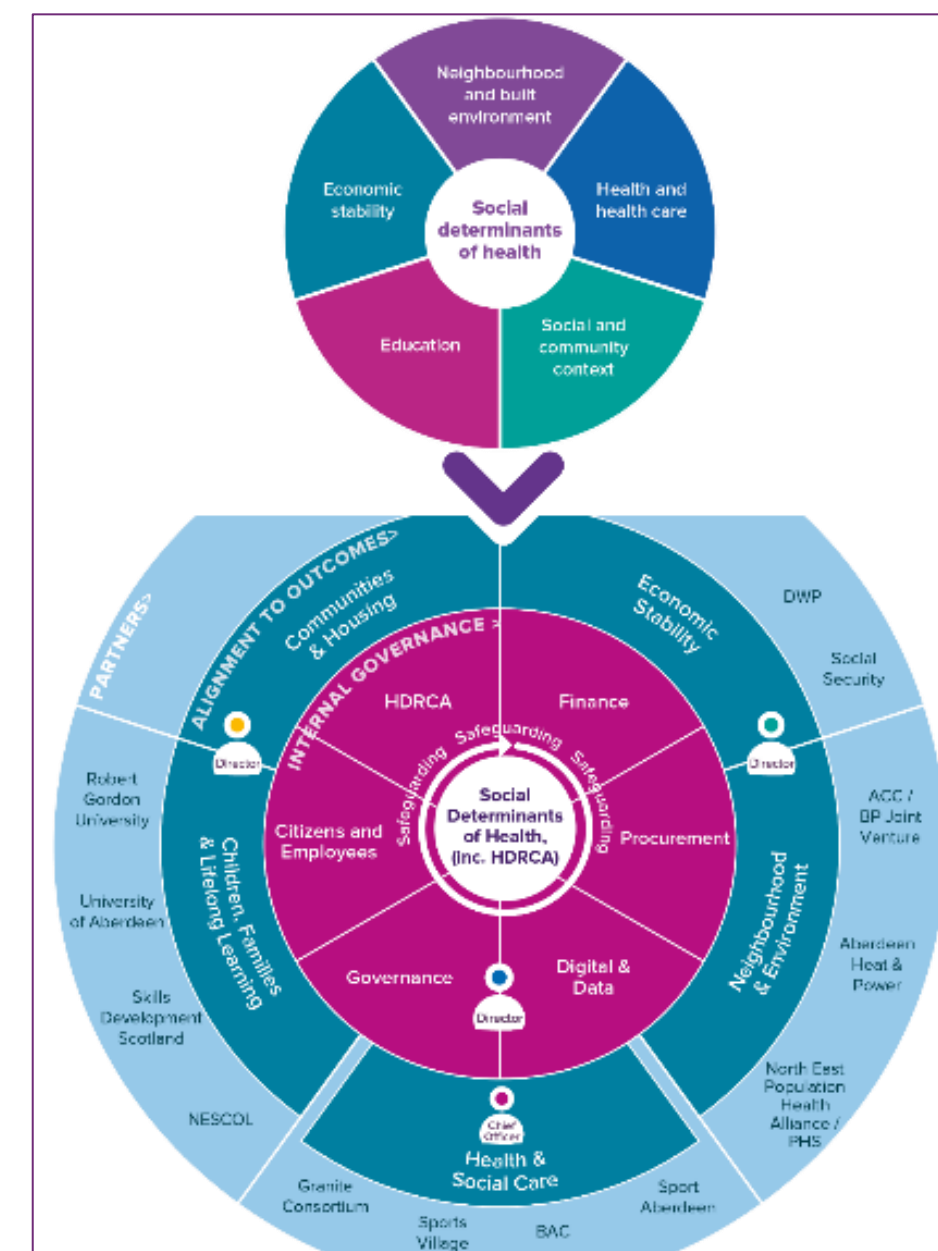
Throughout session 24/25, **Associate Assessors** have been involved in supporting or leading Quality Improvement visits and mentoring new Head Teachers. This provides peer support for operational issues reducing the pressure on the Central team.

11 Senior Leaders completed the **Into Headship programme** in session 24/25 with 2 already having secured Head Teacher roles within Aberdeen City. Our middle leadership professional training offer continues to have high attendance however there is a need to review our arrangements in order to attract a greater number of potential middle leaders from the secondary sector. During session 25/26 a group of Associate Assessors will work with central officers to review the current programme.

Education Scotland delivered 4 sessions of **Pedagogical Leadership training** with Head Teachers, Deputes and Managers from across the Local Authority and Funded Provider settings. 60 practitioners attended and feedback was very positive. Most participants strongly agreed that these sessions will have a positive impact on their role as leaders. Following the success of these sessions, Education Scotland extended their offer to participants of Pedagogical Leadership. 23 leaders went on to participate in a coaching programme. Education Scotland are now working with the Early Years Team to roll the Pedagogical Leadership course out to Senior Early Years Practitioners and Room Leaders across our settings in 2025/2026.

The Universal Services continue to **pool resources** to support children and families in greatest need and have invested time in building relationships further. Plans to open our Bairn's Hoose within the Links Hub are in the final stages, and this will provide further opportunities to strengthen multiagency practice as we develop our Family Support Model.

The Service continues to value weekly meetings with **Trade Unions** and benefits from shared working groups and collaboration on key documentation to support the workforce. Officers have invested considerable time in implementing the agreed Behaviour Plan during session 24/25. The Safeguarding Group has successfully implemented mandatory de-escalation training for all staff in schools as well as updating health and safety policies and risk assessments for schools. Our data group is able to identify schools where support is required. There is a need to improve the quality of incident reporting in some cases and the group are developing guidance to be shared with schools during 25/26.

ACC FOUNDATIONS: TECHNOLOGY

The **Northern Lights digital transformation programme** has made significant progress over the last year. To date, 37 primary schools and 9 secondary schools have successfully onboarded to the new education digital identity and additional Microsoft services. This includes the deployment of modern devices, access to learning applications and digital tools for both teaching and administration.

The project team has continued to refine and improve the programme based on feedback from early adopters. Updates to the migration process, improved guidance, and tailored support have made the onboarding experience more efficient for schools. All schools now have digital champions in place who participated in onboarding training during summer 2024 and are playing a key role in supporting implementation locally.

Almost all schools now benefit from improved connectivity and upgraded Wi-Fi infrastructure. The roll-out of interactive classroom technology has accelerated, with all secondary schools now equipped with interactive touch panels and follow-up training completed. 38 primary schools have completed installations, with the remainder scheduled for completion by the end of November 2025.

Looking ahead, the following priorities will guide our continued implementation:

- Complete deployments at the remaining 2 secondary schools, 2 special schools, and 9 primary and early years settings

- Launch a new professional learning programme for digital champions, developed in partnership with the Digital Schools Award and HP. Running from September to December 2025, this training will focus on tools such as Minecraft for Education and Microsoft 365 learning features

- Extend training and support for interactive panels through a partnership with SMART Technologies, offering face-to-face sessions and webinar-style CLPL to ensure staff can make full use of the technology

- Continue working closely with Digital & Technology colleagues to resolve technical challenges and modernise infrastructure, including work towards federated identity and improved access to digital services

- Support the roll-out of Teams Telephony across schools in preparation for the move to fully digital communications

The Northern Lights programme remains on track for completion by December 2025, delivering a modern, robust, and future-ready digital environment for all learners and staff. This significant investment by the Council will greater aid the delivery of an innovative curriculum.
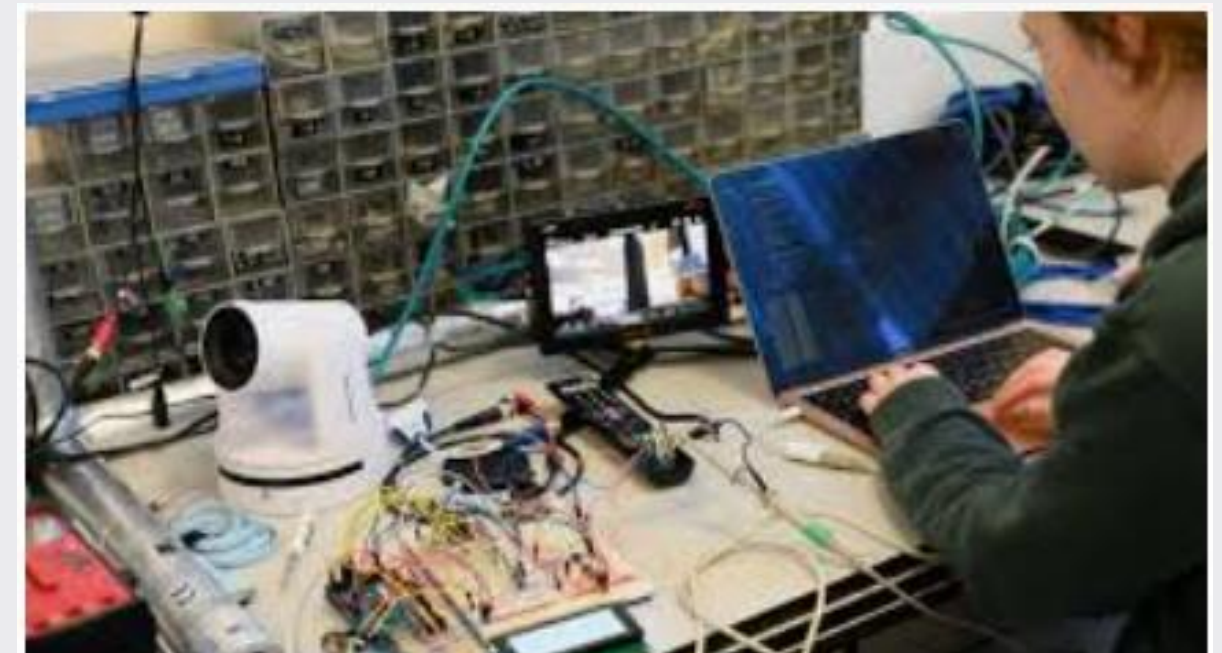
ACC FOUNDATIONS: PARTNER ALLIANCES

This year saw a number of key developments in our work to strengthen Computing Science and digital learning across the region through **Aberdeen Computing Collaborative**.   A joint bid for long-term investment through the North East Investment Zone was developed and submitted, although this was ultimately unsuccessful in attracting funding. We have strengthened regional collaboration by welcoming Aberdeenshire Council as a partner in the Aberdeen Computing Collaborative, supporting a more joined-up approach across the North East.

Professional learning for Computing Science teachers was successfully delivered in partnership with Scottish Teachers Advancing Computing Science (STACS), based at the University of Glasgow. We also contributed to the national Curriculum Review of Computing Science led by Education Scotland.

A bid to the Just Transition Capital Fund has been submitted to further develop Computing Science education across the region, and we await the outcome. We hope to complete the lease of a dedicated outreach space for Computing Science at OneTech Hub. This space will be equipped and operational from August 2025, with a programme of activities to be developed in partnership with schools and wider collaborators.

Excelerate is an investment by **The Wood Foundation** to empower system change in education, providing opportunities for school leaders, practitioners, and industry and community to connect and collaborate to develop learning experiences which allow young people to thrive in school in order to effectively prepare them for the future.

Excelerate continues to support Bucksburn, Dyce, Harlaw, Northfield, Oldmachar and St. Machar Academies to develop approaches across learning, teaching and assessment, partnerships, raising attainment and achievement, and curriculum. Each school is focusing on an aspect of development related to their unique context. Below are just two examples of the improvement activities being supported through our partnership with The Wood Foundation.

Northfield Academy continues to outwork **'Crew'** in the S1-S3 (Broad General Education). In S1, this means a 'home' room for each class, an increased amount of time taught by one teacher to further develop positive relationships, and a residential experience at the start of the academic session to create the climate for those positive relationships.   S2 classes retain daily contact with their 'Crew' teacher as they continue to experience a broader set of experiences across the school. The school is in Year 3 of this changed curriculum with S3 classes again retaining that positive relationship with their 'Crew' Teacher as part of the curriculum.

The model is now a permanent and established part of the Northfield Academy curriculum with '**Crew**' staff now recruited on a permanent basis. Crew continues to draw positive commentary from HMIe during visits with the most recent (17th June 2025) letter saying that *Parents speak positively of the 'Crew' model in S1 and S2, as this has developed young people's confidence and more positive attitudes to school*.

Bucksburn and St. Machar Academies hosted a visit from the **Edge Foundation** as part of the *Deeper Learning Network* during 19th and 20th June. The visit to Bucksburn Academy on 19th June included a focus on a new Pathways Course for S3 young people. Young people are invited to go through research on their own growth sector interests before choosing a Pathways course for the entirety of S3, heavily supported by partner businesses and organisations. During this year, they develop their SCRIPT skills (self-management, communication, resilience, ICT & Digital, problem solving and teamwork). The school are now in the second year of this curriculum offer.

Early in June 2025, we received word from **The Wood Foundation** that their operational and financial commitment to Excelerate would end in March 2026 following a restructure from a 10 to a 7 year investment. Our schools have been massively appreciative of the connection and the local authority will continue to benefit through the learning and expertise gained through this investment. We are very grateful to *The Wood Foundation* for all they have done for our schools and our young people.

The City Parent Forum is very active, moving to online, to ensure that Parent Councils can be regularly represented. The Parent Forum makes a very positive contribution to the Education and Children's Services Committee, seeking feedback from parents directly to help shape Council policy.

Central staff continue to be invited to Parent Forum meetings to update on committee business and seek comment on key issues coming through other feedback channels e.g. social media, complaints and compliments.

All complaints are dealt with promptly with every effort made to resolve at the lowest possible level in order to maintain positive relationships between families and school.

Progress against our refreshed Parent Involvement and Engagement Plan, published in November 2024, has included building capacity in Parent Councils through the increased use of the support offered by Connect. 143 parents from 28 Parent Councils have engaged in their online workshops. Work is also underway to streamline communication to parents through the development of the new ACC website. **Stronger Families Series sessions** have continued to respond to the needs of parents with sessions on Wellbeing, ABZ Campus and Supporting Attendance. A suite of workshops in Autumn 2025 will focus on supporting parents of young people with ASN.

The development of strong alliances remains important in benefiting from new perspectives.

Our pupils continue to benefit from the generosity of and our collaboration with **partners.**

Sport Aberdeen was delighted to receive a generous donation of £26,000 from Saltire Energy to boost sporting opportunities available for children across local schools. Sport Aberdeen put match funding of £19,000 in place and as a result every primary and secondary school in Aberdeen got to choose the equipment they received.   The offer has allowed schools to update any outdated equipment and will improve opportunities for young people in all our schools. We are very grateful to both Saltire Energy and Sport Aberdeen for their generosity.

The **Russell Anderson Foundation**, through Russell Anderson Development School (RADS), continues to support 2155 children in 11 schools across Aberdeen. Their 13 free after-school clubs support 410 young people weekly. In addition to fun football and teamwork games, tennis is now being delivered in partnership with the SERVES initiative.

RADS has delivered their 'Young Leader' programme to 98 P7 pupils and almost 500 P4 learners benefited from a football festival at Aberdeen Sports Village.

In addition to this, the Russell Anderson Foundation/RADS provides 4 weeks of free multisport camps during school holidays which are attended by an average of 105 children each day.

The development of Skills Hubs supports education on nutrition and skills including how to plan, prepare and cook cost-effective and healthy meals, linking all outcomes to the curriculum. Over 600 recipe and ingredient bags have gone home with learners this year allowing them to practice skills at home

The Foundation's **NHS Widening Participation partnership** has seen NHS professionals and specialists visiting over 100 classes in partner schools to provide age-specific health and wellbeing workshops.

Pupils at Northfield Academy were so inspired when they learned of the story behind the man their skate park was named after. They wanted to honour the Career of Lance Corporal Allan Douglas and they created a memorial plaque and trophy in his honour. **The Lord Provost** unveiled the plaque made by the pupils on 18th June 2025.

In addition to the plaque the group also raised funds for a memorial trophy to be presented to pupils who have displayed upstanding moral character.

Our focus on effective and collaborative partnership working is enriching the experiences of our young people and will continue.

NATIONAL STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

Pupil voice is at the centre of all planning in schools. Children and young people have a voice in decisions that affect them and in School Improvement Planning. HMIe inspections and our own quality improvement processes ensure we know where best practice is and are able to share this at Head Teacher meetings. The majority of schools are sharing child friendly plans with their school communities.

All of our schools operate **pupil voice groups** and these range from Pupil Council with representation from each class to groups such as ECO, Literacy, Numeracy, Charities etc. which are identified to support the implementation of school improvement plans. The adoption of 'One Good Adult' and young people's involvement in recruitment processes affords young people the opportunity to influence decision-making. Pupil panels were part of the recruitment process for the Executive Director Families and Communities and other senior Council positions. Our young people helped shape the beach masterplan and are now keenly watching their plans become their reality. The strong Council desire to involve our young people in the development of their city is greatly appreciated by the Education and Lifelong Learning Service, as is the opportunity to help develop a Play Strategy with colleagues across the Place Cluster as part of our work on the Local Development Plan.

In September 2024, as part of work led by the **Educational Psychology Service** Exploration of Learners' Needs across the city, learners' views were explored on a variety of education topics. 155 children and young people took part: 116 learners from primary settings and 39 learners from secondary and specialist provisions. In primary settings, almost all (94%) of learners said that they felt "included" in school with most (82%) learners reporting that they felt "included" in secondary settings. The lower percentage within the secondary learners compared to primary to feeling included is in line with other local and national data sources (Shine & ACC Physical Health and Wellbeing Survey). This reinforces the necessity to consider the perception of "feeling included" within the secondary age group further, as part of a wider approach to improving wellbeing.

There is recognition of the value arising from increased practitioner awareness and confidence with how the **Lundy model of Participation** can be utilised to support the conditions necessary to deliver on Article 12 of the UNCRC. A universal training offer from the Educational Psychology Service titled "Main Character Energy: facilitating Pupil Participation within Education Planning" was delivered as part of the Supporting Learning Festival in February 2025. Participant qualitative feedback subsequently guided the development of the EPS Digital Hub Universal Resources for Staff, to incorporate practical examples illustrating how methods can be used with learners, including those with Additional Support Needs. As part of a strategic approach to centralising learner voice, the Educational Psychology Service intend to continue to offer this universal level Professional Learning and Leadership within ACC.

A significant number of our schools (48) are actively engaged in the **UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA).** Several of our schools successfully achieved accreditation at a range of levels from Bronze to Gold this session, including Orchard Brae and Aberdeen School for the Deaf, who successfully achieved their Silver Awards in December and January respectively. Over the past three years, the Scottish Government has centrally funded the RRSA programme nationally. However, with this national funding concluding in April this year, and as part of our unwavering commitment to children's rights, Aberdeen City Council has managed to secure a maximum discount of 75% to continue access to the programme.

Work is ongoing across the local authority to support services to work closer together at a locality level using the **Health Determinants** research to ensure resources are targeted to those most in need. During 2025/26 work will begin to explore colocation of services within the community to ensure they are accessible and meet the needs of the immediate community. This work involves colleagues from all support services with the Local Authority as well as from NHS and third sector organisations. Through working more closely together and focusing on the family as a whole rather than seeing adults and children separately, this will ensure families will be better served and reduce the likelihood of duplication of services and advice.

The **Educational Psychology Service** engaged in consultation with learners from the Language Support Provisions as part of wider Education and Lifelong Learning work to inform the test of change for The Bridge: Early Intervention Service.

Both the **Young Ambassadors (10-16 yrs)** and **Aberdeen Youth Movement (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 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 secondary schools promoting, 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.

This consultation has informed the development of many strategies and plans, including Community Learning and Development, the Local Housing Strategy and the next Local Outcome Improvement Plan. 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.

Participation and rights are very well developed, but we recognise the need to continue to challenge ourself in this area.
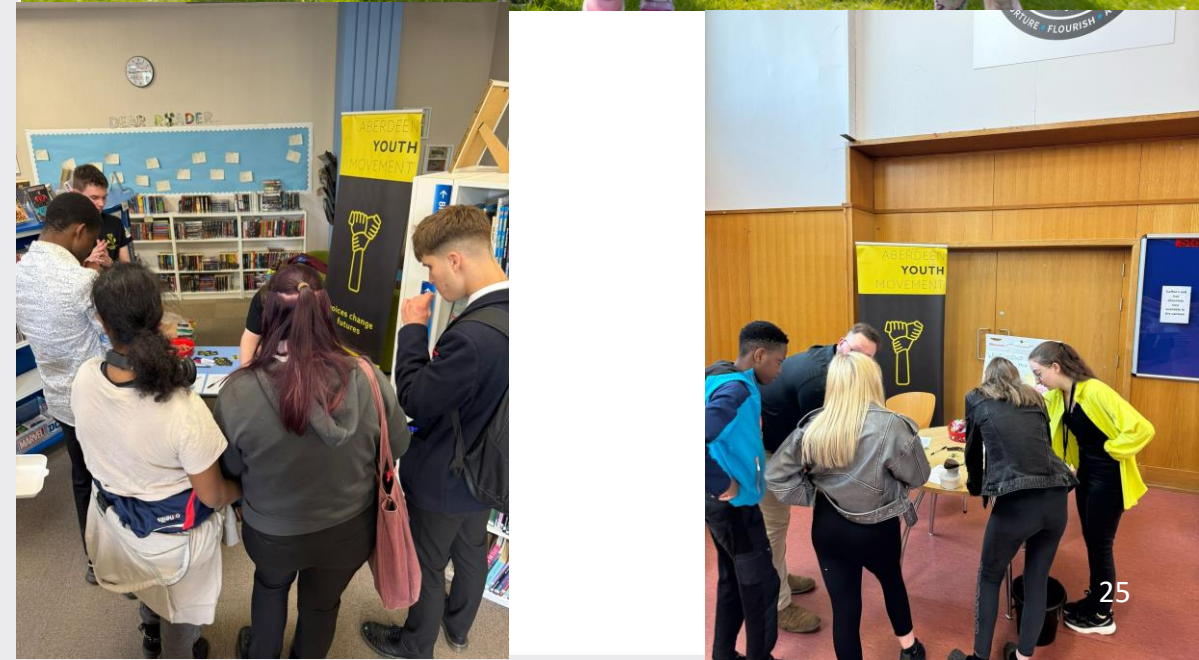
NATIONAL STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

The mental health of our children and young people is continuing to improve. We were delighted to see year-on-year improvements across most areas. All settings continue to participate in the Schools Health and Wellbeing Improvement Network **(SHINE) mental wellbeing survey** and the **ACC Physical Health and Wellbeing survey** to support our understanding of the needs of P6/7 and secondary learners across our settings. This year's surveys had slightly lower completion rates by learners: 458 for SHINE survey and a reduction of 900 for the Physical Health Surveys. However, returns increased from primary staged learners and are still higher than returns at the first 2 data points. The surveys were sent out for completion later this year. This is due to SHINE moving to a new digital platform. This meant the timing approached the end of term which could have impacted on completion rates. The mixture of universal and bespoke interventions provided, and the work undertaken across our settings has led to a continued improving data picture. Positive improvements continue to be seen across mental health and wellbeing areas compared to the previous returns (March 2022 & November 2022) and ahead of the national comparators provided by SHINE. Of particular interest were the following:

- reduction of pupils reporting low mood and at risk of depression
- improvements in the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) which measures mental health difficulties
- increases in reported self-confidence levels and optimism
- Improvements against reporting of loneliness
- Improvements in relation to physical health
- improvements in feelings of safety, inclusion, good health, aspects of sleep, and being listened to.
- Improvements in reporting of liking school, and school support
- Increased reporting of earlier bedtimes

Last year we had an area of concern in relation to our now S5 Girls, who transitioned to secondary school during the Covid-19 pandemic. We have seen improvements in almost every area for them. Not just compared to their reporting last year, but also compared to other S5 cohorts.

In almost every aspect Aberdeen City outcomes continue to sit above national comparator data. Last year saw improvements in relation to two key previous areas of concern for Aberdeen, reports of self-harming, and happiness with appearance. These have again both improved this year. The 'Did Not Disclose' gender, and 'Girls' gender groups both continued to show improvements on previous surveys in these areas. Improvements generally from last year have been maintained.

School leadership teams continue to have access to SHINE reports and the Physical Health and Wellbeing Surveys through a Power BI dashboard. This trend data enables individual schools and Associated School Groups Partnerships to identify positive changes and areas for inclusion in School Improvement Plans for 2025/26. The Educational Psychology Service continues to offer support through Early Intervention Consultations, either around individual children or systemic school issues or areas of attention. The Educational Psychology Service continues to offer training packages, such as Emotion Coaching, Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance, Nurture, Executive Functions and Teenage Brain Development. These can be accessed, or tailored programmes as required can be offered, depending on data and each school's needs. Education and Lifelong Learning's Professional Learning and Leadership programme of training is also reviewed by school leaders to support their capacity building and development of their staff teams.

In 2024/25 the **PEPASS (Physical Education, Physical Activity and School Sport)** group focussed on supporting schools to achieve Sport Scotland Sport Awards, as part of a holistic approach to reviewing PEPASS provision. As of April 2025, 27 schools had achieved the award, 8 of whom had achieved at Gold Level.

Active Schools took over as lead partner for Primary School Football in August 2024.116 teams, from 29 schools (P2 to P7) play football regularly on a Saturday morning. Active schools have focussed on developing an inclusive offer to encourage more girls and new players. P6-S2 training sessions also run at Garthdee. The programme is growing in popularity, especially in P4 and is reliant on a significant number of parents who volunteer as coaches. Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust (AFCCT) support the programme by offering an optional winter festival at Cormack Park. 22 Primary schools also opted in to the additional festival which was funded in part by Parent Councils.

The **physical wellbeing survey** this year highlighted a decrease in the time spent on technology with **26%** (28% last year and 27% at our baseline in 2022) stating that they spend more than 6 hours on technology at the weekend. 868 (946 last year) of these are primary stage learners. 55% of learners this year reported that technology has not affected any of the choices they make on a daily basis. This is a positive increase this year against the 53% from last year and 50% in baseline. Work in relation to encouraging healthy choices in using technology for learners, and their families should continue, so that we can continue to see a decrease in this area.

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. Again, this year **3%, 281** (compared to 3.7%, 256 baseline data) of learners who completed the survey reported that they often or always went to bed hungry because there was not enough food at home. Continued review of this data at local level will help us identify where food parcels, foodbanks, breakfast clubs and other such resources would help us address this and target our support. Initial outcomes and continued targeted work as part of the healthy weight project will inform this work, alongside wider community poverty mapping work.

79% (77%, 75%, *71% at earlier data points*) of learners feel positive or very positive about their body image, showing a further increase of 8% from baseline data. Similar to the mental wellbeing survey, however 21% (23%, 25%, *29%)* of learners reported that most of the time they felt negative or very negative about their body image, this is a reduction of 8% since baseline.   Being Me, a programme to promote positive body image, has been running in 7 Primary schools across the city targeting P5 and P6. Schools have reported positive impacts from early cohorts and this may have contributed to the reduction in the number of young people feeling negative about body image and will hopefully build good habits and outlook to appearance.

Sessions on each of the issues raised will be planned through the Stronger Families series, communications with families, and school or ASG level events to support, alongside Personal & Social Education curricula delivered across schools.

Educational Psychology Service
The Educational Psychology Service is playing a far greater role in the strategic work of the Education and Lifelong Learning Cluster now.

The new **EPS Digital System (EPS Dynamics)** for managing targeted case work and storing confidential data has been in operation throughout 2024-25. EPs are finding the system to be an easier, quicker, more efficient and secure way to manage, store and access confidential case records about learners, whether working in the office, remotely, or in schools. This has reduced administration time and freed up time for applied psychology within Education and Lifelong Learning Services. Additional aspects of the digital system remain in development, particularly around the management and storage of information for our universal offer of Early Intervention Consultations (EICs). EPS are working closely with our ACC Digital Technology Team and Hitachi Solutions to continue the development toward full implementation, which will facilitate better management and evaluation of universal EPS involvement. The use of EPS Dynamics to facilitate service evaluation has been hampered by technical difficulties this session, but it is hoped its data gathering possibilities can be fully explored to good effect in 2025-26.

Following a successful test of change with secondary schools over the 2023/24 period, the Educational Psychology Service have now aligned their data collection/analysis points to reflect greater streamlining with the National Improvement Framework and school quality improvement planning and development priorities. EPS annual review/systemic **Early Intervention Consultations** with schools now take place over the course of Term 4 of the academic year. Initial data so far indicates evidence of improved collaboration between schools and EPS on shared priorities, such as implementation planning for Universal Professional Learning & Leadership offers.   It is anticipated that this change will also result in improved alignment with the indicators of Highly Effective Practice in QI 2.4 Partnerships and QI 3.3 Improvement in Performance within the National Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists (ASPEP) self-evaluation framework, Improving Local Authority Educational Psychology Services in Scotland, as it will enable the identification of trends over time.

The **EPS Digital Learning and Resources Hub** has undergone a thorough refresh and update of navigation and content, in time for a summer 2025 launch for use during 2025/26 and onwards. The Hub will remain a key resource for the Educational Psychology Service to share information, resources and training with Education staff, but it will now contain new and updated content for staff, and increased content for families. It will be significantly easier to navigate. New, clear links to the wider Council website and the Parent Hub aim to ensure that parents/carers can access all related information when they visit local authority online information.
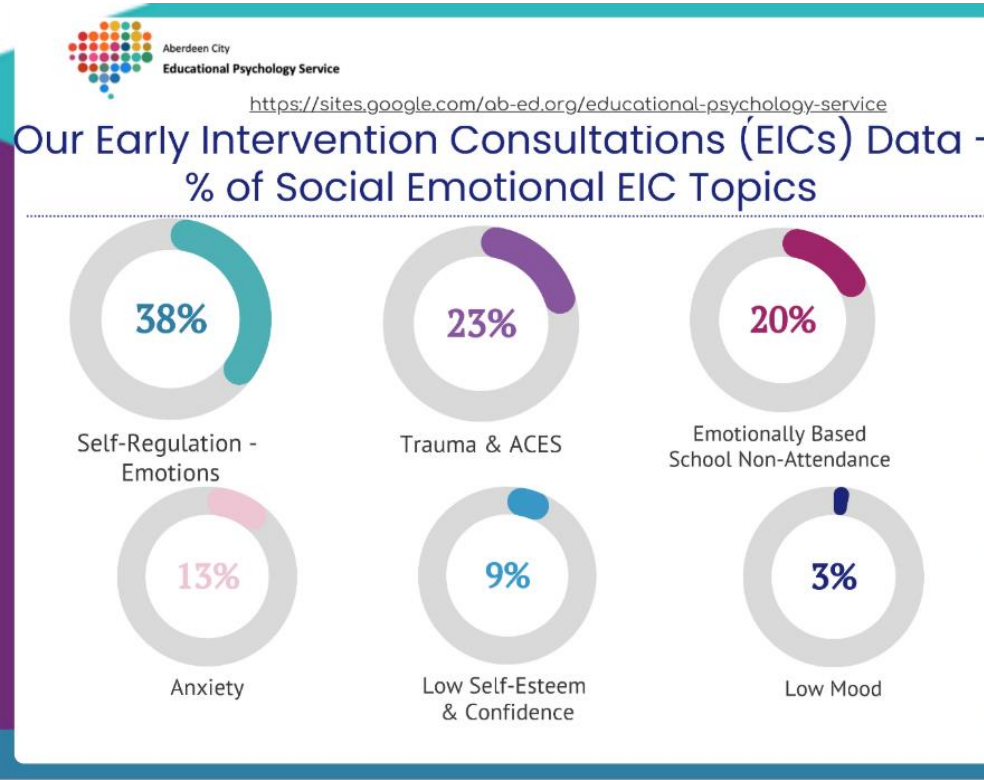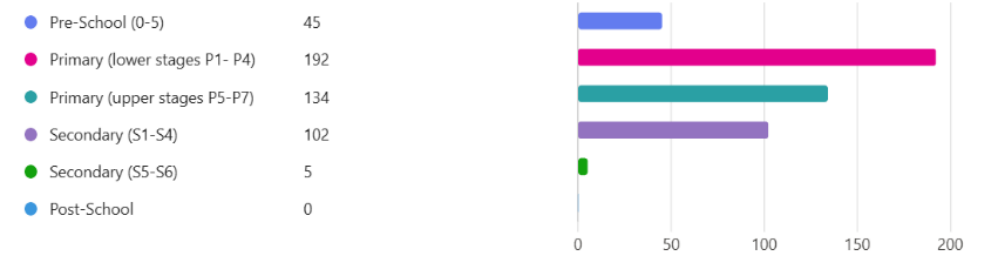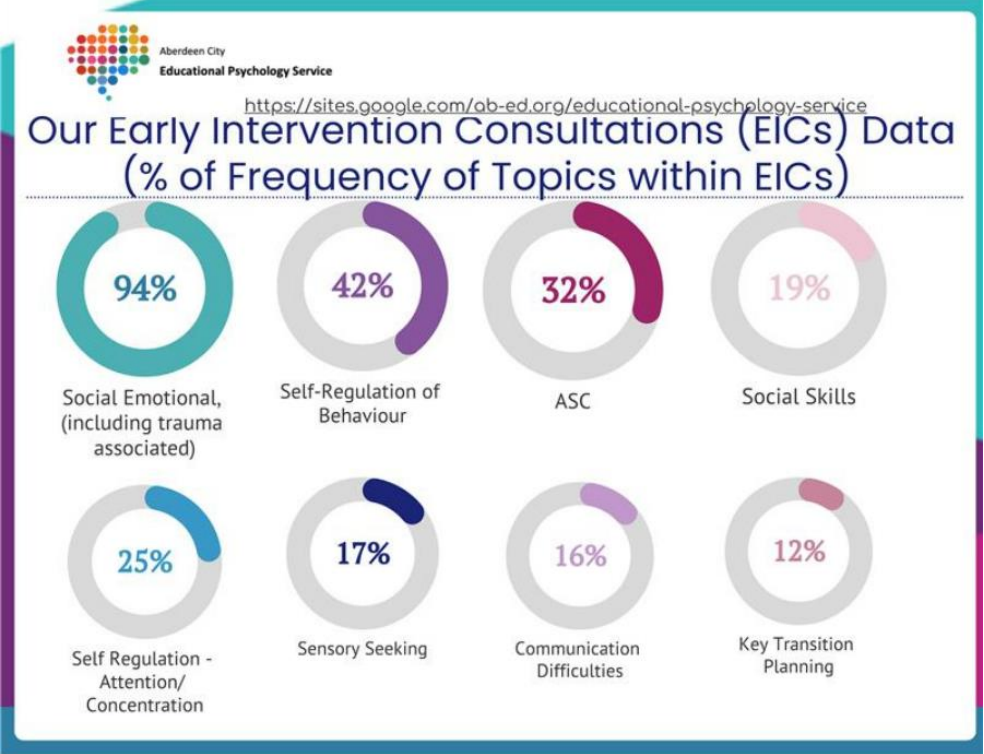
The refreshed **Digital Hub** will be a key element within the EPS process of developing a strong and transparent Universal Support Offer for Parents & Carers. In addition, a Families Working Group has been established to examine and develop our universal and targeted offers to families going forward. This session, the Service has fostered stronger communication links with current services for parents and carers, such as the Family Learning Team and the Stronger Families on-line events, with plans in place to develop new communications for parents/carers and contribute to information sessions and events (e.g. Tues 24th June 2025 Stronger Families online session for parents/carers on the topic of school attendance, including Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance).

A key Universal offer from EPS to Education Services are our **Early Intervention Consultations (EICs).** EICs can be about individual (unnamed) learners, groups of learners or classes, or systemic topics (e.g., understanding behaviour in the classroom, critical incident support). 576 EICs have been recorded so far this session, on a wide range of topics. This is a slight reduction on last year's total, but this is due to the 6 weeks the Educational Psychology Service spent on the Exploration of Learners' Needs. This is where the Service gathered data from schools, families, Trade Unions, ASN & Outreach Groups to get a comprehensive picture of learners' needs and supports across the city. There has also been a reduction in EPS capacity due to maternity leave. The age range and most frequent topics for EICs about individual pupils are detailed on the right

Coaching is used across Educational Psychology Service support offers. Separate to this, Individual or Group Coaching continues to be offered to promote staff personal and professional development and wellbeing, with 6 practitioners accessing this support over the 23/24 session. Although modest in number, practitioner evaluations are extremely positive in relation to the impact of coaching on their practice and wellbeing. We saw an immediate increase after promoting the offer in our termly newsletter for schools, with 3 people signing up for coaching sessions the week after. We recognise the necessity to actively continuing to promote the coaching offer to support school staff resilience, empowerment, and professional development.

Aligning with the CIRCLE framework, the **Spotlight** resource has been developed and piloted by the Educational Psychology Service Dee Locality to enable the sharing of good practice across ACC settings in supporting the needs of learners with complex ASN in mainstream settings. Some focused implementation processes are currently being trialled which will continue into session 25/26, including the new Bridge: Early Intervention Service.

This session, the EP service launched updated guidance for schools in responding to **Critical Incidents and Bereavement**. EPs have supported several schools this session though difficult circumstances and have developed Operational Guidance for Educational Psychologists to support and guide practice during challenging events.

Aberdeen City Educational Psychology Service
https://sites.google.com/ab-ed.org/educational-psychology-service
Our Early Intervention Consultations (EICs) Data (% of Frequency of Topics within EICs)

94% Social Emotional, (including trauma associated)
42% Self-Regulation of Behaviour
32% ASC
19% Social Skills
25% Self Regulation - Attention/ Concentration
17% Sensory Seeking
16% Communication Difficulties
12% Key Transition Planning

- Pre-School (0-5) — 45
- Primary (lower stages P1- P4) — 192
- Primary (upper stages P5-P7) — 134
- Secondary (S1-S4) — 102
- Secondary (S5-S6) — 5
- Post-School — 0

Aberdeen City Educational Psychology Service
https://sites.google.com/ab-ed.org/educational-psychology-service
Our Early Intervention Consultations (EICs) Data – % of Social Emotional EIC Topics

38% Self-Regulation - Emotions
23% Trauma & ACES
20% Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance
13% Anxiety
9% Low Self-Esteem & Confidence
3% Low Mood

In session 24/25, the Educational Psychology service continued to offer **training to school staff,** including digital training packages in Emotion Coaching, Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA), Executive Functions, and Teenage Brain Development. EPs also delivered in-person training on Emotion Coaching to the PSA staff of two primary schools and a whole day Trauma Informed Nurture Training with two primary school staff teams. This will be further developed through planned training in November 2025, with the aspiration of developing a universal training offer on this topic. Due to EPS capacity, this will have to be carefully amplified as it is upscaled and delivered more widely. All EPS training includes follow-up coaching sessions to support implementation and help embed new approaches into daily practice.

The Educational Psychology Service contributed to the Supporting Learners Festival in February, with presentations on
• A Fresh look at Emotion Coaching (156 attendees)
• Emotionally Based School Non-attendance (EBSNA) (67 attendees)
• Main Character Energy: Facilitating Pupil Participation within Education Planning (82 Attendees)

Feedback from sessions indicated a rise in attendees' understanding and confidence in all these topics, and follow-up support as discussed in the sessions was sought by some schools in these topics.

The **Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) Programme** continues to thrive. This session 13 PSAs have completed their training to become ELSAs. The EPS has improved their monitoring methodology to ensure an accurate database of ELSAs as staff members leave, retire or move schools, and to ensure fidelity to the ELSA model. While Pupil Support Assistants can use their ELSA skills throughout their role, ELSA sessions can only be delivered by fully trained and currently registered ELSAs who access the ongoing supervision from EPS. There are currently 45 trained ELSAs working in 24 primary schools, 5 secondary schools, and 1 nursery across Aberdeen. There is a large and growing body of robust evidence of the positive impact of ELSA on learners' social and emotional skills, and we are now seeing the beginnings of long-term impacts on attendance and achievement.

Additionally, 9 PSAs in Specialist and Enhanced Provisions have received up to 3 sessions of supervision support from EPS, sharing and developing practice in using the ELSA principles and the Emotionally Connected Framework to support learners with complex needs.

The EPS have developed guidance for **supporting Refugee and Displaced Families in education settings.** They are working collaboratively with Quality Improvement Team colleagues to get this finalised. Draft guidelines will be completed by September 2025, ready for wider consultation with stakeholder groups over the 25/26 period.

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HOW TO INVOLVE THE EPS

PLEASE ENGAGE WITH THIS FLOW CHART TO FIND OUT HOW TO ACCESS THE EP SERVICE

The service also identified the following as the key psychological frameworks and approaches that shape our service delivery:
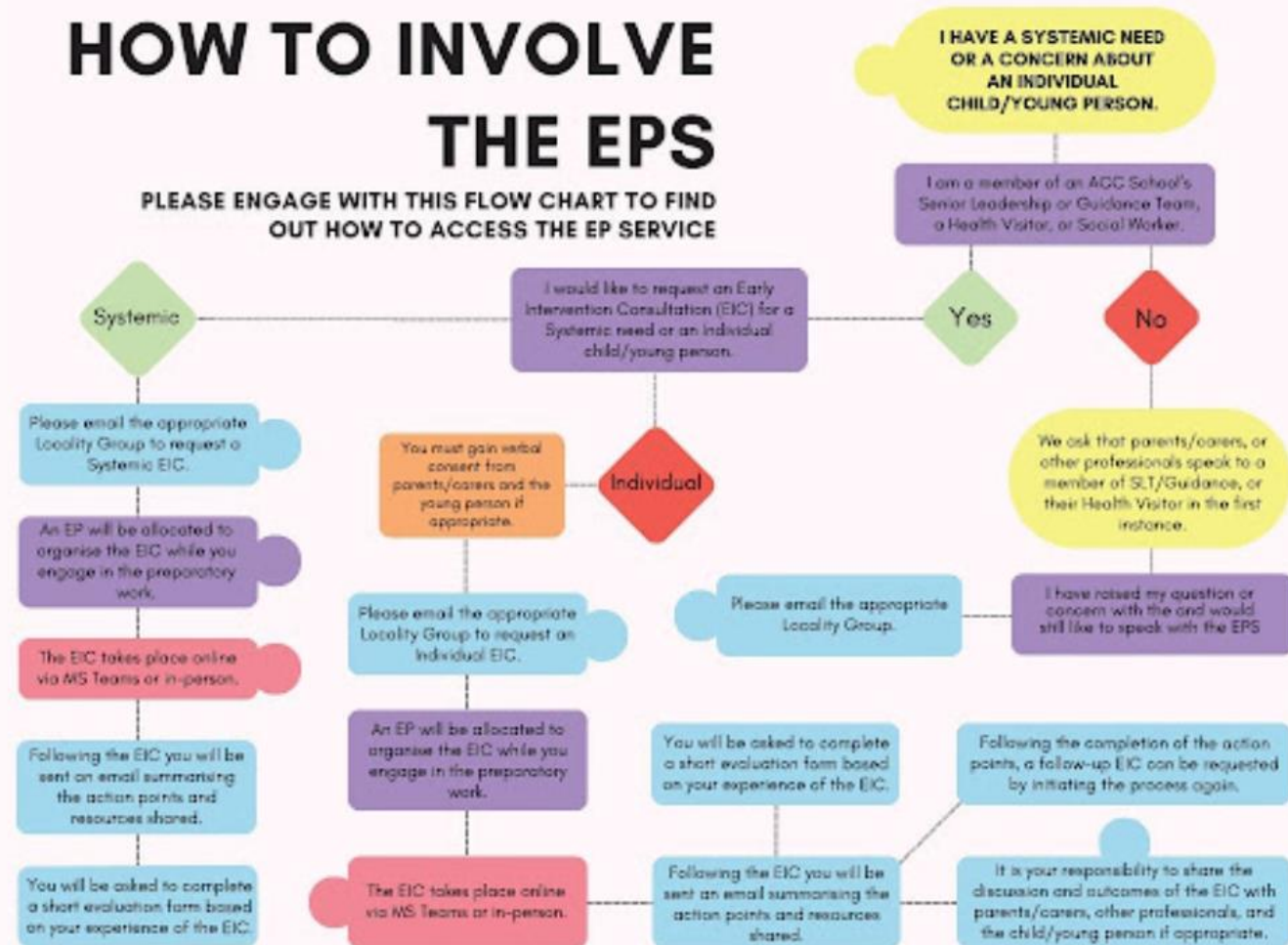
The EPS has further developed its knowledge and skills in the **SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation,** and Transactional Support) Framework in targeted casework and has increased the level of collaboration with multi-agency partners (e.g. Speech and Language Therapy Services) during SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Support) assessment and support plan development.

The EPS is leading on creating a range of new guidance and materials to support Aberdeen City's education practice to align with the national pathway for **Dyscalculia**. This work alongside ASN and Outreach partners is almost complete, and ASN and Outreach partners will now take this forward.

The EPS has further developed its knowledge and skills in the **Dynamic Assessment** of children and young people's learning in targeted casework. Extending this learning into universal work and following up on plans from the previous session, materials will be developed in 2025-26 on the related topic of Mediated Learning Experiences (MLE), sharing key principles of engagement, bridging and meaning in learning tasks to explore differentiation and support teaching staff to ensure that learning support across settings is appropriately tailored, motivating and challenging for all learners. This will support the wider Education and Lifelong Learning work in relation to Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

In 2024/25 the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) has continued to embed its enhanced knowledge of **trauma informed practice** across its universal offers, Early Intervention Consultations (EICs), locality or setting specific work, and training and coaching support. A training offer for schools on universal nurture and trauma-informed approaches is currently being piloted with a small number of schools. Feedback from this test of change, due to complete in November 2025, will inform the development of a wider offer for education settings.

There is recognition of the necessity to adopt a multi-agency approach to Trauma Informed Practice, in line with the aspirations of the National Trauma Transformational Programme. The EPS has developed a resource on Trauma Informed Interactions, for presentation at the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee, to support staff in client and customer facing roles to consider how trauma impacts on an individual's presentation, and how adaptations can be made to the way in which we interact. The intention, following feedback, will be to offer this resource to the wider workforce via ACC Learn by November 2025.

The EP service continues to be involved in analysis of data around **incidents and near misses** in school. Targeted support is offered to senior leadership teams alongside QIOs in school where deemed appropriate, or at a school's own request.

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CIRCLE Resources for Primary and Secondary have continued to be updated throughout the 24/ 25 session based on usage and feedback from schools, services and individual practitioners. The resources are fully accessible, editable to ensure setting autonomy and can be easily updated CIRCLE UNIVERSAL - 24/25 session and CIRCLE TARGETED - 24/25 session.

A city-wide audit of CIRCLE workshop needs took place at the beginning of the 24/25 session. This indicated an increase in knowledge of CIRCLE in Aberdeen city schools and services but still inferred a need for CIRCLE workshops focussed on universal level and targeted level. Listening to school feedback it then made sense to divide training for the framework into two stand-alone sessions – 1 for universal level and 1 for targeted level, with most participants opting to attend both. This allowed for schools and services to evaluate the current impact of CIRCLE implementation and invest time in the workshops that suited their specific needs at the February 2025 Inset Day. It also serves to ensure quality universal supports to be in place prior to focusing on targeted interventions which, without quality supports at universal level, are not always necessary or appropriate. The Inset was well attended (over 200 attendees in total) with a good spread of schools and services attending.
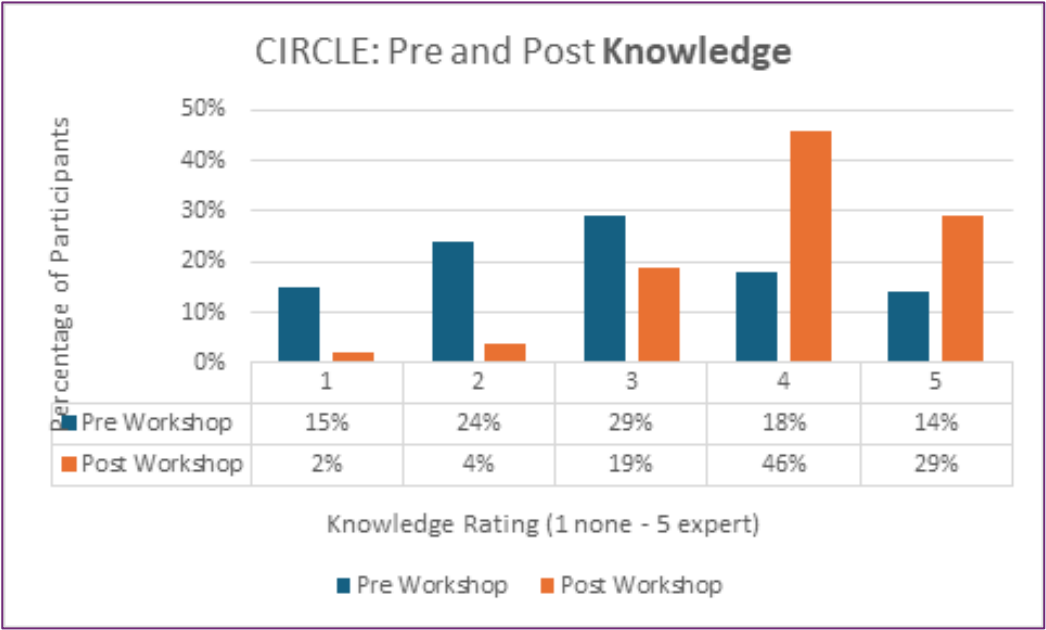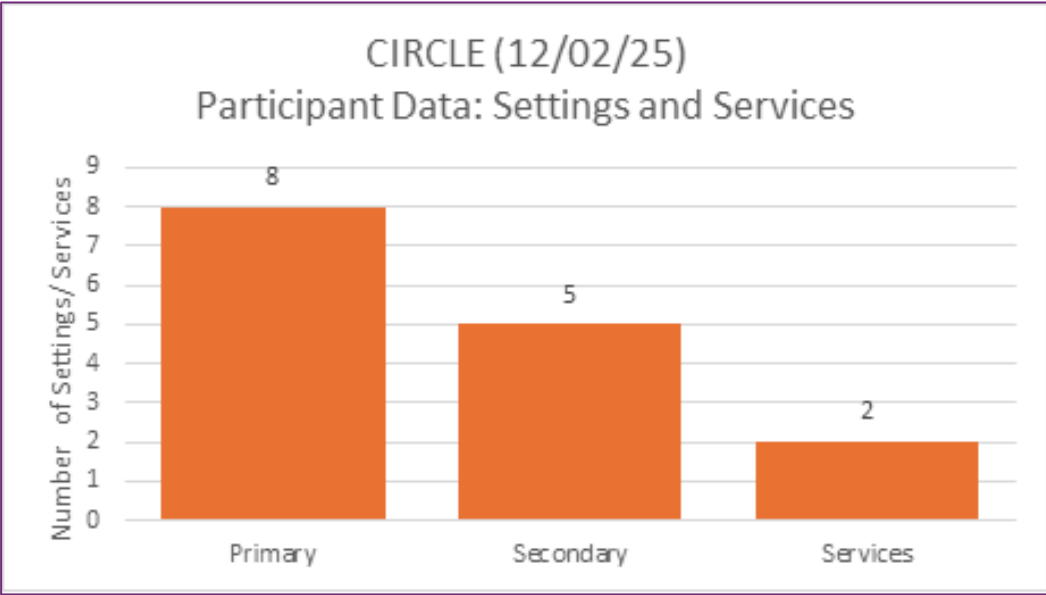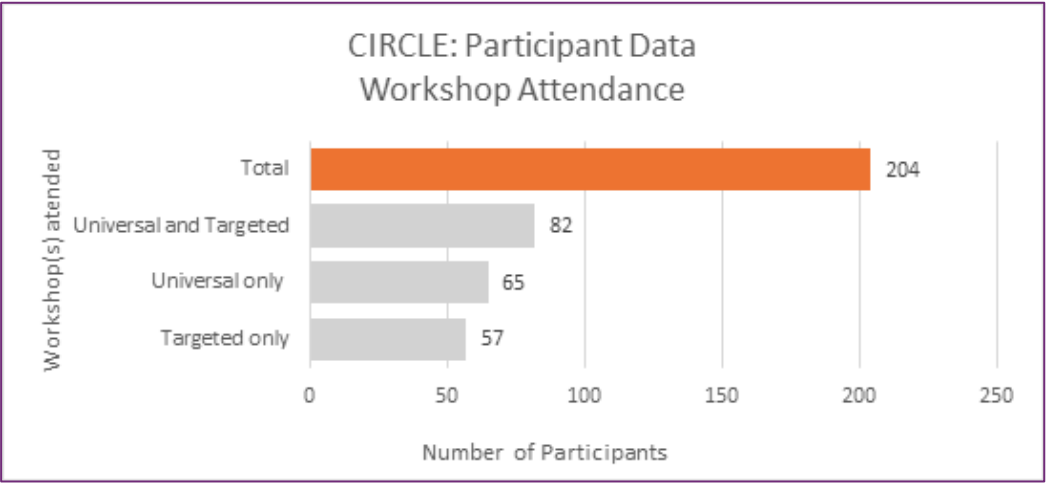
Impact and feedback from the sessions was extremely positive overall in terms of an increase in knowledge of the framework. Knowledge of the framework improved significantly at pre-workshop stage. Most responses clustered around 2–3 shifting to 4–5 post attendance. Confidence to implement also improved.

In May 2025 two CIRCLE for ELC workshops were offered. There was a significant uptake with over 150 colleagues from ELC settings across the city participating. Strategic integration of CIRCLE is now evident in almost all settings' improvement plans, reflecting a strong city-wide commitment to inclusive education.

Work has been ongoing to develop the whole system approach to **Healthy Weight**. A Strategic Networking Group (SNG) has been established with members from Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP), Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian, and Community Planning Partners. This will be extended over time to include wider educational establishments and representatives from the business world. The Education Service is represented by a central officer, a secondary headteacher, a primary headteacher and an Early Learning and Childcare Locality Lead. Family Learning and the School Catering team are also represented.

Progress is being made against the six phases of a whole system approach and following the competition of phase 3 and phase 4 the group will be able to provide recommendations which will inform actions to be taken forward as part of the LOIP.

Considerable partnership work to monitor and improve the health and wellbeing of our young people will continue. Our work around healthy weight and the effective use of CIRCLE will continue to be maintained. Continuing to align all resources around shared work will also continue.

CIRCLE: Participant Data Workshop Attendance

CIRCLE (12/02/25) Participant Data: Settings and Services

CIRCLE: Pre and Post **Knowledge**

NATIONAL STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

The **Scottish Attainment Challenge** (SAC) utilises two main funding streams to address the poverty-related attainment gap: Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) and Strategic Equity Funding (SEF). PEF is allocated directly to schools and focuses on targeted, school-level interventions, while SEF provides a wider, strategic framework for local authorities to work with schools and other partners to achieve the goals of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Both aim to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a particular focus on improving outcomes in health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy.

Head Teachers work with their whole school community to plan best use of **PEF funding**, taking account of a wide range of data and the unique context of the school. The full involvement of stakeholders, including pupils, parents, and community partners, in supporting schools with shaping their pupil equity plans and trackers continues to be a priority. Schools receive support and advice through annual guidance issued by the central Quality Improvement team and the **authority-wide Equity Network**, which meets termly.

During the 2024/25 session, authority-wide meetings have focused on Scottish Government guidance on school uniform, attendance, Cost of the School Day and continued professional dialogue to build knowledge and confidence. Head Teachers have shared good practice with colleagues in similar sectors and across Associated School Groups. The Equity Network Teams channel continues to be used by practitioners to access information, guidance, and support to promote equity. The Equity Network, led by the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor, has seen good engagement from most schools, with evaluation suggesting it is supporting professional learning and collaboration. To develop HT skills further there is a commitment to participate in the Education Scotland Equity for Leadership training during 2025/26.

Following the implementation of a revised **equity plan and tracker in 2023-24**, the setting of specific outcomes and measures has improved. Continued evaluation suggests that most schools are increasingly confident in using data to ensure their plans reflect a clear understanding of context. This evaluation indicates that interventions are continuing to be more time-specific and regularly tracked, with schools showing greater confidence in adapting or abandoning strategies if progress is not achieved. The tracking tool continues to support Head Teachers to plan interventions and target support to address the poverty-related attainment gap more effectively.

Attendance continues to be monitored regularly by the central Quality Improvement team through data discussions with Head Teachers. Parents are sent attendance information termly to remind them of the impact non-attendance can have on attainment. A focus on P1 has been added to discussion agendas to address an emerging downward trend in the attendance of this group.

Schools are developing early intervention approaches to address school refusal linked to mental health issues. This includes providing support within schools and through proactive outreach to prevent issues from escalating. The Educational Psychology service is working closely with schools to share strategies to support emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA).

THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE
LITERACY NUMERACY HEALTH & WELLBEING

Improvement activity over 2024/25 has realised an improvement in school attendance from 91% to 92%.

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.

The number of people now successfully claiming universal credit has increased from 7.705 in March 2020 to 20.145 in Sept 2024.

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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%.

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

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

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

Preventing families from experiencing poverty wherever possible

Aberdeen City schools are working closely with various services and community organisations to provide integrated services which address the needs of children and families affected by poverty. This includes the development of a community-based Family Support Model in Northfield and Torry, which aims to provide tailored assistance and improve overall family wellbeing.

The positive impact of a collaborative approach across services in the local authority to supporting children, young people, and families continues to be evident. Schools are providing crucial support through free breakfast clubs, increased uptake of free school meals, accessible clothing grants, uniform swaps, and partnerships with foodbanks. The successful implementation of Cost of the School Day position statements in almost all schools during 2024/25 has increased awareness and improved access to vital resources. Schools will continue to evaluate their statements and update these as necessary to support learners and their families.

Effective sharing of data and appropriate metrics across services to indicate where children and young people are experiencing poverty continues to inform targeted support to mitigate the barriers to learning that poverty creates.

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.

Continued investment of Strategic Equity Funding in **money advisors** has been successful in increasing families' awareness of and access to financial entitlements. Ongoing and comprehensive support has continued with the creation of a regularly updated information booklet which is issued both electronically and in paper format to all families with children attending Aberdeen City schools and settings. This ongoing holistic approach, including debt management, payment plan negotiation, and emergency fund access, is positively impacting child poverty, wellbeing, development, participation, and family resilience, significantly reducing the risk of family breakdowns and homelessness.

Data from April 2024 – March 2025 shows the following:

	Total for period April 2024- March 2025
Financial Gains	£382,881.03
Debt Cases	86
Total Debts of	£534,337.82
Benefit checks	225
Benefit Claims	61
Benefit Challenges	4

During session 2024/25 Scottish Attainment Challenge funded Family Learning, Youth Work and Pathways Advocates.

In academic session 23/24, 250 young people were tracked by a **Pathways Advocate**. This has risen to 300 in 24/25. In 2023/24 a fifth of the young people had regular or intensive support with this increasing to a quarter of young people in 2024-25.

During the second year of having this role, there is increased confidence that intensive support is being targeted to young people who most need it. It is therefore anticipated (and showing in the emerging 2024/25 data) that we are supporting the young people who are encountering the most significant barriers in their education.

Overall, we are seeing a positive impact of the role on attendance, progress and relationships. Case studies and feedback from staff and young people, evidence key successes for individual young people as a direct impact of having the role within the school.

Positive destinations showed a decline for 2023/24 compared to 2022/23. Care experienced young people are often unable to sustain positive destinations. This is a priority for improvement next session.

With SEF funding, **youth work programmes** have expanded significantly, providing essential support to young people. The initiatives focus on personal, social, and educational development, fostering resilience and confidence among participants. One-to-one support has become a core offering in youth work, addressing mental health and emotional well-being. This personalised approach has proven effective in building trust and improving young people's confidence.

Families and educators have provided positive feedback on the impact of youth work services. Testimonials highlight improvements in mental health, confidence, and overall well-being among participants. Families report feeling reassured and hopeful due to the support received. Teachers note significant increases in learner engagement, confidence, and attendance linked to youth work interventions.

Youth work programmes have led to measurable improvements in health and well-being among participants, focusing on self-awareness, respect, and resilience. Evaluations indicate a strong positive impact across various indicators.

School actively support anti-poverty measures across their communities and this will continue.

Quotes from young people accessing the youth work programmes

"They help me with my confidence, help me make new friends, I can talk about stuff I haven't told anyone."

"I have made more friends. It has calmed me down and helped me understand certain things."

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The Family Learning team delivers tailored support to families, focusing on their unique needs and challenges. A diverse range of courses and activities are available to parents and caregivers, focusing on parenting support, mental health, and family learning activities. These programmes aim to build knowledge, skills, and community connections.

The Family Learning team actively supports families facing poverty and crisis, providing essential resources and assistance. They organise various activities to engage families, promote learning, and foster community connections. These activities are designed to be fun, educational, and accessible to all families. The programmes' reach and impact are evident through participant demographics and engagement levels. Family Learning workers measure various health and wellbeing outcomes, demonstrating improvements in participants' confidence, skills, and overall wellbeing. The programme tracks progress and next steps for continued support.

Feedback is positive, families report building friendships and receiving tailored support that meets their needs; schools recognise the value of Family Learning workers in supporting diverse school communities and partners commend the team's flexibility and responsiveness to family needs, enhancing community connections.

The impact of investment in these areas will continue to be monitored during session 25/26 with a view to them becoming central to our model of Family Support.

Youth Work Activities per ASG 2024/25
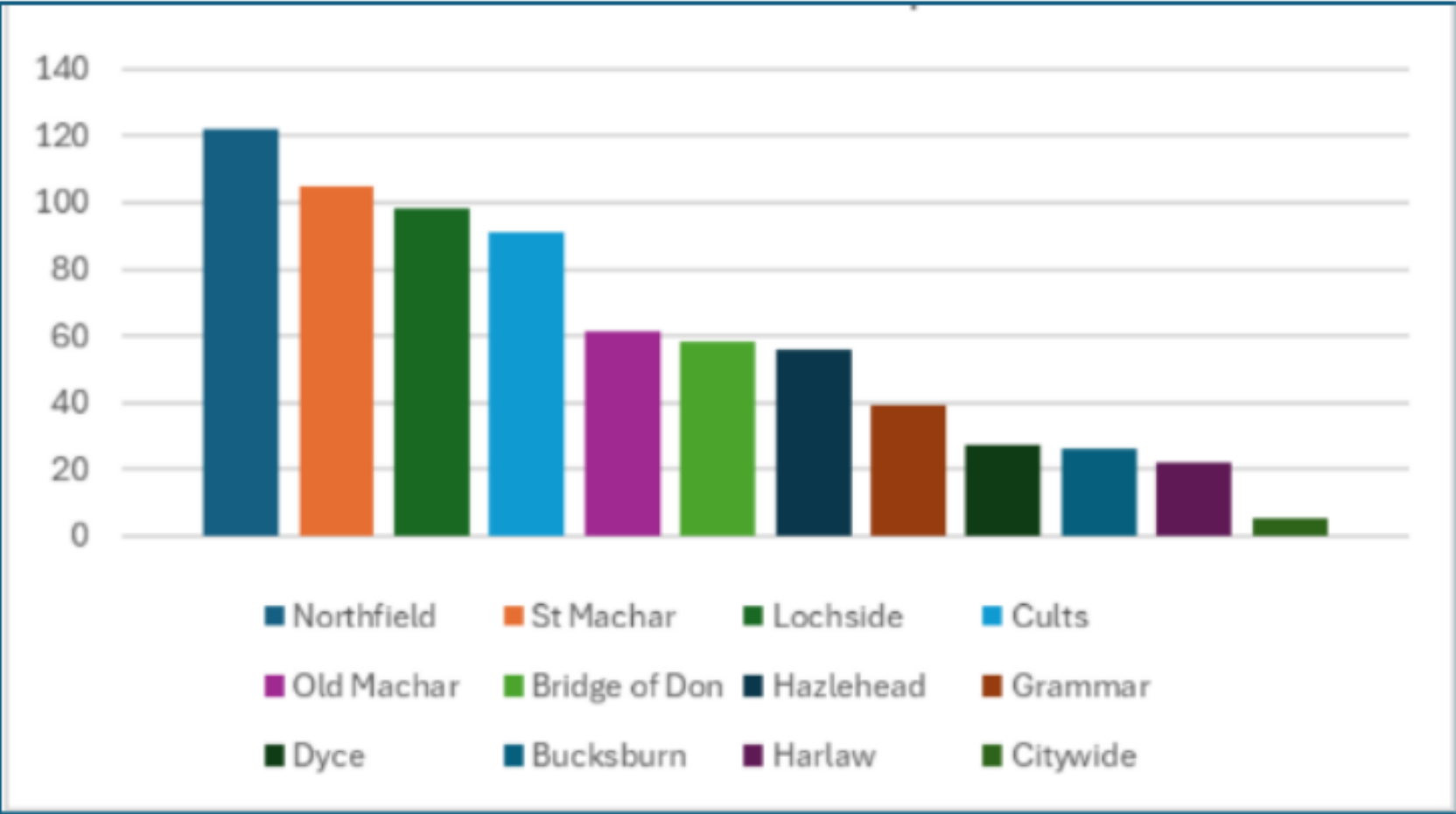
Family Learning Activities per ASG 2024/25

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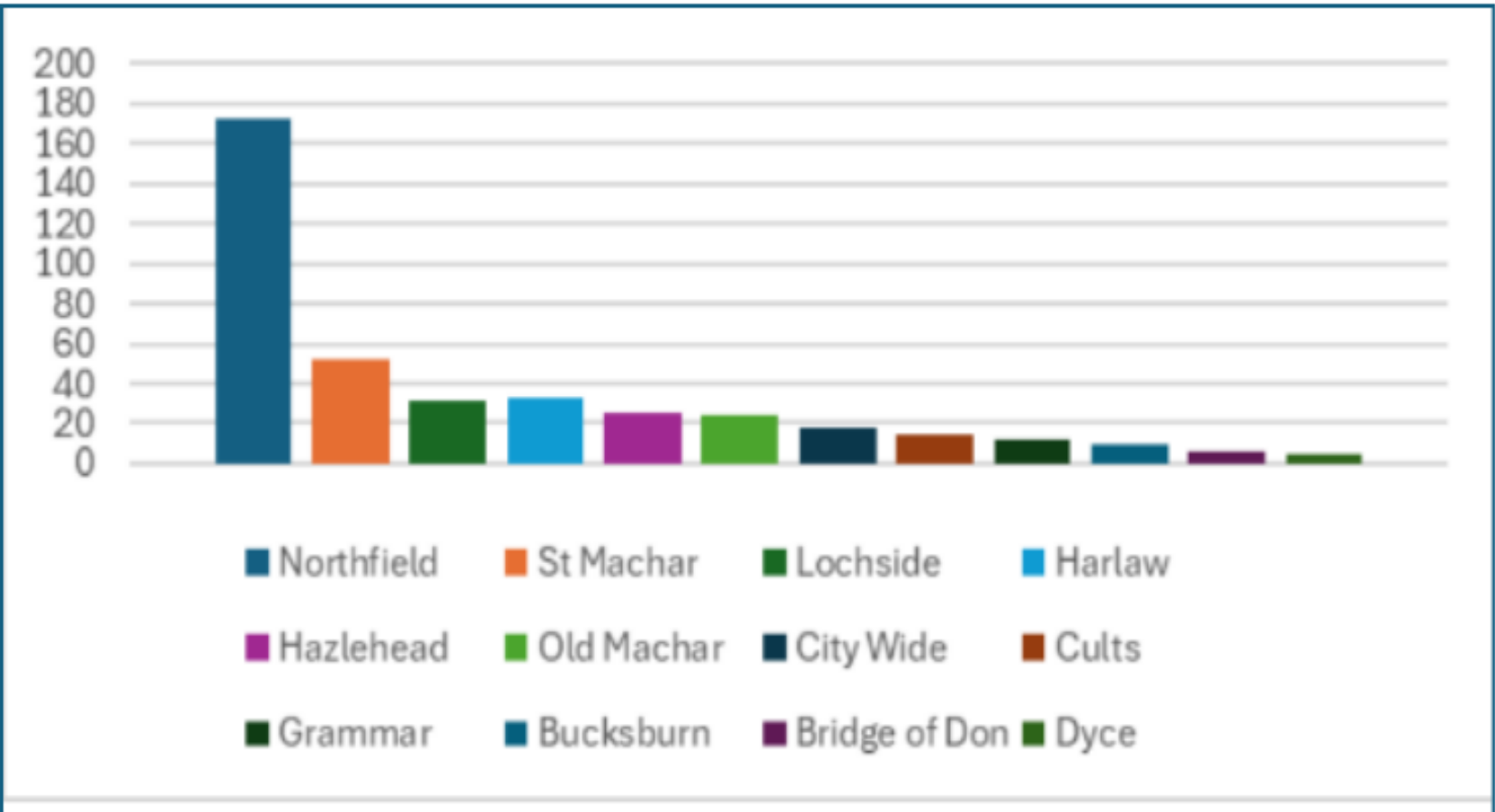
Delivery of The Promise
In line with Scotland's national commitment to *Keeping The Promise*, the pilot programme has continued to reflect and consider how children and families are supported through a whole-family, relationships-based approach. Since its launch in November 2022, the pilot has embedded the core values of *The Promise* by delivering integrated, multi-agency support across Associated School Groups (ASGs), operating 52 weeks a year.
The pilot's expansion to a third ASG, St Machar, in April 2025 has enabled the leadership team to test the model's scalability and adaptability across diverse community contexts. Quantitative data from 2024/25 highlights improvements in attendance and a reduction in exclusions, particularly where early and sustained intervention has been in place. The high proportion of learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) further underscores the importance of co-ordinated, tailored support.

The pilot's dynamic and needs-led approach is evident in its flexible response to changing family circumstances and alignment with Early Intervention services such as Fit Like . In 1 ASG, for example, 8 referrals were considered to be best supported at universal or Fit Like levels, while 1 young person required specialist intervention. These decisions were made collaboratively with school and Fit Like teams to ensure appropriate planning. One young person re-engaged with the pilot following a significant change in family circumstances, demonstrating the team's agility and responsiveness. Additionally, 5 Senior Phase pupils successfully transitioned out of school and are now supported by Skills Development Scotland (SDS), while 2 others moved to universal support due to positive progress—highlighting the pilot's role in enabling successful transitions and reducing reliance on specialist services.

As the pilot moves into the 2025/26 academic year, its continued focus on improved data-informed planning, the integration of wellbeing measurement tools, and strengthened links with community resources will be critical to increasing its impact and sustaining progress in delivering on *The Promise*.   Work to align our work around the Promise is now being driven by a newly established internal Promise Board.

Implementation of the revised anti-bullying policy
Our revised Anti-Bullying Policy was approved in July 2023 and shared with Head Teachers in September 2023. In early 2024 a session was run to allow colleagues to share practice to support their development of local school policies. The Anti-Bullying Guidance has been updated to reflect the recommendations from the updated: Respect for All National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People (November 2024). Key developments included expanded guidance on on-line bullying and an update definition, considering the emotional impact of bullying. Officers met with the Director of Respectme (Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service) on 26 March 2025 and there was a discussion on the amendments made to our guidance.

Is Aberdeen Keeping The Promise?
Year 2 Evaluation Report
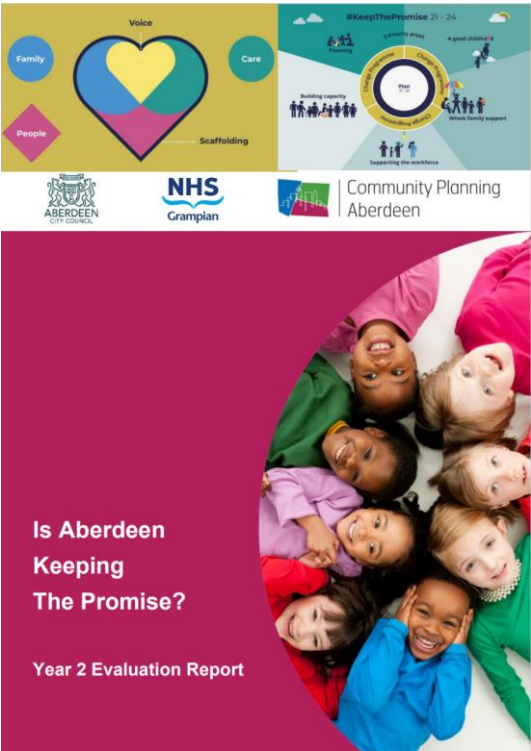
	Primary			Secondary			Total		
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
May	12	23	40	8	27	37	20	50	77
Jun	14	21	25	11	50	35	25	71	60
Jul		3	3		5	8		8	11
Aug	3	6	7	12	13	6	15	19	13
Sep	9	30	20	47	42	35	56	72	55
Oct	8	15	15	28	16	21	36	31	36
Nov	13	25	40	34	33	49	47	58	89
Dec	12	23	34	8	19	42	20	42	76
Jan	21	28	32	22	29	39	43	57	71
Feb	16	24	29	19	31	24	35	55	53
Mar	18	43	24	27	38	27	45	81	51
Apr	6	12	17	12	22	14	18	34	31
Total	132	253	286	228	325	337	360	578	623

Incidents of Bullying

□ Primary   ■ Secondary

equally safe
at school

a whole school approach to
preventing gender based violence
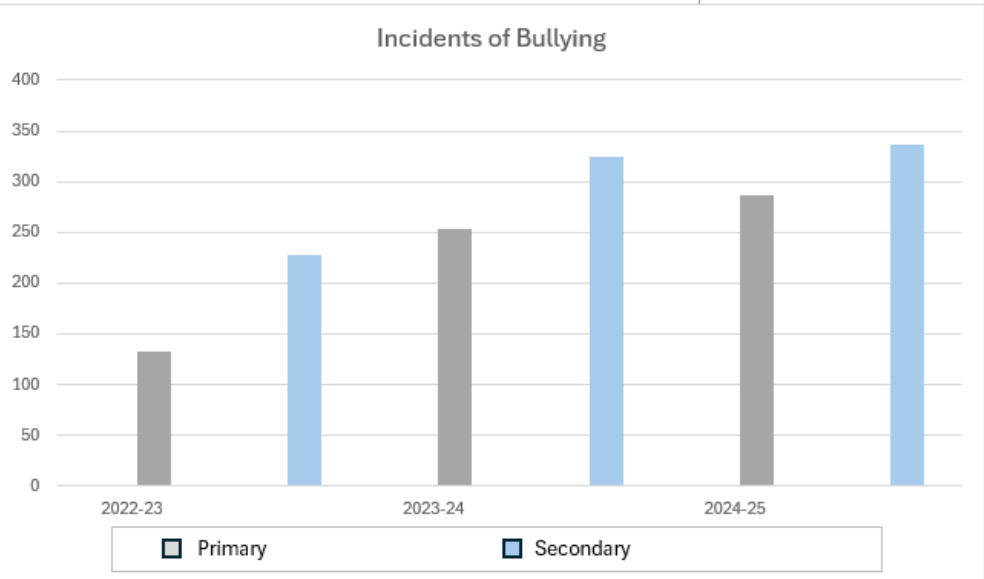
Data is reviewed monthly and trends and anomalies are identified and shared with Quality Improvement Managers to support conversations with senior leaders in schools. This follows further clarification of the expectations on recording and monitoring incidents and the processes that should be followed when an allegation of bullying is reported. All incidents of reported bullying must be recorded. During session 24/25 schools have been more consistent in their reporting, making effective use of the Bullying and Equalities module on SEEMiS. This has resulted in an increase in the number of incidents being recorded and there is now a broader spread of schools which reflects the more robust and systematic arrangements in place. There was a total of 623 recorded incidents, 286 Primary and 337 Secondary.

Throughout 2024/25 staff have engaged in professional learning on offer, developing their skills and experience in dealing with and responding to bullying incidents. Staff have registered with the respectme online CPD resource. Several schools have provided QR codes which enable pupils to make disclosures quickly and discretely. Pupil surveys show there is greater awareness of key adults and where to go to if there is a need to report. We will continue to review the impact of the policy and share successes across the service.

Staff have engaged with the Digital Discourse Initiative. This is a free online professional learning module for teachers and educators, developed by TIE (Time for Inclusive Education) and ISD (Information Services Division) as part of a new international collaboration. It provides bespoke educational tools to address the effects of online hate and disinformation on children and young people. The course covers online hate, safeguarding and educational counter strategies.

All secondary schools have registered on the **Equally Safe at School** website and identified a lead person for this remit. Bucksburn Academy continue to work with ESAS as part of the pilot programme. 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 were 2 incidents related to GBV recorded in February and March 2025. Schools are currently reviewing their Relationships and Sexual Health and Parenthood curriculum to ensure it includes learning about equalities and gender-based violence.

All secondary schools have staff and young people trained in the **Mentors Against Violence programme** and schools are at various stages of implementation. 4 schools have fully implemented the programme, 3 are currently refreshing the programme and the remainder planning to implement during session 24/25. The primary version of the programme is almost ready for release, and we have asked to be considered as an early adopter for 25/26.

To support increased awareness of the impact of trauma on young people, all staff in schools engaged with the NHS national trauma training with all staff completing foundation and intermediate during session 24/25. Undertaking this training will support greater understanding of the issues impacting young people who have experienced trauma in their life and how best to support individuals and families. This will be offered again in session 25/26 to support new staff.

Additional staff have engaged with opportunities to train as trainers for Mentors in Violence (MVP) at a 2-day course in March 2025. This doubles the MVP training capacity within ACC to support the training of staff in schools and ensuring that we are self-sufficient as an authority. As a result of our self-sufficiency as an authority, Education Scotland requested that ACC trainers support colleagues in the independent sector to achieve their roll out of MVP.

A total of 93 staff across 11 secondary schools are currently trained to deliver the MVP programme and to support pupil mentors within their contexts, usually through PSE or wider achievement programmes. Additionally, we will be arranging further ACC training in terms 2 and 3 of session 25/26, to support new staff to this programme and refresh existing staff. This area of work will not be maintained, with central team capacity utilised to support the implementation of a primary model when released.

Systems to support LGBTQIA+ community in school
Schools continue to engage with Time for Inclusive Education. We have 450 teaching staff across 60 education settings who have completed Stage 1 of the E-Learning Module. 3 Schools are involved in Stage 2 professional learning. 1 School has completed all the outcomes. and there will be a further offers later in the session.

To support the published Guidance on LGBT Inclusive Education staff had the opportunity to attend professional learning delivered by TIE in April 2025.

LGBT groups from our schools collaborated with each other and with schools across Aberdeenshire to coordinate an event for LGBT students which took place at Northfield Academy on the 25 April 2025. The event and disco was a huge success and brought 49 pupils and staff together to celebrate diversity and inclusion. There are plans to build on this success with another joint event to be held on the 20 June 2025.   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 March to the end June 2025. This work will be maintained.

Increase provision of ELC to those from low income households
We continue to work with the Scottish Government Data Pipeline to help us identify eligible 2s families. Once identified the families are sent information about eligible 2s and details on how to apply. Based on the data shared with the local authority, information was sent to 488 families. The Service currently supports over 250 eligible 2s in our ELC provisions. This is a 22% increase on the number of children placed in 2023/2024. In addition, the number of eligible children taking up their eligible 2s funded entitlement has increased by 10% from 38.3% in 2023/24 to 48.3% in 2024/25. We will continue to work to increase this positive upward trajectory in session 2025/26.

Multi-agency 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 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

Our model of family support continues to focus on those groups at greatest risk. Outcomes for those in SIMD 1 continue to be of greatest concern. Our work continues with Fairer Future Partnerships and work is ongoing to explore how services can work together in a smarter way. This model is looking at the resources available and how they can be remodelled to ensure they are targeted to ensure maximum impact for those with greatest need.

A Promise Board has been established to bring together services to develop and monitor the implementation of strategies, policies and plans designed to support the Council's delivery of The Promise, whilst considering the contributing internal factors on those in or on the edge of care. This will help build on our progress as articulated in our Promise evaluation.
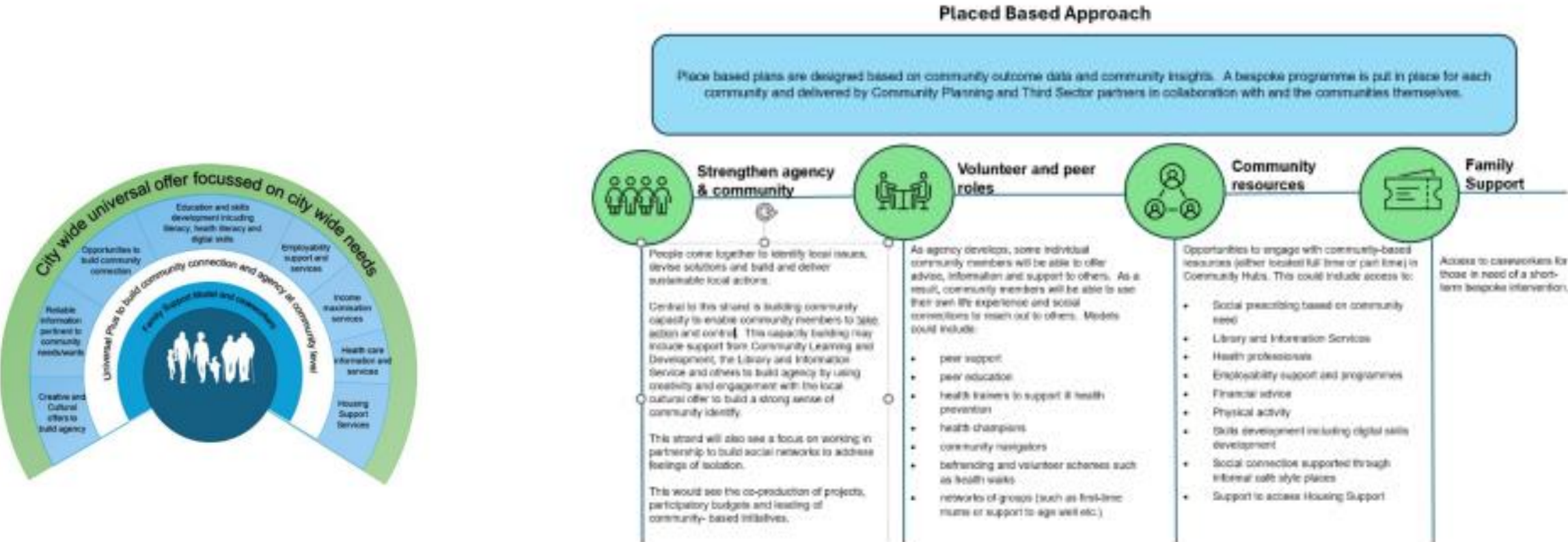
NIF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy

The Northern Alliance, Learning Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Toolkit has been extensively populated and is now a supportive resource to enhance development activity as part of a school's improvement plans. It is designed to add value to schools' existing practices and resources. The Toolkit is built upon strong methodology and supports the impact of improvement within 6 key sections, identified as requiring support through analysis of HMIe school inspection reports across Scotland. It supports practitioners and school leaders to access high quality materials to implement effective staff development. Integral to improvement within these themes is high quality leadership which runs through each element of the Toolkit. Implementation of the leadership cycle supports schools to know whether learning experiences are leading to achievement.

Aberdeen's Learning, Teaching and Assessment officers have worked in partnership with colleagues from the seven local authorities that make up the Northern Alliance. In Terms 1 and 2, our LTA officers spent time in schools piloting the methodology of the Toolkit. This hands-on engagement allowed them to evaluate its effectiveness and gather valuable insights to inform ongoing development leading to effective implementation. The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Toolkit is a high-quality resource with all the necessary elements to support meaningful school improvement. Schools are still at the early stages of implementation and more dedicated time, sustained attention and leadership are needed to ensure its use leads to school improvement

More recently they have focused their time on writing quality Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) sessions specifically for school leaders to support effective implementation of the Toolkit. These sessions have been positively received with around 70 leaders attending sessions 1 and 2. Feedback highlighted the relevance and practical value of the content. As a result of these CLPL sessions, increased engagement with the Toolkit has been seen. Schools are beginning to incorporate it more actively within their staff development activities demonstrating its growing impact.

Evaluations from these CLPL sessions identified that school leaders wish increased opportunities for collaboration and to find out how others have implemented the toolkit in their own settings. In response to this, two additional CLPL sessions were delivered to continue to build confidence and deepen engagement. School leaders also expressed an interest in having a dedicated space to share ideas, strategies and examples of successful practice. To support this a Teams site has been established for school leaders to connect, exchange experiences and access shared resources.

Schools are at the early phase of working through the different elements of the Toolkit implementation and need more time to pilot, evaluate and measure the impact of the Toolkit on their improvement work. Building a shared understanding of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment reduces perception gaps in teachers' practice and is a key driver of improvement. Officers continue to work closely with schools to identify and share ideas for this. Coaching with individual school leaders also supports improvements in identifying next steps and the formation of a quality action plan. Provocations and signposts have been added to the newly created Teams site to support professional dialogue and collaboration. To ensure the methodology of the toolkit is successfully embedded in school practice there is clear value in incorporating it within Aberdeen's Quality Improvement Framework. Identifying ways in which individual themes can be explicitly linked to our quality improvement visits would further strengthen its use and enhance impact on school improvement.

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2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment

Numeracy & Maths Resources

Teacher Languages Professional Learning Site

27 of our Primaries have now completed the **CYPIC National Writing Programme** training. 70 P4 teachers and managers have attended the extensive training with another 123 teachers from P3-7 attending the spread and scale twilight training to allow for continuity of approach from P3 – 7 in our trained schools (training has also been delivered to our probationers across ACC and the central Education team, with all staff taken through the quality improvement journey stages using a recognised graphic.   Data from our most recent cohorts has shown a significant increase in projected writing data at the P4 stage with ambitious stretch aims being met, with almost all achieving or superseding these aims. The methodology is included in the refreshed literacy progression and training will continue to be rolled out to the remaining ASGs over 25/26 to support further increases in attainment.

An online Literacy Hub platform has been created to support teachers in delivering the Literacy curriculum. This has been populated and piloted for the writing element and we are now working through the reading aspect so that these are ready for schools to embark on in 2025/26. The Hub also has video links to suggested pedagogical approaches and gives stimulus and resources via populated links. Our Literacy Journey group have met regularly over this session with a visual now created and education Literacy plans shared with all the stakeholders. Libraries are now working closely with education to raise the profile of Literacy, with an event planned for June 2025 bringing Literacy Champions identified in all our schools together with Library staff and Scottish Book Trust. 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.
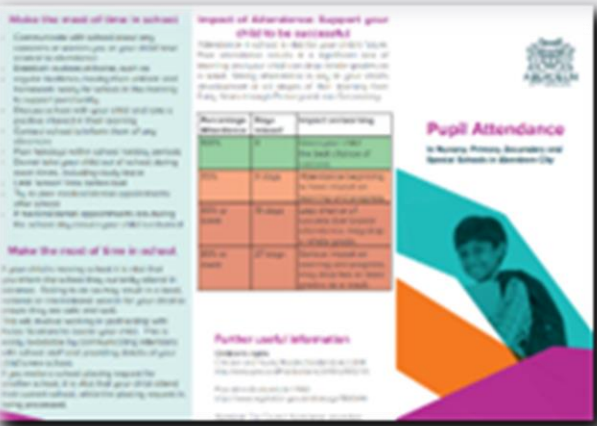
Guidance on Managing & Promoting Pupil Attendance had been circulated to all schools in July 2023 in recognition that poor attendance was impacting on attainment. The Guidance was updated and re-issued in April 2024. The flow chart included continues to ensure that a consistent approach to promoting attendance is adopted across ACC settings. Quality Improvement visits are used to monitor compliance and to ensure consistency in this approach. The Power BI Broad General Education Tracking & Monitoring system provides a platform to monitor attendance easily. Attendance discussions take place termly between Senior Leaders and QIO/QIMs to ensure rigour.

Pupil Attendance – a guide for parents/carers - has been re-issued three times in 2024/25, in September, November and February, to reinforce the message about the impact of attendance on achievement, attainment and wellbeing. Overall, attendance continues to be higher in Primary settings. Following the issue of the updated parent guidance in February there was a 2% increase in attendance across all sectors (Primary, Secondary and Special). Average attendance in Term 4 is 93.2%. The guidance will continue to be reviewed and reissued at the beginning of each term.

A test of change undertaken at Manor Park School in relation to attendance saw a trainee school nurse working with 10 families (P.6 and P.7) with low attendance over a ten week period. Attendance rates rose for almost all learners. This test of change will be replicated next session at Bramble Brae School with a school nurse supporting 5 families (7 children).

Central officers continue to promote Education Scotland Learning resources for Head Teachers to use in their own settings, including the most recent support materials, Engaging Parents and Families to Improve Attendance in Schools and Partnership and Multi-Agency Working (both updated May 2025). This area of work will be maintained through implementation of our agreed Quality Improvement Framework.

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Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

Young people involved in **ABZ Campus courses** for 2024/25 have completed their courses and assessments with new courses having commenced recently for the 2025/26 session. Key developments during 2025/26 are:

- An increase in the number of courses from 72 to 80 in 2025/26, and a further increase in the number of non-NESCOL partner-delivered courses from 24 to 29.
- Further partnership discussion and working developing across other Northern Alliance local authorities
- A consolidation of the virtual and anytime courses offered for young people
- Continued commitment to the importance of listening to our young people and their experiences of our ABZ Campus Courses with surveys and focus groups now an annual part of the quality assurance process
- A continuation of the ASN Employability experience for young people with more complex needs

For session 2025/26, we have increased the range of courses through ABZ Campus.

Year	Total	School Courses	NESCOL Courses	Courses from Other Providers	Foundation Apprenticeship Courses
2023-24	36	23	3	10	8
2024-25	72	31	17	24	25
2025-26	80	34	17	29	23

Over 1500 applications have been made for ABZ Campus courses for session 2025/26.

An overview can be found in the table below:-

Applications	
Applications for ABZ Campus for School-Based Courses	926
Applications for Aberlour & Bon Accord Foundation Apprenticeships* ** not included are applications for Aberdeenshire FA Courses**	165
Applications for NESCOL Foundation Apprenticeships / HNC	370
Applications for Anytime/Twilight Courses	59

Aberdeenshire Council has developed an effective Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) delivery programme. Phase 3 continues to utilise our partnership with this neighbouring local authority where four FA classes will run in Aberdeen City schools and be delivered by Aberdeenshire Council FA staff. As with previous years, these courses are to cater for demand amongst our young people for Construction FAs.

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For the second year, ABZ Campus offers solutions for young people who for a particular reason require to study on an anytime or twilight basis. These courses continue to be chiefly, but not exclusively, offered through partners.   We continue to seek out opportunities to use this offer to work collaboratively with other local authorities. We are projected to have young people from at least two other local authorities accessing our *Anytime* courses and would hope that this will lead to reciprocal arrangements for Aberdeen City young people in future phases of ABZ Campus. To date, we have had productive and positive discussions with ten other local authorities, mainly but not restricted to those within the Northern Alliance.

Regular reporting on our progress with ABZ Campus evidences how we continue to listen to our young people about their experiences of ABZ Campus.   Whilst always striving towards universally positive responses, young people have consistently valued both the offer and experience of ABZ Campus and this is something to be maintained in future phases.

Despite some setbacks in being able to develop a more cohesive work experience element to the ABZ Campus offer, structural changes are planned for the oversight and operation of work experience placements that should allow for a set of work experience options to form part of the choice process for 2026/27.   There will be continued collaborative planning with colleagues from Developing the Young Workforce and Aberdeenshire Council.

Pathways for those with additional support needs: A wide network has been established to support the development of the #WHATif (Inspiring Futures) pathway pilot. The pilot offered 18 young people the opportunity to learn about different types of employment before moving into work experience and volunteering roles within the community.

Young people completed the self-awareness unit and gained an employability award at SCQF level 3 or 4 with some moving on to begin the preparation for employment Award at SCQF Level 4 or, in some cases, Level 5. The supported work placements have allowed young people to develop skills and acclimatise to working life. The programme will continue to be developed throughout session 25/26 as part of ABZ Campus Phase 3.

Developing routes into healthcare: NHS Grampian continues to be committed to supporting the classroom at the St Machar Academy, providing hands-on experience for young people and a place where they can learn about the range of careers available in healthcare. This has been a popular choice for young people and has resulted in positive transitions into the health care sector. Having the classroom set up in the school has allowed young people to develop confidence in working with professionals in their own context.

There is significant evidence of improved breadth and depth across the senior phase. The important work to secure improvements in positive destinations sits alongside efforts in improving the Annual Participation (APM) measure. Activity includes (but is not limited to); improving the capture of data around intended destinations at school level, creating an aligned school leaver form to ensure we capture the right information to support young people, working with Skills Development Scotland to improve Pathway Planning understanding, and creating a more cohesive work experience structure to ensure young people have vital experience of the workplace before leaving school.

Progress against Stretch Aims (2025-26) and targets

Stretch aims and trajectories for individual groups are included in the graphs and tables later in this report.

Stretch aims were first set in 2022, before the unexpected increase in pupil population. Despite this, the service has retained the ambitious aims but acknowledges that our context is considerably changed now. Stretch aims will be reviewed in full to support planning from 2026/27.

Unvalidated ACEL tracking data for 2024/25 suggests that learners have continued to make progress in key areas, with Listening and Talking and Numeracy forecasts remaining stable or improving slightly despite the significant increase in school roll. P4 and P7 attainment has held steady across most measures, indicating sustained performance for learners in middle and upper primary. While P1 attainment has dipped in Reading, Writing and Listening and Talking, this provides a clear focus for improvement and targeted support in the early years. The planned reintroduction of early language interventions will support this work going forward.

The overall attainment picture continues to reflect strong engagement and recovery following the pandemic. However, the poverty-related attainment gap remains a significant challenge. Forecasts show that outcomes for learners in SIMD Quintile 1 remain below target in most curricular areas. The data highlights the importance of maintaining support for schools serving communities with higher levels of deprivation, with a focus on moderation, targeted interventions, and early identification of need to ensure equitable progress for all learners.

Attainment for learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) remains consistent in Numeracy and Listening and Talking, though a small drop is noted in Literacy and Writing.

Forecast data for Looked After Children (LAC) shows an encouraging improvement in Writing attainment, though progress is still required in other areas. Due to the small cohort size, percentages can vary significantly, reinforcing the importance of close tracking and consistent partnership working with providers of care-experienced support.

Trajectory values provide a "direction of travel" for improvement as we work towards overall stretch aims. Education Scotland has asked that this be shown as a range, indicating both upper and lower values.

Forecasts provide indicative performance for 2024/25 based on pre-validation data. These are subject to final quality assurance checks and may be updated in line with the validated attainment release from Insight in later in 2025.

ACEL Reading

Stretch Aim: 85% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2025/26.

The overall forecast for session 2024/25 is 78.48%, representing a slight decrease from the 79.37% achieved in 2023/24 and just below the national average of 80%.

The small decline in the combined figure is driven primarily by a dip in Reading attainment at P1 (Early Level), which has decreased from 80.75% in 2023/24 to 78.80%.

In contrast, attainment at P4 (First Level) and P7 (Second Level) has remained broadly stable or improved slightly, indicating that the issue is concentrated in early literacy. This will be a focus area for improvement activity across the next school session and necessitates close partnership working with our ELC provisions.

Attainment among learners from SIMD Quintile 1 is forecast at 64%, down from the 69% achieved last year, and well below both the national level (72%) and the 2025/26 stretch aim of 78%. The relative size of the cohort has impacted. Learners in Quintile 5 are forecast at 84%, resulting in a Q1–Q5 gap of -19.5pp, which is a slight widening from 2023/24 (-18pp) and further from the 2025/26 target gap of -13pp. The central team has identified those schools who require further support and have planned enhanced engagement as part of their quality improvement arrangements.

The proportion of learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) expected to achieve appropriate levels is forecast at 63%, down from 66% and below the 2025/26 aim of 76%.   A positive development is seen for Looked After Children (LAC), with a forecast increase from 41% to 53%.

The number of young people in P1 with an identified additional support need has risen from 17.9% in 2022/23 to 23.6% in session 2024/25 and this has impacted on attainment. There is a need to plan additional interventions to support this cohort as they move through school.

During session 25/26 ELC settings will ensure all settings prioritise a literacy rich learning environment to promote early literacy skill development to support cohorts currently accessing ELC.

Trajectory for 2025/26 – Between 81% and 84% of learners expected to achieve predicted levels.

% Level Achieved - Reading
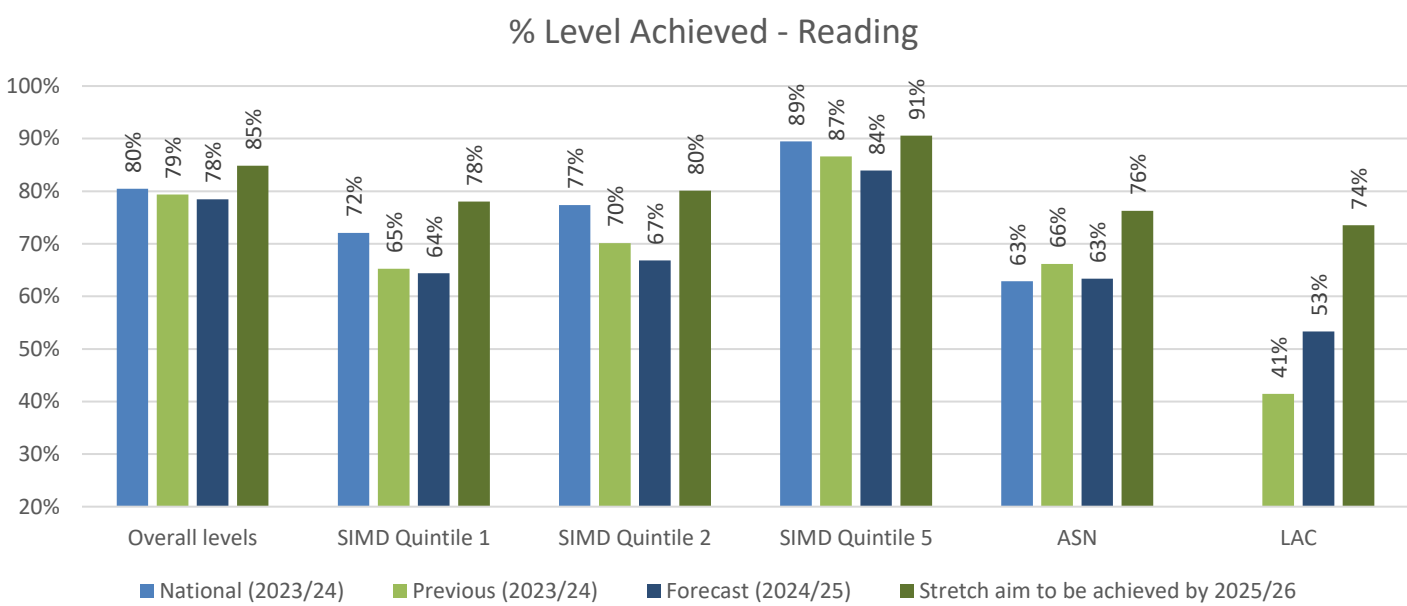
ACEL P1, P4, P7 Reading Combined

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	80%	72%	77%	89%	17.5pp	63%	
Previous (2023/24)	79%	65%	70%	87%	21pp	66%	41%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(80% - 81%)	(67% - 70%)	(70% - 72%)	(84% - 85%)	(15pp to 17pp)	(69% - 71%)	(70% - 71%)
Forecast (2024/25)	78%	64%	67%	84%	1952%	63%	53%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(81% - 84%)	(70% - 77%)	(73% - 77%)	(84% - 88%)	(14pp to 15pp)	(72% - 77%)	(70% - 74%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(1% - 3%)	(3% - 7%)	(3% - 5%)	(0% - 3%)		(3% - 6%)	(2% - 3%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	85%	78%	80%	91%	13pp	76%	74%

ACEL Writing

Stretch Aim – 82% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2025/26.

% Level Achieved - Writing

Legend: National (2023/24), Previous (2023/24), Forecast (2024/25), Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26
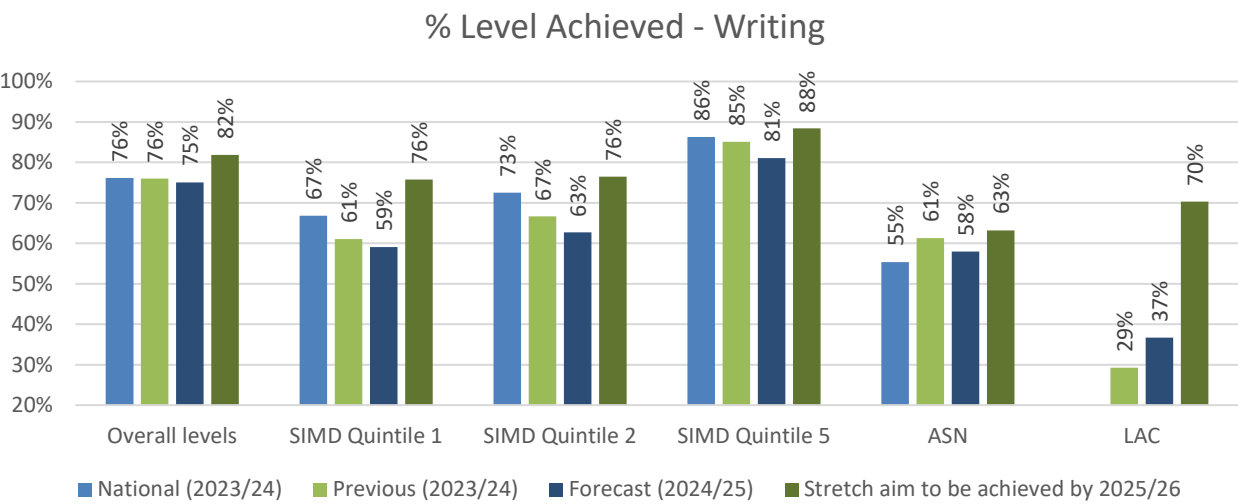
ACEL P1, P4, P7 Writing Combined

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	76%	67%	73%	86%	-19.4pp	55%	
Previous (2023/24)	76%	61%	67%	85%	-24pp	61%	29%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(78% - 79%)	(65% - 69%)	(70% - 72%)	(86% - 87%)	(-18pp to -21pp)	(61% - 62%)	(67% - 70%)
Forecast (2024/25)	75%	59%	63%	81%	-22%	58%	37%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(79% - 82%)	(68% - 76%)	(73% - 76%)	(86% - 88%)	(-18pp to -18pp)	(61% - 63%)	(67% - 70%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(1% - 3%)	(3% - 7%)	(3% - 4%)	(0% - 1%)		(61% - 63%)	(67% - 70%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	82%	76%	76%	88%	-13pp	63%	70%

The forecast for session 2024/25 indicates that 75% of learners across P1, P4 and P7 are expected to achieve the expected level in Writing. While this is a small dip from 76% in 2023/24, performance at P4 and P7 remains stable, providing a strong foundation from which to build. A renewed focus on Early Level writing and literacy will support continued progress toward the stretch aim.

Performance at P1 (Early Level) had previously shown strong results and, while a decline is forecast this session, there is evidence of an increase in additional support needs for this cohort and this presents a clear opportunity to strengthen early support. Priorities will include enhanced provision for early language development, phonological awareness, and fine motor skills - key enablers of writing readiness. By focusing on these early interventions, we aim to secure long-term gains in writing outcomes.

The poverty-related attainment gap remains a key focus. Forecasts show SIMD Quintile 1 learners achieving 59%, compared to 81% for Quintile 5, resulting in a Q1–Q5 gap of -22 percentage points. Although this remains above the national gap (-19.4pp) and just outside the local target range (-18pp to -21pp), improvement activity will continue to target schools serving the highest proportion of learners in Quintiles 1 and 2, ensuring effective moderation and assessment practices to improve equity in outcomes.

Encouragingly, outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) are forecast to rise from 29% to 37%, reflecting the positive impact of targeted support. While this remains below the stretch aim of 70%, it represents a step in the right direction. Outcomes for learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) are forecast at 58%, and improvement plans will focus on ensuring high-quality, tailored support is maintained and strengthened.

Planned improvement activity for session 2025/26 includes:
- Targeted support at P1 to enhance early writing readiness through language and motor skill development
- Expansion of the successful P4 writing intervention programme, supporting sustained progress
- Moderation and assessment support through the QAMSO (Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer) team, focused on schools with higher proportions of learners in Quintiles 1 and 2
- Asking our ELC settings to ensure that literacy rich environments promote literacy skill development

Trajectory for 2025/26 – Between 78% and 79% of learners expected to achieve predicted levels.

ACEL Listening and Talking

Stretch Aim - 90% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2026

The forecast for session 2024/25 is that 88% of learners will achieve expected levels in Listening and Talking. This reflects a 1 percentage point increase from the previous year (87%) and is in line with our trajectory. However, the overall figure masks a slight dip in performance at P1, which has moderated the overall rate of improvement.

Attainment across P4 and P7 remains stable, suggesting that the dip is isolated to the early stages and may be attributed to ongoing challenges in oral language development, including increased numbers of learners with English as an additional language and speech and language delays.

The poverty-related attainment gap (Q1–Q5) is forecast at -15.9 percentage points, a negligible improvement from -16pp last year but still above the national gap of -12.2pp. Performance for SIMD Quintile 1 is forecast at 76%, below the 2025/26 stretch aim of 82%, while Quintile 5 learners are forecast to achieve 91%. There is a need to focus on learners in Quintile 1 however the small numbers in this group mean any fluctuations in attainment can be significant. Plans are in place and attainment for this group will be focussed on during data discussions.

Attainment for learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) remains steady at 75%,and Looked After Children (LAC) are forecast at 66%, consistent with the previous year.

In 2025/26, improvement actions will focus on:

- Supporting P1 learners through enhanced oral language and vocabulary development
- Targeted intervention in P2, following the identified need from previous years
- Continued and wider use of TalkBoost and Early TalkBoost in Nursery to P3 settings

% Level Achieved - Listening & Talking

Legend: National (2023/24), Previous (2023/24), Forecast (2024/25), Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26
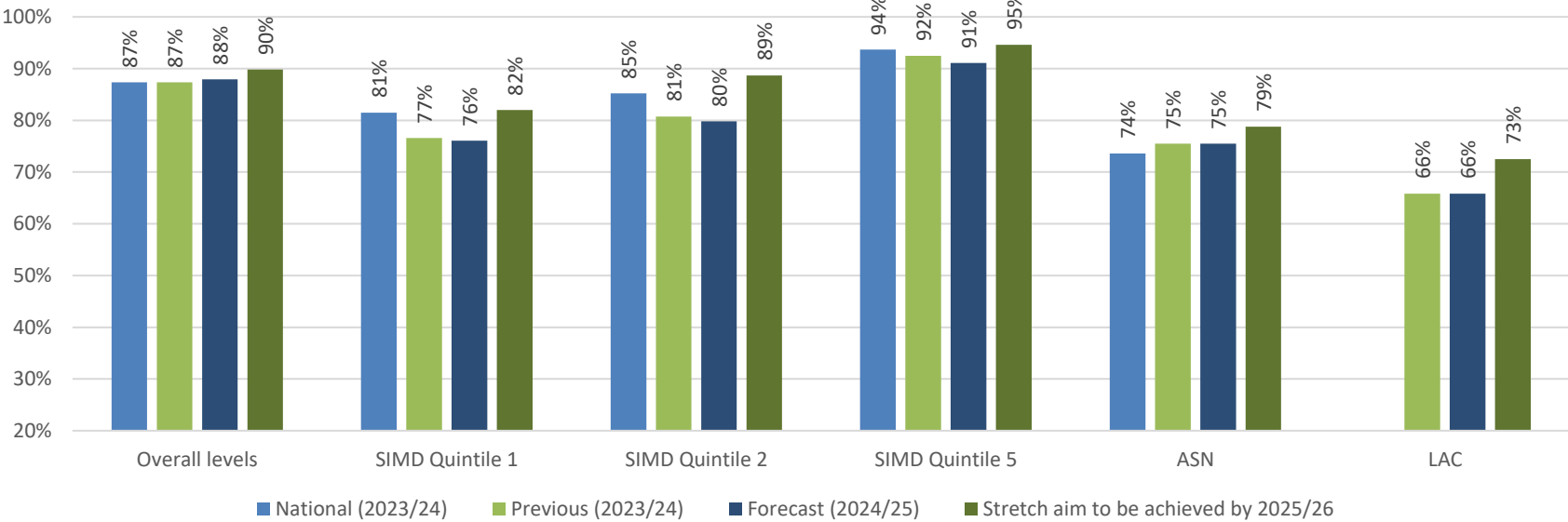
ACEL P1, P4, P7 Listening & Talking Combined

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	87%	81%	85%	94%	-12.2pp	74%	
Previous (2023/24)	87%	77%	81%	92%	-16pp	75%	66%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(88% - 89%)	(79% - 80%)	(83% - 85%)	(92% - 93%)	(-14pp to -14pp)	(76% - 77%)	(66% - 67%)
Forecast (2024/25)	88%	76%	80%	91%	-15.9pp	75%	66%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(88% - 90%)	(81% - 82%)	(86% - 89%)	(92% - 94%)	(-12pp to -14pp)	(76% - 78%)	(66% - 67%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(0% - 1%)	(2% - 2%)	(3% - 4%)	(0% - 1%)		(0% - 1%)	(0% - 0%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	90%	82%	89%	95%	-13pp	79%	73%

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ACEL Literacy Combined

Stretch Aim – 78% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2025/26.

% Level Achieved - Literacy

Legend: ■ National (2023/24) ■ Previous (2023/24) ■ Forecast (2024/25) ■ Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26
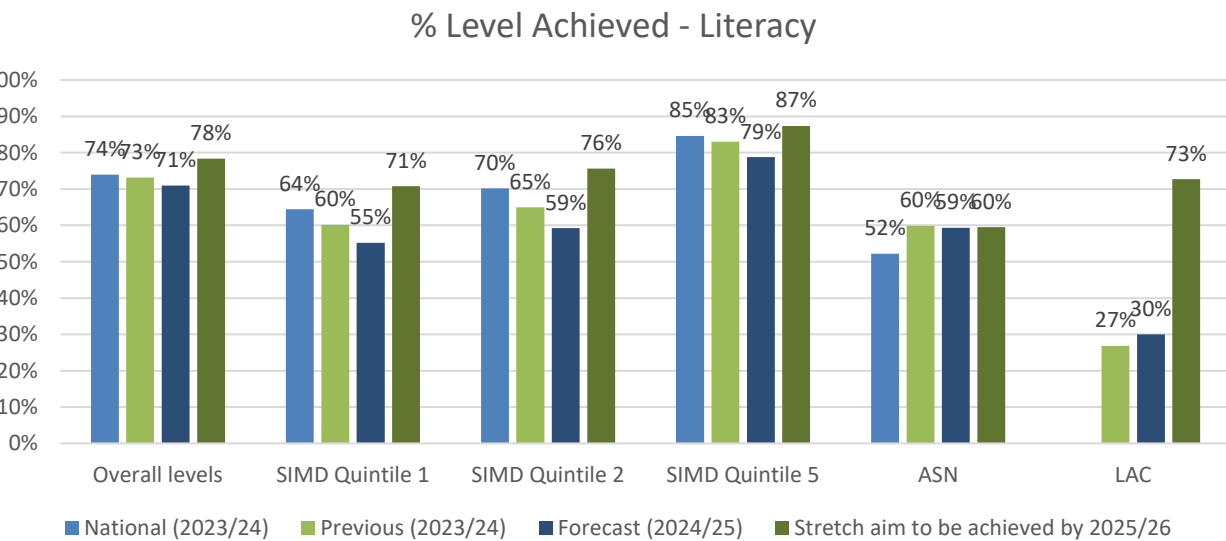
ACEL P1, P4, P7 Literacy Combined

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	74%	64%	70%	85%	-20.2pp	52%	
Previous (2023/24)	73%	60%	65%	83%	-23pp	60%	27%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(74% - 75%)	(63% - 65%)	(68% - 70%)	(84% - 85%)	(-20pp to -21pp)	(61% - 62%)	(59% - 63%)
Forecast (2024/25)	71%	55%	59%	79%	-23.7pp	59%	30%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(75% - 77%)	(66% - 69%)	(71% - 74%)	(84% - 86%)	(-18pp to -20pp)	(62% - 64%)	(59% - 73%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(1% - 2%)	(3% - 4%)	(3% - 4%)	(0% - 1%)		(1% - 2%)	(2% - 6%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	78%	71%	76%	87%	-17pp	60%	73%

The forecast for session 2024/25 indicates that 71% of learners across P1, P4 and P7 are expected to achieve the expected level in Literacy. This is broadly in line with national and overall performance at P4 and P7 has remained steady. The forecast highlights a need to refocus improvement activity, particularly in early level literacy to take account of the increase in additional support needs, to support continued progress toward the stretch aim.

The combined Literacy figure is influenced by a dip in P1 (Early Level) attainment across Reading, Writing, and Listening and Talking. This trend reflects the continuing challenges faced by early learners, including increased numbers with English as an additional language and the prevalence of speech and language needs. Building on the strong foundation at upper stages, the coming session provides an opportunity to strengthen support for early learners, ensuring they are equipped with the skills needed to thrive in Literacy.

The forecast for SIMD Quintile 1 learners is 55%, compared to 79% for Quintile 5, resulting in a Q1–Q5 gap of -23.7 percentage points. Although this is slightly wider than last year's figure, targeted interventions and moderation support in schools serving higher proportions of learners in Quintiles 1 and 2 will continue to promote greater equity.

Learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) are forecast to achieve 59%, reflecting a small shift from the previous year. Looked After Children (LAC) are projected to improve from 27% to 30%, showing promising progress in this group. Continued partnership working and refined tracking will support further gains across all measures for care-experienced learners.

In 2025/26, key actions will include:
- Focused early intervention at P1, with renewed emphasis on early language, vocabulary, and writing readiness
- Expansion of the successful P4 writing improvement programme, supported by partnership work with CYPIC
- Moderation and assessment support through the QAMSO team, prioritising schools in lower SIMD quintiles
- Reintroduction and wider use of TalkBoost and Early TalkBoost from Nursery to P3, to support speech, language, and communication development

Trajectory for 2025/26 – Between 75% and 77% of learners expected to achieve predicted levels.

ACEL Numeracy

Stretch Aim – 84% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2025/26.

The forecast for session 2024/25 indicates that 79% of learners are expected to achieve the appropriate level in Numeracy, maintaining the strong performance seen in 2023/24. This is broadly in line with national data and this stability reflects continued resilience and progress in the context of increasingly diverse learner needs.

Encouragingly, performance has been sustained across the system, with high levels of attainment in SIMD Quintile 5 (85%) and signs of growing engagement across other groups. The poverty-related attainment gap remains an area of ongoing focus, with the forecast gap between SIMD Quintile 1 and 5 currently at -19.0 percentage points. While this is consistent with the previous year, it reinforces the importance of continued, targeted support to help all learners achieve their potential.

Performance for learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) remains positive, with attainment forecast at 64%, demonstrating continued strength in this group. Notably, outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) are forecast to increase from 43% to 50%, representing a promising improvement and reflecting recent efforts to strengthen tailored support for care-experienced learners.

Looking ahead, the city-wide numeracy approach to strengthening numeracy and the refreshed progression framework will continue into 2025/26 with a renewed focus on transition points and early intervention, particularly in P1 and P2. The numeracy working group will continue to strengthen curriculum pathways and pedagogical alignment across the BGE and senior phase, ensuring learners benefit from coherent and consistent progression in Numeracy.

Trajectory for 2025/26 – Between **81% and 84%** of learners expected to achieve predicted levels.

% Level Achieved - Numeracy

Legend: National (2023/24), Previous (2023/24), Forecast (2024/25), Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26
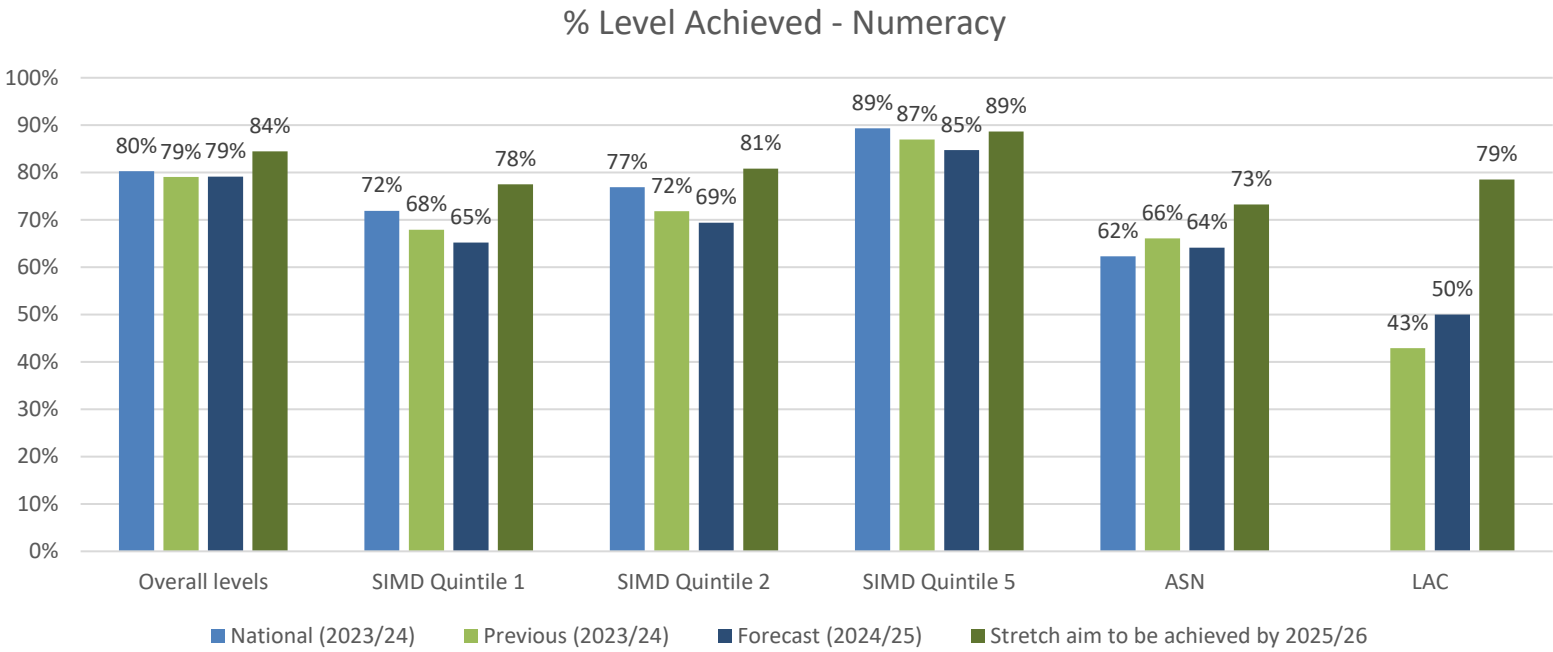
ACEL P1, P4, P7 Numeracy Combined

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	80%	72%	77%	89%	-17.4pp	62%	
Previous (2023/24)	79%	68%	72%	87%	-19pp	66%	43%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(80% - 82%)	(71% - 75%)	(74% - 78%)	(87% - 88%)	(-13pp to -16pp)	(68% - 70%)	(73% - 75%)
Forecast (2024/25)	79%	65%	69%	85%	-19.0pp	64%	50%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(81% - 84%)	(73% - 81%)	(76% - 83%)	(87% - 89%)	(-14pp to -13pp)	(69% - 73%)	(73% - 79%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(1% - 2%)	(2% - 6%)	(2% - 5%)	(0% - 1%)		(1% - 3%)	(2% - 3%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	84%	78%	81%	89%	-11pp	73%	79%

SQA Results for Session 2024-25

The SQA release at this time only represent a partial picture of the success of our young people. Increasing numbers now opt to take wider, less traditional SCQF courses and the full impact of the success of these only really becomes available when INSIGHT data is published in mid-September. To illustrate, last year young people achieved success in over 2,250 additional courses at Levels 4 to 7 (including HNC qualifications and Foundation Apprenticeships). Our forecast is that the broadening of curriculum offer and further development of ABZ Campus will have further extended the number and range of these courses in 2024-25.

There were 4,793 young people in the senior phase of our secondary schools at the point of school census in September 2024. This is 118 more than at the point of census of September 2023 (4,675).   As can be seen below, there are almost 1000 more young people now being presented for SQA awards compared to 2020. 23,825 SQA presentations were made in 2025 compared to only 16,276 in 2020.
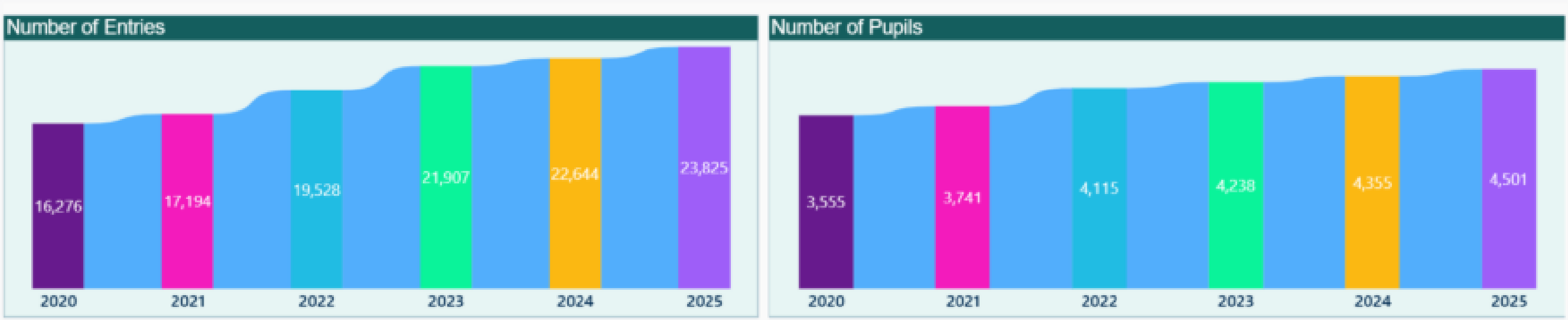
This is the highest number of entries on record. The service has been deliberately working to increase presentations given that previous attainment data suggested that schools were playing overly safe and in doing so, limiting the total achievements of young people (breadth and depth). Breadth and depth is a particular focus of HMIe and can only be fully analysed when Insight is released, although the National 5 data below indicates positive movement.

On average, each young person was presented for 5.29 SQA qualifications. On average, across all levels of SQA qualification, there was a 80% pass rate.

The table to the right demonstrates that, not only has there been a significant increase in roll (18% increase in young people sitting N5, 25% increase in young people sitting Higher and 43% increase in young people sitting Advanced Higher), but this has been matched and exceeded by the percentage increase in entries. Percentage increase in entries has outstripped the increase in pupil numbers, supporting the evidence of increased ambition and expectation.

	N5						Higher						Adv. Higher					
Year	Entries	Diff	% Increase Entries	Pupils (PowerBI)	Diff	% Increase Pupils	Entries	Diff	% Increase Entries	Pupils (PowerBI)	Diff	% Increase Pupils	Entries	Diff	% Increase Entries	Pupils (PowerBI)	Diff	% Increase Pupils
2020	8,060			2274			4670			1601			650			346		
2021	8,440	380	5	2441	167	7	5080	410	9	1724	123	8	640	-10	-2	346	0	0
2022	9,170	730	14	2552	111	12	5390	310	15	1798	74	12	740	100	14	429	83	24
2023	10,465	1295	30	2632	80	16	5665	275	21	1834	36	15	815	75	25	439	10	27
2024	11,015	550	37	2714	82	19	5925	260	27	1897	63	18	890	75	37	468	29	35
2025	11,350	335	41	2693	-21	18	6200	275	33	2006	109	25	945	55	45	495	27	43

The number of presentations at **National 5** increased by 321 to **11,367** from 11,046 in 2024. This continues the now established year-on-year improvement trend and is the highest on record for the local authority.

At National 5, the A-C pass rate for 2025 is **75.3**%, an increase of 2.47% from the 72.83% in 2024. The National pass rate has increased by 1.2% from 2024 and currently sits at 78.4%. Aberdeen City results follow the national trend.

Our relative position at National 5 (when comparing our results with the other Local Authorities) has improved for A-C from 26th to 22nd out of 32 local authorities.

The number of presentations at **Higher** increased by 287 to **6,231** from 5,944 in 2024. This continues the year-on-year trend of being the highest number on record for the local authority.
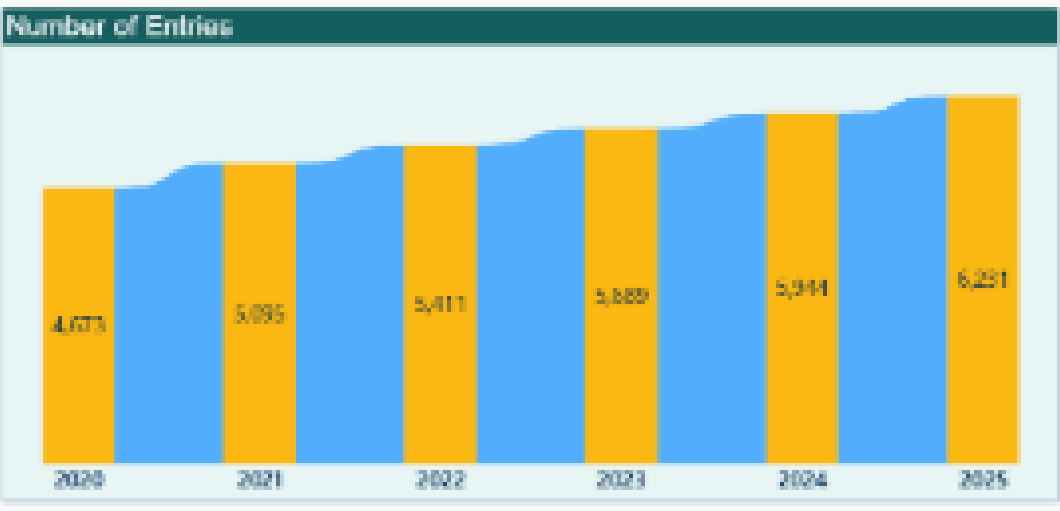
At Higher, the A-C pass rate for 2025 was **72.9%**. This represents a marginal decrease of 0.69% from the pass rate of 73.59% in 2024 and was anticipated given the dip at National 5 last year. The National pass rate for Higher has increased by 1% from 2024 and currently sits at 75.9%.

Our relative position for A-C at Higher (when comparing our results with the other Local Authorities) has dropped from 14th to 20th out of 32 local authorities but with an increased number of entries.

The number of presentations at **Advanced Higher** increased by 58 to 947 from 889 in 2024. This again is the highest number on record for the local authority.

At Advanced Higher, the A-C pass rate for 2025 was **74.13%**, an increase of 1.8% from 72.33% in 2024. The National pass rate has increased by 1.4% from 2024 and currently sits at 76.7%. Aberdeen City results follows the national trend.

Our relative position at Advanced Higher for A-C (when comparing our results of the other Local Authorities) is now sitting at 13th out of 32, an increase from 16th in 2024, and one of a minority of authorities with an increase in Advanced Higher presentations.

At National 5, **37.48%** of presentations achieved an A grade in 2025, an increase from 35.58% in 2024. At Higher **29.90%** of presentations achieved an A grade in 2025, a slight decrease from 31.56% in 2024. At Advanced Higher, **28.09%** of presentations achieved an A grade, a decrease from 29.47% in 2024.

As outlined, schools presented a record number of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher presentations in 2025. Although there is a corresponding increase in school roll, there is evidence of a balance of steady increase in the number of presentations for SQA awards per pupil demonstrating increasing ambition for young people.
At National 5 in S4, the per pupil presentation increased to **5.65** in 2025 from 5.5 in 2024, an increase of 0.15. At Higher in S5, the per pupil presentation decreased to **3.63** in 2025 from 3.68 in 2024. At Advanced Higher in S6, the per pupil presentation increased to **0.93** in 2025 from 0.89 in 2024, an increase of 0.04.

These results indicate that the strategies put in place around presentation policies and our on-going development of ABZ Campus are now realising improvement.

Highlights
Our National 5 results placed our percentage A passes at 13th, and our A-C passes at 22nd out of 32 local authorities.

- 1,357 young people in S4 took National 5 English with 41.2% achieving an A pass and 86.5% achieving A-C.
- 76 young people in S4 took National 5 Accounting with 56.6% achieving an A pass and 88.2% achieving A-C.
- 853 young people in S4 took National 5 Maths with 52.5% achieving an A pass and 76.7% achieving A-C.
- 157 young people took National 5 French with 65.6% achieving an A pass and 92.4% achieving A-C.
- 161 young people took National 5 Drama with 54.7% achieving an A pass and 95% achieving A-C.

Higher
Our Higher results placed our percentage A passes at 9th, and our A-C passes at 20th out of 32 local authorities.
- 66 young people were presented for Higher French with 62.1% achieving an A pass and 91% achieving A-C.
- 321 young people were presented for Higher History with 37.7% achieving an A pass and 81.9% achieving A-C.
- 118 young people were presented for Higher Music with 44.1% achieving an A pass and 83.9% achieving A-C.
- 53 young people were presented for Higher Spanish with 67.9% achieving an A pass and 90.6% achieving A-C.

Advanced Higher
- Our Advanced Higher results placed our percentage A passes at 8th, and our A-C passes 13th out of 32 local authorities.
- Selected Advanced Higher Highlights by subject
- 35 young people were presented for Art & Design (Expressive) at Advanced Higher, with 45.7% achieving an A pass and 94.3% achieving A-C.
- 38 young people were presented for History at Advanced Higher with 31.6% achieving an A pass and 84.2% achieving A-C.
- 41 young people were presented for Modern Studies at Advanced Higher with 36.6% achieving an A pass and 87.8% achieving A-C.

A-C Attainment			
Year	National 5	Higher	Advanced Higher
2025	75.77% from 11,367 entries (75.3% without Skills for Work)	72.9% from 6,231 entries	74.13% from 947 entries
2024	73.29% from 11,046 entries (72.83% without Skills for Work)	73.59% from 5,944 entries	72.33% from 887 entries
2018	77.96% from 7,922 entries	78.14% from 4,849 entries	81.34% from 659 entries

A Attainment (%)			
Year	National 5	Higher	Advanced Higher
2025	37.5%	30%	28.10%
2024	35.58%	31.56%	29.47%

SCQF Level 5

Stretch Aim – 90.5% of all young people will attain 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 5 by 2026.

As a key benchmark of success, 1 or more at SCQF Level 5 continues to be an important indicator of attainment in our schools for leavers. The 2024/25 forecast shows that 88.5% of young people are expected to achieve this measure, placing us just below the lower end of our trajectory range for this year (88.8% – 89.3%). While this is a small step away from the target, it represents continued improvement on previous years.

The poverty-related attainment gap between SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) and Quintile 5 (least deprived) is forecast at 27.70 percentage points in 2024/25. Although this would be above the current year's target range, it highlights where we must focus our efforts most strongly. Targeted interventions for learners in SIMD Quintile 1 (forecast 67.80%) are already being strengthened, building on strategies that have shown positive impact in Quintile 2 (82.00%), where attainment is forecast to be within 2 percentage points of the national figure (83.97%). Performance in SIMD Quintile 5 remains consistently high (95.50%), forecast to be in line with national levels (96.06%) and within our target range.

For learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN), attainment is forecast at 79.00%, remaining close to national performance (78.11%) and showing a steady trend that positions us to achieve the 80% stretch aim by 2026. Outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) are forecast to have improved notably to 44.00%, up from 35.00% last year. While still below the national figure of 53.64% and our target range, this year's improvement would reflect the positive impact of enhanced support and targeted work with this small but important cohort.

Overall, the data continues to show strong performance at a city-wide level, with consistent gains in key areas and clear evidence of improvement for some of our most vulnerable learners. Focused and sustained action in SIMD Quintile 1, ASN, and LAC groups will help secure further progress and support us in achieving our ambitious 2026 stretch aims.

Target for 2025/26 – Between 88.5% and 89.70% of young people will attain 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 5 by the end of 2025/26.

Attaining one or more passes at SCQF Level 5
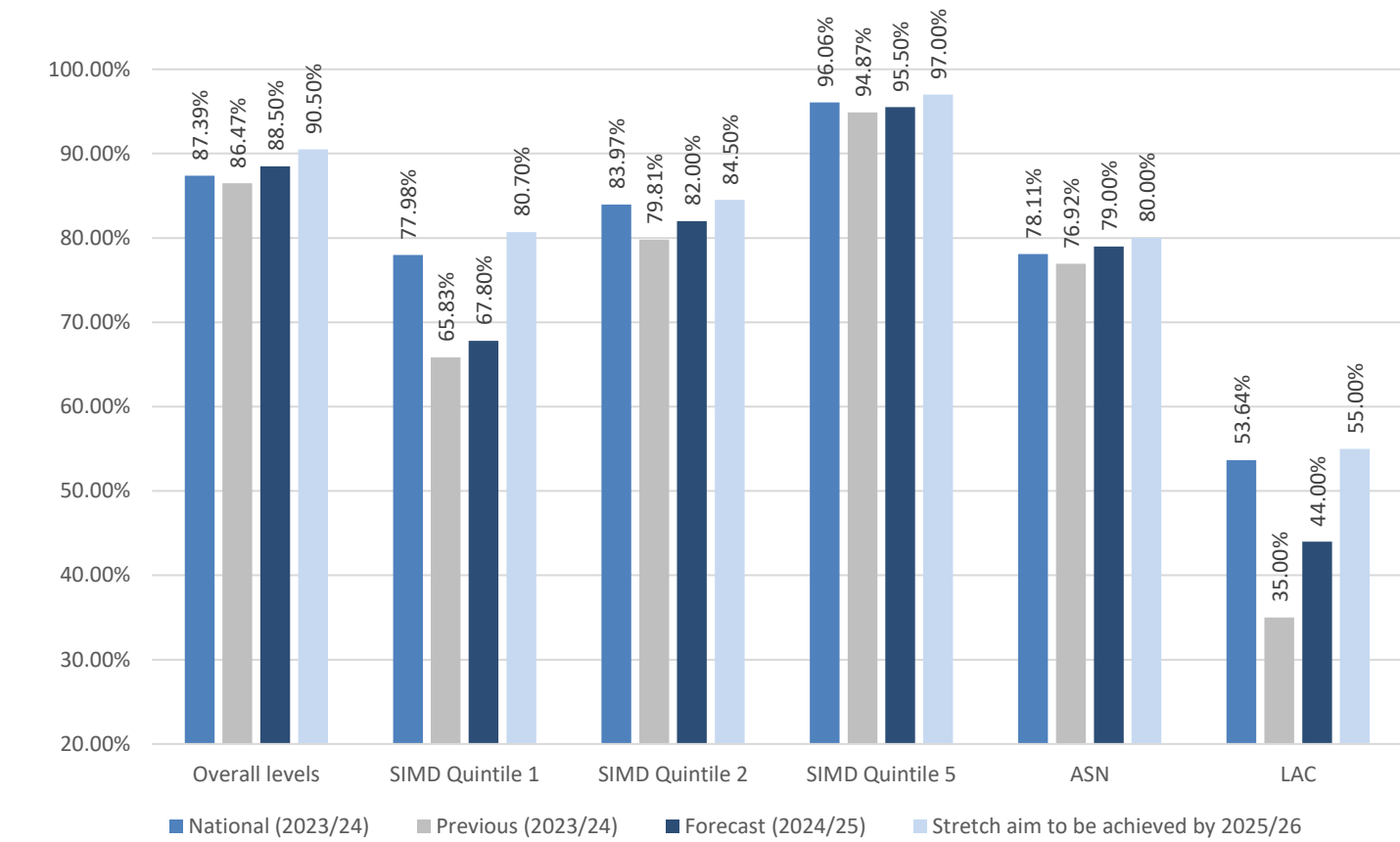
Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 5 based on Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	87.39%	77.98%	83.97%	96.06%	18.07%	78.11%	53.64%
Previous (2023/24)	86.47%	65.83%	79.81%	94.87%	29.04%	76.92%	35.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(88.80% - 89.30%)	(76.78% - 78.28%)	(81.38% - 82.63%)	(95.39% - 96.59%)	(18.61pp to 18.31pp)	(80.48% - 80.48%)	(56.52% - 56.52%)
Forecast (2024/25)	88.50%	67.80%	82.00%	95.50%	27.70pp	79.00%	44.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(88.50% - 89.70%)	(68.30% - 70.22%)	(83.00% - 83.87%)	(95.50% - 95.91%)	(26.70pp to 26.40pp)	(79.00% - 80.00%)	(44.00% - 49.00%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(0.0pp - 1.20pp)	(0.5pp - 2.42pp)	(1.0pp - 1.87pp)	(0.0pp - 0.41pp)		(0.0pp - 1.00pp)	(0.0pp - 5.00pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	90.50%	80.70%	84.50%	97.00%	16.30pp	80.00%	55.00%

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SCQF Level 6

Stretch Aim – 74% of all young people will attain 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6 by 2026.

1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6 remains a key attainment indicator, reflecting both academic achievement and the breadth of course offer across our secondary schools. The 2024/25 forecast indicates that 67.5% of young people are expected to achieve this measure, placing us within the target range for the year (66.42% – 70.42%) and showing continued progress from the previous year's result of 64.43%.

The poverty-related attainment gap between SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) and Quintile 5 (least deprived) is forecast at 41.50 percentage points in 2024/25, a slight improvement on last year's 41.90pp. SIMD Quintile 1 attainment (42.50%) is forecast to increase from 39.70% in 2023/24 and be within the target range (41.50% – 47.50%), with further gains expected in 2025/26. SIMD Quintile 2 attainment (52.00%) is also forecast for improvement from 49.88% and sits within target range, while SIMD Quintile 5 performance remains strong at a forecast of 84.00%, in line with national levels.

Attainment for learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) is forecast at 51.00%, representing a small rise from last year and maintaining performance above the lower end of the target range. Our forecast shows improvement in outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) 20.00%, from last year's 10.00%. While still below the national average, this improvement is a positive indication of the impact of targeted interventions and support for this group.

The continued expansion of the curriculum offer across schools, combined with the opportunities provided through ABZ Campus, is helping to increase attainment and provide broader learning pathways for young people. The focus for 2025/26 will be on building further momentum, particularly for SIMD Quintile 1 and 2 learners, maintaining performance in the other Quintiles, and ensuring sustained gains for ASN and LAC learners.

Target for 2025/26 – Between 68.5% and 72.5% of young people will attain 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6 by the end of 25/26.

Attaining one or more passes at SCQF Level 6
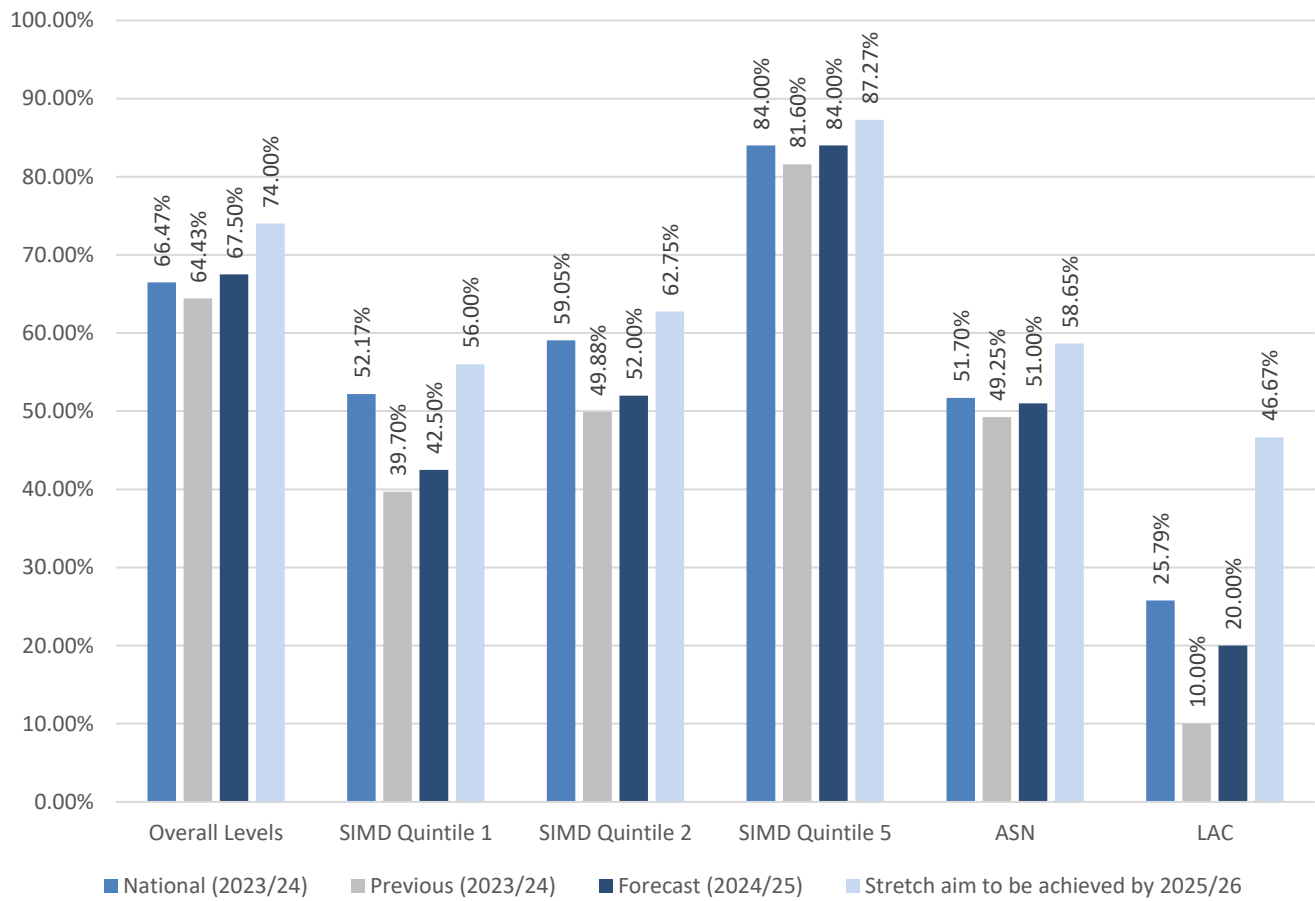
Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 6 based on the Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations

	Overall Levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1-Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	66.47%	52.17%	59.05%	84.00%	31.83pp	51.70%	25.79%
Previous (2023/24)	64.43%	39.70%	49.88%	81.60%	41.90pp	49.25%	10.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(66.42% - 70.42%)	(41.50% - 47.50%)	(50.15% - 56.15%)	(84.11% - 85.11%)	(42.61pp to 37.61pp)	(50.92% - 54.92%)	(15.04% - 30.04%)
Forecast (2024/25)	67.50%	42.50%	52.00%	84.00%	41.50pp	51.00%	20.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(68.50% - 72.50%)	(46.50% - 52.50%)	(55.00% - 61.00%)	(85.00% - 86.00%)	(38.50pp to 33.50pp)	(52.00% - 56.00%)	(22.00% - 37.00%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(1.0pp - 3.58pp)	(4.0pp - 8.50pp)	(3.0pp - 6.60pp)	(1.0pp - 2.16pp)		(1.0pp - 3.73pp)	(2.0pp - 16.63pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	74.00%	56.00%	62.75%	87.27%	31.27pp	58.65%	46.67%

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SCQF Level 3 in Literacy & numeracy

Stretch Aim – 95.14% of all young people will attain a minimum of SCQF Level 3 in literacy and numeracy by 2026.

Positive attainment in Literacy and Numeracy remains a key benchmark of success in the Senior Phase, reflecting both the breadth of the curriculum and the support provided to ensure that all learners achieve a strong foundation for life beyond school. The 2024/25 forecast of 92.00% for all leavers is above the current year's target range (87.45% – 90.95%) and would represent an improvement from last year's 90.67%.

For SIMD Quintile 1 learners, attainment is forecast at 80.50%, up from 79.40% last year and within the target range. Continued progress in this area will be a key driver in reducing the poverty-related attainment gap, which is forecast at 14.50 percentage points this year. While the gap remains above the long-term target, the steady gains being made in both Quintile 1 and Quintile 2 (forecast 89.50%) indicate that focused support is having a positive impact. SIMD Quintile 5 attainment is forecast to remain high at 95.00%, consistent with national performance.

Attainment for learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) is forecast at 88.50%, an improvement on last year and already at the lower end of the 2025/26 target range. For Looked After Children (LAC), performance is forecast to have risen to 70.00%, which would represent a notable improvement from 65.00% in 2023/24 and above the lower end of the target range. These gains reflect the commitment to targeted interventions and inclusive practice across schools.

The current trajectory suggests that, with continued emphasis on equity, high-quality teaching, and targeted support for our most disadvantaged learners, Aberdeen City can sustain this momentum, working towards our ambitious stretch aim by 2026.

Target for 2025/26 – Between 94% and 95.14% of young people will attain a minimum of SCQF Level 3 in literacy and numeracy by the end of school session 25/26.

Proportion of school leavers attaining a minimum of SCQF level 3 in literacy and numeracy
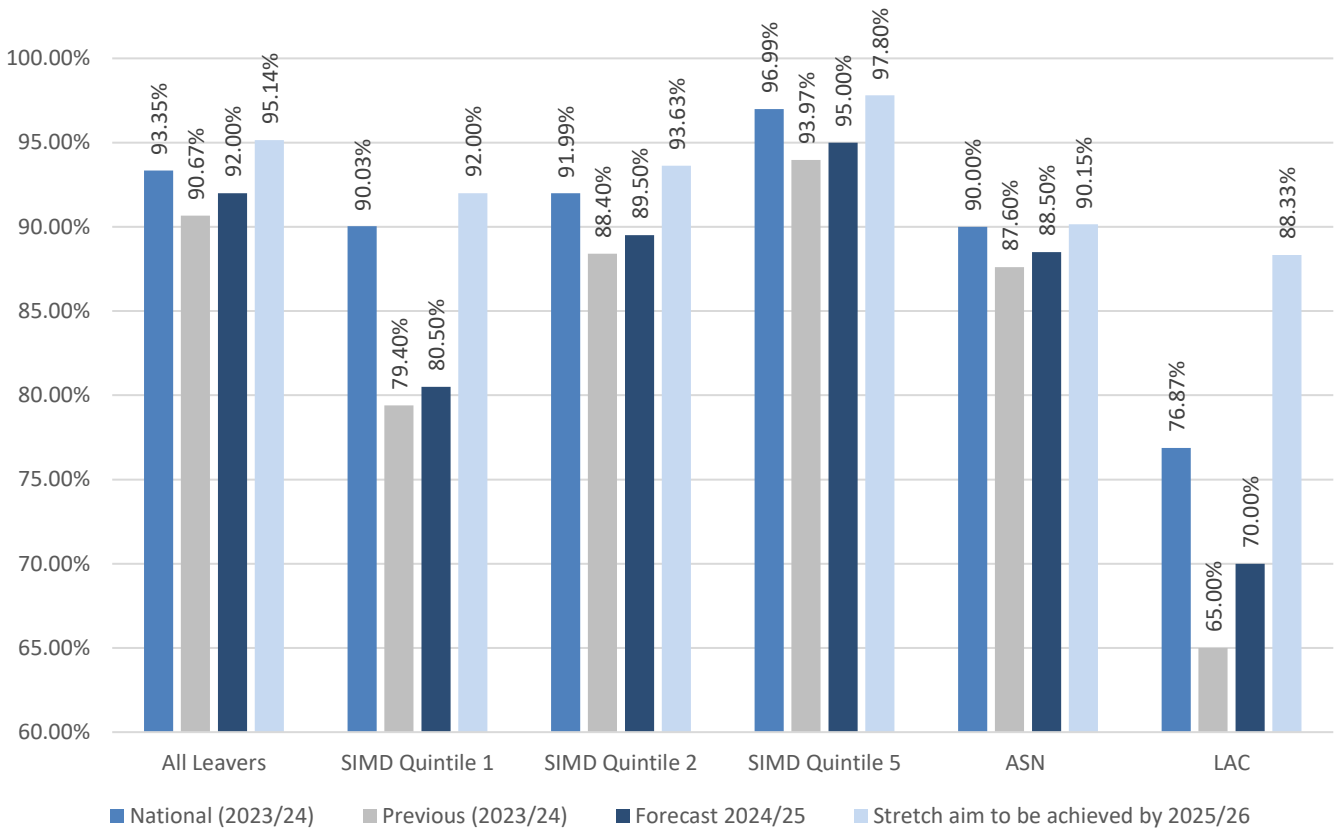
Proportion of school leavers attaining a minimum of SCQF Level 3 in Literacy and Numeracy

	All Leavers	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	93.35%	90.03%	91.99%	96.99%	6.96pp	90.00%	76.87%
Previous (2023/24)	90.67%	79.40%	88.40%	93.97%	14.57pp	87.60%	65.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(87.45% - 90.95%)	(77.56% - 84.56%)	(79.48% - 81.48%)	(89.83% - 90.05%)	(-12.27pp to -5.49pp)	(85.23% - 85.73%)	(73.91% - 76.91%)
Forecast 2024/25	92.00%	80.50%	89.50%	95.00%	-14.50pp	88.50%	70.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(94.00% - 95.14%)	(81.50% - 87.94%)	(90.50% - 93.50%)	(95.00% - 97.80%)	(-13.50pp to -6.72pp)	(88.50% - 90.15%)	(70.00% - 80.00%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(2.0pp - 3.14pp)	(1.0pp - 7.44pp)	(1.0pp - 4.00pp)	(0.0pp - 2.80pp)		(0.0pp - 1.65pp)	(0.0pp - 10.00pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	95.14%	92.00%	93.63%	97.80%	5.80pp	90.15%	88.33%

Proportion of leavers entering Positive Destinations

Stretch Aim – 97.88% of young people will be achieving a positive destination by 2026.

This is an important yet challenging stretch aim as we look to support all of our young people into a positive and sustained destination on leaving school. Our forecast for 2024/25 is predicting a small increase in the positive destination figures (94.50% from 93.62%), and modest gains across the Quintiles, and for young people with ASN.

We are forecasting a 'bounce back' for our LAC cohort having seen a dip in 2023/24, acknowledging that given this cohort is usually approximately twenty young people, fluctuation is to be expected. With strong partnership work with colleagues in Skills Development Scotland and work underway to support schools to improve pathway planning, there is growing confidence that further progress can be made by the end of the stretch aim period of 2026.

Target for 2025/26 – Between 94.83% and 97.88% of young people will enter an initial positive destination by the end of school session 25/26.

Proportion of school leavers leaving to a positive destination

Legend: National (2023/24) · Previous (2023/24) · Forecast (2024/25) · Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26
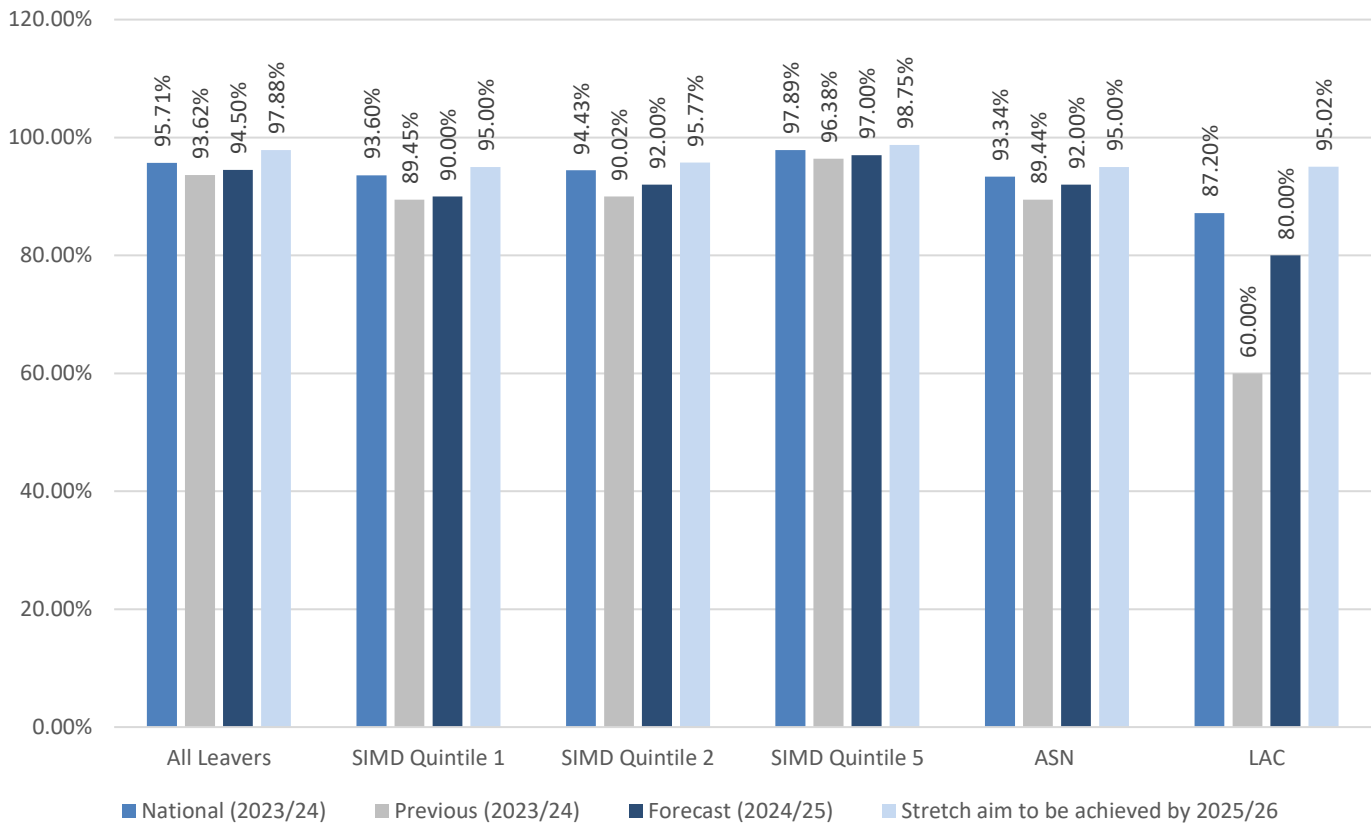
Proportion of school leavers leaving to a Positive Destination

	All Leavers	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	**95.71%**	**93.60%**	**94.43%**	**97.89%**	4.29pp	**93.34%**	**87.20%**
Previous (2023/24)	**93.62%**	**89.45%**	**90.02%**	**96.38%**	6.93pp	**89.44%**	**60.00%**
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(94.83% - 96.17%)	(92.00% - 94.00%)	(92.50% - 94.52%)	(97.13% - 97.47%)	(5.13pp to 3.47pp)	(92.08% - 92.34%)	(81.83% - 86.00%)
Forecast (2023/24)	**94.50%**	**90.00%**	**92.00%**	**97.00%**	7.00pp	**92.00%**	**80.00%**
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(94.83% - 97.88%)	(92.00% - 95.00%)	(92.50% - 95.77%)	(97.13% - 98.75%)	(5.13pp to 3.47pp)	(92.08% - 95.00%)	(81.83% - 95.02%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(0.3pp - 3.38pp)	(2.0pp - 5.00pp)	(0.5pp - 3.77pp)	(0.1pp - 1.75pp)		(0.1pp - 3.00pp)	(1.8pp - 15.02pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	97.88%	95.00%	95.77%	98.75%	3.75%	95.00%	95.02%

Participation

Stretch Aim – 94.5% of all young people will be participating in education, employment, or training by 2026.

This measure takes a slightly different perspective to the Positive Destination figure, and measures participation across the entirety of a year rather than at a single point in time (as is the case with Positive Destination data).   Data identifies that 2023/24 saw a dip to 90.1 from 90.2 in 2022/23 with a forecast of an improvement in 2024/25 to 91.0%.

In session 25/26 the management of work experience will move over to Education and Lifelong Learning and this will allow us to increase the number of organisations who offer work experience to young people; work with partners to create an inclusive database for monitoring placements; and be more targeted in our offers to young people by creating an offer aligned to ABZ Campus. There is confidence that addressing improvements in the way work experience is managed and delivered will support improvements in the positive destination figure over time.

Continued work in partnership with Skills Development Scotland and in pathway planning will further spread good practice across schools and support a move towards the stretch aim by the end of the measuring period.

Target for 2025/26 – Between 91.38% - 94.5% of young people will be participating in education, employment, or training by the end of school session 25/26.

Annual Participation Measure
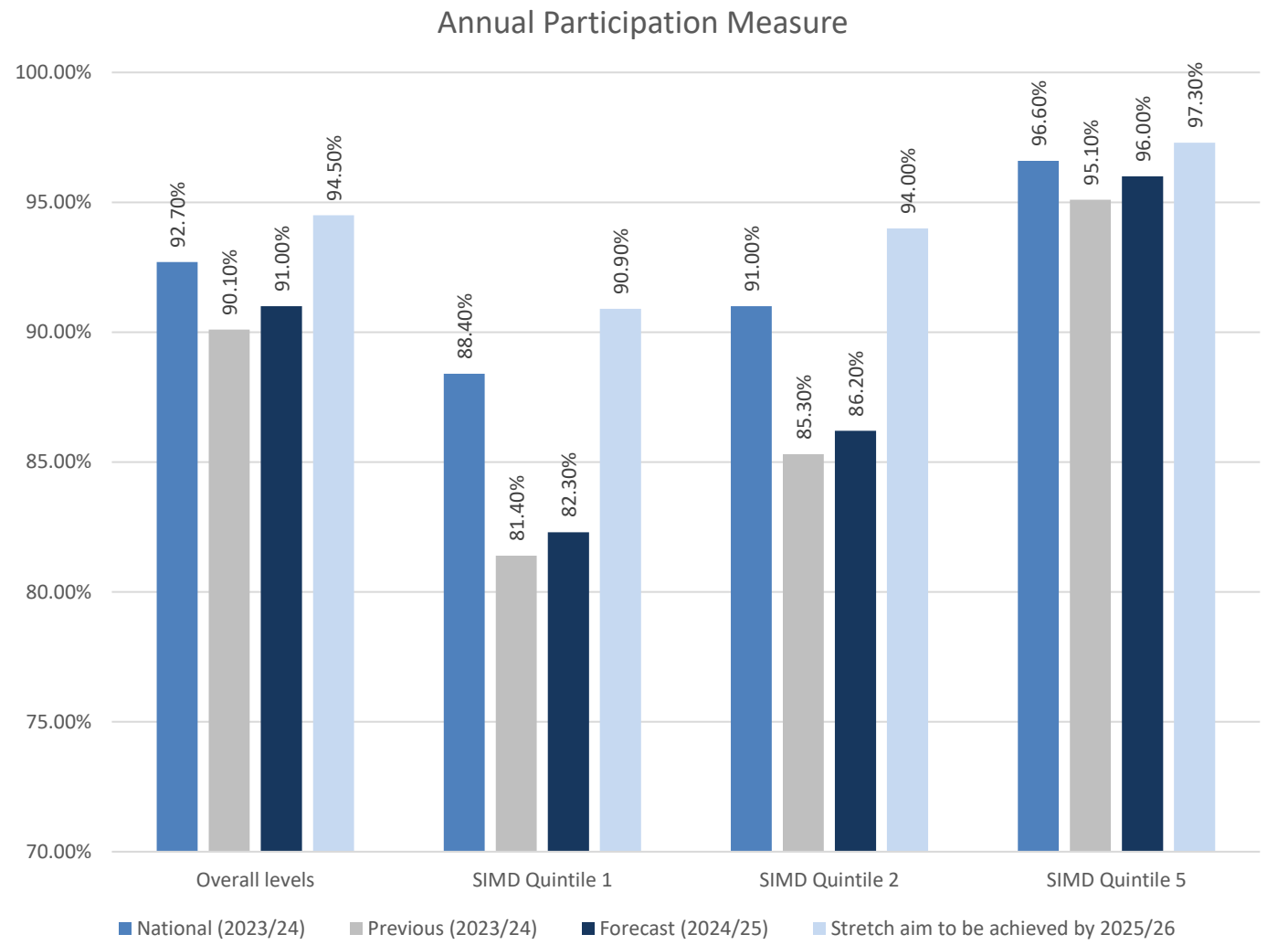
Percentage participation of 16-19 olds participating in education, employment or training based on the Annual Participation Measure produced by Skills Development Scotland by 2026

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5
National (2023/24)	**92.70%**	**88.40%**	**91.00%**	**96.60%**	8.20%
Previous (2023/24)	**90.10%**	**81.40%**	**85.30%**	**95.10%**	13.70%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(91.38% - 91.77%)	(83.28% - 85.00%)	(87.37% - 90.20%)	(96.00% - 96.00%)	(12.72pp to 11.00pp)
Forecast (2024/25)	**91.00%**	**82.30%**	**86.20%**	**96.00%**	13.70%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(91.38% - 94.50%)	(83.28% - 90.90%)	(87.37% - 94.00%)	(96.00% - 97.30%)	(11.73pp to 3.70pp)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(0.4pp - 3.50pp)	(1.0pp - 8.60pp)	(1.2pp - 7.80pp)	(0.0pp - 1.30pp)	
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	94.50%	90.90%	94.00%	97.30%	6.40%

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Attendance

Stretch Aim – 95% of all children and young people will attend school regularly by 2026

Schools across Aberdeen City have continued to prioritise attendance as a key area. Unvalidated data for session 2024/25 indicates a further positive shift, with overall attendance reaching 92%, moving us firmly along the trajectory towards our stretch aim of 95% by 2026.

This improvement reflects the sustained commitment of school teams to remove barriers to attendance. Targeted support has been particularly effective in our most deprived communities, with SIMD Quintile 1 attendance rising from 87% in 2023/24 to 89% in 2024/25. Attendance for children in SIMD Quintile 2 also increased by 1%to 90%. These gains are helping to maintain the poverty-related attendance gap at -6 percentage points, demonstrating consistent progress since 2022/23.

In our most affluent communities (SIMD Quintile 5), attendance rose to 94%, and this high performance provides a strong benchmark for equity across the system. Pupils with ASN maintained strong levels of attendance at 90%, matching the city-wide average, while we recognise a need to refocus support for care-experienced young people, with LAC attendance sitting at 85% — a small decline on last year.

Throughout 2024/25, schools have embedded and expanded upon strategies set out in the revised Guidance on Managing and Promoting Pupil Attendance, aligned with national policy updates. Our information for parents has been updated to make it clear to parents the negative impact of non-attendance on their child's learning. This leaflet has been shared each term with parents to emphasise the importance of attendance.

Senior officers continue to monitor absence data closely, supporting schools to analyse trends, identify root causes, and take targeted action. This intelligence-led approach and community-based collaboration, is ensuring that improvement activity remains tailored and effective.

Aberdeen City continues to perform strongly in comparison with other Scottish cities, and this year's data confirms that we remain on track to achieve our stretch aim.

Target for 2025/26 – Achieve between 90% and 95% attendance overall, with continued narrowing of the SIMD Q1–Q5 gap and targeted support to improve outcomes for care-experienced learners.

%Attendance All Schools
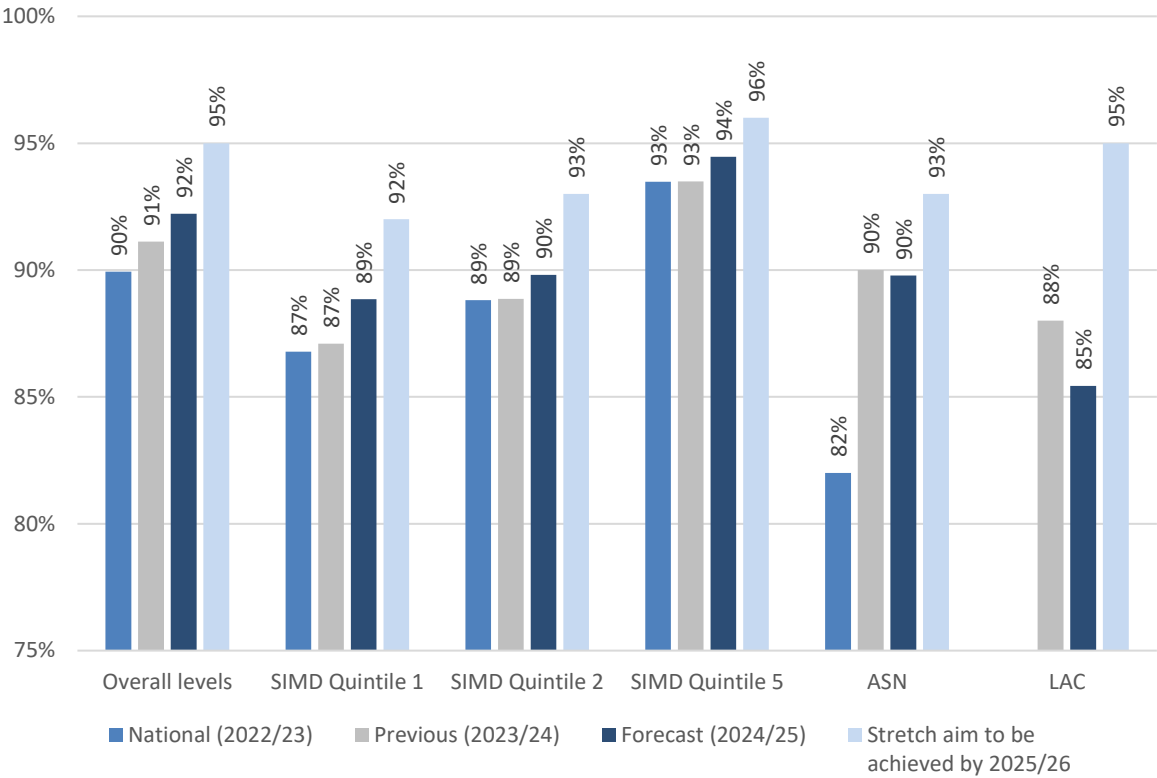
Attendance in Schools

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	90%	87%	89%	93%	-7pp	82%	
Previous (2023/24)	91%	87%	89%	93%	-6pp	90%	88%
Trajectory (2024/25)	(92% - 93%)	(89% - 91%)	(90% - 91%)	(94% - 96%)	(-5pp to - 5pp)	(89% - 90%)	(90% - 91%)
Forecast (2024/25)	92%	89%	90%	94%	-6pp	90%	85%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(90% - 95%)	(89% - 92%)	(90% - 93%)	(96% - 96%)	(-7pp to - 4pp)	(89% - 93%)	(88% - 95%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	95%	92%	93%	96%	-4pp	93%	95%

Exclusion

Stretch Aim – 95% of all children and young people will attend school regularly by 2026.

Exclusion rates continue on a downward trend, with an overall forecast of 15.01 exclusions per 1000 pupils for 2024/25. This reflects a further reduction from 15.7 in the previous year (2023/24), and places us below the national level recorded in 2022/23 (16.6). The trajectory range of 12.1 to 14.1 for this year provides a positive benchmark for continued improvement.

Encouraging progress has been made in reducing exclusions among pupils in SIMD Quintiles 1 and 2. Forecast values of 26.7 and 27.4 show improvement when compared to previous levels of 33.4 and 29.9 respectively. These reductions indicate that targeted interventions are beginning to take effect, although further progress is required to move within our target ranges.

Exclusion levels for pupils in SIMD Quintile 5 have also decreased slightly, from 7.1 to 6.2, aligning more closely with national levels and our planned trajectory. As a result, the overall Q1–Q5 gap has narrowed from 26.3 to 20.4.

For pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN), exclusions are forecast to remain steady at 26.4, similar to last year's figure. The trajectory range of 20 to 10 provides a clear focus for future efforts.

Exclusions for Looked After Children (LAC) remain high at 225 per 1000, showing minimal change from 226.8 the previous year. Although this is consistent with forecast levels, substantial progress will be needed to approach the stretch aim of 30 by 2025/26.

Target for 2025/26 – Maintain downward pressure on exclusion rates across all measures.

Exclusions per 1000 (lower is better)
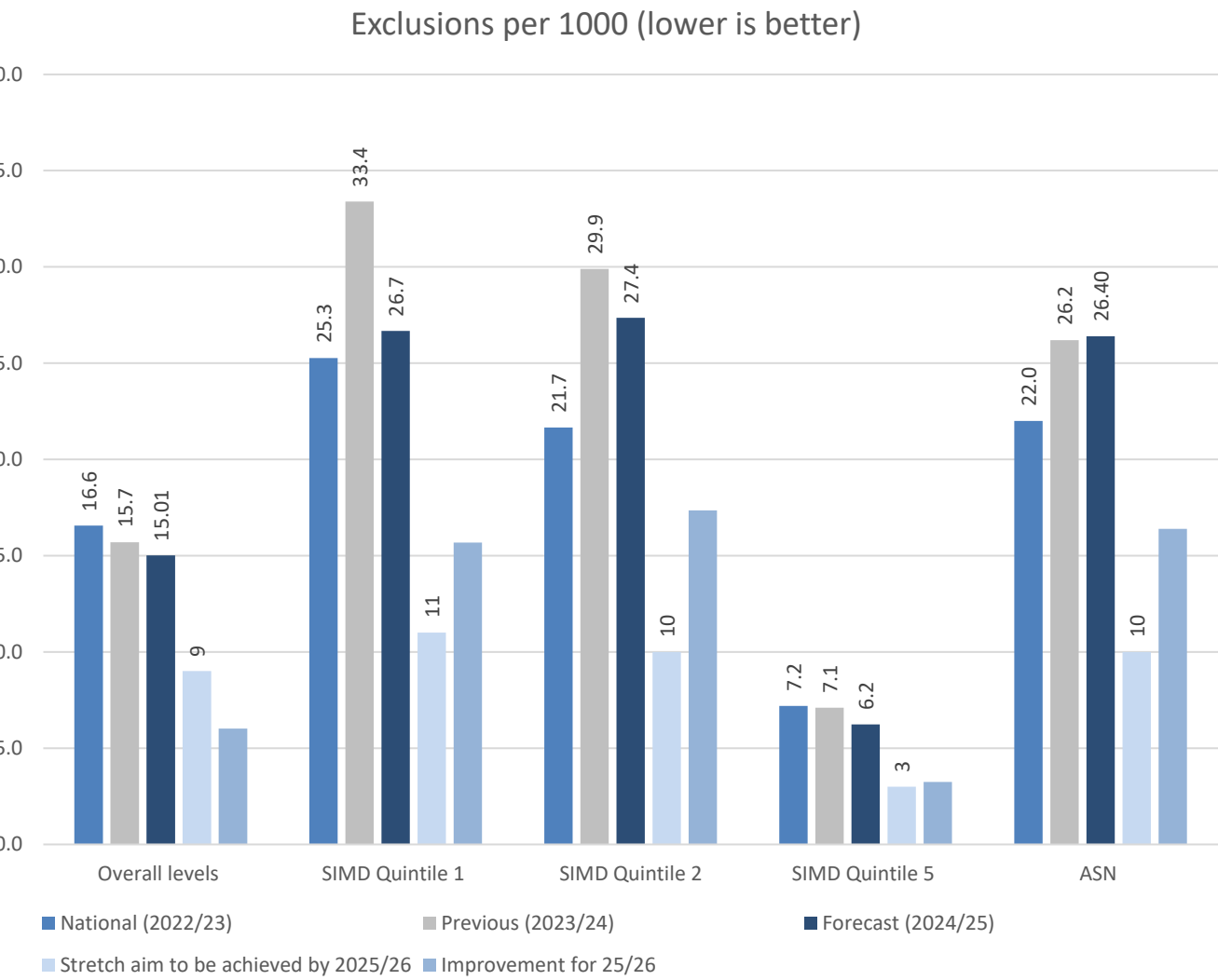
Exclusions Per 1000

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	16.6	25.3	21.7	7.2	-18.1	22.0	78.0
Previous (2023/24)	15.7	33.4	29.9	7.1	26.3	26.2	226.8
Trajectory (2024/25)	(14.1 - 12.1)	(20.7 - 25.4)	(20.0 - 24.0)	(6.3 - 5.6)		(24.9 - 23.6)	(77.7 - 59.4)
Forecast (2024/25)	15.01	26.7	27.4	6.2	20.4	26.40	225
Trajectory (2025/26)	(14.1 - 9)	(20.7 - 11)	(20.0 - 10)	(6.2 - 3)		(20 - 10)	(77.7 - 59.4)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	9	11	10	3	8	10	30
Improvement for 25/26	6.0	15.7	17.4	3.2		16.4	195.0

QI: Leadership of Change

Stretch Aim - 85% of all schools will self-evaluate QI1.3 Leadership of Change at good or better by 2026.

We continue to see changes in our leadership teams across the city with 17% of our Head Teachers either new to the role of Head Teacher or new to the school this session. Quality Indicator 1.3 Leadership of Change has increased slightly by 2%) with 56% of evaluations rated Good or above in 24/25. This is a positive increase and we will look to increase further for session 25/26 as new head teachers and leadership teams increase in confidence.

Work with our middle leadership group will be developed further during session 25/26 with an increased involvement from associate assessors supporting a greater understanding of this core QI and of the national standard. This work will realise an increase in evaluations in this area in session 25/26.

Target for 2025/26 – We are unlikely to achieve our stretch aim, however we predict a continued increase in the number of schools self evaluating this indicator as good or above in session 25/26.

QI: Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Stretch Aim - 80% of our schools will self-evaluate QI2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment at good or better by 2026.

The quality of learning, teaching and assessment continues to be an area of focus for all schools. Revised quality improvement activity and continued targeted professional learning and work with the Northern Alliance on the learning and teaching toolkit has supported improvement in this area and moves us towards our aspirational stretch aim.

Work on the toolkit has helped schools to target areas for professional learning and offer a range of resources both national and local to support schools in delivering consistent messages. Narrowing the focus of professional learning and increasing the opportunities for moderation in schools and across the local authority will support an increase in the number of schools self evaluating as good or better.

Target for 2025/26 – we will continue to see an increase as we move towards our aspirational aim of 80% of schools self evaluating as good or better.

QI: Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion

Stretch Aim - 100% of schools will evaluate QI 3.1 at good or better by 2026.

Although there has historically been a positive trend in self evaluation of 3.1, over the last 4 years there has been a strong focus on changes in leadership in schools and external validation from HMIe has identified that some evaluations were not in line with national standards in one area of the city in particular.

School evaluations align with our quality improvement categories and we are confident that through targeted professional learning and moderation across schools, we will continue to move towards our aspirational stretch aim of 100% of schools self-evaluating good or better by June 2026.

Target for 2025/26 – continue to increase evaluations as we move towards our aspirational aim of 100% of schools self evaluating as good or better in quality indicator 3.1.

Risks to children

A comprehensive review of data has highlighted the risks most likely to impact our children and young people over the coming year. Mitigation strategies to address the risks will be included in this NIF Plan

Individual Level Risks
- Poor behavioural control and emotional regulation
- Mental health issues and prior trauma
- Substance misuse
- Low educational attainment

Mitigation Strategies:
- Early childhood interventions
- Trauma-informed interventions
- On-going provision of counselling
- Clear focus on closing the gap
- Close partnership working to support families in keeping with GIRFEC principles

Relationship-Level Risks
- Family conflict, neglect, and domestic violence
- Poor parental supervision/knowledge
- Peer pressure and gang affiliation

Mitigation Strategies:
- Parenting programmes
- Commissioning of CLD Services to offer support to families
- Focus on our Corporate Parenting duties
- Review of the curriculum available to our young people
- On-going sharing of information with partners

Community-Level Risks
- High-crime neighbourhoods and unsafe public spaces
- Digital environments and online harm

Mitigation Strategies:
- The commissioning of youth work
- Schools are safe and trauma aware spaces
- Investment in Digital literacy, with a focus on keeping ourselves safe on-line
- Prevent focus

Societal-Level Risks
- Poverty and inequality
- Inadequate multi-agency data sharing
- Workforce capacity issues

Mitigation Strategies:
- Focus on poverty and inequality
- On-going sharing of information with partners
- Improved service access for those most in need and identified as being particularly vulnerable
- Monitoring of workforce capacity and capability

Logic Model

Situation

The significant increase in pupils over the last three years has put pressure on the system. As a local authority, due to our geographical location we experience challenges when recruiting quality teaching and promoted staff. Teaching staff tend to be younger and inexperienced, often moving away once they have experience.

Inputs

Improve Leadership of Change in schools

Improve the quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment 3-18

Increase curriculum pathways and improve attainment

Improve the quality of supports for young people

Close the poverty related attainment gap

Prevent families from experiencing poverty where possible and provide support in keeping with The Promise

Activities
What we do

Review and deliver middle leadership training

Provide high quality profession learning

Developing literacy and numeracy frameworks and resource portals for all stages

Professional learning for staff in strategies to support additional needs

Linking with partners to support young people living in poverty

Head Teacher working parties

Engaging with National training opportunities

Who we reach

All children and young people Aged 3 – 18

Outcomes
Short

Interventions will be more targeted at those who face the greatest disadvantage in SIMD 1 and 2

Central staff and Head Teachers will work together to implement our quality improvement Framework

QIMs and AA will create professional learning for practitioners and middle leaders

Medium

Improved attainment for young people in SIMD 1 and 2

Clear impact of professional learning on practice in the classroom and leadership of our schools

Families are able to access financial support and benefits when eligible

Long

All schools meet the national standards in all Quality Indicators and the curriculum offer meets the needs of all learners

Sustained improved attainment and positive destinations

Improved outcomes across the determinants of health in our priority neighbourhoods

Assumptions and Influences

- There will continue to be high levels of poverty
- Resources will continue to be constrained

Measures

- **Attainment at BGE and senior phase**
- **Number of families accessing support**
- **Evaluation of external bodies such as HMIE and Care Inspectorate**

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Education & Lifelong Learning

Inspiring communities to learn and grow together

Equality | Ambition | Respect | Nurture

BON ACCORD

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Aberdeen City Council
National Improvement Framework
Plan 2025-26

Excellence	Equity
Strategic Priorities	
• **Improve Leadership of Change in schools** • **Improve the quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment** • **Increase the range of Senior Phase learner pathways and improve achievement in Literacy and Numeracy**	• **Improve the quality of environments/supports to meet the needs of every child and young person** • **Close the poverty related attainment gap** • **Work in partnership with others to prevent families from experiencing poverty where possible and provide support in keeping with The Promise**
Strategic Enablers	

Workforce	Data	Standards	Partnership
• **High quality professional learning for all** • **Senior and middle leadership development** • **Continue to support staff health and wellbeing**	• **Monitor use of improved tracking and reporting** • **Review data discussion formats to ensure robust support and challenge** • **Continue to develop Power BI data dashboards to support improved analysis**	• **Clear expectations around standards and quality indicators** • **Continually review approaches to quality improvement** • **Maintain approaches to collaborative improvement across the city**	• **Delivery of the Behaviour Plan** • **Delivery of the Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan** • **Continue to align delivery across all services as part of Fairer Futures Partnership**

Excellence Evaluation Framework

Stretch Aims and targets for 25/26

- 85% of all schools will self-evaluate Quality Indicator 1.3 (leadership of change) at good or better by 2026 (current baseline 56%)

- 80% of all schools will self-evaluate Quality Indicator 2.3 (learning teaching and assessment) at good or better by 2026 (current baseline 46%)

- 85% of pupils will achieve Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (ACEL) reading (P1,4 and 7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 78%)

- 82% of pupils will achieve ACEL writing (P1, 4 and 7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 75%)

- 90% of pupils will achieve ACEL Listening and Talking (P1, 4 and 7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 88%)

- 84% of pupils will achieve ACEL Numeracy (P1, 4 and 7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 79%)

- 78% of pupils will achieve ACEL Literacy (P1, P4 and P7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 71%)

- Increase the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 to 90.5% by 2026. Current baseline 88.5% and target for 25/26 set at 88.5%-89.7%

- Increase the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more at SCQF Level 6 to 74% by 2026. Current baseline 67.5 and target for 25/26 is between 68.5% and 72.5%.

- Increase the proportion of school leavers attaining a minimum of SCQF L3 in literacy and numeracy to 95% by 2026. Current baseline 92% and target for 25/26 is 94%-95.14%

- Increase the proportion of school leavers entering an initial positive destination to 97.88% by 2026. Current baseline 94.5% and target for 25/26 set at 94.83% - 97.88%

- Increase the participation of 16-19 year olds in education, employment or training based on Annual Participation Measure to 94.5% by 2026. Current baseline 91% and target for 25/26 set at (91.38%-94.5%)

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Improve the leadership of change in schools			
Build leadership capacity and capability through:			
• a co-ordinated professional learning programme focussing on strategic leadership responsibilities	All QIMs, supporting Associate Assessors and ESO Professional Learning	August 2025	• Improvement in QI 1.3 by June 2026 (Baseline 54% and Target 70%)
• involving all middle leaders in quality improvement visits to other establishments	QIM team		• 100% of Senior Leaders have opportunity to be part of QI visit in another school
• Issuing and analysing surveys of staff, parents and learners to inform Quality Improvement activity	QIM team	August 2025	• Improvement in inspection outcomes in schools to 70% good or better
• increased professional learning and networking opportunities for all staff	QI Team and AAs	August 2025 - ongoing	• Improvement in learning Teaching by June 2026 and Assessment QI 2.3 (Baseline 56% and Target 80%)
• a targeted programme of staff development for schools sitting in Category 3	QI team	August 2025 - ongoing	• Reduction in the number of schools in Category 3
• delivery of a middle leaders programme which necessitates the application of strategic leadership skills in participant settings	QI team and AAs	March 2026	• Increase in the average number of applications which meet the criteria for HT posts
• Use of the Northern Alliance Toolkit to link with wider professional learning opportunities	QI team and AAs	August 2025 - ongoing	• Improvement in learning Teaching and Assessment QI 2.3 (Baseline 56% and Target 80%)
• deliver newly appointed HT programme and review implementation whilst engaging with national partners to help address recruitment	QI team and other central officers	Ongoing	• 100% of new Head Teachers engage and reduction in the number of asks to central officers
• review of the Quality Improvement Framework	QI team and AAs	April 2026	• Improvement Framework is adapted to take account of current quality improvement activity

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment and curriculum in schools			
Continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment (pace and challenge) by:			
• continuing to develop and use the Learning and Teaching Toolkit to support school and individual self-evaluation	Quality Improvement team and Seconded SLT	Ongoing	• Improvement of core QI 2.3 by June 2026 (baseline 43% and target 65%)
• the phased deployment of additional digital tools and a new digital identity	QIO Digital and Qualioty Improvement Team	Ongoing	• 100% of staff confident in the use of the new system by June 2026
• expand the P4 Writing programme to all schools	CYPIC lead	August 2025 – ongoing	• Improvement in CYPIC and ACEL writing data by June 2026 (baseline 70.3% and target 72%)
• continuing to offer data training for all staff to ensure accountability throughout the system	QIM (BGE)	November 2025	• All SLT report they are confident in analysing attainment data. Evident through data discussions
• city-wide moderation programme in Literacy and Numeracy starting with schools in the lower SIMD quintiles	QIMs and AAs	November 2025 and February 2026	• Improved attainment and increased confidence in teacher judgements
• ongoing evaluation of the Numeracy portal through Maths network meetings	QIMs and AAs	August 2025 ongoing	• Improvement in numeracy ACEL data by June 2026, particularly at transition points. Maths network reestablished.
• launch of the Literacy Framework to support children, young people and adult learners and ongoing evaluation through the English Language networks	QIM (BGE) QIO literacy	August 2025	• Literacy portal being accessed by staff across the cluster with at least 2000 hits in the first year
• link standards to new ELC framework to increase pedagogical understanding	Service Manager Early years and locality Leads	August 2025	• Increase in the levels awarded for quality of play and learning in inspections (baseline 86.2% and target 90%). All staff are able to discuss the new framework and implications for their setting during QI visits
• ensure a robust application of the new tracking system and use of the digital data tools	QIM Senior Phase and Lead teacher Curriculum		• All schools using tracker to inform data discussions
• implement and evaluate tracker for care experienced children and young people	Looked after Head Teacher	August 2025 and ongoing	• Increase attainment and positive destinations for all care experienced children and young people. • (baseline 80% positive destinations target 100%)

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Deliver a broader range of senior phase learner pathways aligned to growth areas			
Deliver a broader range of learning pathways through:			
• delivery of Phase 3 of ABZ Campus	QIM senior phase Lead Teacher Curriculum	August 2025 – June 2026	• Increase in the range of courses available (baseline 54 and target 66)
• continuing to develop pathways to support those with a range of additional support needs	ESO ASN and Lead teacher curriculum	Ongoing	• Increase in options available for young people with additional support needs
• increased pathways to meet needs of all learners, particularly in the context of Excelerate withdrawal	QIM senior phase	August 2025	• Improvement in destinations (Baseline 94.5% target 96.5%) and participation (Baseline 93% target 93.77%) data
• increased opportunities for CLPL for Computing Science Secondary Staff and staff across BGE	QIO Digital	Ongoing	• Increased use of the computing collaborative one Hub to deliver staff development sessions.

Equity Evaluation Framework
Stretch Aims

• 100% of schools will evaluate QI3.1 at good or better by 2026. (current baseline 64% and target for 2025/26 90%)

• 95% of all children will attend school regularly by 2026. Current baseline 92% and target for session 2025/26 (92%-95%)

• Reduce levels of exclusion to 9 per 1000 pupils by 2026. Current baseline 15.01 per 1000 and target for 2025/26 (14.1 -9 per 1000) |

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Improve the quality of environments/supports for those with additional support needs			
Improve the quality of environments and supports by:			
• Continuing to implement our accessibility plan	QIO Accessibility	Ongoing	• All areas of the plan implemented
• On-going roll out and implementation of the CIRCLE Framework	ESO ASN	August 2025	• Increased attendance at CIRCLE training sessions (baseline 70% target 80%)
• Implement The Bridge and evaluate to support creation of a Secondary provision	QIM ASN	August 2025	• 100% of young people working with The Bridge experience success in the most appropriate setting
• Ongoing delivery of the Behaviour Plan	QIM ASN	August 2025	• Reduction in the number of incidents reported in schools by 10% (baseline 1133) • 100% of staff trained in reporting incidents
• Review the provision for supporting learners' needs	Principal EP and Team	October 2025	• All staff in schools trained to Trauma Level 1 • All staff trained in de-escalation techniques • Increase number of settings providing bespoke nurture support
• Continue to shape and deliver a whole system approach to healthy weight of children and young people	ESO Health and Wellbeing	August 2025	• Reduced number of children and young people reported as not being of healthy weight

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Close the poverty related attainment gap			
Help address the gap and gradient by:			
• working with HTs to monitor the impact of Pupil Equity Fund interventions and offer schools the opportunity to participate in the Leadership in Equity programme pilot supported by Education Scotland	QIM (CtG)	September 2025	• Increased attainment as a result of interventions • 60% of schools participate in the Leadership in Equity Programme
• reviewing Cost of the School Day statements with the school community	QIM (CtG)	August 2025	• All schools have a Cost of the School Day position statement in school handbook
• maintaining our focus on attendance levels and termly communication to parents and carers working with the Educational Psychology Service to address EBSNA (Emotionally Based School Non Attendance)	Educational Psychology Service and QIMs	Ongoing	• Increase in attendance from baseline (92%to 93%)
• sharing clear expectations around standards across all quality indicators	Quality Improvement Team and HTs	Ongoing	• All schools making reference to the standards
• targeting families most in need of our help by sharing data	Quality Improvement Team QIO digital	Ongoing	• All data sharing agreements in place
• the provision of Money Advisors, working with the third sector to support foodbanks and uniform swaps and targeting families in need of assistance	QIM (CtG)	August 2025	• Increased number of benefits claimed through Money Advisors etc baseline (benefit checks 163 benefit claims 54)

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Addressing inequality			
Continue to address inequality by:			
• ensuring all secondary schools are employing Equally Safe at School strategies and all key staff have completed the e-module	QIO (Equity)	August 2025	• All Secondary schools engaging in the equally safe at school modules
• using the SHINE data to identify areas of vulnerability and targeting support from the Educational Psychology service to ensure improved outcomes	EPS service	August 2025 – ongoing	• Reduction by 5% in number of children and young people reporting low mood (baseline P6/7 -22% baseline S1-6 – 32%
• secondary schools having agility in their PSE and RSHP curriculum to be able to respond to local issues as they arise	ESO Health and Wellbeing	August 2025 – June 2025	• All secondary school PSE and RSHP curriculum plans are agile and take account of local issues and context
• maintain the Mentors Against Violence training to ensure all secondary schools have trained staff and implement the primary version when available	ESO operations		• Reduction in the number of incidents between young people
• Continue to amplify the voice of children and young people across the organisation	QIO - pupil voice	August - June 2026	• Pupil voice is evident across the organisation through creation of easy access versions of policies and guidance
• Delivery of The Promise through: • reviewing data trends and interventions as part of the Promise Board • continuing to review arrangements for those who are cared for out of authority • evaluating the impact of the expansion of Edge of Care pilots	Looked After Head Teacher	August 2025	• Reducing the number of young people cared for out of authority by 5% • Improved attendance, attainment and positive destinations for those supported by the Edge of Care pilots

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	16 September 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan 2025-30
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/212
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne
REPORT AUTHOR	Margaret Stewart
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan 2025-2030 to Committee for approval.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee

2.1 Note the progress made towards delivery of the Interim Community Learning and Development Plan 2024/25;

2.2 Approve the partnership CLD Plan 2025-2030; and

2.3 Instruct the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to publish the plan, evaluate progress against the first year of the CLD Plan 2025/26 and present an evaluation of progress and updated CLD Delivery Plan for 2026/27 to Committee in September 2026.

3. CURRENT CONTEXT

3.1 The Scottish Government Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships places a number of obligations on Community Planning Partnerships and Local Authorities in respect of Community Learning and Development (CLD) including the establishment of 3 yearly Community Learning and Development Plans.

3.2 In 2024, in anticipation of **Learning: For All. For Life. A report from the Independent Review of Community Learning and Development** and its recommendations, national timescales were relaxed. Aberdeen City Council complied with national guidance and presented an Interim one-year Plan for approval to the Education and Children Services Committee in September 2024. An evaluation of progress against that Interim Plan is available in Appendix A.

3.3 The responsibility for meeting The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations (2013) rests with the Local Authority as a whole. Within Aberdeen City Council the responsibility for Community Learning and Development sits within the Education and Lifelong Learning Cluster.

3.4 Local authorities cannot meet the requirements of the CLD Regulations without engaging with partners, learners and community groups and organisations in keeping with the CLD values and principles. As a result, the CLD Plan 2025-30 has been developed in partnership with a range of CLD stakeholders.

3.5 A recent 2024 progress visit by HMIe suggested that partnership delivery and evaluation could be further strengthened, and this insight has been taken into account in setting our priorities.

3.6 The provision of effective CLD can have benefits well beyond Education and Lifelong Learning, reaching housing tenants, those being supported through Asylum and Dispersal schemes and also those being supported by social work services. As a result, consideration has been given to how the CLD Plan can better align with related strategies and Plans, such as the recently approved Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Plan and Local Housing Strategy. A common format has been used to guide greater cohesion across Strategies and Strategic Plans.

3.7 This consideration around cohesion across Strategies has also guided the development of a 5 year high level Plan to ensure that partners strategically plan over the longer term. Taking this approach will help make best use of Partner time and afford greater opportunities for coherence across the suite of Council strategies designed to improve outcomes for people.

3.8 To ensure that the Plan remains sufficiently agile to respond to emerging needs and published Strategies (such as the Local Outcome Improvement Plan in 2026), this 5 year Plan will be supported by yearly evaluation and yearly Delivery Plans. Taking this approach will help CLD services be more responsive to emerging evidence and ensure that key learning coming through the development of other Plans and Strategies can be taken into account to fully ensure cohesion across the suite of Council Strategies and Plans.

Reporting against the CLD Interim Plan 2024/25

3.9 The ACC CLD team have undertaken an evaluation of progress against the CLD Interim Plan 2024/25 in order to inform areas for further action over the lifetime of the proposed CLD plan 2025-30. The full evaluation is available in Appendix A with key successes including:

Youth Work

- Employability: SHMU Train supported 56 young people, with 14 entering positive destinations and others becoming volunteers. Participants reported increased wellbeing and readiness for work, education or training.

- Achievement: ACC Youth Work supported National Improvement Framework priorities through targeted interventions, mentoring, and accredited awards (e.g. Hi5, Dynamic Youth Awards, Youth Activity Awards).

484 young people achieved SCQF-rated awards, up from 337 the previous year.

- Children's Rights: Aberdeen Youth Movement (AYM) contributed to the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee and supported the city's ambition that 100% of decisions affecting young people are informed by them by 2026.

Adult and Family Learning

- Family Support: Family Learning delivered 331 learner activities to 609 participants, totalling 15,342 learner hours. 99% reported improved wellbeing and self-awareness.

- Mental Health: SHMU's trauma-informed support engaged 140 adults, reducing isolation and improving wellbeing. Middlefield Community Project's MIndU service provided essential mental health support.

- Digital and ESOL: The ACC ESOL team delivered 211 activities to 474 participants, totalling 12,602 learner hours. Programmes included ESOL for employability and English for the Care Sector.

Community Development

- Capacity Building: The Ukrainian Hub, supported by volunteers and recognised nationally, offers cultural and educational activities and now operates independently on Sundays.

- Social Enterprise: Business Gateway supported 98 individuals to start businesses, with over 50% from priority neighbourhoods, reducing reliance on universal credit.

- Health Inequalities: Programmes like *Soup & Sannies*, *Confidence to Cook*, and *Supper & Science* promoted healthy eating, reduced isolation, and built community resilience.

The CLD Plan 2025-30

3.10 Our ambition is for Aberdeen to be "a place where all people can prosper, regardless of their background." At the heart of this, is a commitment to tackling poverty and inequality and supporting the city's people to live healthy lives.

3.11 To ensure that this CLD Plan helps to address inequalities, we have taken the time to reflect on what we know about our citizens and what can be learned from published research to ensure that the proposed CLD Plan helps tackle inequality and improve the health of our citizens.

3.12 In keeping with other strategies, our exploration has been structured under the five themes of the social determinants of health:

- Education & Lifelong Learning;
- Economic Stability;
- Communities & Housing;
- Neighbourhood & Environment; and
- Health & Social Care.

3.13 A clear summary of findings is outlined within the proposed CLD Plan (Appendix B). Consideration has also been given to the complexity of need experienced by some learners. CLD partners have used co-created learner personas to help design services that mitigate risks and better reflect the lived experiences of those engaging with CLD. This has ensured the proposed CLD Plan is firmly focused on the needs of the people and what this means for CLD services.

3.14 To further strengthen this approach, extensive engagement was undertaken through *Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future* using the Scottish Place Standard Tool. This participatory process revealed strong support for expanding community-based adult learning, targeted youth programmes, and initiatives to improve health, wellbeing, and employability. Over 90% of respondents endorsed proposals to increase access to lifelong learning, promote inclusive service design, and strengthen community influence in decision-making. Feedback highlighted the need for practical, locally delivered learning opportunities, better use of community spaces, and clearer communication. This feedback has informed the development of the CLD priorities outlined in the CLD Plan 2025-30 and highlighted the importance of locally delivered learning, inclusive design, and stronger community influence.

3.15 Building on the insights gathered through engagement and research, the proposed CLD Plan priorities and outcomes were co-created through a city-wide process involving CLD partners, senior leaders, learners, and community members. This collaborative approach included thematic working groups and in-person "Creating the CLD Plan" events.

3.16 In response to HMIE recommendations, Aberdeen City Council reviewed its governance arrangements and established the Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership (ACLDSP), with strategic oversight provided by the Community Empowerment Group (CEG). The ACLDSP will lead implementation, shared evaluation, and inclusive decision-making across the CLD landscape. Throughout the lifespan of the CLD Plan, the Strategic Partnership and thematic groups will work collaboratively using shared evaluation frameworks and joint monitoring to ensure delivery remains responsive to emerging needs and reflective of community priorities.

3.17 The CLD Plan 2025-30 has been endorsed by the Community Planning Management Committee and has also been quality assured by the internal Strategy Board. We have a high level of confidence that there is coherence across our recently developed Strategies.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 place duties upon the Authority in relation to the process to be undertaken in securing community learning and development including a requirement to publish plans every 3 years containing information about the

provision of CLD. The 2013 Regulations place requirements on education authorities that they are to meet in discharging their duties, under section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, to secure adequate and efficient provision of further education.

6.   ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1   The proposed CLD Plan recognises the critical role of the environment in shaping health and wellbeing outcomes. It highlights the need for equitable access to green and blue spaces, especially within 300 metres of homes, and acknowledges the impact of climate change on vulnerable communities. CLD partners are tasked with empowering communities to take ownership of local environmental initiatives, such as food growing projects and greenspace management. The plan also supports place-based approaches to climate resilience, promotes environmental sustainability through education, and integrates climate action into community development and learning strategies.

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 delivering against statutory requirements.	Mitigated by establishing and reporting progress against the CLD Plan	L	**yes**
Compliance	Risk of not complying with CLD regulations.	Mitigated by embedded self-evaluation by CLD partners and staff CPD	L	**yes**
Operational	Risk of not working to the national policy goals given the changing context in the city.	Mitigated by being agile and responsive to changes in the needs of the community	L	**yes**
Financial	Risk of not using resource most effectively to support communities	Mitigated by delivering against the CLD Plan and by remaining alert to unanticipated challenges facing those we serve and responding proactively.	L	**yes**

Legal	Risk of legal challenge by not complying with The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013.	Mitigated by yearly evaluation and yearly Delivery Plans and appropriate consultation with relevant stakeholders. An updated plan will be presented to Committee in accordance with the regulations.	L	**yes**
Reputational	Risk of not delivering a strong CLD provision for city residents	Mitigated by having a clear and well scrutinised plan	L	**yes**
Environment / Climate	Risk of not complying with local and national NetZero target	Mitigated by proactive measures to manage resources	L	**yes**

8. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVETY PLAN 2025/26	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement A City of Opportunity Empowering Communities	*The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement:-* *Sharing the progress against the Community Learning and Development Plan aims to increase awareness of the scope of CLD provision and the impacts delivered thought the plan as well as ensuring effective, responsible and inclusive delivery against the proposed CLD plan contributing to a City of Opportunity and Empowering Communities.*
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	*Sharing the progress against Community Learning and Development Plan aims to increase awareness of the scope of CLD provision and the impacts delivered through the plan as well as ensuring effective, responsible and inclusive delivery against the proposed CLD plan contributing to:* Stretch Outcome 1.20% reduction in the percentage of people who report they have been worried they

	would not have enough food to eat and/ or not be able to heat their home by 2026. 2. 74% employment rate for Aberdeen City by 2026 6.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	*Sharing the progress against the Community Learning and Development Plan aims to increase awareness of the scope of CLD provision and the impacts delivered thought the plan as well as ensuring effective, responsible and inclusive delivery against the proposed CLD plan contributing to* Prosperous people (Children and Young people): Stretch Outcomes 4 - 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026 and 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, particularly the Key Drivers: Increasing children's knowledge and understanding of their own physical and mental wellbeing and take an early intervention and prevention approach. Improving pathways to education, employment and training for all our children Stretch Outcome 7. 83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026. Stretch Outcome 8. 100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/disabilities will experience a positive destination Prosperous People (adults): Stretch Outcome10. Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026 – particularly the Key Drivers: Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and groups. Provide individuals and communities with the social resources needed to reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation. Encouraging adoption of healthier lifestyles through a whole family approach.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	*Sharing the progress against the Community Learning and Development Plan aims to increase awareness of the scope of CLD provision and the impacts delivered through the plan as well as ensuring effective, responsible and inclusive delivery against the proposed CLD plan contributing to* Prosperous Place: Stretch Outcomes 13. Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate and 15. 26% of Aberdeen's area will be protected and/or managed for nature

	and 60% of people report they feel that spaces and buildings are well cared for by 2026. – particularly the Key Drivers Contributing to the delivery of Aberdeen Adapts by developing a bottom up approach to community resilience to encourage greater ownership and independent action towards understanding communities' risks from climate change and adapting to them. Increasing the diversity, quality and use of Aberdeen's green spaces by facilitating community participation in them to restore nature and increase people's satisfaction, health, and wellbeing
Community Empowerment Stretch Outcomes	*Sharing the progress against the Community Learning and Development Plan aims to increase awareness of the scope of CLD provision and the impacts delivered through the plan as well as ensuring effective, responsible and inclusive delivery against the proposed CLD plan contributing to Community Empowerment* 50% of people report they feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026.
Regional and City Strategies Community Learning and Development Interim Plan 2024/25 Children's Services Plan Community Empowerment Strategy Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy **2025-2030** ACHSCP Strategic Plan 2025-29	*The proposals within this report support the Community Learning and Development plan 2025-30 and subsequent plans.*

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	An Integrated Impact Assessment has been created
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Aberdeen-Interim-CLD-Plan-2024-25.pdf

11.   APPENDICES

11.1   Appendix A – Progress against the CLD Interim Plan 2024/25
11.2   Appendix B – Community Learning and Development Plan 2025-30

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Learning changes lives for the better – CLD Plan 2024-2025 - Progress report

Continued Youth Work Outcomes (from CLD Plan 21-24)			
What are we going to do	**The impact of what we have done together**	**RAG**	**Next steps**
Support young people to gain the employability skills required for the world of work. This will increase the number of young people leaving school into a positive destination, especially those from priority areas. Work with school leavers to develop their employability skills.	A wide range of partners help young people of school age and beyond - particularly those from priority areas and those facing multiple barriers - to move towards positive destinations by building their employability skills, supporting their aspirations and creating accessible pathways to education, training and improving their wellbeing. • SHMU worked closely with schools (St Machar and Northfield Academies) to re-engage young people at risk of disengagement, offering alternative pathways that align with their interests and aspirations resulting in some young people progressing to positive destinations. • SHMU developed inclusive initiatives like Haven Role Play Group, providing tailored interventions for neurodiverse young people, and New Scots on Screen for ethnic minority young people. SHMU Train supported 56 young people to participate in post-school employability programmes with 14 entering positive destinations and others becoming volunteers. Participants reported increased wellbeing and readiness for work, education or training. • The SHMU Digital Media Skills programme was expanded to 4 courses annually, supporting 40 participants and boosting digital skills across priority groups. Participants developed creative confidence, job-search abilities and practical knowledge in areas such as filmmaking and media. • Aberdeen Foyer, as a delivery partner for the King's Trust programme, strengthened their outreach through a refreshed networking plan and use of the King's Trust marketing		Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the St Machar pilot project. Explore opportunities to scale successful programmes and ensure sustainability through continued partnership working There is a need to more carefully track the impact of the totality of the offer being

toolkit, leading to more diverse referrals and increased engagement from underrepresented groups. During 2024/2025 51 young people aged between 16 and 25 were supported, with 33 (65%) progressing to a positive destination, including 18 into employment. Participants reported developing confidence, motivation and skills through individual challenges and a community project.

- Foyer Reach provided 38 young people, in recovery from health and wellbeing challenges, with support tailored to their needs and aspirations. 14 (36%) progressing to education, training or employment.- This programme is targeted at young people furthest from the labour market and some will have moved into volunteering or progressed to other Foyer (or Partner) self-development/employability courses.
- Fairer Aberdeen employability programmes supported 294 young people, with 91 (31%) securing immediate positive outcomes.
- The Annual Participation Measure (APM) group, led by Skills Development Scotland (SDS), has fostered a collaborative approach to improving positive destinations. A pilot project targeting Christmas leavers in St Machar, delivered by the CLD Youth Work team, is an example of a responsive and targeted intervention.

Outcome Summary:

There are a wide range of youth work opportunities supporting young people to develop employability skills, particularly those from priority areas facing multiple barriers. Ongoing, targeted, and inclusive support is essential to ensure these young people are engaged and able to benefit fully.

Well-designed programmes are improving wellbeing, confidence, and work readiness, with increasing success in reaching marginalised groups. Some participants are progressing to positive destinations such as further education, training, or employment, while many report enhanced wellbeing, self-belief, and a renewed sense of purpose.

To sustain and improve outcomes—especially as the school leaver positive destination rate has remained at 93.6% for both 2022/23 and 2023/24—continued collaboration and targeted support

made to young people to better identify where there is a need for a targeted intervention.

	for those facing the greatest barriers are vital. There is also a need to better track the overall impact of the support offer to identify where additional interventions are needed most..		
Support young people's mental and physical wellbeing and increase the number of young people who report that they feel mentally well.	Youth work activities delivered by Aberdeen City Council (ACC) and partners are having a demonstrable impact on young people's mental and physical wellbeing. Informal learning experiences are delivered in both school and community settings, ensuring accessibility and relevance for the 1281 young people enrolled over 2024/25. Most young people who took part and completed an evaluation said that their involvement with youth work had improved their confidence, knowledge and skills. Details of some programmes benefiting wellbeing are exemplified below: • ACC Creative Learning's Creative Play Programme supported 60 pupils (P3-P7) from Kittybrewster school to develop creative thinking, teamwork and meta-skills. 30 creative outdoor workshops were delivered, enhancing engagement and wellbeing. A youth-led approach empowered pupils to take ownership of their learning, fostering collaboration and resilience. The project was embedded in the school's existing skills framework and promoted off-page, experiential learning. 100% of learners reported improved confidence and creative skills. • The introduction of Seasons for Growth at Lochside and Northfield Academies has expanded the wellbeing offer. The core intention of these programmes is the development of resilience and emotional literacy to promote social and emotional wellbeing. • Confidence to Cook is being used in Cults, Hazlehead, and Lochside Associated Schools Groups, supporting life skills, confidence and a sense of achievement. • SHMU's Youth Media and Engagement Programmes offer creative opportunities in safe and engaging spaces where young people can express themselves, develop personal and social skills and build positive connections that reduce their risk of harm and exclusion. Using a relationship-based and trauma-informed approach, participants report feeling safer, more respected and more aware of the consequences of risk-taking behaviours; reduced isolation and stronger peer networks and better school engagement. Teachers and social workers observed an improvement in the mental health and		While qualitative feedback is strong, further consistent quantitative data is needed from partners to fully evidence impact on different groups. For example, disaggregated data by SIMD, ASN, protected characteristics and longitudinal tracking of wellbeing outcomes. Explore opportunities to expand successful models to other schools and communities

		emotional regulation of young people who took part in these programmes. One participant noted "*taking part in the course reduced my isolation and loneliness, improved my mental health and confidence, self-esteem, creative skills and core skills all in one go!*" **Outcome summary:** The work of partners is clearly contributing to improving young people's mental wellbeing. Projects are youth-centred, inclusive, and responsive to local needs and informal learning is being used effectively to build confidence, resilience and life skills in young people.		
	Work with partners from the Family Wellbeing Hubs to provide early intervention support to children, young people and families.	The Fit Like? Hubs operate as a multi-agency model, bringing together services from health, education, social work and the third sector. This collaborative approach ensures families receive holistic, wraparound support tailored to their needs. Fit Like? Hubs are embedded in local communities, reducing barriers to access and building trust with families. In 2024, Fit Like? received 567 requests for support (+41 education-specific requests redirected to the Education ASN& Outreach Team), 358 families (63%) were offered support. CLD Family Learning is embedded within the provision ensuring co-ordinated and consistent support to families within their communities. Evidence shows improved wellbeing, engagement and resilience among children, young people and families who engage with the Hubs. In 2024, Fit Like? expanded its support through both individual and group-based interventions for children, young people, and parents. School-based programmes like LIAM supported 50 young people with anxiety management, while a new pilot, Harm-Less, reached 57 Primary 7 pupils at Woodside Primary, focusing on emotional wellbeing and harm reduction. For parents and carers, group programmes such as *Distress to Success*, *Helping Your Anxious Child*, and the newly established *Helping Your Autistic Child* engaged 80 parents in structured support. These groups are now universally accessible via the service's website. Over the year, 123 families moved on from the service - most (109) transitioning to universal supports, with a smaller number referred to long-term social work (8) or CAMHS (6). Engagement typically lasted 6 -12 months, highlighting the service's strong role in early intervention and successful step-downs to community-based supports.		Review resource allocation and ways of working to maximise impact as we further develop our Family Support Model.

		Outcome summary: The integration of Family Learning into the Fit Like Family Wellbeing Service and partnerships with schools, social work and community organisations aid the transition of support for families and demonstrates strong leadership and strategic alignment with the Aberdeen City GIRFEC Model of Tiered Intervention. Agile and responsive programmes, as described above, have been adapted to meet increasing demand, though a significant waiting list for 1:1 support highlights the need to review resource allocation and ways of working to maximise impact as we further develop our Family Support Model.		
	Support Community Planning Aberdeen's work to promote and protect Children's Rights.	Youth work partners in Aberdeen are making strong progress in empowering young people to participate meaningfully in civic life and decision-making processes. There is clear evidence of increased opportunities for youth voice, with structured platforms such as Aberdeen Youth Movement (AYM), Granite City Speaks and Young Ambassadors enabling young people to influence local policy and community development. AYM's involvement in high-level decision-making forums, such as the Child and Young People's Rights Community Planning group, Aberdeen Housing Forum and their work to elicit the voices of young people to support the Council budget setting process and policy development through the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future engagement, demonstrates a strategic commitment to embedding youth voice in governance. The quarterly meetings with council leaders further reflect a culture of co-production and mutual respect. AYM's contributions to the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee and collaboration with Scottish Women's Budget Group on poverty research show that young people are influencing complex and cross-cutting policy areas. This is a strong indicator of youth empowerment and leadership. The expansion of AYM's digital presence, including ethical social media platforms like Blue Sky and TikTok, reflects a responsive and youth-led approach to engagement, increasing accessibility and visibility of youth rights.		To fully realise its impact, strengthen data collection and impact evaluation.

	SHMU's work in schools and communities, particularly with care-experienced young people and those with lower literacy attainment, highlights a strong commitment to equity and inclusion. The Speak Out FM programme and Media Makers projects are excellent examples of creative, rights-based practice. SHMU's collaboration with schools, social work, and community partners ensures a joined-up approach to safeguarding and promoting children's rights. Their contribution to city-wide initiatives like the Priority Neighbourhood Partnerships further amplifies youth voice in local planning. 2 AYM members are actively contributing to the Child and Young People's Rights LOIP group, supporting the city's ambition that 100% of decisions affecting young people are informed by them by 2026. This is a clear benchmark for evaluating future progress. **Outcome Summary:** Youth work providers actively promote the UNCRC and children's rights, supporting young people to express their views through Youth Voice platforms. They also help other organisations and services to adopt rights-based approaches when engaging with young people. Youth work partners in Aberdeen are creating inclusive and meaningful opportunities for young people to shape their communities and influence decisions. This work is grounded in a strong rights-based ethos and effective partnerships. To fully realise its impact, there is a need to strengthen data collection and impact evaluation.		
Promote and deliver diversionary activities for young people with an enhanced focus on the priority areas.	Partners across Aberdeen are delivering a broad and inclusive range of diversionary activities that are demonstrably improving young people's mental and physical wellbeing, building confidence and reducing risk-taking behaviours. These activities are particularly effective in priority neighbourhoods where access to positive opportunities may be more limited. There is strong evidence of increased participation in youth work across the city, with a wide range of partners offering accessible, free and purposeful activities. These are often co-designed with young people and delivered in partnership with schools, social work and community organisations.		Connect and respond to priorities identified through the Youth Thematic Community Safety Group

- The Youth Activities Grants (YAGs), managed by ACC Youth Work and AYM, supported 1,119 young people in 2024–25 with a total allocation of £46,066, enabling participation in activities that promote health and wellbeing.
- Middlefield Youth Flat engaged 180 young people across 982 sessions, with a strong focus on supporting isolated young people and those from the most deprived SIMD areas.
- CLD-funded community projects supported 1,023 children and young people, with 899 reporting increased confidence and resilience, demonstrating clear impact on life chances.
- ACC Youth Work's centre-based programme recorded 1,066 attendances, with three of four groups based in priority areas.
- The City Centre Partnership and Youth Horizons programme provided free holiday activities, increasing access for young people aged 12+ during school breaks.
- Denis Law Trust's Street Sports programme is attracting high numbers of participants in multiple locations, offering safe, active alternatives to risk-taking behaviour.
- SHMU's leadership in youth media and justice-experienced youth work is notable, with innovative outreach to asylum-seeking and care-experienced young people and the development of a Young Leaders model.
- The Oldmachar youth club, initiated by local volunteers, is a strong example of community-led leadership, providing a safe and engaging space for young people and supported by 468 volunteer hours.
- The City Centre Partnership was formed in 2024 with the aim of increasing the number of activities for young people in the city centre during school holidays. During Easter 2025 the Youth Horizons programme provided free activities for young people age 12 and above. The programme successfully engaged 145 young people aged 12–25 in 44 additional activities co-designed with them, leading to increased confidence, new skills, and stronger community connections. Organisations who contributed include: Fast Lane, Go-Karting, Apple Store, Transition, Face Youth, ACC libraries and NESCOL.
- ACC Youth Work teams delivered school holiday programmes during Easter and Summer breaks. Activities were delivered within ASG areas and were free. The aim was to provide

	young people with something purposeful to do during school holidays and allowed youth workers to maintain contact with young people, particularly vulnerable ones. **Outcome summary**: Diversionary youth work in Aberdeen is positively impacting young people's lives, particularly those in priority areas. Youth work partners are demonstrating strong collaborative leadership, with a shared commitment to inclusion, equity and youth empowerment. Programmes are increasingly data-informed and targeted, ensuring resources are directed where they are most needed. The breadth of provision, strong partnership working and focus on inclusion and wellbeing are key strengths. Young people who take part in diversionary activities are choosing to use their free time purposively and are being diverted from risk taking behaviour. Connect and respond to priorities identified through the Youth Thematic Community Safety Group		
Work in partnership with primary and secondary schools, with a focus on priority areas, to support improvements relating to the National Improvement Framework priorities	Aberdeen City Council (ACC) Youth Work has effectively used Strategic Equity Funding to support children and young people aged 10+, contributing to improved wellbeing and readiness to learn. This aligns well with National Improvement Framework priorities, particularly in closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The Youth Work team offers a flexible and needs-based curriculum which includes one to one support, group work, targeted and universal transition programmes, youth awards such as Hi5, Dynamic Youth and Youth Achievement Awards, lunch-time drop-ins that provide safe spaces for pupils. In 2024–25, 1,281 young people enrolled in youth work activities and evaluations show most participants improved in confidence, knowledge and skills. Effective use was made of award programmes to recognize achievement - 484 young people achieved SCQF-rated awards (Hi5, Dynamic Youth, Youth Achievement), up from 337 in the previous year. These awards provide a structured pathway for personal development and recognition of achievement. During 2024-25 the youth work team collaborated with Alcohol and Drugs Action (ADA) on a pilot harm reduction project called Harm Less at Cornhill School. The project for primary 7 pupils aimed to reduce the risk of harm associated with drugs and alcohol by		Strengthen data collection and analysis to better understand impact across priority groups and improve the targeting of resources.

improving young people's knowledge and confidence. Following the successful pilot, Harm Less will now be delivered in a further 2 primary schools: Sunnybank and Charleston.

- Youth Work and Growing2Gether collaborated to deliver Growing2Gether's Nursery Mentoring Programme in Northfield and Lochside academies. Growing2gether is a 16-week programme that provides young people with work experience in a nursery; it supports young people to develop empathy and improve their confidence and mental wellbeing. Young people from Northfield who took part in Growing2Gether were identified because they were finding their own school learning challenging. Participants were offered group work and practical activities that challenged their thinking about their abilities and their potential with a view to supporting their own education with school and beyond. Feedback from young people who took part shows that it had a positive impact on how they view themselves, what they believe they can achieve and on their overall wellbeing and confidence. Feedback also showed that participants would highly recommend the course to others.

- Targeted support to young people on flexible learning pathways by youth workers, delivered in schools, is highly valued by young people, parents and teachers. Young people are engaging with staff and achieving positive health outcomes and achieving accreditation through Youth Award programmes. Most of the young people participating in these activities have improved their confidence and their ability to work with others.

- Drop-in youth groups in some secondary schools are effectively supporting young people, at risk of social isolation, to build their confidence, communication and team working skills. As a result, young people are more settled in school and are able to engage better in learning.

- A Creative Writing and the Outdoors programme, delivered by Creative Learning in partnership with Danestone Primary School, has delivered a high-impact creative writing programme. The project fostered a collaborative school culture, with shared strategies and increased motivation across classes. Almost all learners reported improved creative writing skills and teachers reported increased confidence and capability in using outdoor learning to enhance literacy.

	• The Associated School Group Partnership Forums, in each secondary catchment area, provide a useful route to share practice and coordinate actions. This is helping staff to better meet the needs of those who require additional support. **Outcome summary**: Work in partnership with primary and secondary schools has enabled Youth Work to become an important offer for children and young people in primary and secondary schools. The delivery model was responsive and inclusive, with strong partnerships across schools, third sector organisations and community groups. Young people are benefiting from improved emotional and mental wellbeing outcomes and their readiness to learn is improving also. While participation and outcomes are strong, there is a recognised need to improve the targeting of resources to fully reflect the funding source, to those most in need to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap.		
Emerging Priorities for Youth Work Plans from 1 year Interim Plan			
Continue to improve data sharing and joint planning between youth work, employability providers and secondary schools.	**Outcome summary**: Shared data is beginning to target resources to learners most in need; this will reduce duplication and create efficiencies and will be further supported by CLD partners making use of a shared data system with employability services. The Annual Participation Measure (APM) group was set up by Skills Development Scotland to increase the number of young people leaving school and entering a positive destination. The group is beginning to improve data sharing between partners and is encouraging collaboration between services. This group aims to improve sustained positive destinations for the Aberdeen City 16-19 year old cohort and minimise "unconfirmed" statuses. Data is being used to direct the work and focus resource on where it is needed most.		Demonstrating how improved use of data and joint planning creates efficiencies and addresses need
There is a need to consider how	**Outcome summary**:		Develop a multi-disciplinary

CLD providers can best work with secondary schools to track achievement.	CLD providers who work in schools are using a range of tools and evaluative methods to track and recognise learners' progress. Learning Partnerships are being used to discuss the needs of children and young people and allocate support that best meets their needs. Progress is being made to improve how CLD providers can work with secondary schools to track achievement. Achievements of learners taking part in youth work activities are shared with schools. There still needs to be a more systematic and uniform approach to tracking achievement and consideration will be given to use of the Glasgow Wellbeing Scale to complement understanding.	■	approach to tracking outcomes.
Extend the knowledge of youth workers around what awards could suit the groups they are working with and consider how they could be introduced (with a particular focus on SIMD 1&2)	**Outcome summary:** The promotion of Youth Awards by ACC Youth Work has led to a significant increase in participation and achievement, with 484 young people gaining awards in 2024/25 compared to 337 in 2023/24. National credit-rated awards, that can act as a framework to record and recognise young people's achievements, including Hi5, Dynamic Youth Awards (DYA) and Youth Achievement Awards (YAA), are now utilized by a broader range of partners such as Craigielea, Education Support and Promise staff. Training has been provided to all youth workers for Hi5 and DYA, and to a few for YAA. Evaluations indicate over 80% of participants reported improvements in skills, collaboration, self-perception and communication. The awards are integrated into school learning offers and have been effective in engaging young people, including those disengaged from traditional learning environments.	■	Increase percentage of young people from SIMD 1 and 2 gaining awards. Expand Youth Awards training to more partners.
Further develop multi agency response to The Promise, including Edge of Care pilots.	**Outcome summary**: The flexibility and solution-focused approach of partners has seen the Promise Pilot extended to St Machar increasing the number of ASGs supported to 3. There are robust tracking and monitoring systems in place to ensure outcomes are being achieved by participants. Young people and families are receiving timely support from youth work, family learning, social work and schools and benefit from enhanced support from partners. The Edge of Care Pilots can evidence that they are having a positive impact on the lives of families and young people, but the positive impact is not yet showing in wider data on those entering care. A more focussed evaluation framework will support a greater understanding of the reasons for this.	■	Establish an evaluation framework to better articulate the impact of the edge of care pilots on those entering the care system.

Continued Adult and Family Learning Outcomes (from CLD Plan 21-24)			
What are we going to do	**The impact of what we have done together**	**RAG**	**Next Steps**
Families are supported to raise attainment and build their capacity and resilience	The CLD Family Learning team in Aberdeen has demonstrated significant impact in 2024–25, delivering 331 learner activities to 609 participants, equating to 15,342 learner hours. The team has effectively used multiple funding streams (Strategic Equity Funding, Pupil Equity Funding, Scottish Attainment Challenge and Whole Family Wellbeing Funding), to provide both universal and targeted support. Following the input, an increase in the levels of personal achievement (82%), self-awareness (99%), and wellbeing (99%) was reported by learners. Families are benefiting from early intervention support, allowing them to access the right support at the right time. Family Learning provides relational, flexible, and community-based support to families, focusing on improving overall family wellbeing. Through Scottish Equity Funding, both universal and targeted early intervention support is available across all eleven ASGs in Aberdeen. Scottish Equity Funded Development workers have delivered 12,759 learner hours to 1204 participants. • The Edge of Care Pilots, now active in three ASGs, adopt a whole family approach and provide intensive early intervention support. Family Learning has been involved since the project's inception. The Northfield and Lochside Pilots Family Learning offer has equated to 655 learner hours to 35 participants. • A strong partnership with the ACC Social Work Kinship team has been developed, with a Family Learning Development Officer seconded to increase universal, community-based support to kinship carers, funded by the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. Kinship support has been provided to 23 participants, totalling 759 learner hours. • Pupil Equity Funding has enabled the continuation of Family Learning Development Workers in three primary schools within the Northfield ASG, embedding support within		

specific school communities. Pupil Equity Fund specific work has been delivered to 100 participants and 4758 learner hours.

- UKSPF funding supported Family Learning to deliver 20 courses and activities to 150 parents/carers and their families with 56 participants taking part in numeracy SQA Level 2 and 3.
- Family Learning has offered one-to-one pluralistic counselling to 90 adults in 24-25 in a 3-year project providing placements to volunteer student counsellors both online and in 3 locations across the city including Seaton, Cummings Park and Rosemount.
- Creative Learning's bespoke Geronimo programme provided artist-led play sessions for families with children aged 0–5, using a whole-family approach to strengthen relationships, build confidence, and develop life skills through creative play. A total of 87 sessions were delivered across priority neighbourhoods including Torry, Tillydrone, Woodside, and Middlefield, with additional tailored sessions in Mastrick and for Kinship Peep (Peep Learning together programme) groups. Collaborative programmes included summer sessions with Family Learning and a Geronimo meets Peep hybrid at Greyhope School Nursery with Active Schools. The programme engaged 269 participants from 115 families (126 adults and 143 children), all receiving family support. 100% of parents reported improved relationships and wellbeing.
- During 2024/2025, Peep delivered approximately 154 Peep sessions to 399 families including weekly groups, pop ups, and 1-1 work). 12 families also completed a Peep Progression Pathway portfolio which earned them an SCQF credit rated unit.
- CLD-funded Community Projects support families, young people and children in priority areas through Early Learning, After School Clubs, Family Support, Adult Learning, Youth Work, Community Capacity Building and access to free food. They supported 865 families and 1,023 children and young people, with 324 volunteers contributing 37,980 hours.
- 'Fairer Aberdeen funds organisations such as Middlefield Youth Hub, HomeStart, ACIS Youth Counselling, Befriend A Child, Choices, ACC Creative Learning Geronimo, CFINE, Pathways, CAB, and community flats in Tillydrone, Seaton and Cummings Park.

	Initiatives supported 166 families with complex needs and 5,566 individuals received financial advice, gaining over £2 million collectively. **Outcome summary**: The CLD Family Learning team in Aberdeen has made a significant impact in 2024-25 by delivering 331 learner activities to 609 participants, totalling 15,342 learner hours. The team effectively utilised multiple funding streams to provide both universal and targeted support resulting in high levels of personal achievement, self-awareness, and wellbeing among learners. Collaborative and partnership working has helped ensure effective early intervention support reaches those who need it most. Family learning initiatives have demonstrated a strong commitment to improving family wellbeing and resilience through relational, flexible, and community-based support.		
Develop and deliver targeted learning package for those whose employment opportunities have been hardest hit by Covid-19, and:- • Emerging priorities not detailed in the plan: • Welcoming New Scots • Cost of Living Crisis • Warm Spaces	CLD partners have developed and delivered targeted learning packages for individuals whose employment opportunities were most affected. These packages included employability workshops, digital skills training, and mental health support. Initiatives such as Future Focus CV Workshops and REHIS (Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland) qualifications were delivered in partnership with local organisations. Volunteers gained practical experience in community cafés and received mentoring and resilience training. Similarly shmuTRAIN, Pathways, and Fairer Aberdeen-funded initiatives provided tailored support, qualifications, and mentoring, helping hundreds of individuals to regain confidence, improve job prospects, and re-engage with the workforce. CLD partners have actively supported New Scots through inclusive programmes that promote integration and wellbeing. Football sessions for asylum seekers and refugees provided access to high-quality facilities and equipment, fostering physical activity and social inclusion. The Ukrainian Community Hub and School offered ESOL classes, mental health support, and cultural activities. Shmu's New Scots on Screen and community radio initiatives gave ethnic minority communities platforms to share their voices and build skills. Community Projects and a few community centres offered informal learning opportunities and peer support, fostering inclusion and wellbeing.		

	The CLD response to emerging priorities has been robust and community-led. Targeted learning packages have empowered those most affected by COVID-19, while inclusive programmes have welcomed New Scots and supported their integration. Efforts to address the cost of living crisis and provide warm spaces have strengthened community resilience and wellbeing. Across all initiatives, CLD partners have demonstrated strong collaboration, volunteer mobilisation, and a commitment to reducing inequalities. These outcomes reflect high-quality delivery of community development. **Outcome Summary** Those facing additional challenges in their lives such as illness, disability, bereavement and the effects of poverty are supported well by CLD providers. Staff and volunteers running a wide range of adult learning opportunities are skilled in encouraging local people to participate. This is reducing social isolation and loneliness for many. Adults joining groups such as sewing classes, wellbeing cafes and older peoples' groups at Middlefield Community Project are making friends and trying new activities. For most, their participation is life changing, with them feeling happier and better able to address challenges in their lives.		
Improve the Mental Wellbeing of adults in our communities	The CLD Healthy Minds team has made a significant impact in supporting adults with diagnosed mental illness through personalised learning opportunities. In 2024/25, 58 adults accessed 100 learning opportunities totaling 1245 hours, with 91% reporting increased confidence and 86% improved skills. The Blair secure forensic unit programme, funded by NHS and UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund), supported 15 patients with 96% reporting improved confidence. Creative engagement through arts and festivals, such as Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival and Spectra, has enhanced mental wellbeing. The I'm Fine Festival, hosted with Aberdeen City Libraries, promoted mental health awareness with positive feedback from attendees. SHMU's trauma-informed support engaged 140 adults, reducing isolation and improving wellbeing. Middlefield Community Project's MIndU service provided essential mental health support through Talking Therapy and peer groups. Collectively, these initiatives demonstrate strong community impact, effective partnerships, and a commitment to mental health and wellbeing.		Develop collaborative working further and increase activity

Tutor provision at the Blair unit in Cornhill hospital is effectively supporting a group of vulnerable learners. Activities are learner led across a range of interests, including core skills. Sessions help learners to structure their day, to stay motivated and to maintain their mental health and reduce anxiety. Core skills gained through the programme helped? a few learners to resettle in the community where appropriate.

Outcome summary:

Strong examples of mental health and wellbeing support through personalised learning and creative engagement are making improvements in wellbeing, reducing stigma and promoting resilience. CLD Healthy Minds team targeted learning offer in the community and in the forensic unit at Cornhill is helping adults with a diagnosed mental illness to aid their own recovery. Third sector partners including ALC, Middlefield Community Project, Printfield Community Project and SHMU have supported participants to engage in activities aimed at supporting positive mental and physical health. Most report an increase in confidence and skills and move on to volunteering opportunities, employment, other learning opportunities or groups within their own community. Positive steps have been made for partners to work together through the Mental Health Partnership Group.

| Equip Adult Learners to meet key challenges and transitions in their lives – to include Digital inclusion, literacy, numeracy, ESOL and financial resilience and health literacy | Adult Learning ICT currently delivers 10 general ICT classes, with most learners working toward accredited qualifications. These classes help build confidence, improve digital skills, and enhance employability. In response to learner feedback, new short courses on using smartphones and tablets are being developed for launch in September 2025. This will allow tutors to deliver more focused sessions by separating basic IT skills from device-specific training, ultimately improving the learner experience. CLD Healthy Minds delivered 'Confident with a smartphone' course to learners to tackle technology barriers and to build more confidence in using technology to connect with the world. One learner has continued to access ongoing support through Silver Surfers. CLD Adult Literacies provides targeted specialist support for those with low levels of literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Individual learning plans and one to one meetings are supporting adult learners in a few groups to set and manage their goals. This is helping learners to progress and be more confident to try new things. |

- Adults undertaking community payback orders are supported well by adult learning workers to improve their life skills. This includes literacy and numeracy skills but also exploring aspects such as building positive relationships with others. This is helping many of these learners to be more optimistic about their futures and consider how they can progress in their lives.
- Adult Literacies provides targeted specialist support for those with low levels of literacy, numeracy, and digital skills. ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) supports individuals with low level English language skills. Through the delivery of targeted adult ESOL and community development support, CLD contributes to the city's Humanitarian Response.
- Using Multiply funding for resources, Adult Learning ESOL incorporated numeracy elements into core ESOL classes, with the aim for learners to complete SQA Core Skills Numeracy (level 2) awards. Across all classes, at least 200 awards will have been completed by the end of the project.
- The ESOL team have also delivered short courses on specific topics, aimed at helping learners to develop both language and life skills, such as: ESOL for employability, English for the Care Sector, Basic Sewing skills (using a sewing machine). The ESOL team also worked with the Robertson Group to provide employability support to learners, with bespoke sessions arranged covering a variety of topics such as interview skills and CV writing as well as an overview to work in Scotland.
- The CLD ESOL team helps low level ESOL learners to realise their potential by gaining language and other skills to participate more fully in community, family, employment and learning. As a result ESOL learners are gaining a wide range of skills that meet their needs. Many have built friendships within the groups and are more confident. Learners are successfully using the communication skills they are gaining in their wider lives. This includes speaking to their children's schools, using transport and seeking medical services. Many are using the skills and, in some cases, qualifications they are gaining to find work or move onto further learning or volunteering. The pace and challenge set by staff is appropriate and enables the leaners to progress well.
- The Adult Learning programme at Clinterty demonstrates a strong commitment to community engagement and lifelong learning. The Parent and Toddler group effectively

fosters early learning, strengthens parent-child relationships, and addresses social isolation and mental health, particularly among men. The Cooking group integrates essential skills such as numeracy and literacy with collaborative learning, enhancing confidence and wellbeing. Homework support activities contribute to academic development and digital literacy, while the Drop-in Biscuit and Blether sessions provide a valuable platform for identifying individual needs and promoting wider participation. Support with Social Security forms, in collaboration with Social Security Scotland, empowers residents to navigate complex systems, reducing poverty and anxiety. The CFINE food pantry addresses food insecurity and promotes healthy eating. Tailored learning support for school-aged children and disengaged teenagers enhances educational outcomes and strengthens school-family links. Engagement with young adults pursuing SVQs in the care sector supports employability and personal development. Overall, the programme supports 12 extended families and exemplifies a responsive, inclusive, and impactful approach to community learning.

- The Multiply-funded programmes, Recast – Kelly Cats and Sewing Skills, have engaged adult learners in creative, hands-on activities that embedded numeracy skill development in a supportive and inclusive environment, tailored to the needs of adult learners with limited formal qualifications. The Recast programme provided a 4-week intensive course where learners applied numeracy in practical casting activities, while the Sewing Skills programme offered an 8-week course for ESOL learners, integrating language development with numeracy and creative skills. 100% of participants reported improved numeracy and a positive experience. The programmes fostered confidence, reduced anxiety around numeracy, and encouraged learners to apply their skills in everyday contexts, including supporting children and re-entering the workforce.

Outcome summary:

The CLD Adult Learning team in Aberdeen has been highly effective in equipping adult learners to overcome digital, literacy, and numeracy challenges through the running of a range of classes, most of which are accredited, leading to increased confidence, improved skills, and higher employability among learners.   Additionally, the team provides targeted specialist support for

	those with low levels of literacy, numeracy, and digital skills through individual learning plans and one-to-one meetings. The ESOL team has integrated numeracy elements into core classes, helping learners achieve SQA Core Skills Numeracy awards . These comprehensive efforts ensure that adult learners are well-supported in overcoming key challenges.	🟩	
Develop and support outdoor learning initiatives	**Outcome summary:** The Family Learning, Healthy Minds, and Creative Learning teams have shown a strong commitment to delivering high-quality, inclusive learning. Their focus on outdoor and community-based opportunities ensures that programmes are both engaging and accessible. Programmes such as *Self-Care in the Outdoors*, *Learn to Ride*, *Parent & Carer Golf*, and *Geronimo* have successfully promoted health, wellbeing, and family engagement. By leveraging accessible public spaces and collaborating with partners like Tullos Community Garden, Sport Aberdeen, and Creative Practitioners, the teams have significantly extended their reach and impact. Their strategic use of local venues and strong community partnerships has not only reduced barriers to participation but also strengthened community ties and fostered a sense of belonging.	🟧	
Increase focus on accredited qualifications and development of Progression Routes including (linkage to ABZ Works/Campus)	**Outcome summary**: 11 New assessors and 3 new Internal verifiers are undergoing training. This will lead to an increase in accredited qualifications being delivered. Since April 2024 120 learners have achieved an SQA award with approx. 200 learners currently in the process of being awarded. Work to date to identify and train new internal verifiers and assessors will support the further use of accredited qualifications.	🟩	Number of accredited awards being achieved
Emerging Priorities Adult Learning			

Further develop city wide CLD partners contribution to the Family Support Model and explore how commissioned services contribute to the Family Support Model	**Outcome summary**: Following the successful appointment of a lead officer, work is now progressing on the Family Support Model with an initial focus on those who experience care and those impacted by domestic violence. Work is currently being concluded with CELCIS to establish our theory of change, evaluation framework and methodologies to support our explorations and relationships are being built across key services. The set-up phase of this work is now concluded with the deeper explorations now underway to inform next steps. This work will be further developed through the establishment of the Family Learning thematic group.		
Adult learning staff to work with their partners to see if data analysis can provide evidence of their positive impact and contribution to helping to reduce re-offending	The Adult Learning team has established a strong and evolving partnership with the Criminal Justice team, initially focused on Unpaid Work and now expanded to include Diversionary Court, the Women's Project, and the Support Team. This collaboration reflects a strategic alignment aimed at supporting individuals involved in the justice system through education and personal development. The Adult Learning team delivers a broad curriculum that includes core academic subjects (Literacy, Numeracy, ICT), personal development (Confidence Building, Life Skills, Health and Wellbeing), and employability-focused training (SQA Core Skills, Working With Others, Employability). This diverse offering is well-suited to address the complex needs of learners within the criminal justice context. A wide range of evaluation methods are used including Learner Baselines and Achievement Records and Learner and Criminal Justice Team Feedback These tools provide qualitative and quantitative insights into learner progress and programme effectiveness. However, the team is actively working to enhance data analysis capabilities to		Key areas for development include enhancing data analysis to better link learning outcomes with reductions in reoffending, and establishing a shared system to track learner pathways and long-term impact.

	better track learner pathways and assess the impact on reoffending rates. This indicates a forward-thinking approach focused on evidence-based practice and continuous improvement. **Outcome Summary** This work demonstrates strong inter-agency collaboration, a well-designed and relevant curriculum, and a robust evaluation framework supported by a commitment to data-informed decision-making.		
Find ways to respond positively to the huge increase in the number requiring ESOL support.	**Outcome summary:** ESOL learner numbers continue to increase, with no signs of this slowing down in the immediate future. Demand remains high for classes, due in part to the high quality of classes delivered by the team. There are plans to continue to diversify the offer, where funding and tutor capacity permits, to offer Confidence to Cook courses as well as introduce new SQA courses, such as Beginner Literacy 1 and 2, to bridge the gap between learners who have mastered the basics of the English language but are not quite ready for National 2 awards. The Adult Learning ESOL offer has expanded over recent years in response to the ever-growing demand for ESOL in the city following the arrival of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine on resettlement schemes and the opening of three (now two) asylum hotels. As well as core English classes aimed at helping learners to reach a level of English where they can communicate in everyday life and access other services, additional short courses and activities are offered when tutor capacity and funding allows. These have included: • Basic sewing courses teaching learners how use a sewing machine – funded initially by Multiply and subsequently by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, participants also achieved an SQA Core Skills Numeracy: Measuring (level 2) • Braided Rag Rugging and Glass Fusing sessions, also funded by Multiply • An ESOL and Crochet course • A singing class where learners developed their English through song, accompanied by a tutor on the guitar • ESOL for the Care Sector, supported by Bon Accord Care		

- Scottish Culture, where learners got to taste haggis, neeps and tatties and learn some traditional Scottish dances.

Since November 2024, the ESOL team have been running a weekly Board Games and Language Cafe at the Maritime Museum, supported by a development worker from the Resettlement Team. Initially funded with money from a Youth Action Grant awarded by the Aberdeen Youth Movement, the sessions are also supported by volunteers who are former learners who have completed their SQA National 3 award. Feedback to the sessions highlights the friendly atmosphere and the opportunity to meet new people and practice English while playing games.

Since August 2021, the Adult Learning ESOL team have delivered 619 activities, which amounts to 32, 765 learner hours. In 2024-25 the Adult Learning ESOL team have delivered 211 activities to 474 participants, which amounts to 12,602 learner hours. As of June 2025, the team has a capacity to deliver 61 classes a week. There are currently 244 learners enrolled in classes and 111 on the waiting list. There is a 5 week wait for an assessment to join a class, with 89 people currently awaiting assessment. Using money awarded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the ESOL team is currently recruiting three 18.5-hour tutors and an 18.5-hour coordinator, fixed term until the end of the financial year. When they join the current team of 9 tutors and 1 coordinator capacity will rise to 79 classes.

ESOL classes are offered from Literacy level (for learners unfamiliar with the Roman alphabet) up to Pre-Intermediate (CEFR A2, SQA National 3). Learners currently attend two 90-minute classes per week, which will increase to two 2-hour sessions from August 2025 in response to learner feedback.

When tutor capacity allows, short topic-based courses are also delivered over 4–6 weeks, with one 90-minute session per week. Previous topics have included vocabulary and pronunciation, Scottish culture, English for the care sector, and ESOL for employability.

Assessment sessions are held once or twice weekly, accommodating 14–23 appointments.

	The ESOL team meets fortnightly with the Aberdeen ESOL Sub Group—comprising other providers across the city and shire—to share updates, coordinate provision, and avoid duplication. The Refugee Project Manager also attends to provide updates on new arrivals and accommodation. In response to increased referrals from the DWP, a city-wide referral document was co-developed in early 2025. This is now used by DWP work coaches and can be shared with other organisations. Additionally, GREC has developed an interactive ESOL map for Aberdeen.		
Further develop opportunities for Learner's Voice, the voice and experiences of learners, to shape future provision and priorities and use this to influence service delivery, and the development of a sense of agency	CLD Adult Learning hosts an annual *Celebration of Learning* to recognise learner achievements. The 2024–25 event had 180 learners in attendance at the Beach Ballroom. In addition to celebrating success, the event gathers valuable feedback that informs the Adult Learning Action Plan. Learners report increased confidence in areas such as speaking English, numeracy and digital skills. The ESOL team held two *Learner Voice* focus groups in 2025, involving 30 learners from 14 classes across four venues, supported by in-class discussions with 127 learners. Feedback was highly positive, with learners reporting improved communication, confidence, and job readiness. All requested changes in 2024 were implemented, including new short courses and a weekly *Language Café* supported by peer volunteers who completed their SQA National 3 award. Other teams also engaged learners: - **ICT**: 10 learners participated in a digital-focused consultation. - **Healthy Minds**: 10 learners contributed to city-wide consultations and learners have regular review meetings where they discuss their goals, leading to new creative and wellbeing activities.		

	• **Family Learning** have established a Learner's Forum with parents/carers to discuss their priorities and desired focus for the service. Past learners are also being engaged to ensure their voices shape future provision. **Outcome Summary** The CLD team in Aberdeen has been highly effective in capturing learner voice to influence service delivery. They hold annual Celebration of Learning events and ESOL Learner Voice focus groups, gathering feedback from hundreds of learners. These events provide valuable insights into learners' experiences and needs, leading to the implementation of requested changes such as more classes and speaking opportunities. Additionally, regular review meetings and consultations ensure that learners' voices are heard and acted upon, resulting in tailored learning opportunities and improved service delivery. This approach demonstrates a strong commitment to learner-centred service development			
Ensure community learning providers are encouraged and supported to contribute to the future libraries model and the development and delivery of a City adult literacies plan	**Outcome summary:** Community learning providers have played a pivotal role in the early stages of shaping the future libraries model through their collaborative development of a citywide Literacy for Life plan. This cross-sector initiative, spanning Education, Adult Learning, Family Learning, Libraries, NHS, and Health & Social Care Partnership colleagues, has led to the identification and implementation of inclusive literacy initiatives. These include intergenerational literacy advocacy, stay-and-play sessions, and family ESOL pilots, all of which have fostered relationship-based approaches that reduce stigma and build trust at key family touchpoints. The Literacy for life plan will go live from August 2025 and will be an evolving resource, housed initially on the ACC Parent Hub website Library staff have been involved in shaping the Aberdeen CLD plan 25-30 fostering collaborative working relations that better meet the needs of learners and communities.			Promote the Literacy for life plan and test initiatives including joint training with teachers, and ESOL and Family learning staff working with parents with English as a second language at nursery and p1.
Tackling health inequalities through effective	**Outcome summary:**			

adult and family learning	Family Learning have expanded their offer of universal groups with a clear aim of tackling health inequalities. The team have developed and delivered a range of activities in partnership with Sport Aberdeen, including Boccia, Golf, Tennis and 'Learn to Ride' sessions to families. We have provided sessions focusing on the science of good health in partnership with Aberdeen Science Centre. We have also re-established a core offer of Confidence to Cook classes, secured via Multiply funding.		
	CLD Healthy Minds developed 2 sports groups along with Aberdeen Sports Village (ASV) staff to work with learners to build confidence in attending the gym. 9 participants took part equating to 85 learning hours. 4 participants now meet weekly to attend with half taking a membership at ASV. A further 2 learners also participated in "Learn to Ride" sessions in conjunction with Sport Aberdeen.		
	"This has encouraged me to stick with organised exercise."		
	A range of cooking opportunities has been offered to CLD Healthy Minds learners along with our Community Development colleagues, CFine and AHSCP. Learners participating in cooking activities reported that they are more encouraged to shop in person rather than order groceries on-line and are turning to more healthy eating habits.		
	"It made me try new recipes and I am more able to cook independently"		
	3 Healthy Minds learners were supported to take part in the Women's Wellbeing Fair, which allowed them to investigate a range of wellbeing options for themselves and strengthen the relationship and trust by sharing their opinions and helping each other during and after the event.		
	ACC Adult Learning team have supported a weekly food pantry at Clinterty Travellers site and delivered cooking sessions and are working in partnership with GREC to find community health connectors and support health champions from the community. Confidence to cook sessions will be offered to ESOL learners July to March 2025		

	Since August 2023, Family Learning have delivered regular parent/carer and whole family golf sessions. We have delivered 15 universal golf offerings in partnership with Sport Aberdeen utilising Auchmill Golf Course. In 2024-25, we have delivered golf sessions to 17 participants totalling 202 registered learner hours. Our regular boccia sessions, also in partnership with Sport Aberdeen, have been provided to 35 participants, equalling 220 registered learner hours. Two FLDW (Family Learning Development Worker?)s attended Food Champion training in Oct 2024, allowing them to deliver the Confidence to Cook programme. Family Learning have since delivered Confidence to Cook seven times to 31 participants, equalling 342 registered learner hours. Family Learning have developed 'Supper & Science' in partnership with Aberdeen Science Centre. These family-focused, four-week blocks encourage fresh, homemade cooking, followed by a science session delivered by Aberdeen Science Centre. We have delivered this block four times to 26 participants resulting in 240 registered learner hours.	🟩	

Continued Community Development Outcomes (from CLD Plan 21-24)			
What are we going to do	The impact of what we have done together	RAG	Next Steps
Provide capacity building support to communities to create, develop and sustain	Widespread Capacity Building Support: Across all projects, Community Development workers provide tailored support to build governance, leadership, and operational capacity. This included training, mentoring, and facilitation of funding applications (e.g.Rosemount and Midstocket Mens Shed, Cummings Park Community Association, Deevale Growers, Skatepark Group).	🟩	

| programmes and activities which address emerging priorities and provide increased opportunities for citizens | New and existing groups are supported effectively to design and deliver sustainable programmes. Examples include: Establishment of the Ukrainian Hub and School and development of a weekly programme, which gained national recognition; Expansion of food-based social sessions with volunteer-led delivery at Cornhill and Seaton Soup & Sannies and Dyce; Created youth-led programmes addressing anti-social behaviour and wellbeing through Youth Horizons and Cornhill Youth Development.

Numerous initiatives (e.g., Come And Network project, SHMU, Community Projects and CFINE) focused on developing volunteer confidence, skills, and leadership. Volunteers took on key roles in planning, delivery, and governance.

Initiatives are clearly aligned with local needs, such as diversionary youth activities (Cornhill, Oldmachar); social isolation (Men's Sheds, Soup & Sannies); Cost of living and food insecurity (Cubby, Mounthooly, UDECIDE) and Integration of refugees and asylum seekers (Ukrainian Hub, Fresh Community Wellness).

Citizens gained access to new services, learning opportunities, and platforms for civic participation. For example the ACC CLD Community Development Team has worked successfully with partners and volunteers to establish a Ukrainian Hub based at Rosemount Learning Centre. The Communities Team supported volunteers to establish the Ukrainian Association, which now has charitable status. Well-supported volunteers are offering a wide range of social, cultural and educational activities that is supporting displaced Ukrainian refugees to socialise and to maintain important aspects of their culture and language. The association now has sole responsibility for the centre on Sundays where they provide a variety of activities for children. The Hub's inclusive model was recognised as a future-proofed approach to refugee integration and community empowerment as Highly Effective Practice by Education Scotland

Outcome Summary

CLD partners have played a pivotal role in enabling communities to build capacity and deliver programmes that respond to local needs. Through governance support, funding facilitation, and partnership working, communities have developed sustainable initiatives that promote inclusion, | | |

	wellbeing, and resilience. These efforts have resulted in increased volunteerism, stronger local leadership, and enhanced access to services and opportunities across Aberdeen	🟩	
Support the creation and development of social enterprise and community wealth building	Participants report they significantly enhanced their knowledge and skills through hands-on workshops, personalised 1-2-1 sessions, and engaging field trips. These experiences not only boosted their confidence but also equipped them with practical skills that can be applied in various creative and professional contexts. Business Gateway's Business Start Up project by dedicated community business advisors within our priority neighbourhoods provides personalised and accessible support to people on their self-employment journey. A total of 98 individuals (45 in 2024/25) started a business which has either taken them off universal credits or significantly reduced their reliance on universal credits. Of the 98 people who started a business, more than 50% were from priority neighbourhoods. Creative Learning ABZ Works: Enterprising Creatives programme supported individuals and groups interested in developing a creative business. It focused on training and skills development through workshops and site visits and participants reported they gained confidence, resilience, and employability skills **Outcome summary**: For many participants, the transition from benefit dependency to business ownership has been life changing. Stories of individuals gaining financial independence and confidence show the importance of dedicated and localised support.	🟧	
Ensure Community Planning partners work closely with people and communities to improve our collective	A dedicated group of enthusiastic community representatives benefits from valued and effective support provided by community development staff and partners. These representatives are enhancing their networking abilities and are well-prepared to contribute positively to their community through locality planning. Priority Neighbourhood Partnership meetings are scheduled in advance and offer flexible attendance options—both in person and online—significantly lowering barriers to engagement. Additionally, these meetings are chaired by community representatives and agenda-setting meetings effectively ensure that discussion topics align with community priorities.	🟩	

| understanding of strengths, needs and opportunities | Community Learning and Development partners consistently empower active community members to deepen their skills, knowledge, and understanding of broader community needs, thereby strengthening community capacity. This ongoing support is enabling an increasing number of individuals to participate more confidently and effectively in groups such as Locality Empowerment Groups (LEGs), Priority Neighbourhood Partnerships (PNPs), the Fairer Aberdeen Board, and other community bodies, allowing them to take ownership of outcomes and generate meaningful positive change.

The Fairer Aberdeen Board includes 7 volunteers from priority areas, 1 from the Community Council Forum, and 2 from Aberdeen Youth Movement. The community representatives are supported through the Regeneration Matters Group which meets monthly and are involved in monitoring funded initiatives and considering their impact on issues that affect all the priority areas.

Outcome summary:

We have seen an increase in annual attendance at each of the Locality Empowerment Groups, with an 8% increase in North, 35.8% increase in Central and 29.2% in South.

Participation in Priority Neighbourhood Partnerships has declined, particularly in the North and Central Localities. To address this, we are exploring new methods to boost engagement, acknowledging that each neighbourhood has unique needs. Our focus has been on hyper-local engagement. A recent test of change in Seaton tested the idea that holding area focused meetings within neighbourhoods could increase attendance. Additionally, by concentrating on area specific priorities from the Locality Plan, we aimed to encourage those with a particular interest in those issues to participate. You can read more about the test here.

The Locality Planning team, together with community representatives, continue to look at enhancing the accessibility and appeal of participation through improved structures around Locality Planning. | | |

	Community representatives on the Fairer Aberdeen Board have a positive influence on decision-making. This helps to ensure that the work of Fairer Aberdeen is based on the needs of communities across the city	🟩	
Further, develop a clear and coherent framework to support volunteers and volunteering within communities and across community groups and organisations	There is a strong culture of volunteering across Aberdeen, with over 80,700 volunteers contributing 6.2 million hours annually of help every year (with over 137,000 volunteer hours contributed through Fairer Aberdeen Fund projects), making a positive difference to all aspects of life, people and communities across our city. Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations logged 10,882 volunteer interactions during the year. Youth volunteering is a great strength in Aberdeen, with 3,129 young people (age 12-25 years) undertaking Saltire Awards for volunteering. Inclusive community food provision and wellbeing initiatives addressing poverty, isolation, and mental health have a significant impact on the local community. Youth engagement and intergenerational learning takes place ?through clubs, schools, and community events. Community-led initiatives like Keep Middlefield Clean and Culture Café at Fersands and Fountain foster civic pride and inclusion. Employability and wellbeing programmes (e.g., ABZ Works, Boogie in the Bar, Dyce Lunch Club) supported hundreds of individuals. Projects like Roots of Empathy and Culture Café supported peer learning and leadership Projects supported thousands of residents, improving wellbeing, reducing isolation, and promoting healthy lifestyles. Volunteers across projects reported increased confidence, purpose, and social connection. There was a high levels of volunteer engagement across diverse projects and demographics with structured support provided through ACVO and community-led initiatives and effective collaboration with CFINE, NHS, CAB (Citzens Advice Bureau), Aberdeen City Council, and local charities. Training and mentoring opportunities were embedded in many programmes. Volunteers received training in food hygiene, first aid, and customer service. Strategic partnerships with third-sector organisations and public services delivered integrated support. ABZ Works worked in partnership with Middlefield Community Project to provide volunteers with qualifications for REHIS (food hygiene), First Aid, and Customer Service, along with mentoring, resilience, and mental health support. Volunteers gain experience from working in the community cafe.	🟩	

	Outcome summary: Volunteers are increasing the learning opportunities and support available to communities well. Across CLD providers, staff support citizens well to become volunteers and share their knowledge and experience with others. These volunteers are more confident and are rightly proud of how they are contributing to their communities.		
Develop and iimplement a training and development programme to ensure best practice is adopted across partners, informed by the National Standards for Community Engagement.	Community Planning partners have collaboratively developed an introductory course, Foundations of Community Engagement. This course effectively complements the existing Community Empowerment Toolkit by providing essential training for individuals seeking foundational knowledge in community engagement. This course significantly enhances participants' confidence and competence in applying engagement skills within their roles. It comprehensively covers critical areas such as issue identification, barriers to participation, use of the VOICE planning tool, practical engagement techniques, project evaluation, communication of outcomes, adherence to National Standards, and managing challenging conversations. **Outcome summary:** Overall, the training is a valuable resource that strengthens the capacity of individuals to engage communities meaningfully and professionally.		
Support communities to develop and contribute to local projects which tackle poverty **Key achievement by partners +** list who you are seeking info from	Effective community development is providing communities with support required to enable them to create and deliver local solutions to poverty related issues. This is enhancing skills and knowledge which are being effectively applied to bringing about local improvement and building community capacity. Community groups such as Seaton Community Hub, Cornhill Community Association, Cairncry Community Centre, Touch of Love in Torry, Fersands Community Project, Tillydrone Campus, Cubby in Cummings Park, STAR Flat in Seaton, Middlefield Hub Project, Torry Health Matters and many more run programmes and activities that make a real difference in the lives of the local people. Effective approaches to supporting empowerment and community leadership through volunteer-led initiatives and local decision-making is leading to good examples of inclusive programmes		

(food, fuel, and benefit maximisation) - need to focus projects on those most affected by increased life pressures such as: Cost of Living, migration; young people, minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, and how they can be supported	addressing food insecurity, social isolation, and wellbeing across Aberdeen. Committed and enthusiastic volunteers are contributing thousands of hours across multiple projects. Community led initiatives benefit from good capacity building through governance support, training, and mentoring, and this is enhanced by strong partnerships working across sectors including health, education, and third-sector organisations. This is resulting in the establishment and expansion of food-based programmes such as Soup and Sannies and The Cubby and the delivery of targeted support including 'warm spaces', grocery vouchers, free meals, and winter clothing. The creation of networks like Torry Health Matters to coordinate health and wellbeing initiatives is strengthening community voices in influencing and sharing in the design and delivery of responses to issues. Community led initiatives such as participatory budgeting through UDecide and Woodside Decides are further enabling local decision-making and resource allocation. As a result, inclusive programmes enhance community cohesion, reduce isolation and strengthen communication and coordination in communities faced with multiple challenges.		

Outcome Summary

Effective community development is enabling communities to create and deliver local solutions to poverty-related issues. These initiatives demonstrate a coherent framework of support that builds capacity, fosters resilience, and enables communities to take ownership of poverty reduction strategies.

There is a clear focus on alleviating the impacts of poverty through training programmes, employability programmes and money and benefits advice. Partners across Aberdeen City, including Touch of Love Outreach. Jesus House Torry, Cairncry Community Council, Community Projects and CFine, are making a valuable contribution to tackling poverty through the provision of food banks and food pantries.

Feedback from organisations funded through the Fairer Aberdeen Fund and CLD consistently show the value they bring to supporting communities to develop projects that tackle poverty and support the most vulnerable people.

The programmes delivered by enthusiastic and capable community groups and organizations have been successfully progressing due to effective and appropriate capacity building support

	that is empowering communities to take ownership and deliver solutions to impacts of poverty and inequalities. Many groups and organizations are providing a high-quality service derived from community identified need.		
Harness the increased levels of community volunteering to build greater resilience - support communities to develop resilience plans and groups	Good progress has been made to increase levels of volunteering and Community Resilience Groups and related volunteering. There are two full Community led resilience plans (Peterculter and Cults, Milltimber and Bieldside), a third is currently under development by Bridge of Don Community Resilience Group. Three other groups have opted to engage with task specific community resilience activity rather than a full plan engagement with plans to expand to 6 / 7 by winter 25. In October 24,100 community members attended a Community Resilience Conference. Plans are underway for the next conference in October 25. In March 25, Battery packs funded by SSEN were given to 3 Community Resilience Groups. AHSCP also issued 30 batteries to those vulnerable who need powered medical equipment to live. **Outcome summary:** Community groups are effectively engaging and supporting their communities by creating area specific "call to action" resilience plans. Through the recruitment of local volunteers, they are mobilising and working together to support vulnerable people during times of severe weather and energy outages. Development continues to engage and increase the number of communities getting involved to prevent, mitigate and respond to environmental events, particularly flooding.		
Support community management/ownership of green spaces and the development of food growing spaces and projects	Community engagement through gardening and green space development. Collaboration with local organisations and volunteers. Environmental sustainability and education. Social inclusion and mental well-being. Successful development of community gardens such as Deevale Growers, Tullos Community Garden, and Mounthooly Forest Garden. Hosting of community events including garden birthdays, planting days, and workshops. With the support of CFINE as lead partner, The Aberdeen Community Garden Network, ACGN, was formed last year, a collaboration of community gardens across the city working together. Formation of the Aberdeen Community		Areas for development: secure land tenure for projects, establish formal greenspace management

	Garden Network (ACGN) promoted knowledge sharing across community garden networks. Engagement of diverse community members including youth, families, and corporate volunteers. Creative initiatives such as poetry and songwriting inspired by garden activities Strengths include strong evidence of community-led planning and implementation (e.g., Mounthooly Forest Garden); effective use of local assets and partnerships (e.g., CFINE, NESCOL, Environmental Team); inclusive and participatory approaches to community engagement; and a demonstrated impact on community cohesion and environmental awareness. Challenges: delays in securing site access for some initiatives; limited quantitative data to measure long-term outcomes. Enhance monitoring and evaluation practices.		groups. expand data collection and evaluation metrics. Continue to build partnerships and secure funding for future phases.
Neighbourhood planning - develop toolkits and training to strengthen community's capacity to produce their own neighbourhood plans	In February 2025, Community Planning Aberdeen launched an online 'toolkit' aimed at helping people in the local area make positive changes in their communities. The Community Empowerment Toolkit is a helpful resource that offers practical tips and information for anyone wanting to improve their neighbourhood or get involved in effective community engagement. The toolkit clearly recognises how important it is for communities to take an active role in shaping better outcomes for Aberdeen. By making information easily available, it gives individuals and groups the tools they need to influence decisions and take action that benefits not only their local area but the wider city too. The toolkit aims to make sure everyone in Aberdeen, no matter their background or situation, feels empowered and motivated to get involved in their community. The goal is for all communities to become equal partners in planning and improving the city.		
Emerging Priorities Community Development			
Develop actions to more effectively	Across Aberdeen, the CLD partners have implemented robust mechanisms to measure and demonstrate the impact of community-led interventions. The Health Improvement Fund (HIF) supported 75 projects in 2024, reaching 8,884 individuals and mobilising 393 volunteers. Each		

measure and demonstrate the impact of CLD interventions on communities.	project was required to show meaningful community involvement, with 64% reporting sustainability beyond the funding period. Evaluation frameworks such as HIIC (Health Issues in the Community) and PEEP were used to assess health outcomes, while community governance panels ensured alignment with local priorities. The estimated return on investment was £2.7 million, reinforcing the value of preventative, community-based approaches. **Outcome Summary** CLD interventions in Aberdeen are increasingly evidence-based, with strong evaluation frameworks and community governance. The use of participatory tools and sustainability metrics has enabled the team to demonstrate tangible outcomes in health, wellbeing, and inclusion.	🟧	
With partners and communities, co-create a clear, consistent, readily available training offer to help build capacity to deliver opportunities and services to meet the needs of their community	The 'Come and Network' (CAN) programme exemplified collaborative training development, involving 22 partner organisations and over 100 survey responses. Workshops covered digital inclusion, communication, and wellbeing, with sessions co-designed by NESCOL, Aberdeen University, and community groups. The programme strengthened volunteer confidence and built cross-sector capacity. The steering group used feedback to inform future CLD planning, ensuring the training offer remains relevant and inclusive. **Outcome Summary** The CAN project successfully co-created a responsive training offer with partners and communities. It enhanced volunteer skills, built organisational capacity, and informed future CLD planning through inclusive engagement and evaluation.	🟩	
Develop a clear plan and actions to support the development of community enterprises and	The CLD team supported the development of community enterprises such as the Tillydrone Community Campus SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) and the Ukrainian Hub SCIO. These groups received governance training, funding support, and facilitation in lease negotiations. The Tillydrone SCIO now delivers 13 weekly classes and manages seven community spaces, while the Ukrainian Hub has become a nationally recognised model. These initiatives demonstrate how CLD can enable sustainable, community-led management of assets and services.	🟧	

community asset transfers	**Outcome Summary** CLD support has enabled communities to take ownership of local assets and deliver inclusive services. Through governance development and partnership working, community enterprises are thriving and contributing to local resilience.	🟧	
CLD Partners should broaden the base of community participation & engagement to ensure that community groups include people with lived experience of inequality and disadvantage	CLD partners have broadened participation by engaging underrepresented groups through initiatives like the Torry Health Matters Network and the Rosemount Men's Shed. Projects such as Soup & Sannies, Knit & Natter, and the Mounthooly Forest Garden have created inclusive spaces for dialogue and action. Participatory budgeting through UDECIDE involved 853 voters and funded 23 projects, while the Skatepark Group and Youth Horizons programme empowered young people to shape local provision. **Outcome Summary** Participation has been broadened through inclusive, community-led initiatives. CLD has enabled people from diverse backgrounds to engage in decision-making, shape services, and build stronger community networks.	🟩	
Tackling health inequalities through effective community development	CLD partners have demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing health inequalities through a wide range of community-led initiatives, using a range of creative approaches to support local people well. Many are using specific funding streams to support community led projects. Partners have trained community volunteers that enable them to support people within their own area. The establishment of the Torry Health Matters Network exemplifies effective partnership working, bringing together stakeholders from NHS, local authorities, and community organizations to co-design and deliver health and wellbeing interventions. A variety of inclusive and creative approaches such as 'Bumps & Babies', 'Soup & Sannies', 'Cooking with Dorothy', and 'Knit & Natter', have successfully engaged diverse groups including parents, older adults, and isolated individuals. These initiatives not only address immediate health	🟩	

	and wellbeing needs but also build community capacity by training volunteers and encouraging peer support. The use of targeted funding streams like the Health Improvement Fund (HIF) has enabled the delivery of 75 community-led projects, supporting nearly 9,000 individuals and mobilizing over 9,000 volunteer hours. This reflects a strong return on investment and sustainability, with 64% of projects expected to continue beyond the funding period. The delivery of the Health Issues in the Community (HIIC) course and the PEEP programme further illustrates the CLD team's role in empowering individuals with knowledge and skills to influence their health outcomes. The inclusion of non-native English speakers, asylum seekers, and women in these programmes demonstrates a commitment to equity and inclusion. **Outcome Summary** CLD partners have been highly effective in empowering communities and promoting inclusion characterised by strong partnership working, community empowerment, and a clear focus on reducing inequalities. The initiatives are responsive to local needs, sustainable, and aligned with the priorities of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).		
Further develop opportunities for people with lived experience of inequality and disadvantage to develop a sense of agency, to shape future provision and priorities and use this to influence	People with lived experience of inequality have been central to shaping CLD services. Examples include the HIIC women's health course, which led to health advocacy and increased screening uptake, and the Ukrainian Hub, co-designed by refugees. The Fersands project embedded anti-poverty work in all services, while SHMU empowered marginalised voices through media and participatory events. These approaches have increased agency, confidence, and influence among participants. **Outcome Summary** CLD has effectively supported people with lived experience to shape services and priorities. Through co-production and empowerment, individuals have gained agency and contributed to more inclusive, responsive provision.		

and co-produce service delivery.		🟧	

Areas for development, from HMIE progress visit			
Senior leaders and CLD partners to work together to improve the strategic governance and decision making in CLD - this should include CLD partners setting and jointly monitoring shared measures of success and ensuring that one strategic group has strategic oversight of all aspects of CLD across the whole plan.	**Outcome summary**: The existing governance structure has been reviewed, informed by research evidence and our increased engagement and discussion with other local authorities who are successfully progressing their CLD governance and strategic partnerships. The Community Empowerment Group (CEG) now has strategic oversight of the CLD plan. This decision was informed by the experience and knowledge across the membership, with the role and remit of the group best reflecting the scope of the CLD plan. The CEG acts as a connector between operational and strategic work of the CLD plan linking it to the wider Community Planning structure. The process of renewing the governance structure has enhanced the CEG's awareness of their role, leading to a deeper understanding and improved effectiveness in their responsibilities. A considered and robust approach to shaping the governance around our CLD plan has involved almost all partners and senior leaders in the development of revised arrangements for strategic leadership. Governance arrangements are clear. CLD partners report an improved understanding of their place within the structure; and how revised arrangements will benefit strategic and operational direction, decision making and shared monitoring and reporting of the CLD plan. This clarity has been evident through Community Empowerment Group workshops, where the representation for the group has been robustly considered across statutory and 3rd sector partners, to reach agreement on the membership of the CLD Strategic Partnership.	🟩	

Ensure there is sufficient input or influence from community representatives, young people and adult learners in CLD strategic planning.	**Outcome summary**: As the Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership (ACLDSP) progresses increased learner and community representation on the partnership is identified as the first priority to ensure we develop and maintain genuine and equitable opportunities to contribute to decision making in relation to the CLD plan and associated activities. It is recognised there is a need to make sure mechanisms to capture the views of people, including young people with lived experience are effective in doing this.		Representation across CLD areas from learners and community members Extent to which community representatives feel they can influence CLD strategic planning Level on ladder of empowerment captured for those involved
Develop and embed shared self-evaluation across partners and consistent sharing of data to develop a fuller understanding of the impact of CLD, which could better inform the use of resources.	• 70 CLD city wide stakeholders involved in providing qualitative feedback at 'Creating our CLD plan events' **Outcome summary**: In progressing our collective 2025-30 CLD plan, staff and partners are fully involved, have ownership and, as the plan is finalised, increasingly see it as being a principal focus of their work. This is being achieved through in-person 'Creating our CLD plan events' with city wide CLD partners sharing experiences and priorities from their own contexts, and a further session refining agreed outcomes. This involvement has seen an increase in the number of partners sharing data and other measures of impact. As we progress the CLD plan 25-27, with improved governance arrangements across the ACLDSP and through thematic partnerships covering Youth Work, Adult Learning, Family Learning, Community Development and Workforce Development, the collectively written outcomes are key to our developing evaluative frameworks for improved reporting, data sharing with a focus on joint self evaluation.	Sept 24	.

Update plan for 2025 – 2027			
Undertake a more substantial learner and partner consultation and update the 2024-2027 plans accordingly, to reflect the impact of the review outcomes along with the outcomes from the more extensive consultation process	**Outcome summary**: Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future: The integrated engagement approach adopted across Community Planning Aberdeen in spring 2025 demonstrates a valuable commitment to inclusive and efficient community consultation. By using the Place Standards tool across 14 themes and consolidating multiple strategic consultations into a single process, the initiative successfully reduced the burden on communities while enhancing participation. The engagement of 2,087 citizens, including 587 children and young people, reflects strong outreach and responsiveness to diverse community voices. Tailored sessions, particularly those led by young people and those designed for ESOL and family learning groups, further evidence this approach's alignment with the principles of Community Learning and Development (CLD). The findings highlight both clear support for CLD proposals and critical areas for improvement, especially around influence and control in SIMD1 areas, indicating a data-informed approach for addressing inequalities in housing and community development. Additionally informing the CLD plan was parallel work with City wide CLD providers during 'Creating our CLD plan' events. Through discussion and workshops these sessions successfully identified continuing and emerging priorities for consideration and inclusion within the CLD plan 25-27. Included within these sessions were the sharing of our collective data used to identify commonalities across public and partner engagement as well as local and national priorities and information from our population needs assessments. This demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusive planning and evidence-based decision making.	Jan 25	Updated CLD plan 24-27 Number of CLD partners and learners involved in CLD plan 2024-27 Level on ladder of empowerment captured for those involved

Community Learning and Development Plan 2025-2030

Transforming lives by supporting individuals and families to overcome barriers, build skills, and contribute confidently to their communities.

Community Planning Aberdeen

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL
BON ACCORD

Contents

Photo: CFINE

Forward

The Aberdeen City Partnership Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan for 2025-2030 has been developed in partnership with key stakeholders, including the local authority CLD Service, voluntary organisations, community groups and those who live in our communities. Taking this approach has helped ensure it outlines a cohesive partnership approach to community development over the next few years that maximises the impact of available resources to enhance the educational, social, and economic outcomes of those who face the greatest disadvantage.

In alignment with national legislation and guidance, this plan prioritises the principles of equity, inclusion, and lifelong learning. It is informed by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which emphasises the importance of community participation and empowerment in decision-making processes. Additionally, the plan adheres to the guidance provided by the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework, which outlines the key outcomes for improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities across Scotland. Our CLD plan is also guided by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ensuring that rights and needs are at the forefront of our efforts.

We are committed to taking account of the wider social determinants of health in our work in order to reduce inequalities in the longer term and promote sustainable development. Our plan has benefited from challenge from the Institute of Health Equity to help us better design targeted interventions aligned with the principles of proportionate universalism. We anticipate that this challenge will help us better address the significant inequality felt by some in our city to better level the playing field.

Rather than following the usual 3-year cycle, this Plan has been established to direct our shared work over the next 5 years. Amending timescales has enabled the closer alignment of the CLD Plan with other key strategies and plans that impact on those who face inequality, such as the Local Housing Strategy, the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Plan and the developing Local Outcome Improvement Plan. The environment we are currently operating in is uncertain and constantly changing, with key strategies and plans due to be published over the coming years. As a result, we have only developed a detailed Delivery Plan for 2025-26. Partners have committed to developing a yearly Delivery Plan based on self evaluation evidence and emerging learning from other key strategies. Shared and holistic planning and evaluation by Community Planning and CLD Partners will be central to the success of the Plan.

**Margaret Stewart, Chair of Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership
and Michelle Crombie, Chair of Community Empowerment Group**

Current Service Delivery

Community Learning and Development Services, via Community Planning Aberdeen, provide a range of enabling support to individuals of all ages across our communities. This includes the provision of youth work in both the community and in school settings, a range of adult learning programmes including those commissioned to support positive mental health and promote language learning, programmes and events designed to boost the knowledge, understanding and skills of parents and carers, as well as community capacity building and empowerment

In 2024/25, **1281** young people were supported by **youth work.** **484** young people achieved an SCQF qualification.

ESOL provision expanded significantly, supporting over **474 learners with 12,602 learner hours** in 2024–25

Over **80,700 volunteers** contributed **6.2 million hours** annually, with many gaining and moving into employment

Family Learning teams delivered over **15,000** learner hours, supporting **609** participants with a focus on wellbeing, resilience, and attainment

401 young people, were supported by **SHMU Train, Aberdeen Foyer, and Fairer Aberdeen** employability initiatives focusing on priority areas and those facing multiple barriers

98 individuals (45 in 2024/25) have been supported to start a business which has either taken them off universal credits or significantly reduced their reliance on universal credits. Of the 98 people who started a business, more than **50%** were from priority neighbourhoods.

There are however currently several challenges for our service delivery
- The Community Learning and Development partnership do not have a shared self-evaluation framework based on agreed shared measures. This prevents all partners from coming together to assess the strength of the CLD offer.
- Community Learning Partners have not always been consistently represented within governance arrangements. As a result, opportunities have been missed to benefit from the valuable expertise they bring to shared decision-making.
- Many other Strategic Plans detail a desire to move to more participatory decision making and co-design. This presents a significant opportunity to upskill the CLD partnership workforce in best practice.
- Financial resources are finite and in real terms diminishing. There is a need to maximise the use of available resources across the Partnership by being more targeted and aligned in approach in order to remain sustainable.

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Actions carried forward from the 2024 CLD Plan

In addition to considering the presenting needs across our communities to help shape our Partnership CLD Plan for 2025-30, time has been invested undertaking a final evaluation of the last Plan. Undertaking this evaluation has shown the need to continue moving some areas forward. These areas will be included in our 2025/30 Plan.

Youth work themes	Next steps
Across all youth work themes	Improve data collection and analysis to more effectively target resources
Employability & Positive Destinations	Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the St Machar pilot project and establish an evaluation framework for Edge of Care pilots. Scale successful programmes
Mental & Physical Wellbeing:	Collect more consistent quantitative data (e.g. SIMD, ASN, protected characteristics)
Family Wellbeing Hubs	Review resource allocation and working methods to maximise impact
Accreditation	Increase Youth Awards uptake in SIMD 1 & 2 areas and expand training

Adult and Family Learning themes	Next steps
Family Support Model	Further develop city-wide CLD partner contributions and explore commissioned services
Reducing reoffending	Use data analysis to evidence impact and track learner pathways
ESOL demand	Respond to increased demand with diversified offers and increased tutor capacity
Learner Voice	Continue to gather and act on learner feedback to shape provision
Literacy for Life Plan	Promote the plan and test initiatives like joint training and ESOL support for families with early years children

Community Development themes	Next steps
Measuring impact	Better demonstrate the impact of CLD interventions
Workforce development	Co-create a consistent, accessible training offer with partners and communities
Community Enterprises and Asset Transfer	Develop clear pathways and actions to support these initiatives
Inclusive participation	Broaden engagement to include those with lived experience of inequality
Health inequalities	Continue creative, community led approaches to tackle health inequalities
Agency and co-production	Support people with lived experience to shape services and priorities

Governance and planning	Next steps
	Increase learner and community representation in strategic planning

Embed shared self-evaluation and consistent data sharing across partners

Ensure that CLD stakeholder consultation continues to inform the CLD 2025-30 plan |

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Aberdeen Context

Our shared ambition is for Aberdeen to be "*a place where all people can prosper regardless of their background.*" At the heart of this is a commitment to tackling poverty and inequality and supporting the city's people to live healthy lives.

Through an understanding of the needs of the city and its people, as well as the services and interventions that are provided, the Council's suite of strategies and strategic plans aims to identify the things that will bring benefit to people and commit to evidence based and effective future actions.

The focus for our strategies and actions is on improving outcomes across five themes of the social determinants of health:
- **Education & Lifelong Learning**
- **Economic Stability**
- **Communities & Housing**
- **Neighbourhood & Environment**
- **Health & Social Care**

The population of Aberdeen City is estimated to be 227,750 (4.1% of Scotland's population). The overall population had been declining from 2015to 2023, primarily due to a falling birth rate and fluctuating net migration. In the coming years, Aberdeen is projected to have fewer people of working age and will see a rise in the number of older people, particularly those over 75.

A falling and ageing population poses a number of challenges to an area and can lead to a cycle of economic decline. It can also increase pressure on public services by reducing the overall tax base, whilst increasing the need to provide services and care, specifically for children and older people. Given that the falling birth rate has been a reality for a number of years, if the city's population is to be sustained, or grow in the short and medium term, this must be driven by migration; by attracting people to and keeping them in the city. Like many other areas, a growing number of people in the city are recorded as having a limitation to work, exacerbating the balance between those in work, and those who are not.

Living healthy lives is also a critical issue for the affordability of services. The Scottish Fiscal Commission highlighted in April 2025 the extent to which population health affects the sustainability of public finances. The Commission anticipate that the Scottish Government will face significant challenges funding devolved public services in the future. However, if improvements in population health can be achieved, pressure on health-related spending may be reduced in the future. Our focus, therefore, must be to ensure Aberdeen is a place where people want to come to live and work, and to support the people who do live here to play a full social and economic part in the city's future in collaboration with Community Learning and Development partners.

Wider Social Determinants of Health

The social determinants of health contribute to the unfair and avoidable differences in outcomes seen across our city. To ensure that Aberdeen Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan 2025-30 helps to address health inequalities, we have taken the time to reflect on what we know from published research, including from our published Population Needs Assessment. Taking this approach has helped us identify areas of focus for the Aberdeen CLD Plan to ensure that it is firmly focussed on tackling inequality.

Social Determinants

Children, Families & Lifelong Learning
Economic Stability
Communities & Housing
Neighbourhood & Environment
Health & Social Care

What shapes our health

40% — Social and economic factors

30% — Health behaviours

20% — Health services

10% — Physical environment
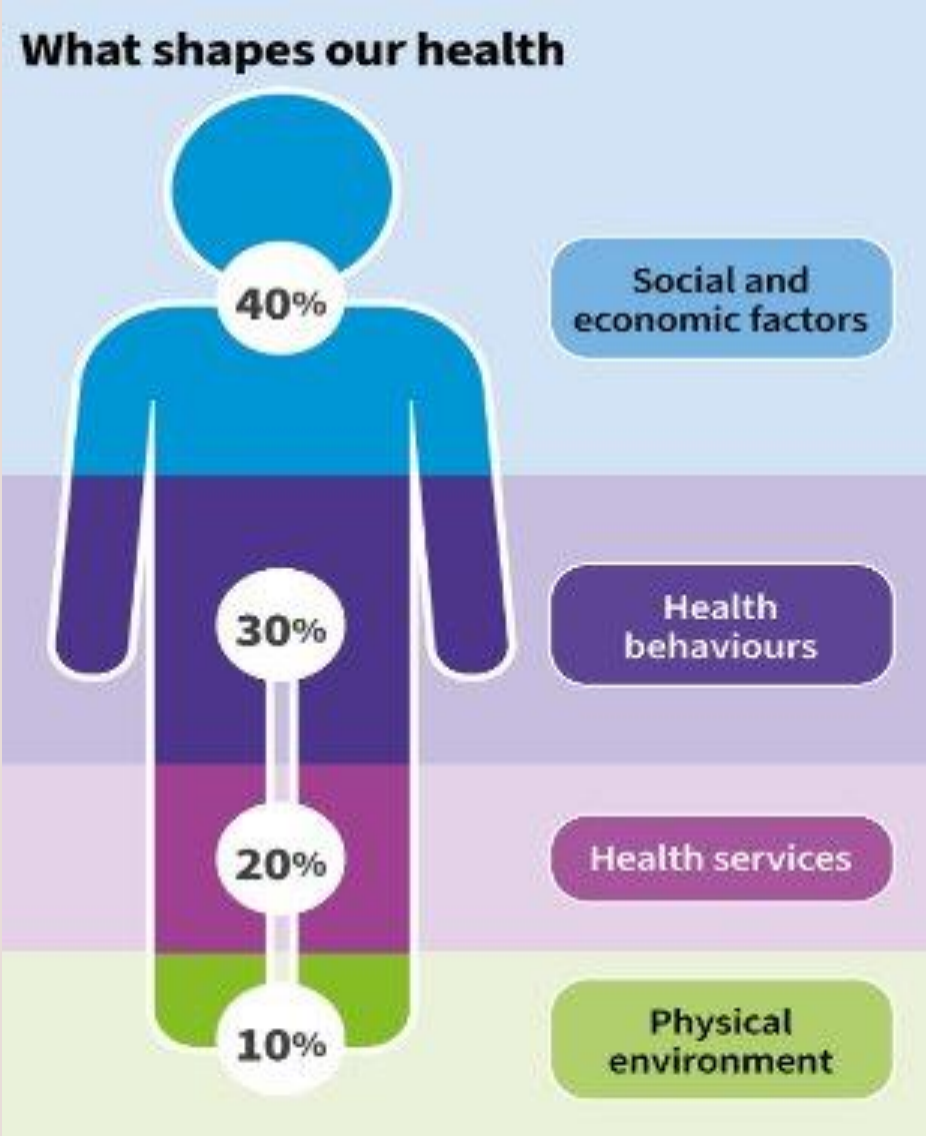
Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

It is clear that the life circumstances of children affect their educational attainment, and that educational inequality can lead to inequalities of health and wellbeing in early adulthood and beyond. As such, the life circumstances of parents and carers directly impact on children and young people. We must continue to challenge ourselves to take a whole family approach by working closely with others to help swiftly address risks to family wellbeing.

In Aberdeen there is evidence of increased numbers of children living in poverty; having a disability; with additional support needs; and entering school with at least one developmental concern. There are also a small number of young people in our schools who are at risk of disengaging with education due to being trauma experienced. There is a need for us to understand what will make the biggest difference to individuals by co-designing with those most in need of our support.

Whilst attainment and mental health outcomes show a positive trend across a range of measures, the most striking data feature is the impact of family affluence/deprivation on children's experiences and outcomes, including educational attainment, positive destinations and mental and physical health. In 2024, participation rates for 16–19-year-olds in education, employment or training were lower for those in the 20% most deprived areas (83.5%) than for those in the 20% least deprived areas (95.9%) There is a need to develop more impactful approaches to offering multi-agency support to families facing adversity through our Family Support Model. Shared data and planning will be important in order to ensure we maximise the impact of resources.

Aberdeen continues to welcome many families and people from around the world and needs to ensure that they are well placed to access employment opportunities. Those seeking refuge in the city will continue to require essential support, including accommodation, and help into training and employment to enable them to join the labour market. Learning English can help people integrate into their new communities, impact positively on the type of work they will be able to do and their ability to engage with service providers, including health services, teachers, housing officers, employers etc. Access to support to learn English will continue to be important.

The Aberdeen CLD Plan has a key role in helping ensure that:
- Families with children can access appropriate learning opportunities and multi-agency whole family support (including financial support and help to address food insecurity).
- Young people at risk of disengaging from education/ at risk of poor outcomes are supported to find a positive pathway into a positive destination.
- People, at every stage in life, have the opportunity and means to develop the skills, knowledge, values and attributes to fulfil their potential and to make a meaningful contribution to society.
- There is adequate provision of accessible and accurate information to help young people and families sustain positive lifestyles.
- Resettled families can access language learning and community integration opportunities and the learning needs of those seeking refuge in the city are planned for.

Economic Stability

A healthy economy is inextricably linked to the health and wellbeing of a population. Simply put, people who experience economic inequalities have poorer health and wellbeing. It is essential that there is a local economy that can help people and families maintain the types of financial security to put food on the table, pay their housing costs, and to afford the other necessities of everyday life. To prevent loss of health and wellbeing we must continue to address the economic inequalities evident across the city and support financial security. The accessibility of financial inclusion services will continue to be important, as will the utilisation of initiatives such as Aberdeen City Council's Rent Assistance Fund and Community Planning Aberdeen's test of change for Cash First.

One in seven households in Aberdeen has no one working within them, which equates to 13,700 workless households, but households with low income, or likely to be experiencing financial instability, are also important. Data highlights that economic inactivity for people from ethnic minorities is more pronounced and this must be addressed. There is a need for CLD Partners to continue to work to identify and support the readiness and skills development required to enable all groups to equally enter the labour market, by utilising co-design approaches with identified vulnerable groups and having a clear understanding of the data.

The estimated unemployment rate in the city in June 2024 was 4.4%, which is above the Scottish level of 3.5%, whilst the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits matched the Scotland figure. It is estimated that 3 out of 5 (57%) households experiencing relative poverty will be within working households. Households with a low income are of considerable concern, not least the 12% of such households where some 3,600 children aged 15 years and under reside given all we know about child poverty outcomes. As a result, supporting these households through employability and wider supports is a key priority for this CLD Plan. Place based approaches to reducing inequalities over time must remain a priority, seeking to reduce both the absolute and relative inequalities across the City.

Aberdeen is experiencing an economic transition toward a low-carbon economy. Energy remains a key component in this but there are other growth and volume sectors. It is important to ensure that employability programmes reflect emerging opportunities and are fully aligned to the Regional Economic Strategy (RES). There is also a need for CLD Partners to fully understand and target activity around those furthest from the labour market.

The **Aberdeen CLD plan** has a key role in ensuring:
- Those facing financial instability are guided to sustainable food and fuel support, employment training, and financial inclusion services that are based on the lived experience of those who need us most.
- Innovative models such as the Food Ladders are explored and supported to strengthen local food systems and address community wellbeing.
- Young people are supported into positive destination programmes aligned with growth and volume sectors that help them feel more confident, learn new skills and get ready for work.
- People and communities, particularly those furthest from the labour market, are supported to benefit from new jobs outlined in the RES, so no one is left behind.
- That vulnerable groups are known, for example ethnic minorities, individuals living with a disability, people living with trauma, planned for and carefully tracked in order to address child poverty

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Communities & Housing

Feeling safe within your home, your place and your community are important factors in wellbeing, so too are low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. An ability to participate within one's community is a key element in creating and maintaining wellbeing as those with agency tend to have better mental health and wellbeing. Community Learning and Development services will play a significant role in helping develop agency through Community Hub models such as Middlefield Project and the Future Libraries Model in order to strengthen the mental health and resilience of those living in the city.

Along with other local authorities across the UK, Aberdeen has strived to meet the challenges presented by the rapid influx of displaced people seeking support and refuge, and is currently home to around 2,000 displaced people, which is a ten-fold increase in arrivals over the last 3 years. Resettled families can face isolation on arrival to the UK. Such isolation can be reinforced by language barriers and varying cultural perceptions of appropriate interactions. CLD partners play a key role in helping those seeking refuge to develop language skills to enable inclusion and build social connections to support integration into local communities. Partners are also key to helping those seeking refuge to engage and connect with others who share the same language and culture.

Two Community Empowerment editions of the City Voice in June 2023 (City Voice 47) and December 2024 (City Voice 52) asked panellists about current involvement and empowerment in their communities. The mean scores in this section were consistently lower than other sections with concerns raised about the effectiveness of participation and of participation structures leading to some community members reported not feeling listened to. Through our use of the Scottish Place Standard Tool (SPST), the Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future engagement of 2025 highlighted that there are differing feelings about community across the city depending on Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Those living in SIMD 1 identify community as an issue, with scoring also raising concerns about their sense of influence and control, which scored low across all SIMD quintiles but is notably lower in communities in SIMD 1. This suggests that we need a different relationship with communities predominantly housing those living in SIMD1.

Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations (ACVO) reports that there are over 80,700 volunteers in Aberdeen who regularly give their time in support of local communities, contributing an incredible 6.2 million hours of help every year, making a positive difference to all aspects of life, people and communities across our city . Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations logged 10,882 volunteer interactions during the year. Youth volunteering is a great strength in Aberdeen, with 3,129 young people (age 12-25 years) undertaking Saltire Awards for volunteering (locality breakdown: Central: 787, North: 1397 and South: 945 people). There are challenges both locally and nationally in sustaining volunteering levels, particularly due to the impact of the ongoing cost of living crisis and additional pressures voluntary and community groups face. CLD partners have a key role in helping to sustain levels of volunteering.

Communities & Housing cont.

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in Aberdeen City operates through a structured framework of thematic groups, each focusing on specific areas of community safety, in order to help address the feelings of being unsafe felt by members of the community. Thematic groups work collaboratively to address various issues, develop strategies, and implement interventions to enhance safety and well-being in the community.

Every opportunity for joined-up working and for information to be shared is taken, with youth work playing a considerable role in sharing the best approaches and linking individuals into existing youth work provisions.

Priority Neighbourhood Partnerships (PNPs) and Locality Empowerment Groups (LEGs) work collaboratively to develop and implement actions that address community priorities outlined in Aberdeen's three Locality Plans, as well as respond to emerging local issues. These plans are developed following extensive community consultations, including initiatives such as *Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future*, ensuring that local voices shape the direction of change. The groups consist of local residents and partner organisations, fostering strong partnerships and shared decision-making. PNPs specifically focus on identified Priority Neighbourhoods across the city and are chaired by community members, with agendas set by community representatives. Their work involves creating plans aimed at improving conditions within their communities, with the belief that involving local people in both the development and delivery of these plans offers the greatest potential for meaningful and lasting change.

The **Aberdeen CLD Plan** has a key role in helping build healthy and sustainable places and communities by:
- Helping to shift our relationship with those living in SIMD 1, including by building agency through positive collaboration and co-design with communities, ensuring that the voices of lived experience are heard in service design and delivery
- Ensuring that communities take decisions that affect their lives and communities, and that our participation structures are representative of the communities being served
- Supporting community organisations to effectively respond to and address local issues
- Supporting communities to use the assets in their communities to develop skills and responses to poverty and inequalities, including through the use of volunteers
- Driving multi-agency working to offer more preventative support, and early help with complex issues through the emerging model of Family Support.
- Measuring the impact of our collective work, to help prioritise our allocation of resources and next steps
- Empowering communities through volunteering, participatory budgeting, and local action groups, helping to build stronger, more connected communities.

Neighbourhood and environment

We know now that where we live, where we work, and where we spend our time has an important influence on our health and wellbeing. The design, development and maintenance of a place is important in promoting good health and sustaining wellbeing for individuals, families, and communities.

For good health and wellbeing, people need to be able to access a green space within 300m of their home, and Aberdeen City Council has a key role in ensuring access to greenspaces and woodland, and in protecting the quality of local blue spaces (water and river sides). CLD can play a key role in helping residents experience the benefits of being in local greenspace.

The natural environment, sustainability and climate change also do, and increasingly will, impact on life in the city. Direct effects associated with climate change include increased mortality and ill-health associated with excess heat and cold, and loss associated with flooding and damage to properties. Climate change is also likely to exacerbate inequalities associated with air pollution, access to greenspaces, fuel, and food poverty. We know, for example, that the number of children hospitalised due to asthma is increasing locally and is at odds with a declining national trend. There is a role for CLD in helping our communities take action to address climate change.

A survey of children and young people, aligned to the Place Standard Tool indicators, asked about the same 14 themes included in the Scottish Place Standard Tool. The themes with the highest proportion of 'Not Good' responses were facilities and services (35.2%), play and recreation (34.7%) and care and maintenance (33.7%) which shows that over a third of respondents chose these options as areas for improvement. In addition, the Play Sufficiency Assessment, compiled to support the development of the next Local Development Plan, shows that play is not equally accessible. There will be key role for CLD partners in shaping how these findings are addressed.

We know that place-based approaches can improve the quality of community and neighbourhoods and support the health and wellbeing of communities. Quality placemaking has been at the core of planning in Aberdeen for a number of years. All developments must ensure high standards of design, with biodiverse open space, sustainable transport options and a distinctive sense of place. there is a key role for Community Development partners in supporting local people in decision making about the places that they live in to allow us to shape communities in a way that people want.

The **Aberdeen CLD Plan** has a key role in ensuring:
* That communities are empowered to address climate change
* Promoting access to green spaces to support learning, physical and mental wellbeing (including play)
* Supporting community members to take ownership and management of green spaces and food growing projects in order to shape their environment.
* A continued focus on improving life chances and developing resilient and influential communities in place planning.

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Health & Social Care (Children and Young People)

Giving every child the best start in life and ensuring they are supported as they grow into adults is essential in creating good population health and wellbeing throughout life. Children who are born into families impacted by deprivation are at a higher risk of suffering from health inequalities. There is a need for our provision to prioritise those who need us most to address this health inequality.

Challenges exist during the period from before birth to the start of school, including maternal drug and alcohol use, and smoking at the beginning of pregnancy which remains around 1 in 8 pregnancies. Premature births in Aberdeen are similar to the levels seen in Scotland and overall, 85% of children are born at a healthy weight. Rates of pre-school immunisation by 24 months remain below the national target. There is a key role for community partners in helping to address this low uptake of immunisations and working with others groups across the city, for example the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, to support our residents to address some of the challenges they face.

As for many other issues, the physical health of school age children, including healthy weight, physical activity, oral health, and early pregnancies varies across communities. Outcomes are largely determined by levels of deprivation signalling a need to review how good health is supported at community level. Community based approaches which focus on health at community level will be important in addressing these issues.

Variation is also clear in the self-reported mental health and wellbeing of school-age children. Of primary 6 & 7 pupils surveyed, whilst, on the whole they feel that they are healthy and that this is improving, affluence within the family is clearly a factor, as the more affluent the family, the more likely the child reported being healthy and self-confident. Resources must be prioritised to help address this inequality wherever possible.

We know that some groups are more likely to experience childhood adversity including those from ethnic minorities, those with a disability, and those who are care experienced. The health outcomes for these groups remain persistently below those of their peers. There is a key role for Community Learning Partners in understanding the groups who face most adversity and working together to address inequality and monitor.

Health & Social Care (Adults)

For both women and men, healthy life expectancy is declining in the city. People living in more deprived areas have shorter lives and are more likely to live with poorer health for longer. 1 in 4 adults describe themselves as having a limiting, long-term illness. As we get older, we tend to need more health and social care support, and the support of dependants to help us manage long-term conditions or diseases. Preventing disease progression and encouraging the adoption of healthier behaviours are important elements for improving health outcomes and this must be a focus of our shared efforts.

Over half of the deaths in Aberdeen City in 2022 were associated with cancers and circulatory diseases, for which smoking, having obesity or a higher weight, and physical inactivity are known risk factors. It is clear that there is still work to be done in promoting healthier lifestyles, and this will be progressed through initiatives such as our the Fairer Futures pathfinder which focusses on prevention, early intervention and long-term sustainability.

Whilst the rates at which people are being admitted to hospital due to alcohol and the rate of alcohol-related deaths has been declining or has been relatively stable over the last few years, the drug-related death rate has increased substantially. Continuing to reduce the serious consequences of alcohol and drug use remains a priority which will result in improved health outcomes for those affected, meaning that we now need to look far more holistically at how best to support our residents to overcome the many different challenges they face by taking a family centric approach to the delivery of services through close working with others such as the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

Data suggests that more people are being prescribed drugs for anxiety and depression than ten years ago, though the rate of people being in hospital for mental illness has fallen. Deaths from suicides have risen and the effects of the cost-of-living crisis suggest that mental health and wellbeing may further deteriorate in the near future. Early intervention should be a focus, addressing, for example, the number of people feeling socially isolated in our communities. It will be important to integrate our Future Libraries Model with our Aberdeen CLD Plan.

We know that financial, spatial and relational factors are associated with housing insecurity and mental health. We also know that overcrowded homes can be associated with stress, anxiety and the spread of respiratory illness. It would be helpful to ensure that our tenant participation structures, as outlined in our Local Housing Strategy, are able to take advantage of the expertise available from Community Learning and Development staff.

The **Aberdeen CLD Plan** has a key role in ensuring:
- Good quality, community learning and development leads to improved health outcomes for the people of Aberdeen.
- Opportunities for prevention and early intervention are maximised, for example by collaborating to increase uptake of immunisations.
- Aligning work to support healthy behaviours and a sense of community and belonging through our Future Libraries Model and other community-based initiatives.
- Continuing to work with partners to ensure access to education and employment, and opportunities for connection are available for New Aberdonians.
- Knowing our vulnerable groups and working with partners, including the Alcohol and Drugs partnership, to address the issues those groups face
- Prioritising our use of resources to support those who need us most,
- Supporting other services, such as Housing Services, to develop high quality participation structures.

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Learner Stories

Those facing the greatest disadvantage often experience challenges across multiple social factors. The Aberdeen CLD Plan must recognise this complexity, as greater need is often linked to poorer health and wellbeing outcomes. To support the plan's development, a range of personas were co-created with CLD learners. While grounded in real lived experiences, these personas have been blended to ensure anonymity. Each persona draws on shared themes from multiple stories, helping to highlight real challenges and support more empathetic, informed planning.

"I am enjoying finding myself again."

Elena is a single parent of 3 children, one of whom has additional support needs

About Elena…
- She experiences depression and anxiety due to her previous experience with domestic abuse and addiction and is currently seeking support for her own experience of neurodivergence.
- She is academic and took a career break to be a mum to her children. She loves them and describes them as being her whole world and feels now she is ready to give some time to herself.
- She has limited family and friendship support but has engaged in some self-care and confidence building courses with Family Learning and this has given her the confidence to engage with counselling sessions.

What has Elena already achieved?

- She attends groups with Family Learning and engages well with 1-1 support with her worker.
- She has pushed herself out her comfort zone to try new activities and research new opportunities such as volunteering.
- She is managing a difficult co-parenting relationship with her abusive ex.

What would Elena like to achieve?

- She wants to feel less isolated as she often overthinks when at home alone and when the children go to bed.
- She wants to be able to meet all her children's needs while advocating for her ASN child.
- She would like to meet like-minded people, make new friends and maybe even a new relationship.
- She would like to build new skills to help her support her family. She is looking for a safe non-judgmental space to make positive changes to her life.

Learner Stories

Linda is a mother to children with additional support needs

About Linda…
- She is 42, and a mother of five children aged between 7-24. She lives with her husband and 4 of the youngest children and their dog. She doesn't work due to chronic back pain, but her husband works 2 full jobs.
- Her youngest daughter has recently been diagnosed with ADHD and is struggling in school and at home with behaviour and emotional regulation. Her middle daughter is being assessed for Autism, her youngest son has ADHD traits but has not received a diagnosis and her eldest son is looking into a private diagnosis for ADHD.
- She is struggling to manage the needs of all of her children, which vary massively, with her own chronic daily pain and frustrations of being unable to be a physically fit and active parent. Herself and her husband want to be able to support their children individually and also be able to regain the family time they very much need.

What has Linda already achieved?

- Through her own research and by taking part in family learning courses she has;
- She has gained a better understanding of ADHD, the nervous system and the impact it has on behaviour.
- She has learnt techniques to deal with challenging behaviour and diffuse situations.
- She has a new awareness of sensory tools that can help regulation.

What would Linda like to achieve?

- Stability within school for the children to receive the best education they can.
- To be able to reintroduce family days out.
- Establish better routines at home which support the children's needs.

Learner Stories

"I want to leave school as soon as I can and earn money"

Adam is a Christmas Leaver looking for a job

About Adam…
- He is in S4. His education has been disrupted by family bereavement and trauma. His attendance since S1 has been just above 65 per cent, he does not enjoy school and when he does go, he just wants to muck about with his mates.
- He lives with his mother and older sibling. Mum has 2 jobs but they still struggle financially.
- He gets on well with his mum and older sibling. They are a supportive family unit who look out for each other
- He has recently been diagnosed with ADHD.
- He can be easily influenced by older peers and there are concerns for his future when he leaves school.

What has Adam already achieved?

- Adam is academically capable, but much prefers practical subjects where he can use his hands. He would like a job where he can work outdoors without anyone telling him what to do. He hates the thought of working in an office, and doesn't want to go on to college
- He is engaging well with a youth worker twice a week to find a positive pathway.
- Adam can be caring and thoughtful. He can reflect on his behaviour and explain why he behaves the way he sometimes does. He was involved for a while with AFC community trust which he enjoyed.

What would Adam like to achieve?

- Adam would like to leave school as soon as he is legally entitled to and start earning money.
- He knows that to earn money and get a good job will be difficult without qualifications, going to college or getting an apprenticeship.
- With the support of his youth worker, Adam is hoping to access a post school community-based employability programme.

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"I would like to be a hairdresser when I leave school and have my own business"

Sara, 13, is struggling with school

About Sara…

- She lives with her Mum and younger sister. Mum has health issues which sometimes limits what she can do. Sara worries about her Mum.
- Sara didn't attend primary school for the majority of P7. She is now in S1, and her attendance rate is 54%. School is concerned that Sara is losing a lot of learning, and she is beginning to fall behind academically.
- Mum struggles to get Sara up and to school. Mum is concerned that Sara is staying up all night on her phone and is worried who she is communicating with.

What has Sara already achieved?

- She describes herself as kind and funny. She describes her likes as sleeping and her dislikes as getting up in the morning.
- She loves her dog who she takes on long walks every day. She loves animals and describes herself as being a very caring person. She has thought about volunteering at an animal charity.
- She does not live with her dad, but she has a very good relationship with him. She also has a very good relationship with her grandad whom she visits regularly.

What would Sara like to achieve?

- She has said that she would like to be a hairdresser when she leaves school.
- She would like her Mum's health to improve.
- She would like to own her own business and be rich.
- She understands that she will need to improve her attendance at school and get the qualifications she needs to go to college.

Learner Stories

"I want to feel more confident and help my family have a better life"

Alison, 31, is an Adult Learner

About Alison…

- She is married with 2 children aged 5 and 7. She is unemployed, but her partner works full-time. The family live in a small 2-bedroom flat.
- She has some additional support needs and has poor literacy skills. She had poor attendance at school. She can use her mobile phone but has a low level of ICT skills. She has very few formal qualifications.
- She would like to return to the workplace now that her children have both started school.

What is Alison feeling?

- Embarrassed by her level of literacy and ICT when trying to help her children with homework.
- Very low in confidence and self-esteem.
- Concerned about the family income and lack of space in her small flat.

What would Alison like to achieve?

- Help with literacy and numeracy to support her children in doing well at school.
- Improve literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to help gain employment and increase her employability prospects.
- Improve her confidence and self-esteem by receiving training and gaining qualifications.
- Increase in family income to improve her family's wellbeing and move to a larger property.

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Learner Stories

"I want to use my voice to help others find theirs and continue all the activities and learning I enjoy"

Jason, 36, has a complex mental health condition

About Jason…

- He has spent some time in a psychiatric hospital.
- He has become a key community member, and takes part in many groups and volunteering, but struggles to see how far he has come on his journey.
- He is trying to get back to work but often feels caught between systems that don't fully understand or support his needs.
- He used to work with the Scottish Woodland Trust.

What has Jason already achieved?

- Jason has successfully relocated and adapted to a new environment, engaging in structured mental health support and adult learning .
- He has overcome many difficulties to achieve an SQA qualification in Numeracy.
- He has gained confidence and structure through volunteering and peer mentoring which makes him feel he is doing something meaningful .
- He takes part in community campaigns sharing his lived experience with others.

What would Jason like to achieve?

- To be happy and enjoy things.
- Hopes to meet a life partner and settle down.
- More social opportunities to build his friendship circle.
- More training or structured pathways that are tailored to meet his needs with no tight timescales.
- Eager to find employment and build a stable future.

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Learner Stories

"Through my Adult Learning, I feel heard in conversations which has built my confidence"

Stephen is a person with lived experience of the justice system

About Stephen…

- He is in his mid-40s with an ongoing heart condition and is living with his long-term partner.
- He does not have family members living within the city; however, he has siblings who provide emotional support over the phone.
- He has extensive knowledge about horses.
- He is a quiet introvert who has gained confidence over time.
- He has completed a community payback order.

What has Stephen already achieved?

- He has a sense of achievement having completed his payback order.
- He is more confident about expressing his needs.
- He has started an SVQ in Maths and will continue his learning in the community.
- He has gained confidence and interpersonal skills leading him to better manage situations and relationships that previously caused him anxiety.
- During his time with Adult Learning, he felt heard and valued and is now optimistic about his future.

What would Stephen like to achieve?

- Continue attending the NHS course for heart disease and become stronger in his health.
- Continue his learning in the community.
- Achieve the right work/health balance which suits his needs.
- Continue to work on his important family relationships with the aim of building closer bonds.

Learner Stories

"I want to belong and be part of a community"

Mustafa, 27, is a Syrian Asylum Seeker

About Mustafa…

- He has fled his country in fear for his life. He came to the UK alone, leaving his wife and young daughter in Syria. He has a brother who lives in Glasgow and an aunt and uncle and two cousins in Manchester.
- In Syria he worked as a tailor and would like to do the same in Scotland. He would like to reunite his family when he can support them.
- He only completed primary school in Syria. He can read and write in Arabic. When he arrived in Scotland, he was able to say a few phrases but was unable to read or write using the roman alphabet.

What has Mustafa already achieved?

- He has been attending English classes for 6 months and is becoming more comfortable forming letters in the roman alphabet. In his class they are preparing for the SQA Preparation for Literacy National 2 award.
- He attends the mosque regularly, which helps to connect him to the local community.
- He volunteered with a local bicycle repair centre and once he had completed a few sessions, an anonymous donor provided him and some others who were helping out, with one of the repaired bikes. This means he can get to his English classes more easily, as before it was a 30-minute walk.

What would Mustafa like to achieve?

- He would like to continue studying English. He knows he has a lot to learn, but he thinks his speaking is getting better. If he can complete the SQA Preparation for Literacy National 2 award it will be the first qualification he has ever achieved.
- Once his spoken English has improved and he understands more, he would like to do some volunteering, maybe in a charity, until he is able to start working properly.
- Eventually, he would like to open his own clothes alteration shop or business – maybe in Glasgow with his brother, or maybe here if his brother will move.

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Learner Stories

"To provide for my children so they can grow up happy, taken care of and have everything they deserve"

Danny is a single father to a large family experiencing poverty

About Danny…

- He is 42, and a single father of 3 children aged between 5 and 19. They live in a three-bedroom council tenancy along with the family dog.
- He is currently not working due to both his parenting responsibilities at home and has a life limiting condition. He receives benefits to support the family, but often finds this doesn't stretch far enough, he relies on a weekly local foodbank to ensure he can maximise the amount of food and products coming into the home.
- He has limited social supports in the local area, with a few close friends nearby who offer him some support, although they also have their own challenges. He has extended family that live outside of Aberdeen but are unable to provide him with direct support.

What has Danny already achieved?

- Danny is a nurturing and supportive father to his three children, and, despite the challenges and financial constraints, he continues to ensure his children are looked after and have their needs met.
- Danny has undertaken training courses to bolster his CV and support him into employment in the future.
- Danny supported his eldest child to find their first job, with a plan to getting their own place.

What would Danny like to achieve?

- *"To see my kids growing up, happy, living a better life"*
- Danny would prefer to work to provide for his family using money he has earned. This is currently challenging for him due to his parental responsibilities and personal health, but he would like to get a job once his younger children are older.

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Learner Stories

"I want to improve my opportunities to provide for my children until we can return to our country."

Svitlana, 35, is a Ukrainian refugee

About Svitlana…

- She has been living in Scotland with her two children (7 and 9) since the war started in 2022 and she had to leave her hometown. Her husband is still in Ukraine, fighting in the army.
- In Ukraine, Svitlana had a well-paying job working as a manager in an office. For the first year she lived in a hotel where she was surrounded by other Ukrainian people and families who all helped each other with childcare.
- She now lives in a two-bedroom flat with her children. It is the first time she has lived alone without her parents or husband. She has made friends with other Ukrainian families, but most of them live in other parts of the city. She has a part-time cleaning job, but the hours are irregular and sometimes clash with her English classes. She wants to continue going to classes to help her get a better job and to be able to support her children with their schoolwork.

What has Svitlana already achieved?

- She completed a Level 2 SQA in Time and Money as part of her ESOL class. She also took part in a basic sewing skills course which allowed her to complete Level 2 SQA in Measuring, she now uses the bag she made.
- In her cleaning job she needs to understand the instructions from her Team Leader. She uses a translation app for this but finds that she is relying on it less than when she started.
- She has got used to living without her husband, and with the initial support of her resettlement worker and the housing team, she has managed to get settled in her flat.

What would Svitlana like to achieve?

- She would like to continue with her English classes. Her tutor has said the group will start preparing for the ESOL National 2 SQA award. She thinks this would help her to apply for better jobs, but it will be difficult if she must miss class due to work.
- Eventually she would like to find a job that is more like the one she had in Ukraine, in an office.
- She would also like to be able to talk to the doctor without the need for an interpreter, as she finds this embarrassing at times, even though she knows she shouldn't.

Learners' experiences

It is clear that there are key and recurring vulnerabilities that our CLD Plan needs to take account of.
These include those who are:
- Care experienced.
- Living with a disability.
- Older and frail.
- Living in single parent households.
- Socially isolated, particularly as a result of a long-term health condition.
- Experiencing, or have experienced domestic violence.
- Substance users.
- In need of long-term support for their mental health.
- Fearful as a result of repeated anti-social behaviour.
- Released from prison.
- Fleeing conflict.
- Living with trauma, particularly those who seek refuge in the city.
- Experiencing financial vulnerability.
- Living with obesity and chronic diseases

The **Aberdeen CLD plan** has a key role in:
- Ensuring those most at risk of poorer outcomes (the groups identified above) are prioritised for community learning and the wider support they need to thrive, and checking the adequacy of our current arrangements.
- Working with others to safely share data so that the likes of **Elena and Danny** do not have to repeatedly tell their story and are supported to maximise their benefit entitlements.
- Making sure that community resources delivered in partnership help address the social isolation felt by **Svitlana**, **Jason**, and **Mustafa**, and encourages the healthy behaviours they are keen to realise, along with the development of their employability skills.
- Ensuring that our staff and systems recognise that a lack of engagement can be an indication of a lack of trust, as in **Sara's** case, and not a lack of need.
- Commit to changing our relationships with the most vulnerable people to be more person centred to reduce the risk of disengagement.
- Improving our response to domestic violence by working in partnership with initiatives like Homewards Innovative Housing Project to help those like **Elena**.
- Ensuring that there are progression pathways for those who need long term mental health support like **Jason**.
- Working to reduce the prevalence and impact of anti-social behaviour.
- Working with families to fully understand the needs of those supporting disabled children and adults in order to better plan for their long-term needs.
- Improving our communication around the types of support that is available.

Risks to children

A comprehensive review of data has highlighted the risks most likely to impact our children and young people over the lifetime of this Plan. Mitigation strategies to address the risks will be included in this CLD Plan.

Individual Level Risks

- Poor behavioural control and emotional regulation
- Mental health issues and prior trauma
- Substance misuse
- Low educational attainment

Mitigation Strategies by CLD:
- Early childhood interventions
- Trauma-informed care
- Education programmes

Community-Level Risks
- High-crime neighbourhoods and unsafe public spaces
- Digital environments and online harm

Mitigation Strategies by CLD:
- Focussed youth work
- Safe spaces
- Digital literacy campaigns
- Prevent focus

Relationship-Level Risks

- Family conflict, neglect, and domestic violence
- Poor parental supervision/knowledge
- Peer pressure and gang affiliation

Mitigation Strategies by CLD:
- Parenting programmes
- Family therapy
- Kinship care

Societal-Level Risks
- Poverty and inequality
- Inadequate multi-agency data sharing
- Workforce capacity issues

Mitigation Strategies by CLD:
- Routine risk updates to multi-agency teams
- Improved service access for those most in need and identified as being particularly vulnerable
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Risks to adults

Individual-Level Risks

- **Substance misuse**: Chronic and acute risks from drug and alcohol dependency.
- **Mental health and neurodiversity**: Poor mental health and lack of tailored support.
- **Self-neglect and complex needs**: Overlapping vulnerabilities leading to missed interventions.

Mitigation Strategies by CLD:
- Trauma-informed care training for frontline staff.
- Expanded mental health support services.
- Early intervention and recovery programmes

Community-Level Risks

- **Barriers to treatment and recovery**: Limited access to high-quality services in disadvantaged areas.
- **Digital exclusion and online harm**: Lack of digital literacy and access to safe online environments.

Mitigation Strategies by CLD:
- Accessible and inclusive recovery services.
- Digital inclusion programmes.
- Community outreach and engagement
- Focus on Prevent

Relationship-Level Risks

- **Domestic abuse and gender-based violence**: Often underreported due to data gaps and workforce limitations.
- **Isolation and lack of support networks**: Increased vulnerability to exploitation and deteriorating wellbeing.

Mitigation Strategies by CLD:
- Multi-agency collaboration and data sharing.
- Collaboration with housing and outreach services.
- Community-based peer support initiatives.

Societal-Level Risks

- **Workforce capacity and capability**: Gaps in training and resources for adult safeguarding.
- **Data gaps and poor risk assessment**: Inconsistent use of tools and mental capacity frameworks.
- **Inequality and poverty**: Economic hardship and housing instability.

Mitigation Strategies by CLD:
- Workforce development and supervision.
- Improved data sharing protocols.
- Policy reforms and anti-poverty strategies.

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Our Vision

This Partnership CLD Plan sets out a vision and priorities for the future delivery of Community Learning and Development related services.

Our vision is to:
Transform lives by supporting individuals and families to overcome barriers, build skills, and contribute confidently to their communities.

We believe that strong and empowered communities, supported by services from the public, third and private sectors, can work together to reduce the inequality evident at community level. We recognise the range of positive work already taking place across the city, but we also recognise the need to better connect operational work through improved use of data and shared evaluation.

Recognising the Challenges
Consideration of Aberdeen's Population Needs Assessment, Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future citizen engagement, CLD partner engagement, consideration of known and emerging risks and exploration of the social determinants of health have helped identify the key challenge and action needed to deliver our vision.

Our Key Challenge

Many residents of Aberdeen face barriers to learning, don't feel listened to or able to access local initiatives that they have confidence will help them. This is being exacerbated by the impacts of poverty and inequality contributing to poor health outcomes, particularly for those who are a member of a vulnerable group.

Our Response

We will break down barriers to learning and foster inclusion by directing partnership support to those most impacted by poverty and inequality. Through integrated services, we will provide tailored assistance that responds to the changing and diverse needs of Aberdeen's residents, while also promoting healthier, more vibrant communities.

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Our Priorities

Reducing poverty and tackling inequalities is an overarching theme across this CLD Plan. CLD partners are committed to working together as partners, with local communities, to improve life chances for people of all ages through the specific lens of learning, personal development and active citizenship. There is recognition given to the disproportionately high levels of poverty and inequalities which exists within some communities across the city, and the need for CLD to be targeted and focussed on communities and individuals experiencing the negative effects of poverty and inequalities.

We also recognise the importance of providing opportunities for **improved Health and Wellbeing**. People living in our disadvantaged communities are at higher risk of poor health, disease, and earlier death than those living in our more affluent areas. They are also more likely to experience barriers to health and wellbeing and difficulties accessing services. Health inequalities are unfair and preventable, often due to adverse social circumstances such as poverty, unemployment, poor housing, childhood experiences, and isolation. Partners will tackle these inequalities by targeting support to those who need it most, promoting self-care through prevention and early intervention, making it easier for people to get the support and information they need, and working collectively with others including communities, families, and carers. Our approach will be inclusive and empowering, with a focus on prevention, transformation and building individual and community capacity.

Based on the evidence base locally and nationally we have identified 6 priorities for action:

Delivery priorities

1. To support adults to become better skilled, educated, confident, healthy and empowered through **Adult Learning**.
2. To develop the personal, social and educational skills of young people ,particularly those at risk of disengaging, so that they realise their potential through **Youth Work**
3. To improve the life chances and long-term health of our children, families and communities through **Family Learning** and whole family support.
4. To supporting **communities** to take to bring about change for themselves and their communities and to have influence and control.

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Organisational priorities

5. To enhance the skills and capabilities of staff and volunteers in CLD
6. Strengthen collaboration and shared accountability across Aberdeen's Community Learning and Development partners

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CLD Priorities and Cross cutting themes

The CLD Plan weaves six delivery priorities with seven interconnected cross-cutting themes shaping how we address inequality, promote wellbeing, and empower communities. This integrated approach ensures targeted, inclusive, and sustainable support for learners and families, aligning lifelong learning with place-based, digital, environmental, and whole-family strategies to improve outcomes across Aberdeen.

Cross cutting themes

Reducing Poverty and Tackling Inequality

Improving Health and Wellbeing

Whole Family Support

Inclusion and Empowerment

Place-Based and Community-Led Approaches

Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

Digital Inclusion and Literacy
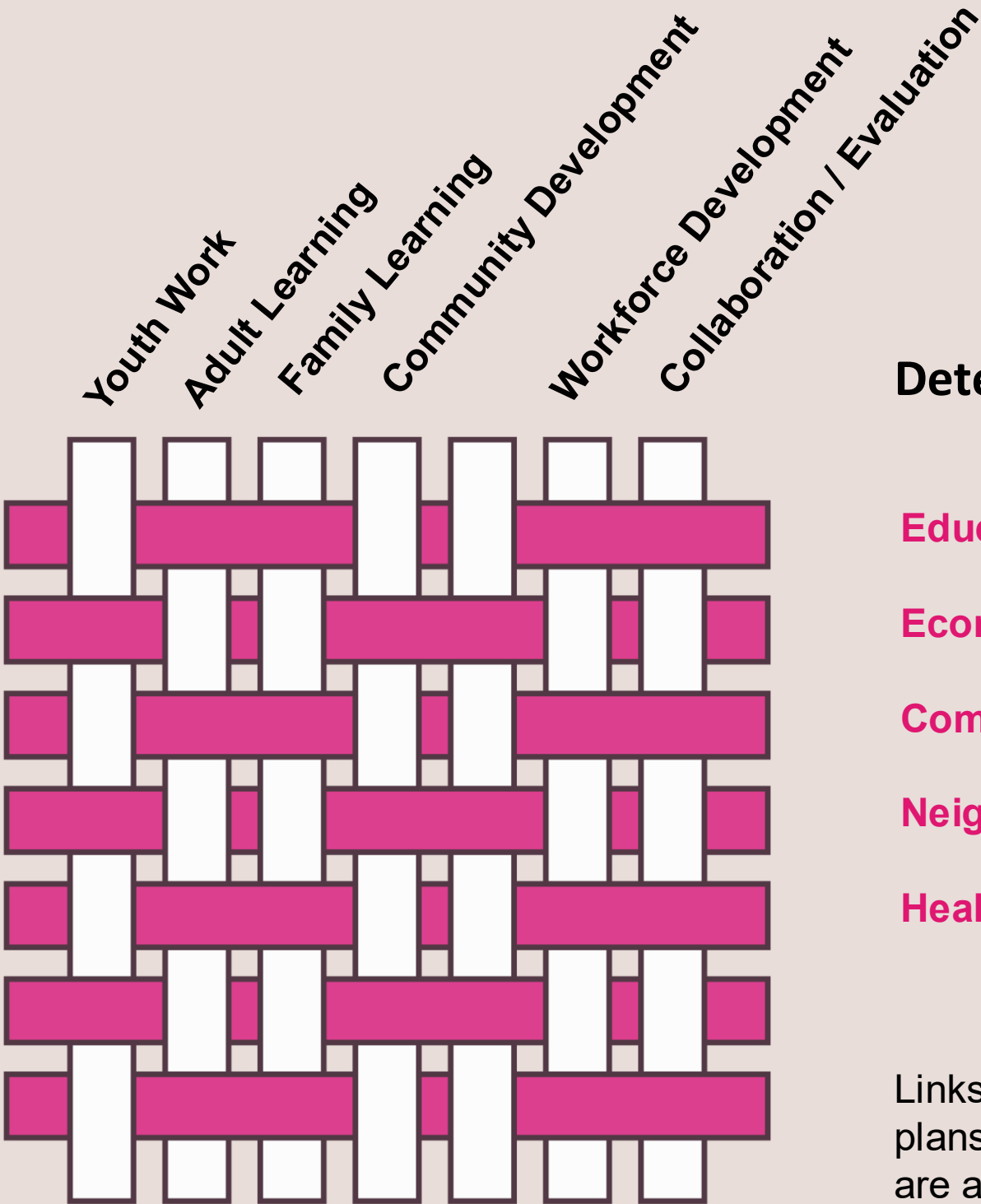
Youth Work
Adult Learning
Family Learning
Community Development
Workforce Development
Collaboration / Evaluation

Determinants of health

Education & Lifelong Learning

Economic Stability

Communities & Housing

Neighbourhood & Environment

Health & Social Care

Links to local and national strategies and plans that support these cross-cutting themes are available in Annex A.

Shared Governance

Effective governance is central to the successful delivery of the CLD Plan 2025–2027. It ensures strategic oversight, shared accountability, and inclusive decision-making across CLD partners. Previous evaluations, including the 2024 HMIE inspection, identified the need for stronger strategic leadership and collective ownership. In response, Aberdeen City Council and its partners have undertaken a comprehensive governance review to address these gaps and enhance the impact and sustainability of CLD across the city.

The Community Empowerment Group (CEG) holds strategic oversight of the CLD Plan ,acting as a connector between operational delivery and the broader Community Planning structure. The Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership (ACLDSP) has been established to lead implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This structure ensures that governance is both strategic and responsive to community needs.

Operational Delivery

Thematic partnerships covering Youth Work, Adult Learning, Family Learning, Community Development and CLD Workforce Development have been established to support operational delivery. These groups report into the ACLDSP and are responsible for shaping delivery plans, contributing to shared evaluation, and ensuring that local needs are addressed through place-based approaches.

Shared Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Governance arrangements embed a culture of shared self-evaluation and performance monitoring. The ACLDSP is tasked with jointly monitoring shared measures of success, analysing data across partners, and using findings to inform agile, responsive planning. This approach addresses previous gaps in demonstrating impact and supports continuous improvement.

As shared baselines are established over the first year of this plan, progress will be routinely monitored and used to set detailed delivery plans for each year. Taking this approach will afford partners a level of flexibility to respond to emerging needs and priorities identified across the Community Planning Partnership.
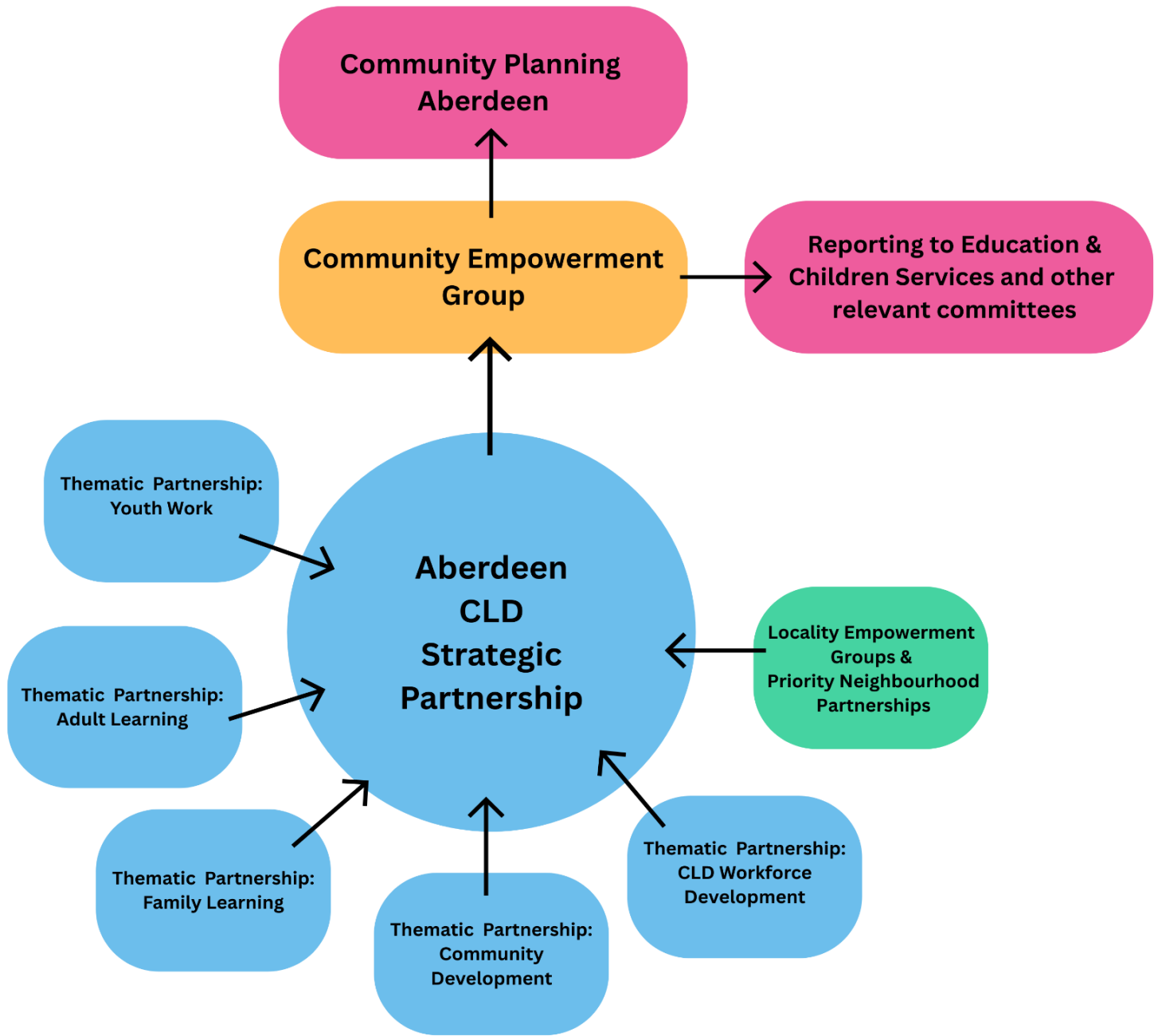
Next Steps

- Improve learner and community representation in the strategic partnership to ensure equitable decision-making.
- Establish and develop systems for joint monitoring of shared success measures.
- Strengthen the role of thematic partnerships in shaping and delivering shared evaluation.
- Maintain robust engagement with the CEG and wider partners to ensure alignment and responsiveness throughout the plan's lifecycle.

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Logic Model

Situation

Many residents of Aberdeen face barriers to learning, don't feel listened to or able to access local initiatives that they have confidence will help them. This is being exacerbated by the impacts of poverty and contributing to poor health outcomes, particularly for those who are a member of a vulnerable group.

Inputs

Partnership Youth work

Partnership Family Learning

Partnership Adult learning

Community capacity building

Skilled staff and volunteers

Partnership self evaluation

Activities
What we do

Targeted 1-1 and group youth work

Skills development and accreditation for young people

Improve financial security and health knowledge

Skills development programmes for all ages

Family Learning programmes

Community integration opportunities

Language learning

Capacity building and empowerment

Who we reach

All people in Aberdeen City who are marginalised, vulnerable or impacted by poverty

Outcomes

Short

Interventions will be more targeted at those who face the greatest disadvantage

CLD Partners will collect common data measures to help evaluate our collective impact and determine the allocation of resources.

More multi-agency improvement activity will be shared by the lived experience of those living in our communities

Medium

Improved partnership understanding of the impact of our collective efforts helps strengthen our offer

Higher numbers of learners access accredited courses

More people who engage with CLD access employment or further training

Long

CLD activity is central to addressing poverty and inequality and building trust and empowerment delivered by highly skilled staff

Improved outcomes across the determinants of health in our priority neighbourhood

Assumptions and Influences

- There will continue to be high levels of poverty
- Resources will continue to be constrained

Measures

- Number of learners being supported
- Impact of CLD on learners
- Social determinants of health data

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Delivery Plan
2025 - 2030

Priority 1: Adult Learning

Support adults to become better skilled, educated, confident, healthy and empowered through Adult Learning
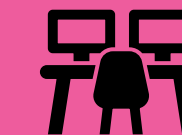
Why is this a Priority?

Enabling individuals to develop essential skills like literacy, numeracy, language learning, how to remain healthy and digital literacy are crucial for adapting to economic changes and improving the quality of life. Adult Learning provides first step employability skills, supports mental wellbeing, and fosters community engagement. Additionally, it supports integration for refugees and marginalised groups, promoting inclusivity and resilience.

What does the evidence say about adult literacy?

Literacy levels in Aberdeen reflect broader trends seen across Scotland. According to the Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies (SSAL) 2009, about 73.3% of the Scottish working-age population have literacy skills appropriate for modern society. However, around 26.7% face occasional challenges, and 3.6% experience serious difficulties. Factors such as age, gender, education, and income significantly influence literacy levels

The Education Scotland **Adult Learning Strategy 2022-27** underscores the importance of targeted learning for marginalised groups and recommend:
- Closer partnership working to ensure that adult learning is learner-centred, available and accessible
- An increase in access to and support for accredited learning for community-based adult learning to support positive pathways for adult learners.

What does the evidence say about the best approaches?

Learning: For All. For Life. A report from the Independent Review of Community Learning and Development (CLD) evidenced that the key enablers to participation in CLD include:

- Flexibility and adaptability
- Culturally competent and empathetic practitioners
- Safe, trusting environments
- Localised delivery and proactive outreach
- Partnerships between CLD providers and other services
- Learner-focused delivery

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Priority 1: Adult Learning

Support adults to become better skilled, educated, confident, healthy and empowered through Adult Learning
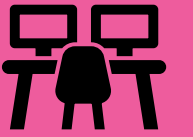
What does the evidence from Your Place Your Plans Your Future say?

Use of the Place Standard Tool with communities (Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future) recently showed us that:

86.2% of people asked agreed with the proposal to **"Work with partners to provide accessible community-based learning opportunities (e.g. skills in digital inclusion, literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages, and financial resilience) for adults, particularly those furthest from inclusion and facing disadvantages, to foster lifelong learning, positive pathways an and reduce reoffending"**

92.3% agreed with this proposal **"Provide a range of activity to improve people's physical and mental health and reduce harm ensuring people can continue to work and make a positive contribution to the economy whilst also improving their own financial wellbeing."** This engagement also raised some areas for improvement including opportunities for continuous education and skill development and better advertising of volunteering and training opportunities to make them more accessible to everyone, including non-digital users.

What does the evidence say about the learning needs of New Scots, refugees and asylum seekers ?

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2024 emphases the need for provision of accessible learning opportunities to help New Scots develop language skills, gain qualifications, and improve employability. Aberdeen is home to 1/3 of Scotland's migrants and is one of the biggest dispersal centres for asylum seekers in Scotland. Our own response and associated Delivery Plan.

What does the evidence say about mental health?

In Aberdeen City, around 25% of the population experiences a mental health problem each year. Specifically, about 12% report symptoms of depression, and 14% report symptoms of anxiety.

In the last year referrals to the CLD Healthy Minds team has doubled. Scottish Government Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 has a focus on promoting mental health and wellbeing through community-based initiatives. This includes providing opportunities for lifelong learning and skill development, which can enhance mental health by fostering a sense of purpose, community connection, and personal growth.

Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Strategic Plan articulates how mental health will be supported over the next 4 years and this CLD Plan will support the delivery of those agreed actions.

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Priority 1: Adult Learning

Support adults to become better skilled, educated, confident, healthy and empowered through Adult Learning
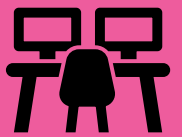
Priority

Support adults to become better skilled, educated, confident, healthy and empowered through Adult Learning.

Outcome

More adults from identified marginalised communities will have access to learning and services to become better skilled, better educated, more confident, aware of how to remain healthy and empowered to be part of their community.

Measures

- No of adults from different marginalised groups who are enrolled in an adult learning programme (baseline across all partners to be determined)
- No of adults undertaking SCQF and wider achievement awards
- No of adults engaged with CLD activity
- % of adults engaged in CLD activity who report improved skills, confidence and improved health and wellbeing.
- Increase first step accreditation across the city by 20% by June 2027
- % of adults engaged in CLD activity who take a direct role in shaping their learning
- No of learner hours

What we will do:

Baseline Needs: Capture learner needs and vulnerabilities across first step providers to guide planning and performance analysis.
Network Leadership: Revitalise the Adult Learning Network to coordinate provision and apply a shared evaluation framework.
Co-Design Pathways: Develop programmes and volunteering routes with marginalised groups, aligned to the Regional Economic Strategy.
Trauma-Informed Learning: Offer community-based learning to build confidence, resilience, and connection for those furthest from education or work.
Adult Voice – Keep growing opportunities for adults to shape provision across the city

Track Impact: Regularly review how well the offer supports volunteering readiness.
Future Libraries: Deliver inclusive, needs-led library services that reduce barriers and support health, digital, information, financial and language literacy and informal learning.
ESOL Provision: Maintain flexible ESOL class supply for new Scots and asylum seekers.
**Support Refugees**: Continue offering integration opportunities for people seeking refuge.

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Priority 1: Adult Learning

Support adults to become better skilled, educated, confident, healthy and empowered through Adult Learning

The following are the initial project activities we will undertake over 2025/26 to contribute towards achieve this priority, a more detailed live delivery plan will be developed by the ACLDSP and thematic groups to ensure effective ownership.

Description	Outcome/impact	Measure	Target
Establish Baselines	Better understanding of learner needs and vulnerabilities to inform planning and performance analysis	Number of learners from different marginalised groups enrolled in adult learning programmes	Baseline to be established across all partners.
Progress Adult Learning thematic partnership	Improved coordination and shared evaluation across adult learning provision	Number of partners using shared evaluation framework	Collaborative working and reporting mechanisms in place by Dec 2025
Co-Design Pathways	Increased engagement of marginalised groups in learning and volunteering	Number of co-designed programmes and volunteering routes created	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Trauma-Informed Learning	Increased confidence, resilience, and connection for adult learner	% of adults reporting improved confidence and mental health	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership

Priority 2: Youth Work

To develop the personal, social and educational skills of young people, particularly those at risk of disengaging, so that they realise their potential through Youth Work

Why is this a Priority?

The life circumstances of young people affect their ability to develop life skills and engage in their schools and communities. Youth work addresses inequality by providing targeted support for young people impacted by poverty and socio-economic disadvantage. Youth Work can support young people to overcome barriers to learning, support physical and mental health improving their life chances.

What does the evidence say about young people?

Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future
- 93.4 % who commented on the proposal that that there should be targeted learning opportunities for young people to address key issues, provide opportunities to gain skills, improve mental and physical wellbeing and have their voices heard agreed with it. (Facilities and Services)
- 91.6 % who commented on the proposal that there should be work with young people to promote children's rights and provide targeted support to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap and support employment and positive destinations through relevant and accredited learning opportunities agreed with it. (Work and Local Economy)
- UNCRC principles and youth voice must be embedded throughout planning and delivery (taken from stakeholder consultation on 30/04/2025)
- Co-creation of services with young people, including planning and evaluation, is essential (stakeholder consultation)

- Youth Work provision must extend beyond school environments and work hours(stakeholder consultation)
- More provision is needed for 18–24-year-olds, especially those not in education or employment (stakeholder consultation)

Scottish Equity Funded school-based youth work is making a significant difference in the lives of young people. A total of **1,723 young people** have participated in these initiatives, with:
- **89% reporting improved confidence**
- **94% reporting enhanced knowledge and skills**

These programmes are contributing to broader positive outcomes, including:
- Improved **health and wellbeing**
- Increased **engagement** and **attendance**
- Better **attainment in literacy and numeracy**

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Priority 2: Youth Work

To develop the personal, social and educational skills of young people, particularly those at risk of disengaging, so that they realise their potential through Youth Work
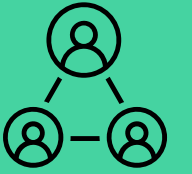
Priority

To develop the personal, social and educational skills of young people, particularly those at risk of disengaging, so that they realise their potential through **Youth Work**

Outcome

- More young people from identified vulnerable communities/groups will have greater access to accredited learning and services to become better skilled, better educated, more confident, and ready to participate in education, employment or training
- Young people will directly influence decisions that affect them by engaging in age-appropriate and youth-led opportunities that amplify their voices.

Measures

- The no of young people at risk of disengaging who are being supported by youth work
- The no of young people at risk of disengaging who successfully re-engage in their school or community
- The no of community-based activities that provide a safe and supportive environment for young people
- % of young people being supported by youth work who report that their physical and mental wellbeing has improved.
- % of young people being supported by youth work who achieve a nationally recognised award
- No of opportunities for young people to directly influence policy decisions
- No of young people being support by youth work who go into a positive destination
- No of with marginalised 18–25-year-olds who engage in youthwork
- Learner hours

What we will do:

Map Gaps: Establish a baseline and evaluation framework to identify missing youthwork pathways and target support to those most at risk.
Strengthen Leadership: Expand the Youth Work Network to boost collaboration and strategic oversight.
Track Destinations: Implement a school-based evaluation framework focused on long-term positive outcomes.
Co-Design for Impact: Develop employment-ready programmes with young people and partners, aligned to growth sectors.

Safe Spaces: Increase access to welcoming, partnership-led spaces for young people, promoting connection and having fun.
Recognise Achievement: Expand access to awards in schools and communities, including those valued by FE/HE.
Reach the Marginalised: Engage 18–25-year-olds who've left school and are furthest from work or wellbeing to co-design tailored pathways.
Youth Voice: Keep growing opportunities for young people to shape decisions.
Shared Goals: Collaborate with partners like the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership to deliver joined-up support.

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Priority 2: Youth Work

To develop the personal, social and educational skills of young people, particularly those at risk of disengaging, so that they realise their potential through Youth Work

The following are the initial project activities we will undertake over 2025/26 to contribute towards achieve this priority, a more detailed live delivery plan will be developed by the ACLDSP and thematic groups.

Description	Outcome/impact	Measure	Target
Establish Baselines	Better understanding of learner needs and vulnerabilities to inform planning and performance analysis	Number of learners from different vulnerable groups enrolled in adult learning programmes	Baseline to be established across all partners
Progress Youth Work thematic partnership	Improved coordination and shared evaluation across youth work provision	Number of partners using shared evaluation framework	Collaborative working and reporting mechanisms in place by Dec 2025
Focus on engagement with 18–25-year-olds	Increased engagement this age group to support wellbeing and positive destinations	Number of young people from this age group engaged, % of this age group achieving a positive destination	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Creating mechanisms for youth voice and decision making	Increased confidence, resilience, and influence of young people	No of opportunities for young people to directly influence policy decisions	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership

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Priority 3: Family Learning

Improving the life chances and long-term health of our children, families and communities   Learning and whole family support.

Why is this a Priority?

The life circumstances of children, young people and their families affect their educational attainment, their ability to develop life skills and engage in their communities. Family Learning plays a vital role in improving outcomes for children, parents, carers, and the wider community. Family Learning can empower the whole family network to improve children's outcomes. Programmes are flexible, community-based, and tailored to local needs, covering topics such as parenting, health and wellbeing, and confidence building.

What does the evidence say about family learning?

Research shows that **parental engagement** significantly improves children's educational outcomes. The **National Improvement Framework** highlights the importance of supporting learning at home, encouraging parental involvement in the life and work of schools and early learning settings, and embedding family learning into educational practice.

The strategy aims to **close the poverty-related attainment gap** by building on the strengths of families and communities. It promotes strong, collaborative partnerships between public sector services, early years settings, schools, the NHS, third sector organisations, independent agencies and community groups.

In April 2025, the whole family approach was widely endorsed, particularly in relation to early intervention and building resilience. Through public consultation in 'Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future', local people echoed a need for partnership working to provide accessible community-based learning opportunities for adults, young people and children, particularly those in priority areas. The results also demonstrated a desire to engage with activities to boost social interaction and well-being with value placed on family-oriented events in community spaces

Family learning plays a crucial role in:

- **Raising Attainment**: Evidence shows that children's achievement improves when families are actively involved in their learning.

- **Promoting Equity**: Family learning helps close the attainment gap by supporting the whole family network and addressing inequalities.

- **Empowering Families**: It builds confidence, skills, and engagement, enabling families to support both their children's and their own lifelong learning.

- **Strengthening Partnerships**: It fosters collaborative relationships between families and all key stakeholders, aligning with the principles of *Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)*, *The Promise* and the *UNCRC*.

- **Supporting Policy Goals**: It contributes to the aims of the *Community Empowerment Act*, the *Education (Scotland) Act 2016,* and the *National Improvement Framework* by encouraging inclusive, community-based approaches to lifelong learning.

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Priority 3: Family Learning

Improving the life chances and long-term health of our children, families and communities   Learning and whole family support.

Priority

Improving the life chances of our children, families and communities through family learning and whole family support

Outcome

Families and communities will be strengthened through the development of meaningful relationships and helping families access multi-agency family centred support which promotes equality, inclusion and lifelong learning.

Measures

- Number of adults and children engaging in universal family learning activities
- Number of adults and children engaging in capacity building family learning programmes
- Number of adults and children who engage in one off community events
- % of those who engage with family learning who report improved mental health and wellbeing, confidence and skills
- % of those who engage with family learning who go on to support other families
- % of supports designed and delivered in collaboration with multi-agency partners
- Number of onward referrals to other partners

What we will do:

- **Create a Family Learning Thematic Partnership** to coordinate efforts, reduce duplication, and apply a shared evaluation framework.
- **Engage** learner voice to identify needs, with emphasis on promoting accessibility for all.
- **Co-design and deliver** universal, targeted and intensive programmes of support for parents and carers to improve their confidence, knowledge and skills in helping with their children's social, emotional, or learning needs
- **Maximise use of community spaces** to build local capacity and resilience

- **Progress cross partner commitment** to support Aberdeen's Whole Family Support Model.
- **Maintain collaborative relationships with partners,** allowing flexible approaches to family support from early intervention to managing risk and challenge.
- **Use family-centred planning** to provide flexible, needs-led support through the most appropriate services

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Priority 3: Family Learning

Improving the life chances and long-term health of our children, families and communities   Learning and whole family support.

The following are the initial project activities we will undertake over 2025/26 to contribute towards achieve this priority, a more detailed live delivery plan will be developed by the ACLDSP and thematic groups

Description	Outcome/impact	Measure	Target
Establish Baselines	Better understanding of learner needs and vulnerabilities to inform planning and performance analysis	Number of learners from different vulnerable groups engaged in family learning programmes	Baseline to be established across all partners
Progress Family Learning thematic partnership	Improved coordination and shared evaluation across adult learning provision	Number of partners using shared evaluation framework	Collaborative working and reporting mechanisms in place by Dec 2025
Maximise use of community spaces	Improved local capacity and resilience	Number of families engaged in learning programmes	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Cross partner involvement in Family Support Model	Tailored support in homes, schools, and community settings	Number of families receiving targeted support	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership

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Priority 4: Community Development

Supporting communities to take action through Community Development to bring about change for themselves and their communities and to have influence and control

Why is this a Priority?

Our communities face major challenges from the wider economic outlook, rising cost of living, falling public expenditure and our changing demographics. These challenges are leading to the significant transformation of how public services are delivered, the role of the third sector, and the expectations of and on communities. Communities want and expect more control over their lives, and this has implications for the role of public services, a shift towards supporting and facilitating, rather than delivering and directing. Our communities are in different places in terms of their experiences and capacities to take on the responsibility that more control over resources and decision-making leads to. Therefore, it is essential to develop a strategic approach to supporting this shift to increased power in communities that recognises that individuals most affected by poverty need to be involved in identifying the best solutions. Locality planning continues to play an important role in supporting community development across Priority Neighbourhoods. It has contributed to encouraging community participation, strengthening relationships, and fostering a growing sense of identity and belonging. The model has enabled collective problem-solving, empowered local leadership, and supported self-help and learning. While there has been meaningful progress, further work is needed to ensure these outcomes are consistently realised across all areas.

What does the evidence say about community development?

Evidence from a range of sources, demonstrates the powerful impact of CLD on the lives of learners and communities. At its best, effective CLD is life changing for people, families, and communities. It inspires people to maximise their own potential and empowers people, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and in their communities.

Recent Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future and City Voice data show that residents in SIMD 1 areas report significantly lower levels of community connection, influence, and control—highlighting the need for a more responsive and empowering approach to community development in these neighbourhoods.

Community Development is an approach to achieving social change. It is action taken through building organisation, learning and power within communities in order to promote democracy, sustainable development, equality and social justice as well as supporting communities to make the most of their assets and using these to make positive change. It builds community capacity and influence by enabling people to develop the confidence, understanding and skills required to influence decision making and service delivery. Community development practitioners may be paid (employed workers) or unpaid(community activists and voluntary workers).

Local, national, global
There is strong and growing evidence that communities locally, nationally, and globally, must be responsive to the impact of unpredictable world events due to the increasing frequency and severity of crises such as climate change, war and pandemics.

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Priority 4: Community Development

Supporting communities to take action through Community Development to bring about change for themselves and their communities and to have influence and control

Priority

Supporting communities to take action to bring about change for themselves and their communities and to have influence and control

Outcome

- Communities benefit from high-quality capacity building and community development support that strengthens and enhances their existing skills and abilities.
- Communities are recognised and supported as equal partners in planning and decision-making processes that affect lives and community.
- Communities are supported to lead on the initiatives which they deem to be priorities within their neighbourhoods.
- Communities are supported to access the resources that they need to meet their ambitions for themselves, their families and neighbours.

Measures

- Increase the scoring of influence and sense of control(Place Standard tool) from 3.3 to 3.5 for SIMD areas 1&2
- No of grassroots organisations who co-design training content that reflects their priorities and capacity-building needs.
- No of grassroots organisations receiving capacity building support
- No of community groups/individuals who participate in community events
- No of community groups who apply for funding
- Proportion of those who've received support who feel that it has had a positive impact in terms of enhanced capacity, skills, confidence
- Total annual budget allocated to initiatives such as participatory budgeting, community-led planning, and empowerment initiatives

What we will do:

Establish a Community Development Partnership to drive shared ambition and strategic coordination across Aberdeen.

Test new participation models, Health Issues in the Community (HIIC),participatory research, alternative funding, to shift power to communities.

Strengthen service coordination and access to spaces by building trust and capacity across communities and services.

Leverage opportunities like Community Wealth Building, Democracy Matters, and anchor organisations to unlock development potential.

Identify system-level barriers and risks to community outcomes and develop a long-term vision and plan for Community development.

Centre lived experience in all development, ensuring a holistic, person-led approach.

Use shared evaluation to sustain and amplify what works, embedding a learning culture that draws from best practice and proven success elsewhere.

Promote community development values, ensuring integrity and duty of care in engagement.

Collaborate through existing networks, Priority Neighbourhood Partnerships, Locality Empowerment Groups, Food Poverty Action Aberdeen, taking a community development approach to delivering outcomes within the Locality Plans.

Support grassroots initiatives tackling poverty and food insecurity, using tools like Food Ladders.

Empower communities to engage with Just Transition, local climate planning, and resilience building.

Enable agile, community-led responses to global disruptions to strengthen local resilience and support

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Priority 4: Community Development

Supporting communities to take action through Community Development to bring about change for themselves and their communities and to have influence and control

The following are the initial project activities we will undertake over 2025/26 to contribute towards achieve this priority, a more detailed live delivery plan will be developed by the ACLDSP and thematic groups

Description	Outcome/impact	Measure	Target
Establish Baselines	Better understanding of learner needs and vulnerabilities to inform planning and performance analysis	Number of community members from different vulnerable groups engaged in Community Learning activity	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Establish Community Development thematic partnership	Improved coordination and shared evaluation across community development provision	Number of partners using shared evaluation framework	Collaborative working and reporting mechanisms in place by Dec 2025
Exploring and test participation models	Increased development of community strengthens and enhances their existing skills and abilities	Number of tested programmes	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Leverage for community focused wealth building	Communities are supported to access the resources that they need to meet their ambitions for themselves, their families and neighbours.	% of community members engaged	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership

Priority 5: Workforce development

Enhancing the skills and capabilities of staff & volunteers in CLD

Why is this a Priority?

Community Learning and Development (CLD), as defined by the CLD Standards Council Scotland, is a professional practice that empowers individuals and communities to identify goals, engage in learning, and drive change. It encompasses diverse areas such as community development, youth work, adult learning, health and wellbeing, and volunteer support. A key focus is on staff and volunteer development through tailored training and continuous professional learning, aligned with the CLD Standards Council's strategy, *Growing the Learning Culture*. This commitment is central to Aberdeen's CLD Plan 2025–2027, which prioritises workforce development to strengthen governance, leadership, and service quality. Stakeholder feedback highlighted gaps in capacity and professional development. Addressing these through targeted actions ensures services remain responsive, equitable, and impactful. A skilled and supported workforce enhances collaboration, supports vulnerable groups, and boosts community resilience and engagement.

What does the evidence say about workforce development?

Nationally
The Scottish Government's guidance calls for the recruitment of qualified practitioners, supporting CLD Standards Council membership, and ensuring compliance with national occupational standards. The independent review of CLD reinforces this, stating that a strong and suitably professionalised workforce is essential to delivering high-quality outcomes for learners. The review emphasised that CLD staff play a critical role in building trust, delivering person-centred learning, and enabling progression, functions that require skilled, supported professionals. The independent review calls for a national CLD Workforce Plan, improved CPD standards, and parity of esteem with other professions. It also recommends multi-year funding to support workforce stability and development.

Locally
The formation of the Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership (ACLDSP) aims to strengthen strategic leadership and collective ownership by embedding workforce development into thematic delivery and shared evaluation structures. The April 2025 stakeholder consultation highlighted workforce development as a cross-cutting priority. Partners cited staff capacity issues, lack of Continued Professional Development and the need for trauma-informed and inclusive training.

Increased focus on collective workforce development is required to deliver quality services by volunteers and frontline staff while making the most of our collective resource.

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Priority 5: Workforce development

Enhancing the skills and capabilities of staff & volunteers in CLD

Priority

Enhancing the skills and capabilities of staff & volunteers in CLD

Outcome

The CLD workforce have increased access to the skills, practices and further learning and accreditation to better meet the changing needs of learners and communities.

Measures

- Increase in CLD Standards Council membership across Aberdeen
- Maintain the number of further and higher education work-based placements
- Increase in shared CLD CPD opportunities across CLD partners

What we will do:

Create a workforce development thematic partnership to:

Ensure high-quality, relevant professional learning by sharing best practice and delivering joint training for staff and volunteers.
Collaborate across CLD partnerships to offer accredited courses for those involved in community learning and development.
Develop a clear, accredited progression pathway through the workforce development thematic partnership.
Provide vocational learning opportunities, including practice placements for CLD university students.
Promote CLD Standards Council membership and support workforce engagement with the Standards Council.

Encourage skill-sharing through regional and national CLD networks, events, and collaborative training.
Respond to current and emerging priorities across CLD workforce development.
Build digital competence across the CLD workforce to support others and use new technologies effectively.
Expand access to sector-specific qualifications for staff and volunteers.

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Priority 5: Workforce development

Enhancing the skills and capabilities of staff & volunteers in CLD

The following are the initial project activities we will undertake over 2025/26 to contribute towards achieve this priority, a more detailed live delivery plan will be developed by the ACLDSP and thematic groups

Description	Outcome/impact	Measure	Target
Establish Workforce Development Thematic Partnership	Strengthened strategic coordination and shared responsibility for workforce development	Partnership established and active	Operational by end of 2025
Respond to current and emerging priorities across CLD workforce development.	Increased access to skills and practices to meet changing learner and community needs	Number of training sessions delivered	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Collaborate across CLD partnerships	Broader access to accredited courses for CLD practitioners	Number of joint courses offered across CLD partners	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Promote CLD Standards Council membership	Increased professionalisation and recognition of CLD workforce.	Increase in CLD Standards Council membership across Aberdeen	Year-on-year increase

Priority 6: Collaboration

Strengthen collaboration and shared accountability across Aberdeen's Community Learning and Development partners.

Why is this a Priority?

Collaboration among community learning and development (CLD) partners is a powerful vehicle for fostering social inclusion, enhancing skills, and supporting lifelong learning within communities. By working together, organisations can share resources, avoid duplication, achieve economies of scale, and amplify their positive impact.

What does the evidence say about collaborative working and shared accountability?

HMIE identified the need for a more joined-up approach to self-evaluation and shared data use. This would help avoid duplication, improve resource efficiency, and provide a fuller understanding of CLD's impact.

The Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership (ACLDSP) and thematic delivery groups are tasked with shaping delivery plans and contributing to shared evaluation. This structure ensures that governance is not only strategic but also responsive to community realities.

CLD Partners across all CLD strands called for improved shared metrics, and co-produced reporting frameworks. These were seen as essential for transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

The learning-life-report-independent-review-community-learning-development-cld.pdf reinforces that CLD's impact is often under-recognised due to fragmented data and inconsistent outcome measurement. It recommends a national CLD Outcomes and Measurement Framework and highlights the need for consistent data collection and reporting across all providers

Priority 6: Collaboration

Strengthen collaboration and shared accountability across Aberdeen's Community Learning and Development partners.
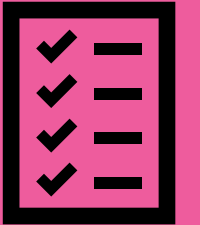
Priority

Strengthen collaboration and shared accountability across Aberdeen's Community Learning and Development Organisations.

Outcome

Improve the ability of the collective CLD partnership to demonstrate progress made to CLD outcomes

Measures

- Shared measures of success set by Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership
- Involvement of CLD partners in designing and implementing shared self-evaluation and data gathering systems.
- Evidence of improvement through governance structures
- Increase the number of CLD partners contributing to shared reporting against the Aberdeen CLD Plan.
- Improved accuracy in reporting the impact of CLD outcomes across the city, and our reporting nationally.
- Increased involvement of partners in strategic and thematic groups

What we will do:

Supporting collaboration through the Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership and Thematic groups

Enabling representation from new CLD providers, learners and communities as we work collaboratively

Building capacity across the CLD partnership by strengthening how we track, measure, and report on progress.

Create opportunities for regular collaboration across CLD partnership to progress CLD priorities

Being accountable and communicating what has been achieved to communities, stakeholders, and funders.

Promote shared self-evaluation across thematic partnerships using How Good is our CLD (HGIOCLD)

Collect and review CLD impact and performance data bi-annually and annually against thematic priorities.

Extend use of national CLD KPIs across all partners.

Play a key role in the delivery of the Partnership Prevent Plan to ensure digital safeguarding, a shared approach to addressing radicalisation, and multi-agency risk management through shared data sets

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Priority 6: Collaboration

Strengthen collaboration and shared accountability across Aberdeen's Community Learning and Development partners.

The following are the initial project activities we will undertake over 2025/26 to contribute towards achieve this priority, a more detailed live delivery plan will be developed by the ACLDSP and thematic groups

Description	Outcome/impact	Measure	Target
Supporting collaboration through the Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership and Thematic groups	Improve the ability of the collective CLD partnership to demonstrate progress made to CLD outcomes	Shared measures of success set by Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Enabling representation from new CLD providers, learners and communities	Increased involvement of partners in strategic and thematic groups	Involvement of CLD partners in designing and implementing shared self-evaluation and data gathering systems	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Create opportunities for regular collaboration across CLD partnership to progress CLD priorities	Increase the number of CLD partners contributing to shared reporting against the Aberdeen CLD Plan	Number of CLD partners contributing to shared reporting	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Promote shared self-evaluation across thematic partnerships using HGIOCLD	Strengthened shared accountability and continuous improvement	Use of HGIOCLD across thematic partnerships	To be determined by ACLDSP and thematic partnership
Work with the HDRC to design an evaluation of arrangements to commissioning.	Establish an approach to the evaluation of our current arrangements to maximise the impact of sources of funding.	SMART approach in place.	Approach in place for the beginning of session 2025/26.

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Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future

Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future engagement, using the Place Standard Tool, revealed strong support for the proposed CLD priorities, with over 90% of participants endorsing actions such as expanding community-based adult learning, targeted youth programmes, and initiatives to improve health, wellbeing, and employability. Respondents also backed inclusive service design and greater community influence in decision-making. Feedback highlighted the need for practical, locally delivered learning opportunities, better use of community spaces, clearer communication, and more support for marginalised groups. These insights have directly informed the CLD Delivery Plan 2025–2030, ensuring it reflects community priorities and addresses the barriers identified through engagement.

You asked for…	We Are Doing
Clear Volunteer Opportunities	Empowering communities through volunteering, participatory budgeting, and local action groups
Basic Lifelong Learning including digital skills, literacy for life	Support adults to become better skilled, educated, confident, healthy and empowered through Adult Learning
Use of schools in the evenings, evening classes, business input to run these	Maximise use of community spaces to build local capacity and resilience
Volunteering and Training	Expand access to sector-specific qualifications for staff and volunteers
Community Support	Support grassroots initiatives tackling poverty and food insecurity
Local Job Opportunities and Skill-Building Initiatives	Young people are supported into positive destination programmes aligned with growth and volume sectors
Information Dissemination and Community Engagement	Promote community development values, ensuring integrity and duty of care in engagement
Community-Led Initiatives and Lifelong Learning	Co-design Pathways: Develop programmes and volunteering routes with marginalised groups
Community space and social gatherings	Increase access to welcoming, partnership-led spaces for young people

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A Statement of CLD needs which will not be met within the period of the Plan

This plan reflects the current position in Aberdeen, while recognising that unmet needs in service delivery and support may continue to emerge. Through ongoing community engagement and by listening to the voices of learners, we will identify and record these needs. The Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership will work collaboratively to explore with thematic partnerships how such needs might be addressed and factor this into our yearly planning. A significant proportion of our provision is delivered through the voluntary efforts of active citizens, both individually and within groups, who play an increasingly vital role in identifying and responding to unmet learning needs.

Strategic Use of Resources and Future Ambitions

All existing CLD services are currently resourced through a blend of national grants and funding streams, local authority funding, voluntary sector contributions, and the invaluable efforts of volunteers. However, in light of ongoing financial pressures across all sectors, there is a shared recognition of the need to maximise the impact of these resources through more strategic alignment and joint planning. Looking ahead, the Aberdeen CLD Strategic Partnership is committed to exploring new collaborative and consortia-based approaches to service delivery. This includes pooled resources, and co-designed interventions that respond flexibly to emerging needs. By working together in this way, we aim to build a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable CLD offer for all communities across Aberdeen.

Aberdeen CLD partners

This plan has been shaped by a broad and committed partnership of CLD stakeholders, including learners and communities across Aberdeen. Each partner shown here has played a vital role in its development and will continue to contribute to its delivery, ensuring a collaborative and sustained approach throughout the lifespan of the 2025–2030 plan.

Annex A: Strategies and plans connected to CLD cross cutting themes

1. Raising Attainment Focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap through the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC). Investment in Pupil Equity Funding and Strategic Equity Funding. CLD supports wellbeing and readiness to learn, aligning with local stretch aims.
2. New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy Aims to support refugees and asylum seekers from day one of arrival. CLD contributes through partnerships and initiatives that promote integration.
3. ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Supports language learning for non-native speakers including refugees and migrants. Delivered through CLD partnerships and other providers, aligned with the New Scots Strategy.
4. Curriculum for Excellence CLD supports the four capacities of CfE: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors. Promotes skills for learning, life, and work.
5. Community Empowerment CLD supports participation in community planning under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. A review of the Act is underway to strengthen community ownership and decision-making.
6. Family Learning CLD delivers impactful family learning opportunities. Supported by refreshed National Occupational Standards and Education Scotland resources.
7. Employment and Skills CLD provides accessible routes into skills development, especially for those excluded from work. Works with partners to support lifelong learning and employability with synergies with the Regional Economic Strategy 2023

8. Mental Health Support New national strategy (2023) focuses on wellbeing, prevention, and addressing inequalities. CLD contributes to mental health support through community-based interventions.
9. Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) CLD supports youth transitions into employment. DYW initiatives include school coordinators and third-sector partnerships targeting disadvantaged youth.
10. UNCRC and Youth Participation UNCRC Incorporation (Scotland) Act 2024 embeds children's rights in public services. CLD supports youth participation and rights-based approaches.
11. Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) CLD supports early intervention and whole-family approaches to wellbeing and development.
12. Tackling Child Poverty CLD is key in supporting families through employment and skills development. Aligns with the Best Start, Bright Futures delivery plan and targets priority families.
13. Keeping the Promise CLD contributes to transformational change for care-experienced children and young people. Supports delivery of the Promise Implementation Plan.
14. Volunteering CLD promotes inclusive volunteering through the Volunteering Action Plan (2022). Volunteering supports wellbeing, skills development, and community cohesion.
15. Learning for Sustainability (LfS) CLD helps embed sustainability in education. Supports the Target 2030 goal for all education settings to become Sustainable Learning Settings.
16. Aberdeen's Anti-Poverty Mapping shows how local services and organisations collaborate to tackle poverty through targeted, localised support across learning, housing, health, and economic stability.

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	16 September 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Music Service Update
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/125
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne
REPORT AUTHOR	Beth Edwards
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 At the Education and Children's Services Committee on 17th September 2024, the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning was instructed to continue to extend opportunities for music making through partnership working between the Music Service and Aberdeen City Music School and others; and report back on progress within one calendar year. This report provides an evaluative overview of the progress made over the 2024/25 academic session.

1.2 In addition, officers were instructed to include data about tuition at primary school level broken down by school in the next report. This is included as an appendix to this report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

2.1 instructs the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to continue to extend opportunities for music making through partnership working between the Music Service and Aberdeen City Music School and others; and

2.2 instructs the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to report back on progress in one calendar year.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

Opportunities for music making

3.1.1 Members requested that the service continue to extend opportunities for music making through partnership working between the Music Service and Aberdeen City Music School and others.

3.1.2 In 2024-25, the Music Centre (extra-curricular ensemble) offer increased significantly with the introduction of weekly Saturday Music Centre activities, alongside activities on three week nights. In the 2023-24 academic year

ensembles met a couple of times before concerts, so the development of regular weekly rehearsals is notable.

The 2024-25 model of Music Centre has allowed for pupils to make substantial musical progress in their own playing and ensemble skills, develop friendships with other like-minded individuals, alongside providing the opportunity for Music Service staff to get to know pupils, parents and carers in a different context.

The ensembles on offer have included Junior Wind Band, Intermediate Wind Band, Junior Strings, Intermediate Strings, Folk Collective, Senior Ensemble Junior Choir, Senior Choir, Adult Choir, Piping Ensemble, Junior Guitars, Senior Guitars and Jazz Ensemble.

3.1.3   The Music Service programme of Festive and Spring Concerts at the Beach Ballroom is now well established, with two evenings of concerts being delivered in December 2024 and in March 2025. When these concerts were re-established following the Covid-19 pandemic, there was initially a single concert in December. As a result of pupil, parent and staff demand this has grown to Festive and Spring Concerts, taking place across two nights, with some groups playing in both concerts to ensure they were of a sufficient length. The 2024-25 academic session saw the Service deliver two fully distinct concert nights in December and March. This change reflects the significant growth in the number of ensembles and performance items and ensures that there are opportunities for more children to showcase their talents. In 2022 there were around 300 children involved, with this reaching 400 children in 2023. In the 2024-25 session we had around 500 children involved in our Beach Ballroom concerts.

3.1.4   The Music Service worked alongside Aberdeen City Music School during the Festive and Spring concerts. Aberdeen City Music School had standalone items in the performances and the pupils performed alongside Aberdeen City Music Service pupils in the massed finales that ended each concert.

The Music Service Senior Ensemble worked along composer Steve Pycroft, who created bespoke arrangements of pop songs for the group.

3.1.5   As part of the Tall Ships Festival programme, the Music Service received a grant from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This grant was to commission a composer to write a piece of music inspired by the Tall Ships Festival. The Music Service worked with emerging composer, and Music Service alum, Clara-Jane Maunder. Clara-Jane wrote a piece called 'A Sea Journey' and this was premiered at the Cowdray Hall in March 2025 by Abbottswell School, accompanied by pianist Ian Lovegrove, as part of the Art Gallery's Lunchbreak Concert series. Clara-Jane Maunder said, *"it has been a real delight to work on this commission for Aberdeen City Music service over the past couple of months, and it has been even more wonderful to hear it performed in such a beautiful and enthusiastic way by pupils from Abbotswell School. I benefitted hugely from the Music Service's instrumental tuition, ensembles, and orchestras as a young person, so this has been an absolute full-circle moment. It has been truly wonderful to have the opportunity to write for the next generation of young creatives, inspired by the city I grew up in. "'A Sea Journey' follows the journey of a sailor (maybe from this century, or maybe from long*

ago) as they return to Aberdeen after a long time at sea, continuing with them past familiar parts of Aberdeen's coastline until they arrive home to the Granite City.'

In May 2025, 'A Sea Journey' was performed by four schools at the Aberdeen Big Sing 2025, this time accompanied by the Big Sing orchestra.

In July the piece was also performed again by Abbottswell School at the opening ceremony of the Tall Ships Festival.

3.1.6 As well as performing at the opening ceremony of the Tall Ships Festival, the Music Service was given the opportunity to perform on the main stage on the Sunday morning. This performance was due to feature the Music Service Intermediate Wind Band, Folk Collective and Senior Choir.

3.1.7 The Aberdeen Big Sing is now a keenly anticipated annual event. The 2025 event saw all 3000 Primary 4 pupils from Aberdeen City Schools and the independent sector singing together in Duthie Park, accompanied by a live orchestra made up of pupils and staff.

The Music Service received grant funding from Creative Scotland's Youth Music Initiative which meant that a team of singing instructors could visit schools throughout the year to teach pupils the Big Sing songs. In addition to this, the Service continued to work closely with Charanga to provide resources for class teachers to rehearse the songs with their pupils at a time of their choosing in the run up to the event. The Service increased the level and frequency of provision at Orchard Brae School and worked closely with staff there to ensure that pupils were able to fully access the performance.

To develop teacher confidence in rehearsing classes for the Big Sing, the Music Service developed opportunities for teachers to come together to engage in professional learning. In addition, the Service provided 'online live lessons' which were each attended by over 50 classes and meant that children could sing together online prior to the Big Sing event itself.

The Aberdeen Big Sing 2025 event has provided an opportunity for Aberdeen City schools to re-connect with schools in our twin city of Clermont-Ferrand. All Primary 4 children in Aberdeen City learned a song in French, which was performed at the Aberdeen Big Sing 2025. Pupils in Clermont-Ferrand have been learning 'Colour is a Beautiful Thing' and some of our Scottish songs including 'My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean'. Following a successful online 'live lesson', the next stage of the project was for schools to connect to sing together and get to know each other better. The French schools sent in recordings of themselves singing the songs, broadcast on the day on a large screen, which meant that they were able to sing together with the children from Aberdeen at the Big Sing. We are delighted to be able to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their language skills in real life contexts.

3.1.8 The Music Service continues to deliver a range of large group and/or whole class projects which are designed in conjunction with school leadership teams and have the aim of increasing access to high quality musical opportunities.

This included the development and expansion of the Ashley Road Woodwind Project, the first full year of Riverbank School's Riverband, and a number of schools benefiting from 'Plastic Brass', a project which used light-weight brass instruments to introduce pupils to the instruments. Pupils in these projects benefited from performance opportunities, including in school, at the Music Service Festive and Spring Concerts, at the Aberdeen Big Sing and at the Aberdeen Performing Arts Light the Blue Festival Family Arts Day in Union Terrace Gardens.

3.1.9   As part of the programme of provision funded by Creative Scotland's Youth Music Initiative, the Music Service organised for musicians from Live Music Now! to work in Orchard Brae School to deliver 29 workshops to 115 pupils. Comments from the musicians delivering the provision demonstrates the value of the work: *"The piece of feedback that we got multiple times a day from staff was that the students were the calmest and most content that they had been in ages. We had one teacher who said the music had directly helped a distressed student become emotionally regulated and asked us to come back whenever we had a few spare minutes between classes. We had a lot of groups that found a collective experience of regulation and quiet, most notably at the final concert."*

Five schools benefited from a week each of provision delivered by Scottish Culture and Traditions Youth. This allowed pupils in the upper stages of primary school to develop their skills on tin whistle, guitar, clarsach and Scots song which led to them being able to perform in concerts to peers and families.

3.1.10 The Aberdeen Performing Arts Light the Blue Festival allowed for numerous collaborative activities and performances. These included:

- Music Instructors being part of a week-long project to develop Playground Performances at Gilcomstoun School
- Bucksburn Junior Band, Fiddle Futures (Junior) and Riverband performing at the Family Arts Day in Union Terrace Gardens
- Fiddle Futures (Senior) collaborating with an inclusive dance company for a performance at the Bon Accord Shopping Centre as part of the Teenage Takeover Day
- The Music Service Intermediate Wind Band and Folk Collective performing at the Big Gig with their own performance items and alongside other young people from SC&T (Scottish Culture & Traditions) Youth, Big Noise Torry, Aberdeenshire Music Service and sound's Get Creative Ensemble.

3.1.11 The Music Service was part of the Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust Day in February for the second year running. This year, a group of piping pupils performed on the pitch at the start of the Aberdeen vs Hibernian match. Following their performance, pupils and their music instructors were given tickets to watch the match. The performance gave the pupils the opportunity to perform in a unique setting and in front of a large crowd, equipping them with skills from which they will benefit throughout their lives.

3.1.12 Academic session 2024-25 saw the development of partnership activity with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO). In September 2024, the service

worked with the RNSO and Charanga to organise the orchestra performing at the Lemon Tree with several Primary 3 classes from across the city. Schools were given songs to sing with the orchestra and were able to watch the orchestra perform a variety of well-known pieces, learning more about orchestral instruments.

In addition to this work, the Music Service and the RNSO have worked together to deliver three workshops for brass pupils at the Cowdray Hall and the Beach Ballroom. These have allowed for more opportunities for the pupils to perform and receive guidance from professional musicians as well as developing their music making skills.

The RNSO has also provided tickets for their concerts at the Music Hall, leading the Music Service to develop a Concert Club, where young people can attend the concerts with their peers and are supported by Music Service staff. We have also worked with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Ensemble and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra to organise for pupils to watch concerts in a 'school trip' format.

3.1.13 In order to develop an awareness of careers available to pupils who may wish to go on to work as musicians, the Music Service arranged a trip to Perth for the Intermediate Wind Band to watch the British Army Engagement Ensemble perform at the Perth Concert Hall. The pupils' feedback was that they immensely enjoyed the performance and the opportunity to travel to Perth with their Music Service friends.

3.1.134 The Music Service pupils performed at a range of festivals in the 2024-25 academic session, including a choir performance as part of Spectra, a Music Service Jazz Ensemble performance as part of the Aberdeen Jazz Festival and a Folk Collective performance as part of the Confucious Institute Spring Festival at the Tivoli Theatre.

The Confucious Institute partnered with the Music Service in the 2024-25 session in order for the Music Service to borrow a guzheng (a Chinese plucked zither) and for string pupils to learn how to play this through tuition from a student from the Confucious Institute. This led to numerous performances at a range of venues.

Once again, pupils from the service performed at Grampian Hospitals' Christmas Carol Concert at the Music Hall. This year this included a junior choir, a string quartet, pipers and instrumental soloists.

For the first time, the Music Service Junior Choir was invited to sing at the Aberdeen City Council Carol Concert at the Duthie Park Winter Gardens accompanied by Bon Accord Brass Band.

Pupils from the Music Service performed at the Aberdeen Highland Games in Hazlehead Park.

3.1.15 Locality Concerts continued to be an important part of the Music Service calendar, with performances from Don Locality pupils at Oldmachar Church,

Dee Locality pupils at Lochside Academy, and West Locality pupils at Northfield Academy. There was a noticeable increase in the standard of the performances, the number of children taking part and the audience numbers at these events, and they provide a valuable platform for pupils doing their first performances up to pupils working at more advanced levels.

For advanced pupils, there were additional opportunities to perform at the Cowdray Hall as part of the Art Gallery Lunchbreak Concert Series.

In June 2025 we held our second Leaver's Concert at the Cowdray Hall, and this will now become an annual event, allowing young people in S4-6 who are leaving school to perform in front of family and friends for one last time before leaving the Music Service. The number of young people choosing to perform in this concert increased, allowing it to be a full 2.5 hour event with an interval.

3.1.16 During session 2024-25 the Service ran the Scottish Young Musician Competition for the third year. In 2023 we had 30 entrants, in 2024 we had 67 entrants and for 2025 we had 120 entrants which meant that we had to hold several days of first round auditions. The final was held over two nights at the Cowdray Hall, with separate competitions for Junior and Senior finalists. The winner of the competition then went on to compete in the national final of the competition in Glasgow, securing an Early Music Prize.

We held an ensemble competition for the first time, with a number of groups competing for a trophy, with the Senior Vocal Ensemble winning the prize.

The service also worked closely with the North East of Scotland Performing Arts Festival, with many pupils entered into the solo and ensemble categories. Trips were also arranged for the string pupils to participate in a traditional music workshop in Inverurie.

3.1.17 The Music Service continues to participate in the 'In the City' programme, with provision delivered by staff during the October and Easter holidays.

3.1.18 In November 2024, the Music Service ran a family ceilidh for pupils and parents/carers of Music Centre attendees. The music was provided by a staff ensemble. This was successful, with many families attending and enjoying dancing together.

3.1.19 Following committee approval, a group comprising two Music Service staff members and six string pupils travelled to our twin city of Regensburg, in Germany. During their time in Germany the pupils performed at four concerts, including as part of the 70th anniversary celebrations of the Aberdeen-Regensburg twinning partnership and Bürgerfest, one of Europe's largest street festivals. This was the first opportunity in many years for the Service to support pupils to travel and perform internationally. A report of the trip is attached at Appendix 2.

3.1.20 Music instructors continue to prepare pupils for, and support, primary and secondary school Christmas, Spring and Summer concerts. These concerts provide valuable opportunities for children to perform individually and in

ensembles at school level and the Service values the close working relationships with school departments which enable these concerts to be successful.

3.1.21 The Music Service continues to engage in regular Quality Improvement visits which allow for areas of strength and development to be identified. Data from across the year feeds into the Service's annual Quality Improvement Plan, including information from parents/carers and children.

This includes the following statement from a parent/carer:

My daughter, now aged 13, joined the Music Centre whilst she was playing Percussion in Primary School. Since joining, her confidence has grown dramatically, not only with her music. All of the instructors and Music Centre staff are incredibly supportive, approachable and enthusiastic. My daughter has had so many wonderful opportunities to perform and compere. She has made friends from other schools, been to see the RSNO at the Music Hall and had a workshop with a world class professional Percussionist. My daughter has a medical issue and Beth has been so understanding, asking how best to support her, so that my daughter could continue to attend and perform. My daughter and I both feel extremely reassured and know that she will be looked after if she is feeling unwell or anxious.

My son, aged 10 joined the Music Centre this year and plays trumpet in the Junior Wind Band. He just loves performing. Prior to joining the band he performed at the Beach Ballroom in the Junior Choir at the Christmas concert and enjoyed every minute. He recently got to attend a special brass workshop with musicians from the RSNO and even got to attend the concert at the Music Hall the night before.

I am so grateful to the Music Centre staff and all the opportunities that have been given to my children. They are both growing in confidence, making great progress with their instruments, making friends and having fun! It is also very telling that my 16 year old son, who unfortunately missed out on the Music Centre when he was younger (due to the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic), has recently asked if he could join the senior guitar ensemble and perform at the Christmas concert. I am convinced that this is in part due to seeing how much his younger siblings are thriving with the Music Centre.

And the following statement from a pupil: *I play percussion which includes drum kit, glockenspiel and piano. I play in the intermediate wind band regularly and joined the String group for the Easter concert.*

I started in Junior Wind Band and I enjoyed it so much. I felt so important at the back top playing percussion and I loved to perform. I then moved into Intermediate Wind Band and I helped at the last Christmas concert with the Junior Choir, which was so fun and I learned a lot. I have also had the opportunity to compere for shows. Compering has really helped with my confidence, as I get very anxious about lots of things and I am so proud that I can now speak in front of a crowd. I was also asked to be the percussionist for the Intermediate string group, which was something very exciting and new.

Music Centre has given me so many opportunities including playing in many concerts at the beach ballroom, the Music Hall, the P&J Live, Pittodrie stadium and most recently at Duthie Park in front of thousands of people at the Big Sing, which was amazing! I feel so lucky to be able to play in these concerts. I have made so many good friends. Lastly, I would like to say how amazing all of the instructors are. They have taught me so much and they do so much for everyone, so thank you so much for everything you do!

A key aim for the Music Service is that pupils enjoy their lessons, therefore as part of the annual survey, parents/carers were asked to rate enjoyment levels on a scale of 1 to 10. The results demonstrate that most pupils enjoy tuition.

Percentage vs On a scale of 1-10, how much does your child enjoy their instrumental tuition?

On a scale of 1-10, how much does your child enjoy their instrumental tuition?
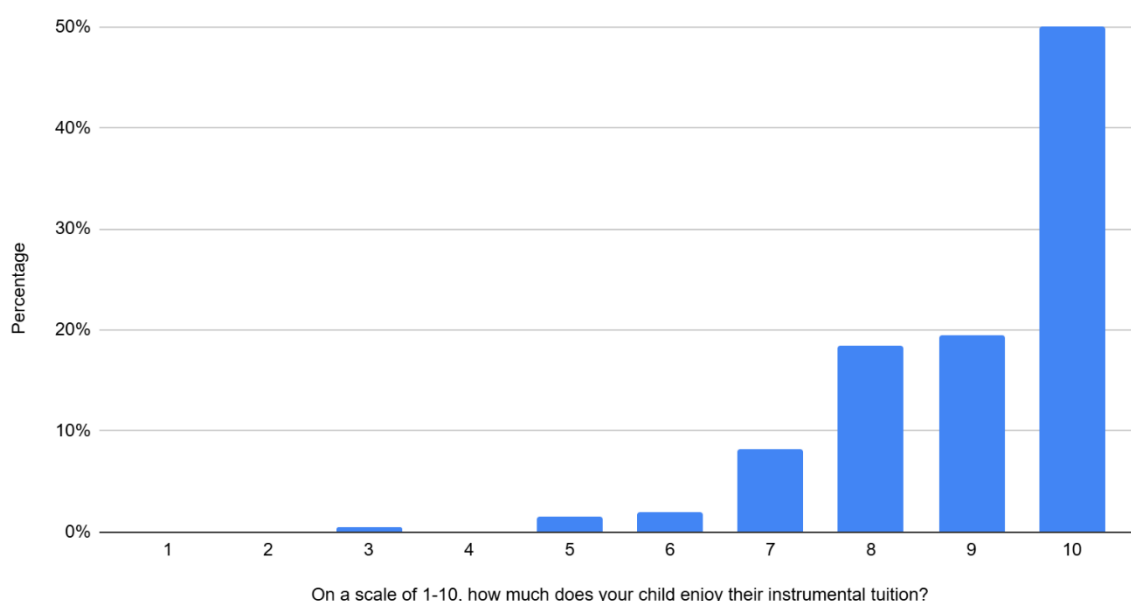
<u>Performance</u>

3.2.1   The Music Service continues to aim to offer high quality tuition to as many children and young people as possible. Pupil numbers are currently sitting at 2082 pupils receiving tuition in a small group/individually on a weekly basis. Pupil numbers have remained steady over the past three academic years and the service has focused on ensuring pupil/instructor contact time is maximised in Music Instructor timetables. The number of pupils engaging in whole class vocal and instrumental programmes continues to be over 5000 over the course of the academic year.

3.2.2   The charts below show the distribution of Music Service across Associated School Groups in August 2020 and in June 2025. This data shows continued progress towards the aim to offer tuition on a more equitable basis across the city.

August 2020

Dyce
1.0%

Cults
29.3%

Bucksburn
6.3%

Bridge of Don
4.2%

Oldmachar
7.3%

Lochside
3.2%

Hazlehead
11.5%

Harlaw
11.5%

Grammar
25.8%

June 2025

St Machar
8.7%

Northfield
10.4%

Dyce
3.9%

Cults
9.5%

Bucksburn
10.1%

Bridge of Don
7.9%

Oldmachar
7.7%

Lochside
8.4%

Hazlehead
10.8%

Harlaw
6.9%

Grammar
15.8%
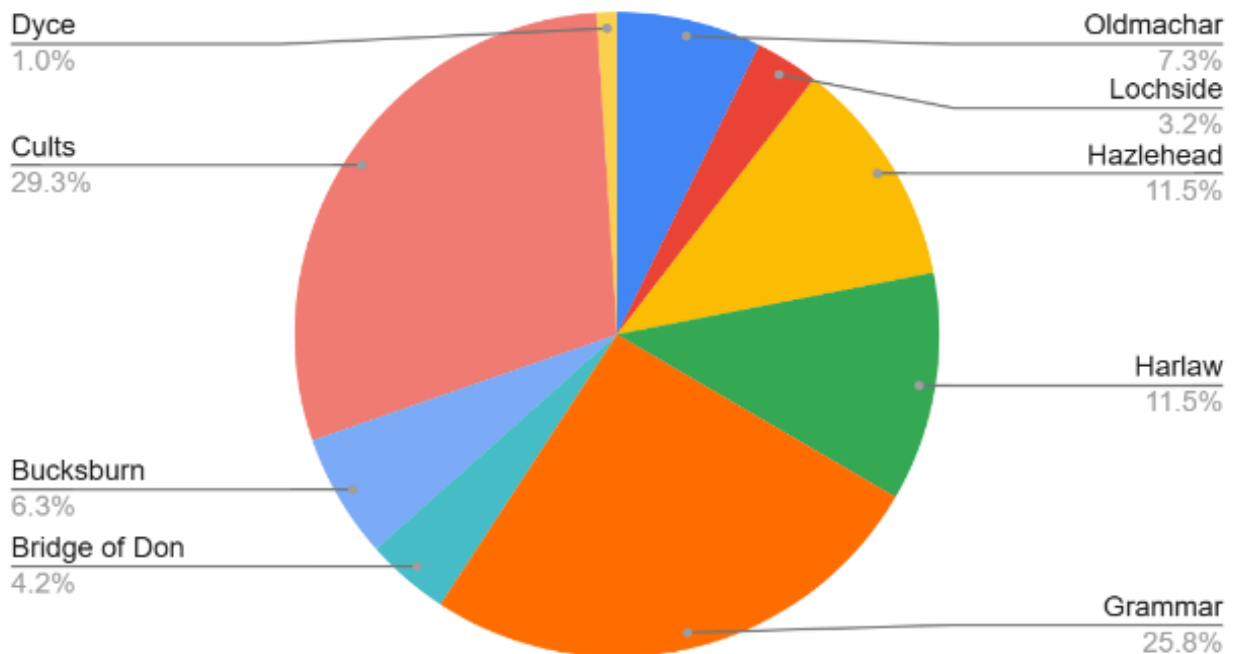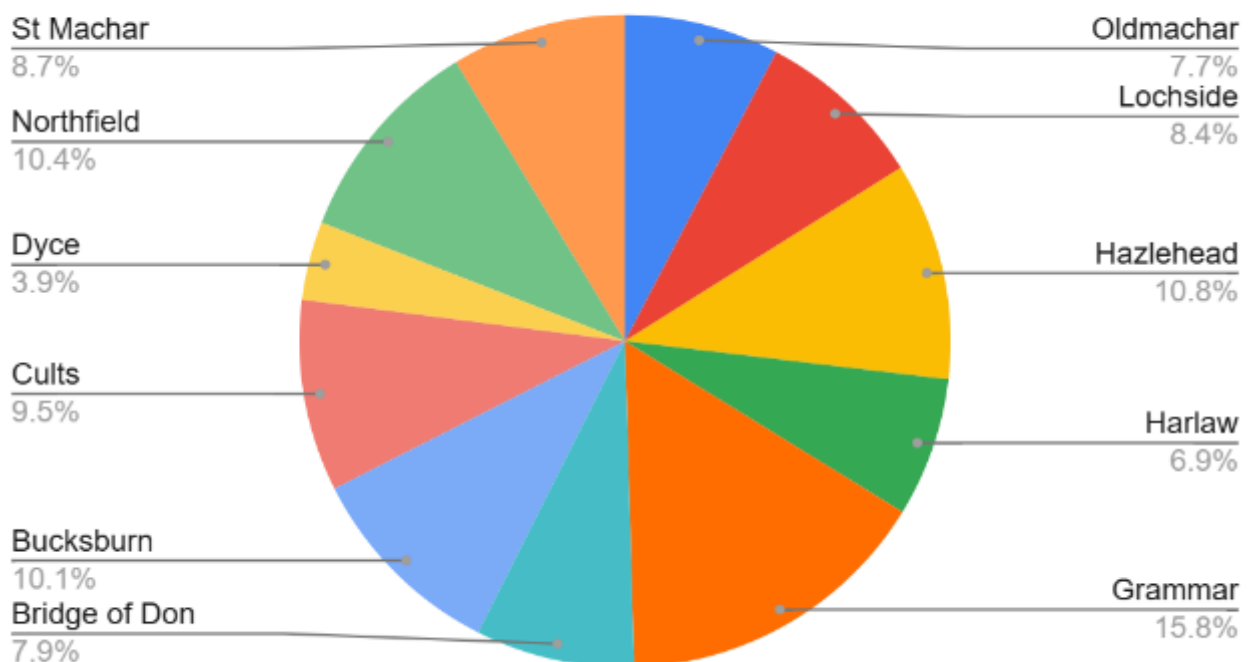
3.2.3 The Music Service tracks SIMD profiles of Music Service learners and looks at this against the profile of the school population in the city. This supports the service in identifying areas for improvement and also with strategically placing provision and projects.

3.2.4 The impact of the Covid pandemic meant that for a period of time, we had an influx of beginner pupils, and fewer advanced pupils. As time passes, the beginner pupils have moved up through school and we now have many more pupils working at intermediate and advanced levels.

3.2.5 The Service continues to have over 2000 children on the waiting list for lessons. For some instructors who teach the most popular instruments (e.g. piano) they have over 270 pupils on each of their waiting lists. The Music Service looks to provide tuition to as many children as possible, however demand does outstrip capacity.

Plans for 25/26

3.2.6 Extra-curricular Music Centre activities will continue three evenings per week and on Saturdays. The format for the ensembles is now well established, so will continue to run as it has in the 2024-25 academic session with only slight changes – the addition of a Primary 1 – 3 choir and an Initial Strings Ensemble for our youngest learners. For our more advanced learners, the Service will provide an offer for them to complete the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Music Leaders Award.

3.2.7 The Music Service will continue to seek high-quality performance opportunities for learners to allow them to perform in a wide range of contexts that are age and stage appropriate. The Service will ensure that the programme of events on offer is sustainable in terms of staff workload capacity. The pace of change within the Service has been rapid over the past couple of years and the Service is now in a place where it would be challenging to provide more opportunities with existing resources.

3.2.8 The Service will continue to work with partner organisations, including professional orchestras and local groups. The first event of the 2025-26 academic session will be a visit from a British Army band who will spend a weekend playing side-by-side with our Junior and Intermediate Wind Bands and teaching them how to march.

3.2.9 Our programme of Locality Concerts, Festive and Spring Concerts, Lunchbreak Concerts and Scottish Young Musicians competition will continue. We have arranged to perform at the Grampian Hospitals Carol Concert in December 2025.

3.2.10 Pupil numbers will continue to be monitored at school, instructor and instrument level with measures put in place to develop any areas where there is an identified improvement need. The Service will continue to develop the registration process for pupils wishing to start lessons, and to raise the level of awareness of the Service in all schools.

3.2.11 The Music Service will develop the Big Sing so that it evolves to become The Aberdeen Big Play and Sing. This will see an additional opportunity for instrumental learners to be involved alongside our Primary 4 pupils singing. The Service will continue to develop links with twin cities to allow

for their continued involvement. For the 2026 Big Sing and Play event the Music Service is pleased to share that the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Charanga will be partnering the service as part of the event.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

The expansion of music service activity and more equitable distribution of tuition across the City assists the Education Authority in fulfilling its duty to secure that the education we provide is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of our children and young people to their fullest potential.

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		L	Yes
Compliance	No significant risks identified		L	Yes
Operational	No significant risks identified		L	Yes
Financial	No significant risks identified		L	Yes

Reputational	Risk that poor quality of provision will present a reputational risk to the Council	There will be regular quality improvement visits to the service with support being offered to any underperforming tutor.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No significant risks identified		L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

Council Delivery Plan 2024	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement **Working in Partnership for Aberdeen**	The Council's Delivery Plan states that the Music Service continues to work to maximise uptake, establish a Music Centre and welcome families back to concerts to celebrate the musical skills of our pupils. This report reinforces this aim and furthers it by offering increased rehearsal and performance opportunities for pupils.
Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	This report supports the LOIP Key Driver 7.1 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.
Regional and City Strategies Regional and City Strategies	The universal provision of education is fully aligned to the Prevention Strategy and a key partner to the Children's Services Plan.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	N/A

10.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1   None

11.   APPENDICES

11.1   Appendix 1 - Music tuition pupil numbers broken down by school
         Appendix 2 – Regensburg Trip report

12.   REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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1. Appendix 1: Data about tuition at primary school and secondary level broken down by school

ASG	Name of school	Number of pupils learning in June 2025
Bridge of Don	Braehead School	45
	Bridge of Don Academy	66
	Scotstown	13
Bucksburn	Brimmond	33
	Bucksburn Academy	114
	Kingswells Primary	31
	Stoneywood Primary	32
Cults	Culter Primary	11
	Cults Academy	118
	Cults Primary	41
	Milltimber	27
Dyce	**Dyce Academy**	44
	Dyce Primary	38
Grammar	**Aberdeen Grammar**	110
	Ashley Road	111
	Gilcomstoun	6
	Mile End	53
	Skene Square Primary	9
	St Joseph's	40
Harlaw	Broomhill	27
	Ferryhill	53
	Hanover Street	3
	Harlaw Academy	51
	Kaimhill Primary	9
Hazlehead	Airyhall	49
	Countesswells	7
	Fernielea	34
	Hazlehead Academy	88
	Hazlehead Primary	47
Lochside	Abbotswell School	22
	Charleston Primary	18
	Greyhope	13
	Kirkhill	30
	Lochside Academy	57
	Loirston School	35
	Tullos Primary School	0
Northfield	Bramble Brae Primary	19
	Heathryburn Primary	27
	Holy Family RC School	35
	Kingsford	25

	Manor Park Primary	12
	Muirfield Primary	21
	Northfield Academy	28
	Quarryhill Primary	17
	Westpark Primary	32
Oldmachar	Danestone School	32
	Forehill School	16
	Glashieburn School	11
	Greenbrae	29
	Middleton Park	24
	Oldmachar Academy	88
St Machar	Cornhill Primary School	35
	Kittybrewster Primary School	4
	Riverbank School	26
	Seaton School	10
	St Machar Academy	46
	St Peter's	11
	Sunnybank School	29
	Woodside School	20
	Grand Total	**2082**

Notes:

1. The service continually monitors pupil numbers in all settings and actively seeks to improve numbers where they are lower. This includes targeted whole-class projects which have been found to increase pupil numbers after a year of implementation. Pupil numbers for whole-class projects are not included in the table above, however there are approximately 3000 children benefiting from these across the year.

2. In some settings there is extremely limited space available which restricts both the teaching time available and the instruments that can be offered.

3. Following dialogue with the Headteacher, there are currently no pupils learning in Tullos Primary School due to the limited time available for pupils to learn an instrument due to the pupil time commitment to the offer from Big Noise Torry.

4. There are over 2000 children currently on the Music Service waiting list for tuition.

5. Pupil numbers are impacted by staff timetabling as in order to maximise teaching time and reduce traveling time, the Service tries to ensure that staff are visiting a maximum of two settings per day.

6. Due to the influx in beginner learners following the Covid-19 pandemic, there are now many learners who have moved up to secondary school so staff have had to adjust their timetables in secondary settings to ensure that they can continue to receive lessons, and this can take time away from primary schools.

7. The service aims to offer the full range of instruments at secondary school, and this can mean in the larger Associated School Groups that tuition is more thinly spread across primary settings in terms of choice available.

Aberdeen City Council Music Service Fiddlers' Trip to Regensburg 2025

18th - 22nd June

Twin Partnership Celebration and Citizens Festival

Trip Overview

From 18th – 22nd June 2025, six students from Aberdeen City Instrumental Music Service were invited to perform in the city of Regensburg as part of the 70th Anniversary celebration of the twin city partnership, and as part of their Citizens Festival, 'Bürgerfest'. These students, who attend five different schools in Aberdeen (Oldmachar Academy, St Machar Academy, Dyce Academy, Bucksburn Academy and Aberdeen Grammar School)and attend Aberdeen City Music Service's Music Centre on a Saturday, rehearsed over two weekends before flying out to Germany to represent their schools, the Music Service and the City of Aberdeen.

The student fiddle players performed in four concerts during their time in Regensburg, including as part of the ceremony at Kurfürstenzimmer for the 70th Anniversary of the town twinning, the Jahninsel where they celebrated an evening of Bavarian-Scottish Music and dance, and multiple performances in the Citizen's Festival to hundreds of audience members. A student highlight was meeting the Student Council of Regensburg, where they were able to share cultural backgrounds and experiences.

Performances and events

Thursday afternoon

Celebration of anniversary followed by standing reception in the Rathausplatz (Old Town Hall), Kurfürstenzimmer.

The group performed three performance sets throughout the ceremony, learned more about the twin partnership from the Lord Mayor of Regensburg, Gertrud Maltz-Schwarzfischer, and Aberdeen City Councillor Radley, and met some students from the Von-Müller-Gymnasium Regensburg, who had travelled to Aberdeen earlier in the year.

During the reception, they were introduced to other Councillors and decision makers for the city of Regensburg, particularly those in History, Education and Culture. Please see pictures below.
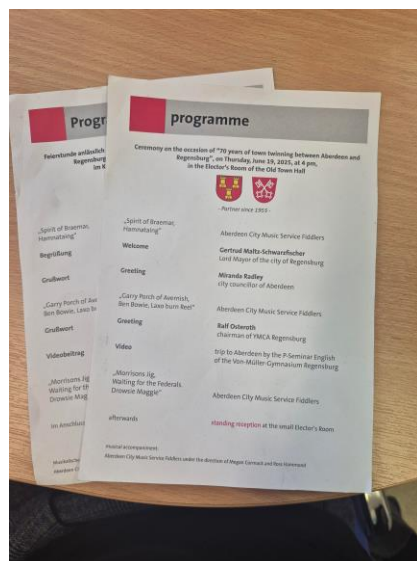
Thursday evening

Bavarian-Scottish evening of music at the Jahninsel.

This event, starting at 6.30 and not finishing until 11, celebrated the differences and similarities of the Scottish and Bavarian cultures. Jahninsel (in the middle of the Danube, accessible by the famous Stone Bridge) hosted the 'warm-up' to the Citizens Festival, with a festival stage, food trucks and an eager crowd to engage in dancing and celebrating the Twin Partnerships. The group were invited to listen to the local youth Wind and Brass Band, before accompanying a local Scottish Country Dance Group. We also learned several Bavarian dances, accompanied by a local Bavarian band led by a Councillor of the City of Regensburg. The students enjoyed performing on an open-air stage, teaching the locals Scottish dances and learning about the local traditions.

Friday morning
Boat Trip on the Danube to see 'Walhalla'
This historical excursion, included climbing 365 steps to see the
'Walhalla' memorial which houses the busts of important people in
German history.

Friday afternoon
Official opening ceremony of the Bürgerfest by Lord Mayor Gertrud
Maltz-Schwarzfischer at the Domplatz.
The group were invited as guests of the city to this event; this
included musical and dance performances by other twin city
partnerships – a youth dance group from Budavar, Budapest, and the
band 'Southern Ways' from Tempe, Arizona. Following a traditional
meal, the group took the opportunity to experience the festival with

many street stages showing differing cultural acts including dancing and music from twin cities from around the world, and a crane taking you above the city for a panoramic view at sunset.

Saturday morning
Official reception in the Imperial Chamber of the Old Town Hall, 'Reichssaal', by Lord Mayor Gertrud Maltz-Schwarzfischer followed by a buffet lunch.

It was a privilege for the group to be invited to this event, as the room is not open for public viewing. The group heard more about the importance of the twin partnership from both the Regensburg Lord Mayor and our Aberdeen City Delegate.

Saturday afternoon
Performances on the Citizen's Festival Thundorferstraße stages 'Wurstkuchl', and 'Schiffsanleger'.

The group performed for a total of 3 hours, in 30 degree heat on street stages in Regensburg. Their programme included traditional Scottish music, singing, and ceilidh dancing, encouraging onlookers to get involved and dance in the streets.

Saturday evening
The Aberdeen students were invited to meet members of the Regensburg Youth Council, who gave them a tour of the city, took them to enjoy Bavarian food and shared their cultural experiences.

Student Learning and Experience

Students were in control of the Music Service social media, working together to plan and create all updates that were posted throughout the trip.

'The thing I have taken away from this trip is how important the twin city partnership between Aberdeen and Regensburg really is'

'I learned about all the amazing work the Regensburg Youth Council does and how they really benefit their city.'

'I enjoyed teaching the ceilidh dances'

'I learned how to say a bunch of German phrases'

Parent/Carer Feedback

Parents were kept updated throughout the trip with a parent group chat, and a daily photo update.

Email saying that their child 'was extremely grateful to have been given this amazing opportunity with 5 others, and came back saying it had been one of the best times of her life'

'Lovely photos and lovely memories'

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	16 September 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Northfield Area Asset Review – Strategic Outline Business Case
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/216
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Stephen Booth
REPORT AUTHOR	Andrew Jones
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1, 1.1.2

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report presents a Strategic Outline Case, which summarises the findings of the recent Northfield Area Asset Review, and includes high level options for improving future primary and secondary education and potential consolidation of other assets in the Northfield area, to bring about improvements in the delivery of Council services to members of the Northfield community.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

    That the Committee:-

2.1 Notes the findings of the Northfield Area Asset Review as set out within the Strategic Outline Case at Appendix A of this report, and refers the document to the Finance and Resources Committee for approval;

2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to develop an Outline Business Case, to present detailed options and costings for the creation of new community campus facilities to serve the Northfield Area, which would support the delivery of the Family Support Model in Northfield, allow for the reduction of excess school capacity, and provide opportunities for the consolidation of existing Council buildings in Northfield; and

2.3 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to submit the completed Outline Business Case for approval to the budget setting process for 2026/27.

3. **CURRENT SITUATION**

3.1 A feasibility study was undertaken in 2023, focusing on the primary schools within Northfield and with the intention of identifying options for reducing excess pupil capacity within these. The feasibility study did not lead to any conclusive recommendations, and officers were instructed by the Education and Children's Services Committee in February 2024 to carry out further work to identify potential future options for primary school provision in Northfield, alongside a

review of the long term future for Northfield Academy, to provide solutions for removing any risks associated with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) known to be present within the building.

3.2 At its meeting of 17 September 2024, the Committee further instructed officers to widen the scope of the review to include all Council owned assets in the area, alongside the schools. This was to allow for a wider range of options to be considered, in terms of consolidating buildings and offering services in different ways, which would help to maximise the potential savings and improvements which could be achieved. The decision of the Committee was:

- *to agree that the aim and priority of the asset review in Northfield was to invest in the area and enhance community and learning provision locally and there would be no detrimental impact on services;*

- *to note that the Community Campus Model, approved by Committee in November 2021 was a community - based education model that ensured improved learning environments and opportunities for our children and young people;*

- *to note that the Family Support Model, approved by Committee in July 2024, aimed to empower residents, build trust and consistent relationships through support that was flexible and responsive to local needs;*

- *to agree that the Northfield Community asset review would encompass the principles of both the Community Campus Model and the Family Support Model to deliver services for our children and families in line with our commitment to drive targeted improvement in our SIMD1 quintiles;*

- *to agree that new purpose-built learning environments in Northfield would represent an appropriate opportunity to meet the inclusion needs of primary and secondary pupils;*

- *to agree the intended scope of the proposed asset review in Northfield to include all public assets, and instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to proceed with the review and to commence engagement with all partners working in the wider Northfield area;*

- *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 - Education and Lifelong Learning to work with the Northfield Advisory Group to invite and support their guidance in shaping improvements and outcomes*

3.3 In response to the above instruction, an area wide asset review was carried out between March and June 2025, which focused on all Council operational assets within the Middlefield, Mastrick, Cummings Park, Northfield, and Heathryfold

localities (collectively referred to within this report as 'the Northfield area'). This included education, sports, leisure, and community facilities, with the objective of identifying potential asset consolidation and enhancing Council services across the area.

3.4   The Strategic Outline Case, presented at Appendix A of this report, provides the findings of the asset review and sets out a number of high level options for improving and consolidating assets in the Northfield area.

3.5   In line with the Committee's September 2024 instruction noted above, the options presented within the Strategic Outline Case focus on opportunities to enhance community and learning provision, which follow the principles of the Community Campus Model and Family Support Model.

3.6   The Council's Community Campus model was approved by the former Education Operational Delivery Committee in November 2021, and aims to encourage the shared use of facilities by communities, to improve collaboration and integrated service delivery, and encourage more effective and efficient use of resources to meet a broader range of community needs at a single location. This approach supports delivery of multi-agency spaces, drives efficiency through the co-location of services, supporting the needs of a particular community, and has the potential to maximise opportunities for early intervention, in keeping with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

3.7   The high level options set out within the Strategic Outline Case at Appendix A therefore include opportunities for providing new primary and secondary education facilities in Northfield, which would support the principles of the Community Campus model. This would allow for some existing primary school provision to be consolidated, helping to reduce the excess capacity which exists within the primary schools, and provide solutions for removing RAAC at Northfield Academy. The options also give consideration to the possibility of improving the delivery of other Council services in Northfield, which could lead to the consolidation of other Council assets in the area.

3.8   The Family Support Model, approved by the Education and Children's Services Committee in July 2024, is intended to help tackle poverty and deprivation by improving wellbeing, increasing income and employability and reducing the cost of living for individuals and families, especially in priority areas such as Northfield. It focuses on building stronger communities and emphasises early intervention and prevention rather than just a crisis response. This approach recognises the importance of establishing a community space that is accessible without 'referral' and which provides an environment that is welcoming and trauma informed.

3.9   The Family Support Model is currently in development, and officers have identified an opportunity for the outcomes of the Northfield Asset Review to be linked to the development and rollout of the model, by including provision for a new type of community space within the options to be explored for Northfield. This would ensure that any new assets for providing education and wider community services in the Northfield area are planned and designed to facilitate the delivery of the model, for the benefit of the Northfield community.

3.10 It is recommended that officers are now instructed to develop an Outline Business Case, to further develop the high level options presented at Appendix A of this report. During the development of the Outline Business Case, further work would be undertaken to tie in with the emerging findings from the work on the Family Support Model, so that the options to be presented in the Outline Business Case include further details of how any proposed new assets could support the delivery of the Family Support Model. The Outline Business Case will also present more detailed cost estimates for the available options, to enable an affordability check and to assist the Committee in making a decision on preferred next steps.

3.11 The high level options within the Strategic Outline Case include the potential for the development of the existing Northfield Academy site and adjacent playing fields, for the provision of new community campus facilities. Desktop studies undertaken during the asset review have confirmed that this area of Northfield is a former quarry. There is therefore a risk of poor ground conditions, which could add significantly to the cost of any development, and also to delivery timescales. Officers propose to undertake detailed physical site investigations, during development of the Outline Business Case, so that the extent of this risk and likely cost implications can be fully understood, to support Elected Member decision making. Findings from the site investigations will be reported within the Outline Business Case.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The cost of developing the Outline Business Case and costs associated with site investigations will be met from existing budgets for delivery of the School Estate Plan.

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 This report outlines the approaches which could be taken to bring about positive impacts on the environment in the future, through proposing new build assets which would contribute to the Council's net zero carbon ambitions, and through ensuring improved resource efficiency by rationalising assets where appropriate.

6.2 All new build and refurbishment projects are compliant with the Council's Building Performance policy, and through the location and design of new buildings we will seek to promote active and sustainable travel to school.

6.3 Designing new assets for the future presents opportunities to make positive impacts on other aspects of the natural environment, including, for example, making space for nature through sustainable approaches to landscaping, avoiding over-use of synthetic materials in school grounds, and providing space for food growing initiatives. Officers will continue to work closely with colleagues in Environmental Planning when designing new and refurbished outdoor spaces, to ensure consideration is given to these important factors.

6.4 However it is also recognised that carrying out physical changes to the Council estate, such as removing surplus capacity or constructing new buildings, could potentially result in a negative impact on the environment, for example through disturbance to habitats and roosting animals, or affecting existing open spaces. Any such activity will be planned carefully to minimise any such negative impacts wherever possible.

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	(1) Failure to plan effectively for the school estate, leading to the Council being unable to fulfil its duty to make adequate and	1) The report sets out opportunities to ensure adequate and efficient provision is maintained (2) Any proposed changes to schools arising from the proposed Outline Business Case will incorporate full	L	Yes

		statutory consultation to ensure compliance with legislation		
	efficient provision (2) Failure to consult formally with stakeholders on changes to schools would be in breach of legislation			
Operational	Failure to engage and consult with communities on the future of the school estate which serves them, could lead to reputational damage for the Council.	Any proposed changes to existing assets and services arising from the proposed Outline Business Case will be subject to full community consultation prior to any final decisions being taken.	L	Yes
Financial	There is currently a high risk of poor ground conditions at the Northfield Academy site and adjacent playing fields which could add significant costs to the project.	Physical site investigations to be carried out during development of the Outline Business Case would ensure any risks can be fully identified and would allow mitigations to be put in place.	M	Yes
Reputational	Failure to engage and consult with communities on the future of the school estate which serves them, could lead to reputational damage for the Council.	Any proposed changes to existing assets and services arising from the proposed Outline Business Case will be subject to full community consultation prior to any final decisions being taken.	L	Yes

Environment / Climate	Development of new assets could lead to increased carbon emissions	Climate risks and the need for the estate to contribute to the Council's net zero carbon emissions targets will be embedded into planning and decision making.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement **Working in Partnership for Aberdeen**	The report supports the delivery of the following policy statements: A City of Opportunity 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 improving the school estate in Northfield. A Prosperous City Policy Statement 8 - Seek to buy goods, services and food locally whenever possible, subject to complying with the law and public tendering requirements. Opportunities to do this will be considered for any projects which are progressed as a result of the proposed Outline Business Case.
Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The report supports the delivery of Stretch Outcome 6 in the LOIP – children living in our priority neighbourhoods will sustain a positive destination on leaving school – proposals in this report will assist in improving education provision in Northfield.
Regional and City Strategies	The recommendations in the report support the delivery of the Council's Property and Estates Strategy.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	No other assessments required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Education and Children's Services Committee, 17 September 2024: Agenda Item 12: School Estate Plan Annual Update

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A: Northfield Area Asset Review Strategic Outline Case

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Corporate Project Management Toolkit

Strategic Outline Case

Project Name	Northfield Area Asset Review
Sponsoring Cluster	Corporate Landlord
Senior Responsible Officer	Stephen Booth

Gateway Review by Sponsoring Cluster			
The Sponsoring Cluster must confirm their support for the project and, crucially, have the resources necessary to deliver the project to conclusion.	Strategic Outline Case agreed	Yes ☒	No ☐
	Project scope modified – further options?	Yes ☐	No ☒
	Pilot exercise to test assumptions	Yes ☐	No ☒
	Postpone or abandon	Yes ☐	No ☒

Find further guidance in the ACC Project Management Toolkit online

The Strategic Outline Case template should be used for projects expected to cost over £250,000. For projects expected to cost up to £250,000, please use the Project Proposal template.

Contents

(F9 function key will update contents after completion of document – guidance here)

1. Project Overview

A detailed review of Council owned non-domestic assets within the Northfield area was undertaken between March and June 2025, to identify opportunities for consolidation of assets, to help reduce costs, and improve Council services to the area. This Strategic Outline Case presents the findings of that review and sets out options for bringing about improvements.

The asset review builds on a separate feasibility study undertaken in 2023, which focused on the primary schools within Northfield and the potential for reducing excess pupil capacity within these. The feasibility study did not lead to any conclusive recommendations, and officers were instructed by the Education and Children's Services ECS Committee in February 2024 to carry out further work to identify potential future options for primary school provision in Northfield, alongside a review of the long term future for Northfield Academy.

The 2025 asset review focused on all Council operational assets within the Middlefield, Mastrick, Cummings Park, Northfield, and Heathryfold localities (collectively referred to herein as 'the Northfield area') including education, sports, leisure, and community facilities, with the objective of identifying potential asset consolidation and enhancing Council services across the area. The review covered:

- Current asset utilisation and future service requirements
- Building running costs and annual maintenance costs
- Building condition and suitability (including backlog maintenance and ability to meet net zero ambitions)
- Opportunities for asset rationalisation, to better meet future service requirements and reduce overall costs
- Opportunities to deliver services in a more integrated way, for example by delivering a range of services from the same building
- Viability of progressing options in relation to required capital spend against revenue savings.

A map of the area to be reviewed along with a list of the assets reviewed is shown at **Appendix 1**.

This document sets out a number of high level options for improving and consolidating assets in the Northfield area, which have been informed by the findings of the asset review, and recommends that officers are instructed to develop these options further in an outline business case, which would identify a preferred option to be taken forwards.

2. Business Aims, Needs, Objectives and Constraints

The Sponsoring Organisation for this project is Corporate Landlord.

By identifying the options for improving buildings and services and potentially consolidating assets within the Northfield area, the project will support the delivery of Stretch Outcomes detailed in the LOIP:

- No 3 in the LOIP – addressing that 95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones. By supporting young peoples physical, mental and emotional health & wellbeing through improving access to services.
- No 5 in the LOIP – Our care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers. By improving the quality of the buildings and combining multiple services this will increase access to the services available in the community.
- No13 in the LOIP – Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate. Reducing the

number of operational buildings within the area and particularly removing older buildings which are less efficient to run, will help to reduce the overall carbon emissions from the estate.

The project supports the overall delivery of the School Estate Plan, approved by Committee in September 2022. In turn the School Estate Plan acts as a strategic implementation plan for the Council's Property and Estates Strategy.

Implementing the actions from the School Estate Plan as instructed by Committee will help to ensure that the school estate is effectively managed and can continue to support and contribute to the delivery of high quality services for children and young people, and for wider school communities.

To address the Strategic Priorities above, the review has explored various options, from a minimal approach with limited benefits, to a full community campus solution with potentially substantial advantages for the community and partners. More detailed information can be found in Section 5.

School Capacity in Northfield
Certain primary schools within the Northfield Associated Schools Group (ASG) are located in close proximity to each other, including Bramble Brae and Manor Park Schools, which are less than one mile apart. Pupil numbers at Bramble Brae School are expected to fall to 42% of its capacity by 2032 and the roll at Muirfield School is predicted to fall to as low as 32% of its available capacity within that timescale. Pupil numbers at Northfield Academy are expected to remain at or around 80% of the school's capacity for the foreseeable future.

In light of the forecast decline in primary pupil numbers, there is a requirement to consider the options for reducing the excess primary school capacity in the Northfield ASG, to help ensure that pupil rolls at the schools in this area can be maintained at sustainable levels in the medium to long term.

Northfield Academy
At Northfield Academy, Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) has been found to be present within the roof structure in various locations around the school site. Although there were no immediate safety concerns reported by the specialist engineers who inspected and tested the roof panels in the school, this will require to be reviewed on a regular basis and could require more intrusive work in the future leading to unplanned closure.

Asset Review
In light of the above, officers were instructed by the ECS Committee in February 2024 to carry out further work to identify potential future options for improving and consolidating primary school provision in Northfield, alongside a review of the long term future of Northfield Academy to provide solutions for removing any risks associated with the RAAC in the building.

In September 2024, the ECS Committee further instructed officers to widen the scope of the review to include all Council owned assets in the area, alongside the schools. This was to allow for a wider range of options to be considered, in terms of consolidating buildings and offering services in different ways, which will help to maximise the potential savings and improvements which could be achieved. The Committee instruction emphasised the need for the review to encompass the principles of the Council's Community Campus and Family Support models.

The options described in Section 5 below therefore focus on the potential for consolidating existing primary school provision, to reduce excess capacity, and for providing solutions for removing RAAC at Northfield Academy. The options also give consideration to the possibility of improving the delivery of other Council services in Northfield, which could lead to the consolidation of other, non-education assets in the area.

Community Campus Model
A key focus of the Council's Community Campus model is to encourage the shared use of facilities by communities, to improve collaboration and integrated service delivery, and encourage more effective and efficient use of resources to meet a broader range of community needs at a single location. This approach supports delivery of multi-agency spaces, drives efficiency through the co-location of services, supporting the needs of a particular community, and has the potential to maximise opportunities for early intervention, in keeping with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

By proposing solutions for Northfield which follow the principles of the Community Campus model, this project provides an opportunity to deliver significant and valuable improvements for the Northfield community, not only in terms of providing quality education facilities, but also in improving access to a wide range of local services to support the community as a whole.

Family Support Model
The Family Support Model, which has been developed over the past year by the Fairer Futures Partnership and with the Northfield community as an initial test site, aims to shift the focus from reactive and risk-based services to upstream and preventative approaches. The model was based in part on the findings of the Scottish Government's Independent Care Review (2020) which highlighted the importance of partnership working, shared culture and leadership, holistic and person-centred practice, and locality-based service delivery.

The intention is for the Family Support Model to help tackle poverty and deprivation by improving wellbeing, increasing income and employability and reducing the cost of living for individuals and families, especially in priority areas such as Northfield. It focuses on building stronger communities and emphasises early intervention and prevention rather than just a crisis response. This new approach recognises the importance of establishing a community space that is accessible without 'referral' and which provides an environment that is welcoming and trauma informed.

The options for improving assets within Northfield which are set out below provide an opportunity to support the further development and rollout of the Family Support model, by providing spaces within buildings which are designed to be used flexibly to deliver a variety of key services in different ways to support the above principles, which also link well with the principles of the Community Campus model.

For example there is scope to include a community library function within any new build development, and expand access to community sports facilities.   In addition and depending on service requirements there could be the opportunity to provide office accommodation or customer contact space for Health and Social Care. The project provides an opportunity to work collaboratively with the Fairer Futures Partnership to provide facilities which can effectively deliver the Family Support Model in Northfield.

The asset review was limited to non-residential, operational properties only within the review area – as defined within the map and assets list at **Appendix 1** of this document.

Given the linkages with the separate and ongoing work around the Family Support Model described above, at this stage of the project it has not been possible to define in detail the types of community services which would be provided within a new Community Campus, and therefore which of the existing non-education assets in Northfield could potentially be consolidated. It will be necessary to wait for the Fairer Futures Partnership to conclude its work, and consideration could then be given to how a Community Campus in Northfield could support any recommendations from the Partnership on the future use of assets for service delivery in Northfield. At this stage the high level options presented in Section 5 below include an allocation of space to be used for the delivery of community services. More detail on this, including the identification of any existing assets which could be consolidated as a result, will be provided in the proposed Outline Business Case.

The Local Development Plan highlights new housing at Greenferns and potential brownfield development at Granitehill. This was taken into account as part of the asset review, and the proposed options outlined below have been developed to ensure sufficient school capacity will be available to meet demand from future new housing in the area.

There is currently no budget allocation within the Council's capital programme to support the construction of any new assets in Northfield. The identified options which involve new construction projects are therefore subject to the identification of appropriate funding sources to deliver them.

In terms of location for a suitable development, a number of sites in ACC ownership have been explored for a potential community campus solution, to include the existing Northfield Academy site and surrounding Cummings Park area, together with the development land at Greenferns Farm. Each of the sites is likely to have planning restrictions and will require a strategy to mitigate the loss of green space and / or future housing allocation.

3. Stakeholder Issues

There are several stakeholder groups who will have an interest in the outcomes of the wider assets review, including people who live in Northfield, parents of all pupils attending the schools, local elected members, MPs and MSPs, community councils, Health & Social Care and also the staff and pupils within the ACC owned and operated assets.

A questionnaire for building managers was developed to ascertain the core data required to determine the suitability, accessibility, conditionality, energy performance and utilisation rating of the assets in scope. In addition, one to one interviews were conducted with the Health & Social Care team, the Fairer Futures Team with input from the Communities Team and partners such as Police Scotland and NHS Grampian. The output of this information is included in **Appendix 2,** and rated to highlight the buildings which are likely to require intervention in the near future. This exercise has highlighted that 16 properties may require capital intervention in the near future to maintain the property and deliver the service.

The consultation was conducted with responses from 28 service lines and followed up with one to one interviews, where further information was required:

1. Children & Families Team
2. Communities Team
3. Libraries Team
4. NHS Grampian (Partnership Team)
5. Fairer Futures Team
6. Sport Aberdeen

Initial consultation has been progressed with the Health & Social Care Partnership and also Police Scotland to determine if there is a requirement for accommodation, and this will be dependent on their own reviews of services in this location.

In addition to the above the Community Planning Team are updating the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and have completed consultation through the Your Place; Your Plans; Your Futures initiative, which will provide additional input into the community aspirations for the North area of the city.

Sport Aberdeen are currently undertaking a review of all of their operational assets in the city, which may have future implications for the sports facilities in Northfield; any relevant findings or recommendations from that review will be accounted for within the proposed Outline Business Case.

With regard to the education estate, The School Estate Plan sets out a commitment to engage with all stakeholder groups from an early stage, so that views and feedback about the available options can be gathered and considered prior to any decisions being taken.

Any recommendations to close schools or change the arrangements for primary school provision will also require formal statutory public consultation, before any final decisions on making changes can be taken.

4. Management and Implementation

The project will be led by Corporate Landlord with support from Hub North Scotland.

Strategic and technical support for developing the feasibility studies will be provided by the Design Team within the Capital cluster. Consultancy Support is likely to be required, particularly to provide specialist engineering and ground investigation to inform the development of the outline business case.

5. Consideration of Options

In order to meet the Strategic Priorities listed above, a series of options have been explored below with the benefits and disbenefits detailed.

Option 1: Do Nothing

Description:

Continue with current maintenance / inspections of roof structure at Northfield Academy. No consolidation of assets in Northfield.

Benefits:

1. Limited capital required
2. Limited disruption (until any unplanned closure)

Disbenefits:

1. Ongoing revenue implications
2. Potential unplanned closure of school
3. No benefit for community or new campus facility
4. Does not mitigate backlog maintenance
5. Does not positively impact energy usage
6. Does not address RAAC removal from estate

7. Does not allow for any consolidation of the primary estate or non-education assets, and cost savings that are associated with this.

Option 2: Do Minimum / Health & Safety Works at Northfield Academy

Description:

Carry out minimum works necessary at Northfield Academy to make existing building structurally sound (i.e. address RAAC). No consolidation of assets in Northfield.

Benefits:

1. Limited capital required
2. Limited disruption
3. Removes RAAC from estate

Disbenefits:

1. Limited lifespan of the Northfield Academy building - will require replacement in future.
2. No benefit for community facility
3. Does not mitigate backlog maintenance
4. Does not positively impact energy usage
8. Does not allow for any consolidation of the primary estate or non-education assets, and cost savings that are associated with this.

Option 3: Consolidation of primary school capacity and enhancement of Northfield Campus

Description:

Upgrade Northfield Academy (with extension) to provide 1,000 secondary places, new build two or three-stream primary school and community space on Northfield site, to consolidate existing assets. Community provision to align with the Family Support model – further detail to be added at OBC stage.

Benefits:
1. Develops a part education campus on a shared site with access to shared leisure facilities
2. Allows consolidation of primary estate and non-education buildings, and reuse or disposal of surplus sites.
3. Removes RAAC from estate
4. Improves Condition / Suitability of existing Northfield Academy
5. Potentially reduces energy use of existing Northfield Academy and improves thermal performance

Disbenefits:
1. Limits benefits of joint / combined spaces and the efficiencies that go with developing a joint campus and shared communal spaces.
2. Limited lifespan of the existing Northfield Academy building - will require replacement at some point in the future.
3. No cost saving by developing in one phase. By developing in stages any benefit (shared prelims / groundworks / mobilisation) will be lost.
4. Will require full or phased decant of pupils and disruption during construction
5. Will require temporary decant facilities therefore further cost implications.

Option 4: Consolidation of existing assets and new Community Campus on a single site

Description:

Replacement Northfield Academy, consolidated primary school provision and consolidated and improved delivery of and access to community services, in a single campus location. Community provision to align with the Family Support model – further detail to be added at OBC stage.

Benefits:
1. Develops a shared community campus on a single site
2. Allows consolidation of primary estate and non-education buildings. and reuse or disposal of surplus sites. Reduces revenue costs for multiple dated buildings.
3. Removes RAAC from estate
4. Potential reduction in overall floorspace / shared communal facilities. Potentially reduces overall development costs.
5. Improves thermal efficiency of existing assets
6. Depending on preferred site, could limit disruption / decant for pupils.
7. Provide the opportunity for other ACC service lines to co-locate and potentially reuse part of the existing Northfield Estate. Potential for NHSG / H&SC to reuse space.
8. Ensures condition / suitability of education assets is A rated
9. Removes backlog maintenance liability

Disbenefits:
1. Significant capital cost
2. Could be a number of years before the benefits are realised
3. Loss of greenspace

Option 5: Consolidation of existing assets with new secondary and primary school provision on separate sites

Description:

New two or three stream primary school and replacement Northfield Academy on separates sites. Improved delivery of and access to community services to align with the Family Support model – further detail to be added at OBC stage.

Benefits:
1. Improves education / community facilities in multiple locations within Northfield area
2. Allows consolidation of existing assets and reuse of buildings or disposal of surplus sites. Reduces revenue costs for multiple dated buildings.
3. Provides opportunities to form a community campus with existing primary schools adjacent to the secondary school site
4. Removes RAAC from estate
5. Improves thermal efficiency of existing assets
6. Would limit disruption / decant for pupils.
7. Provide the opportunity for other ACC service lines to co-locate and potentially reuse part of the existing Northfield Estate. Potential for NHSG / H&SC to reuse space.
8. Ensures condition / suitability of the education estate is A rated
9. Removes backlog maintenance liability

Disbenefits:
1. Likely to be highest requirement for capital as limited benefit for shared site works
2. Could be a number of years before the benefits are realised
3. Potentially additional travel time for access to leisure facilities

Recommendation

It is recommended that officers are instructed to develop an Outline Business Case (OBC) to explore the above options further, and for the completed Outline Business Case to be included within the budget setting process for 2026/27.

Programme

An indicative programme has been drafted, which details the governance process and committee schedules below:

- SOC to be presented to ECS Committee September 2025 and F&R Committee November 2025, setting out high level options for improving assets in Northfield, based on findings of the asset review

- Seek approval from Committee and instruction to develop an Outline Business Case (commencing September 2025) to add more detail to the options, carry out site investigations and to identify a preferred option

- OBC to be presented by March 2026 (budget setting)

- OBC to identify preferred option, to seek approval of funding in capital programme, and an instruction to proceed with design development

6. Costs, Benefits and Risks

Due to the scope of this project at this strategic stage, the projects will require more detailed information to provide project budgets. Due to the nature of the buildings and their condition, a detailed building survey will be required for each of the primary and secondary schools included in the project scope.

Financial savings will be expected from any consolidation of primary schools into a single location / campus and the saving on ongoing / planned and future maintenance requirements, which will be defined through the building condition surveys.

In terms of budget for new build facilities and utilising information available through similar projects a budget estimate has been provided for the following:

New build development options utilising campus approach or a split site - £120m to £180m

The above makes limited allowances for site conditions / abnormals, inflation and programme, which will be provided through the business case process.

The OBC may identify opportunities for consolidating buildings, which will ultimately help to reduce any inefficiencies associated with the current condition and utilisation of assets and reduce the overall cost of running the estate. It also has the potential to bring about improvements to service delivery, through achieving efficiencies in the deployment of staff and resources across a smaller number of buildings.

Depending on the options there will likely be opportunities to explore indirect benefits with partners such as NHS / Health & Social Care to either repurpose existing structures or utilise space within a new build development.

Removing older, inefficient buildings will also help to contribute to the Council's net-zero carbon ambitions.

The project is unfunded and any options are likely to have capital cost implications. Appropriate funding will need to be identified to allow any preferred option to be taken forwards.

Desktop studies undertaken during the asset review have confirmed that the existing Northfield Academy site and adjacent playing fields were formed on a former quarry site. There is therefore a risk of poor ground conditions, which could add significantly to the cost of any development, and also to delivery timescales. As part of the development process to be explored through the OBC, it is anticipated to carry out detailed site investigation work to minimise risks associated with the sites.

7. Operational Carbon Impact

The Northfield asset review considers the rationalisation of a number of primary and secondary school assets in the area together with community facilities. Northfield Academy is central to the asset review with proposal being assessed for a decommission and rebuild or a refurbishment and expansion of the existing footprint.

As part of this Strategic Outline Case the current operational carbon impact has been considered to present an overview of the current and expected future emissions of Northfield Academy under its current operation.

Energy use intensity factors have been calculated to rationalise the current building's operational efficiency against other similar assets. These benchmarks have been calculated using CIBSE industry recognised benchmarks and incorporate annual building energy consumption. The next step of analysis will seek to use available data to assess how different energy efficiency measures might impact the building's operation and carbon footprint. Further analysis is needed of the proposed scenarios to support an operational carbon comparison.

It should be noted that benchmarking has been carried out on the other public assets in the Northfield area however, focus has been given to Northfield Academy due to its prevalence in the asset review and that it is the single largest gas consumer in the area and has the largest carbon footprint of any of the Council's assets in the area. Other school assets have been shown to follow a similar trend so considerations for energy and refurbishment options are considered to be common to both.

Further detail on the likely carbon impact of this project will be provided in the Outline Business Case.

8. Funding and Affordability

Development of OBC will need input from the consultancy team and would likely be in the region of £150,000

In addition there will be costs associated with Site Investigation, which are likely to be in the region of £150,000

These costs will be met from existing budgets for the delivery of the School Estate Plan.

9. Assumptions

Budget estimates provided in this document include high level assumptions on:

- School Roll Projections

- Design Development Risk

- Post Contract Risk

- Main Contractors Margin

- Design Team Fees

- Survey Costs

- Inflation in Construction Costs throughout project period to Q1 xxxxxx

- Allowance for preliminaries

- Ground condition risk

These will be further explored during development of the Outline Business Case.

10. Support Services Consulted

Service	Consultee	Comments	Date
City Regeneration and Environment	Chief Officer, Capital AlanMcKay@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
City Regeneration and Environment	Chief Officer, City Development and Regeneration jrichardswood@aberdeencity.gov.uk	Comments provided	04/08/25
Communications	David Ewen, Communication and Marketing Manager DaEwen@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Corporate Services	Chief Officer, Finance jbelford@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Corporate Services	Jade Leyden, Locality Planning & Community Development Manager jleyden@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Design – Public Buildings	Ian Flett, Senior Architect IaFlett@aberdeencity.gov.uk	No comments at this stage	05/08/25
Emergency Planning Officer	Fiona Mann FioMann@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Families and Communities	Chief Officer, Corporate Landlord stbooth@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Families and Communities	Chief Officer, Education & Lifelong Learning shmilne@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Families and Communities	Guch Dillon, Fairer Futures Partnership Lead gdhillon@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Families and Communities (Asset Management)	Andrew Jones, Service Manager ajones@aberdeencity.gov.uk		

Service	Consultee	Comments	Date
Finance	Scott Paterson, Finance Partner spaterson@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Fleet (if your project has fleet implications)	John Weir, Fleet Manager jweir@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Governance	Chief Officer, Governance jelawson@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Grounds Maintenance	Steven Shaw, Environmental Manager stevens@aberdeencity.gov.uk	No comments.	05/08/25
ICT – Digital and Technology	Steve Robertson, Service Manager, Engineering and Operations sterobertson@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Legal (Commercial and Procurement)	Michele Pittendreigh, Team Leader MPittendreigh@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Legal (Property/ Planning and Environment)	Ross Campbell roscampbell@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Operations	Chief Officer, Operations mareilly@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Operations (Facilities)	Andy Campbell, Facilities Manager AnCampbell@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
People and Citizen Service	Linsey Blackhurst, Organisation, Change & Design Lead (Interim) lblackhurst@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Procurement	Gillian Ross giross@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Programme Management Office (PMO)	PMO Programme Manager RMacTaggart@aberdeencity.gov.uk	No comment at this stage	5/08/2025
Roads Management	Stuart Allan, Team Leader Technical StuAllan@aberdeencity.gov.uk Vycki Ritson, Team Leader Engineering vritson@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Roads Projects	Stuart Andrew, Senior Engineer standrew@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Strategic Place Planning	Chief Officer, Strategic Place Planning DDunne@aberdeencity.gov.uk		

Service	Consultee	Comments	Date
Climate and Environment Policy	EPConsultations@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Equalities Team	equality_and_diversity@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Estates	Property Estates Manager		

Service	Consultee	Comments	Date
	Estates@aberdeencity.gov.uk		
Planning	Local Development Plan Team LDP@aberdeencity.gov.uk Development Management PI@aberdeencity.gov.uk	Comments provided	06/08/25
Transportation Strategy and Programmes	transportstrategy@aberdeencity.gov.uk	No comments	08/08/25

11. Decision by Capital Board	Date
*Approved/Not Approved to prepare an Outline Business Case.	

*indicate whether approved, as well as any additional stipulations.

12. Document Revision History			
Version	Reason	By	Date
1.0	First Draft SOC for Consultation	MW/AJ	04/08/25
1.1	Updated draft submitted with Director Draft committee report	AJ	12/08/25
1.2	Final Draft submitted for Committee	AJ	03/09/25

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Middlefield, Mastrick, Cummings Park, Northfield & Heathryfold Asset Plan

Newton of Auchmill Depot
Newton Farmhouse

Auchmill Golf Course

Auchmill Golf Clubhouse

Elevation of Auchmill Depot

Manor Drive Carpark

Future Development Land

247 Heathryfold Circle

Middlefield Community Project
Heathryhouse

Manor Park School

Bucksburn Farm

Northfield Depot
(closed surplus)

Cummings Park Community Flat

Heathryburn School

Future Development Land

Aberdeen Treasure Hub

Granitehill Enterprise Centre

Smithfield Garages

Greenferns Farm Woodland

Greenferns Farm

Orchard Brae School

Northfield Library
(closed surplus)

Northfield Community Centre

Marchburn Childrens Home

Byron Square Carpark

Bramble Brae School

Cummings Park Nursery

Cummings Park Community Centre

Pharmacy
Byron Square Shop Units

Quarry Centre

Pharmacy

Buscksburn Farm

Westerton School Lodge

Westpark School

Northfield Swimming Pool
Northfield Youth Hub

Northfield Outdoor Sports Centre

Northfield Academy Lodge

Greenferns Farm

Northfield Academy

233 Birkhall Parade

Quarryhill School Lodge

Kingswood Day Centre

Quarryhill School

Stocket Parade Hostel

11 Craigandarroch Place

Mastrick Depot

Mastrick Housing Office

Mastrick Community Centre
Mastrick Library

Mastrick Social Work Office

Police Scotland

Pharmacy

Scout Hut

Len Ironside Centre

Muirfield School Lodge

Williamson Family Centre

Hillylands Bon Accord Care
Muirfield School

OT Store
Records Storage Facility

Scout Hut

Future Development Land
(surplus)

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Property / Address	Condition Rating	Suitability Rating	Access	EPC*	Utilisation Rating	Notes
Northfield Academy Granitehill Place Northfield Aberdeen AB16 7AU	B	C		E	50-75%	
Mastrick Community Centre Greenfern Road Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6TR	B	A	C	?	50-75%	Citizens advice, aa, alcohol and drugs action and social security Scotland, for help with all Scottish benefits. Councillor surgeries. Leased community asset - 10 years - likely 2032 expiry. New Take away Coffee pod / possible lottery funded.
Northfield Community Centre Byron Square Northfield Aberdeen AB16 7LL	B	B	B	E+	50-75%	Community volunteers. childrens club, bingo, lunch group, foodbank, Andys man club, byron boxing, salsa dancing, browies & rainbows, a.a.&da, aa, pathways, befriend a child,private lets on an adhock times. birthday parties, kids discos, youth pool, darts foozeball session. c.a.b. art club. Leased community asset - 10 years - likely 2032 expiry. interest from community (all life changes) for community asset transfer.
Cummings Park Learning Centre Cummings Park Crescent Northfield Aberdeen AB16 7AR	B	B	B	G	50-75%	AHSCP, Schools, Sport Aberdeen, Ranger Services, Unpaid Work Team
Cummings Park Community Flat 122 Cummings Park Drive Northfield Aberdeen AB16 7BB	B	A	D	n/a	50-75%	Groups, classes and one to one session. Agencies include SAFE, Pathways, Adult Learning, SCS, councillors, Intergeneration group (Heatheryburn School), boys brigade, craft for kids, well being for adults and a church service on a Sunday is provided by our partner agency. 14 volunteers support the flat.
The Quarry Centre 35 Cummings Park Crescent Aberdeen AB16 7AS	B	B	B	E+	75-99%	Property performing well on paper. Number of condition and suitability issues raised which are impacting on service delivery. Opportunity for partial co-location
Williamson Family Centre Mastrick Close Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6XZ	A	A	B	F	100%	Williamson is a critical Social Work Hub for Children's Social Work across the city. 155 - 165 people per month (visitors) 30 Staff based here. 20 workstations
Mastrick Area Social Work Office Greenfern Road Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6SH	B	A	B	?	75-99%	Multi agency work being undertaken and conference room utilised for this. Would consider co-location however, would need careful planning / set up due to sensitivities. Location critical. Access to service can be fraught with challenges. Secure safe facility required to protect staff from difficult situations. Used as a hub for staff to return too during the day. Frequent support required from Police. Very location specific and provides locality support for the families in area. Difficult to co-locate with other services, however, community / library space could be used if ever available. 40 FTE staff. 50 workstations.
Mastrick Housing Office Spey Road Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6SF	B	B	B	D+	75-99%	Housing & Support Locality Services. Following the closure of the Northfield Works Depot, the team also work from this base. The building is open to the public from 9am-1pm each working day. 30 staff work from this office. Co location already in place with Northfield Works depot staff. Regular public access required.
Mastrick Library Greenfern Road Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6TR	B	B	B	G	50-75%	Feedback from Libraries Team - Future Library Model - under development. Consider co-location / community hub model. Require mix of spaces / open / private / 1 to 1 / club space / internet / point of access for services. A shared space or building will need access managed to save any antisocial behaviour in shared public access spaces. Consider a co located service for Northfield. people access Library often to access services in times of crisis. Signposting.
Community Equipment OT Store Unit C/D Whitemyres Avenue Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6HQ	B	B	B	n/a	100%	Property has previously been flagged by service with number of condition and suitability issues, opportunities for co-location. The Joint Equipment Service provides equipment to support residents of Aberdeen City on behalf of ACC, ACHSCP and NHSG. The community alarm and telecare service is also part of this service providing community alarm and telecare to 2500 people across Aberdeen City. 43 Staff and 25 workstations
Hillylands - Community Special Needs 2 Croft Road Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6RB	B	A	B	n/a	75-95%	Staff Welfare facilities - only 3 toilets available for a building capacity of 50+ during courses. Upgrade of heating system and air conditioning Installation of electrical sockets in proximity to desks Refurbish existing toilets to increase capacity Upgrade WiFi to fit for purpose system. Limited collaborative opportunity.
Westpark School (formerly Westerton) Cruden Crescent Northfield Aberdeen AB16 7JD	B	B		E+	55%	To be reviewed as part of Education Estate - poor utilisation and EPC
Muirfield School Mastrick Drive Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 6UE	B	B		D+	50%	To be reviewed as part of Education Estate - poor utilisation and EPC
Quarryhill Primary School Birkhall Parade Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 5QT	B	C		D+	71%	To be reviewed as part of Education Estate - poor utilisation and EPC
Bramble Brae Primary School Cummings Park Drive Aberdeen AB16 7BL	B	B		F+	58%	To be reviewed as part of Education Estate - poor utilisation and EPC
Depot Cairnwell Drive Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 5ND	B	B	n/a	n/a	75-99%	Remove from scope of this project, property to be considered as wider Depot Review. Requires increase in EV charging points. Otherwise suitable. Do office staff need to be based here?
Northfield Outdoor Sports Centre Provost Fraser Drive Northfield Aberdeen AB16 5TL	B	B	B	n/a	n/a	Pavillion (Closed) in poor condition - depending on option for Northfield Academy site option to provide improved changing facilities
(Quarryhill School Lodge) 55 Birkhall Parade Mastrick AB16 5QT						This may have to be reviewed depending on outcome of school site
Muirfield School Lodge, Mastrick Drive, AB16 6UE						This may have to be reviewed depending on outcome of school site
Northfield Academy Lodge, Granitehill Place, Northfield, AB16 7NW						This may have to be reviewed depending on outcome of school site
Westerton School Lodge, Cruden Crescent, Aberdeen, AB16 7JD						This may have to be reviewed depending on outcome of school site
Len Ironside Centre Mastrick Drive Aberdeen AB16 6UE	A	A	Modern Standards - assumed accessible	n/a	100%	Performing well in all categories. Co location with NHS / Community Learning Disability Team. Building well utilised. Some investment in changing facilities / EV and car parking.
Day Care Centre Kingswood Court Invercauld Road Aberdeen AB16 5RX	A	A	A	n/a	75-90%	Performing well in all categories. This part of the Kingswood Court complex is used as a day care centre for vulnerable adults. 5 staff 4 Workstations. Offices, Hairdressing Salon. large open plan area for activities, kitchen. open Mon - Friday. Well utilised facility during week. Could community use during weekend?
Marchburn Childrens Home 8 Marchburn Road Aberdeen AB16 7NN	A	B	n/a	n/a	75-99%	Performing well in all categories. To provide a statutory residential care service to children in need of care and protection. City wide service. Service requirement may reduce over time. Up to 20 FTE. Residential care - no collaborative opportunities.

Property						Comments
Northfield Swimming Pool & Fitness Centre Kettlehills Crescent Northfield Aberdeen AB16 5PL	A	A	Modern Standards - assumed accessible	B	50-75%	Recently refurbished, performing well. Some challenges to running the service. Physical and building related. There is scope to increase collaboration with the Health Partnership given they are in the building regularly.
Stocket Parade Hostel 16 Stocket Parade Aberdeen AB16 5QN	B	A	n/a	n/a	100%	Performing well in all categories. Housing Support services for 18 Adults with a Learning disability. They all have ACC occupancy agreements for their homes. Stocket Parade is regulated by the Care Inspectorate and some buildings have HMO licences. 23 staff are employed by ACHSCP to provide 24 hour support for the adults. Residential care - no collaborative opportunities.
House 11 Craigendarroch Place Aberdeen AB16 5SE	B	A	n/a	n/a	100%	Performing well in all categories. This is a 3 bedroomed house, it provides accommodation for 1 client with a Learning disability. Registered for 3 clients. Single care housing facility. No collaborative opportunities.
House 233 Birkhall Parade 233 Birkhall Parade Mastrick Aberdeen AB16 5QT	B	B	n/a	n/a	100%	Performing well in all categories
Aberdeen Treasure Hub Granitehill Road Aberdeen AB16 7AX	A	A	A	n/a	25-50% (office)	Performing well in all categories, utilisation relates to office only therefore scope to look at co-location. Purpose built secure facility. Occupancy is low. Consider increase with ACC Staff or community use in controlled areas. Will require investment.
Records Storage Facility Unit A Whitemyres Avenue Mastrick Industrial Estate Aberdeen City AB16 6HQ	B	A	n/a	n/a	25%	Performing well in all categories, utilisation relates to office only. Leased until 2034. Very suitable for function. No staff based there and no public access. Any possibility to incorporate into Archive Storage?
Social Care & Wellbeing Records Store Unit B Whitemyres Avenue Mastrick Industrial Estate Aberdeen AB16 6HQ	B	A	n/a	n/a	100%	Performing well in all categories. Leased until 2034. Warehouse used for Accession & Storage of Social Work Client paper files in line with Corporate Retention Schedules. Office area 3 FTE for management of Unit 2 (Social Care & Wellbeing Records Store, Whitemyres) & Unit 1 (Corporate Records Store, Whitemyers)Office area also used by 2 FTE (IT Support Analysts Networks) & 2 FTE (IT Support Analysts Education) as Base for Hybrid working on networks and Education Establishments.
Orchard Brae School Howes Road Aberdeen AB16 7RW	A	A	Modern Standards - assumed accessible		?	Performing well in all categories
Cummings Park Nursery Cumming Park Crescent Aberdeen AB16 7AS	A	A	Modern Standards - assumed accessible		?	Performing well in all categories
Heathryburn Primary School Davidson Drive Aberdeen AB16 7FQ	A	A		B	104%	To be reviewed as part of Education Estate - although performing well in all categories
Manor Park School Danestone Circle Northfield Aberdeen AB16 7YB	A	A	Modern Standards - assumed accessible	B	81%	To be reviewed as part of Education Estate - although performing well in all categories
Middlefield Community Project Lord Provost Henry E Rae Community Centre Manor Avenue Aberdeen AB16 7UR	B	A	A	B	100%	To be reviewed as part of Education Estate - although performing well in all categories

*Key to EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) Ratings:

A: Outstanding energy efficiency, requiring minimal energy to operate.
B: Very efficient; minor upgrades could push it to an A.
C: Above average; often seen in modern, well-designed buildings.
D: Average efficiency; improvements may be necessary to enhance performance.
E: Below average; upgrades will likely be needed to reduce operating costs.
F: Poor efficiency, indicating high energy consumption and expenses.
G: Very inefficient; urgent improvements are required to comply with regulations and reduce

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	16 September 2025
EXEMPT	No, but Appendix C is exempt under Paragraph 8: *Estimated expenditure on Contracts.* 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	School Estate Plan Annual Update 2025
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/213
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Stephen Booth
REPORT AUTHOR	Andrew Jones
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report presents the 2025 annual update to the School Estate Plan, providing information on progress with implementation of the Plan, and highlighting new priorities which have emerged over the last year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

2.1 Notes the updates to the Action Plan which are provided at Appendix A of this report;

2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to continue to implement the School Estate Action Plan in accordance with the updated Long Term Programme, presented within Appendix B of this report;

2.3 Refers the capital and revenue cost implications of the updated Action Plan and Programme, as shown at Appendix C of this report, to the budget setting process for 2026/27;

2.4 Instructs the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to carry out an options appraisal to determine any required interim arrangements for establishing the proposed new school at Bucksburn/Newhills, and to include the cost implications of any such arrangements in the budget setting process for 2026/27, with a view to the arrangements being included within the proposals for the forthcoming statutory public consultation on the new school.

2.5   Instructs the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to undertake a feasibility study to investigate options for the establishment of a new primary school to serve Grandhome, including any required interim arrangements, and to report the findings of the feasibility study in an Outline Business Case, in line with the timescales outlined in the Long Term Programme at Appendix B of this report; and

2.6   Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to further develop proposals and timescales for future ASG based asset reviews, and to build these in to future updates of the School Estate Plan.

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 officers 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*". This report provides the annual update to the School Estate Plan for 2025.

3.2   The report provides information on progress to date with the actions and instructions which have been agreed within the School Estate Plan, and highlights further priorities for action which have been identified during the course of the last year. The full School Estate Plan, approved in September 2022, can be accessed here.

3.3   The School Estate Plan consists of the following two key elements:

- **The Action Plan** which sets out the proposed practical actions and decisions which need to be taken to address the identified priorities for individual assets and areas of the city; and:

- **The Long Term Programme** (formerly referred to as the Implementation Plan) which provides detail on the anticipated timescales for carrying out the actions identified within the Action Plan.

3.4   The updated Action Plan, at Appendix A of this report, includes a summary of the projects previously identified and approved within the School Estate Plan, and provides information on the current status of any previous Committee instructions which are associated with these. It also includes any revised or new recommendations on further priorities, and actions which need to be taken to continue developing the school estate. The significant new additions to the plan, and new recommendations requiring Committee approval, are highlighted below.

Victorian Schools Programme (Priority CA1)

3.5   At its meeting on 29 April 2025, after considering an Outline Business Case on the proposed Victorian Schools Programme, the Committee instructed officers to incorporate the preferred option for the programme, along with programming and cost implications, into this year's School Estate Plan update report. The

updated Long Term Programme, at Appendix B of this report, therefore includes all of the projects within the Victorian Schools Programme, along with indicative timescales for delivery.

3.6   Appendix C provides a high level analysis of the likely cost implications for the School Estate Plan as a whole, including the estimated costs for the Victorian Schools programme. It is recommended that the capital and revenue cost implications of the updated School Estate programme as a whole are referred to the budget setting process for 2026/27.

Proposed new school at Bucksburn / Newhills: Interim arrangements (Priority B2)

3.7   The updated Action Plan at Appendix A includes proposals to proceed in 2026/27 with the previously instructed statutory public consultation on the establishment of a new primary school at Bucksburn/Newhills (Priority B2).

3.8   Given that this will be a proposal to establish an entirely new school, which would serve new housing developments in the Newhills Development area, there would be a need to ensure there is a viable number of pupils eligible to attend the school, prior to it opening for the first time, to ensure that the new school can be operated efficiently from the outset, and that there are sufficient numbers of populated classes to support effective curriculum delivery.

3.9   To achieve this, officers propose to carry out an options appraisal in Autumn 2025, to assess the options for providing suitable classroom facilities, on an existing school site, which could be used to establish the new separate school community on a temporary basis. This would allow children living within the catchment area for the proposed new school to enrol at and become part of that new community, prior to them moving to the new school building once this has been constructed.

3.10   This approach would be in line with that taken when the new Countesswells School was established, where the school was accommodated at the former Hazlewood School site for a number of years, so that the school community could grow and develop, prior to the new school building being completed at Countesswells, and which allowed the new building to open with a viable and sufficient number of pupils and classes from the outset.

3.11   It is recommended that the outcomes of the options appraisal and any cost implications of the preferred option are referred to the budget setting process for 2026/27, so that a budget to support the interim arrangements can be identified. Subject to budget availability, the preferred option for the interim arrangements would then be included within the proposals for public consultation on the new school in 2026/27. The outcomes of the consultation, including feedback on the proposed interim arrangements, would be reported to the Committee following its conclusion, so that a decision can be taken on whether to proceed with the proposals.

ASG based asset reviews (Priority A8)

3.12 Following on from the Victorian Schools Programme, which seeks to bring about improvements to the suitability of our oldest school buildings, officers have recognised that whilst it was appropriate to focus on the Victorian schools initially, there will be a need to consider the other groupings of ageing school buildings in the city which, due to their age and design, may present challenges for effective curriculum delivery, and which may require significant levels of investment to maintain them in an acceptable condition.

3.13 For example, the school estate includes fourteen buildings which were built between 1939 and 1960, and a further twelve buildings which were constructed between 1970 and 1990, all of which require investment to bring them up to modern standards.

3.14 Officers recommend that a rolling programme of further asset reviews should be built into the School Estate Plan, to ensure that any investment requirements to upgrade and improve school buildings constructed later than the Victorian era are also fully considered and captured.

3.15 However, rather than focusing only on school buildings which were built in a particular time period, it is proposed that the approach taken in the recent Northfield Area asset review is used as the model for these future reviews, so that a more holistic assessment of all schools, regardless of their age, can be obtained, along with a review of all other public buildings within each Associated Schools Group (ASG) area. This would allow all Council operated buildings within each area to be reviewed, for their condition, suitability and levels of accessibility to public services, so that building improvements and opportunities for improved service delivery can be considered. Findings of the reviews would then be used to inform future priorities for the School Estate Plan.

3.16 Timescales for future ASG based asset reviews have therefore been built into the updated Long Term Programme shown at Appendix B, with initial work to be undertaken in 2026/27 to establish and agree a methodology for the reviews, and the first asset review to commence later in the same year.

Long Term Programme

3.17 Appendix B shows the updated implementation plan, now presented as a long term programme, incorporating all existing and proposed new projects within the School Estate Plan and estimated timescales for delivery of these, over the next fifteen years.

3.18 With the exception of the existing projects currently in progress, and some pipeline projects identified previously, funding required to implement the long term programme has not been identified. All proposed projects are subject to approval of the appropriate business cases which will be brought forward in due course, and if approved these would be included within future budget setting processes for the necessary funding to be identified.

3.19 Despite funding not having been identified at this stage, the existence of a programme which highlights potential future pipeline projects, which fit into a clear long term strategy, is likely to assist in any future applications for external funding, should such opportunities become available.

3.20 The Long Term Programme takes account of the capacity of key teams and services within the Council to successfully deliver individual projects, which have been prioritised to ensure the most essential works are carried out as early as possible.

3.21 The programme is intended to give an indication at this point in time of the likely timescales required to deliver the priorities listed within the action plan. It is acknowledged that, in subsequent annual updates to the action plan, new priorities are likely to emerge which may impact on these timescales. The long term programme will therefore need to be continually reviewed, and updated annually alongside the action plan, to reflect any required changes to the delivery timescales for individual projects.

3.22 As highlighted in the Victorian Schools Programme report which was presented to the Committee in April 2025, the delivery of the Victorian Schools projects would require additional staffing resource within the School Estate Team. The estimated implementation timescales shown within the Long Term Programme at Appendix B are therefore dependent on funding for an additional project manager being made available to help manage this work.

3.23 It is recommended that the cost of adding an additional full time project manager to the staffing establishment within the School Estate Team is included within the budget setting process for 2026/27.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Existing projects within the School Estate Plan will continue to be implemented using funding which has been allocated for this purpose within the General Fund capital programme.

4.2 Proposed new projects identified within this update to the School Estate Plan are subject to appropriate revenue and capital budgets being identified. Estimated costs for projects will be included within individual outline business cases which will be submitted to the budget setting process for approval prior to any projects proceeding. An estimate of the levels of capital funding likely to be required in future years, to deliver the updated Long Term Programme, are shown in the confidential Appendix C.

4.3 Revenue costs associated with the implementation of the Long Term Programme, which are also shown in detail at Appendix C, are summarised as follows:

- Annual running costs for Walker Road building (to be used for Victorian Schools Programme decants): **£280,000**

- Additional annual staffing costs for an additional project manager in the School Estate Team (salary costs at Point 4, Grade 15, including on-costs): **£74,000**

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 provides that it shall be the duty of every education authority to secure that there is made for their area adequate and efficient provision of school education.

5.2 Section 17 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 provides that it shall be the duty of an education authority in the performance of their functions under sections 1 to 6 of the Act, to provide for their area, sufficient accommodation in public schools and other educational establishments under their management to enable them to perform their said functions. In addition, an education authority shall maintain and keep efficient every public school, and other educational establishment under their management, and shall from time to time provide such additional accommodation as may be necessary to enable them to perform their functions under the Act and may, provide, alter, improve, enlarge, equip and maintain schools and other educational establishments within their area.

5.3 The identified priorities for developing the school estate outlined in the updated School Estate Plan are in fulfilment of the above duties incumbent upon the Education Authority.

5.4 A proposal to make changes to a school, including closing, relocating or opening a school, is subject to consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Formal consultations will require to be carried out for any proposals to make these types of changes to schools, and consideration of this has been given in the recommendations arising from the School Estate Plan.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The School Estate Plan outlines the approaches which will be taken to bring about positive impacts on the environment in the future, through reducing carbon emissions from the existing school estate and from future new build schools to contribute to the Council's net zero carbon ambitions, and through ensuring improved resource efficiency by rationalising the school estate where appropriate.

6.2 All new build and refurbishment projects are compliant with the Council's Building Performance policy, and through the location and design of new buildings we will seek to promote active and sustainable travel to school.

6.3 Designing new schools for the future presents opportunities to make positive impacts on other aspects of the natural environment, including, for example, making space for nature through sustainable approaches to landscaping, avoiding over-use of synthetic materials in school grounds, and providing space for food growing initiatives. Officers will continue to work closely with

colleagues in Environmental Planning when designing new and refurbished outdoor spaces, to ensure consideration is given to these important factors.

6.4 However it is also recognised that carrying out physical changes to the school estate, such as removing surplus capacity or constructing new buildings, could potentially result in a negative impact on the environment, for example through disturbance to habitats and roosting animals, or affecting existing open spaces. Any such activity will be planned carefully to minimise any such negative impacts wherever possible.

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	(1) Failure to plan effectively for the school estate, leading to the Council being unable to fulfil its duty to make adequate and efficient provision (2) Failure to consult formally with stakeholders on changes to schools would be in breach of legislation	1) The School Estate Plan sets out updated priorities for the school estate and proposals for continually monitoring and updating plans to ensure adequate and efficient provision is maintained (2) Any proposed changes to schools arising from the School Estate Plan will incorporate full statutory consultation to ensure compliance with legislation	L	Yes
Operational	Failure to engage and consult with communities on the future of the school estate which serves them, could lead	The School Estate Plan emphasises an approach which places community engagement and consultation at the centre	L	Yes

	to a breakdown in relationships with community members. Some proposals about the future of the school estate may not be popular with some stakeholders			
Financial	No significant risks identified			
Reputational	Failure to engage and consult with communities on the future of the school estate which serves them, could lead to reputational damage for the Council. Some proposals about the future of the school estate may not be popular with some stakeholders	The School Estate Plan emphasises an approach which places community engagement and consultation at the centre	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	Development of the school estate and the addition of new school capacity may lead to increased carbon emissions	Climate risks and the need for the school estate to contribute to the Council's net zero carbon emissions targets will be embedded into planning and decision making.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement **Working in Partnership for Aberdeen**	The updated School Estate Plan supports the delivery of the following policy statements: A City of Opportunity Policy Statement 2 - Review and invest in our school estate, ensuring all of Aberdeen's schools are fit for the educational needs and the challenges of the 21st century. The report seeks Committee's approval of the School Estate Plan. A Prosperous City Policy Statement 8 - Seek to buy goods, services and food locally whenever possible, subject to complying with the law and public tendering requirements. Opportunities to do this will be considered for all Capital Projects.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The updated School Estate Plan supports the delivery of Stretch Outcome 4 in the LOIP – children will feel listened to all of the time. The School Estate Plan sets out how all stakeholders including children and young people will be consulted on proposals to make changes to the school estate.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The updated School Estate Plan supports the delivery of Stretch Outcome 13 in the LOIP – Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate. The School Estate Plan sets out the approach which will be taken to reduce carbon emissions from the school estate.
Regional and City Strategies	The School Estate Plan will support the delivery of the Council's Property and Estates Strategy.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Previous Integrated Impact Assessment (Stage 1) relating to the School Estate Plan has been reviewed and no changes required.

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   Appendix A: Updated Action Plan
11.2   Appendix B: Updated Implementation Plan / Long Term Programme
11.3   Appendix C: Estimated Capital Investment Requirements (Exempt)

12.   REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix A

Aberdeen City Council
School Estate Plan Update – September 2025

<u>Updated Action Plan</u>

<u>Update On Existing Projects</u>

- The updated action plan below includes a summary of the projects identified within the School Estate Plan, and provides information on the current status of any previous Committee instructions which are associated with these. It also includes any revised or new recommendations on further priorities and actions which need to be taken to continue developing the school estate. Projects which were reported in last year's annual update as completed, have been removed from the Action Plan.

Area / ASG / School	*SEP Priority*	*SEP Objective*	*Previous Committee Decisions*	Current Status	Update
City-wide Strategic Priorities	A1: There is a requirement to reduce carbon emissions from the school estate	Net zero carbon emissions through the Council's assets and operations by 2045	*08/09/22:* Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to adopt an approach which favours the improvement and repurposing of existing assets, over the construction of new school buildings, where this is appropriate, and to ensure that where new school buildings are required, these are designed from the outset, to comply with the low carbon criteria set out within the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP), and where appropriate, with the Net Zero Public Sector Buildings Standard. (**Recommendation A1**)	On Track (Ongoing)	School Estate planning in the last year has continued to focus on improving and repurposing existing assets. An example of this is the recently completed feasibility study on improving our Victorian school buildings (see separate entry below on the Victorian Schools Programme).

Area / ASG / School	SEP Priority	SEP Objective	Previous Committee Decisions	Current Status	Update
	A2: We need an efficient estate, with over-provision and under-provision of school places kept to a minimum	All new primary schools to be constructed with a minimum pupil capacity of 434, and all new secondary schools to be constructed with a minimum pupil capacity of 1000	08/09/22: Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to ensure that all new primary schools are designed with a minimum pupil capacity of 434, and all new secondary schools are designed with a minimum pupil capacity of 1000, in order to support high quality learning and teaching. (Recommendation A2)	On Track (Ongoing)	Plans for new schools continue to be based on these minimum capacity requirements.
	A3: Some existing schools are operating significantly under capacity, and are forecast to remain under capacity, due to population changes over time	Future capacity of all operational schools to be managed, with a target to maintain occupancy levels at a minimum of 80% of available capacity, to ensure the efficiency and sustainability of the school estate	08/09/22: Notes that potential changes in pupil population across the city are likely to require a reduction in the number of operational schools over the next 10 years, and that within this and future editions of the School Estate Plan, officers will bring forward specific options and recommendations for making changes to the school estate to ensure optimum efficiency and sustainability of the estate as a whole. (Recommendation A3)	On Track (Ongoing)	Updated priorities and recommendations for the School Estate Plan continue to be focused on increasing the proportion of our schools which are within the target occupancy range.
	A4: Where there is spare capacity within schools, in the short to medium term this may be better utilised by other appropriate services	Short to medium term spare capacity within schools to be used flexibly and creatively to ensure efficiency and sustainability of the estate, where appropriate to do so	08/09/22: Notes that where appropriate, officers will seek opportunities to make use of available capacity within schools for other purposes, including the delivery of additional services, in order to make efficient use of available space within the estate which also benefits local communities. (Recommendation A4)	On Track (Ongoing)	Officers have continued to consider options for repurposing spaces for other uses where this is appropriate. The use of surplus space within the new Riverbank School for an early intervention unit is an example of this.
	A5: the Council has made a commitment through the Schools Accessibility Plan, to	Augmentative and alternative signage to be provided in all schools where required	08/09/22: Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to carry out a review of signage in all schools and upgrade / replace signage where required to	On Track (Ongoing)	Ordering of new signage for schools which require it is due to be fully completed by the end of September 2025, and will be installed by the

Area / ASG / School	SEP Priority	SEP Objective	Previous Committee Decisions	Current Status	Update
	improve signage in schools		improve accessibility for all users and agrees to refer this to the budget process. (**Recommendation A5**)		end of the year, in line with the new school signage guidance which was created last year.
	A6: Plans for the school estate need to be continually reviewed using the latest available data	The School Estate Plan to be updated regularly based on the latest available school roll forecast and other key data	08/09/22: Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to present a delivery plan for implementing the agreed actions in this report to the next meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee, and thereafter, 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. (**Recommendation A6**)	On Track (In Progress)	This updated Action Plan and the updated Long Term Programme fulfil the requirement to provide an annual update to the Committee.
	A7: Requirement to evaluate the provision of physical spaces in our schools which support pupils with additional support needs	Consider options for improving the provision and suitability of spaces in schools for supporting pupils with additional support needs	17/09/24: 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 was required. 24/06/25: (i) to note the findings of the review as outlined in the report; (ii) to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to continue	On Track (In Progress)	In line with the Committee's instruction in June 2025, a Service Update on this will be made available by the end of September, and timescales for providing a further report on the adequacy of spaces for ASN provision have been built into the overall programme.

Area / ASG / School	SEP Priority	SEP Objective	Previous Committee Decisions	Current Status	Update
			providing support to head teachers and staff in schools to make best use of the space available to them for supporting pupils with additional support needs, to reflect existing and emerging policies and guidance in this area; (iii) to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to ensure that the Council's specification of spaces for additional support needs in future new school buildings and school refurbishment projects continues to be regularly reviewed and updated, to reflect ongoing feedback received locally, and any relevant national and local guidance on the design of spaces for additional support needs; (iv) to note current provision of spaces offered across the whole school estate and instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to (a) identify any opportunities for sharing good practice in order to develop support for ASN for the benefit of pupils and school communities and (b) to bring back a report as soon as possible based on the adequacy or otherwise of spaces for Additional Support Needs within each School within the city, in order to truly understand the actual requirements for each school; and (v) to note that the Executive		

Area / ASG / School		SEP Priority	SEP Objective	Previous Committee Decisions	Current Status	Update
				Director had undertaken that officers would provide an interim service update on the above in September.		
City-wide Priorities: Denominational Primary Schools	St Peter's RC School, St Joseph's RC School and Holy Family RC School	RC1: Poor suitability and lack of capacity at St Joseph's School, and forecast excess capacity at St Peter's School and Holy Family School	Ensure sufficient and sustainable long term denominational primary school provision for the city	*08/09/22:* Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study and stakeholder engagement to identify options for ensuring appropriate and sustainable long term denominational primary school provision for the city to meet forecast demand, and report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with recommendations. **(Recommendation RC1)** *Council, 02/10/24*: To note the contents of the report, and 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 continued to be appropriate to meet the expected demand for pupil places;	On Hold	A report on the completed feasibility study was presented to the Committee in September 2024, and then referred to Full Council in October 2024, where it was agreed that officers would continue to monitor numbers at the three schools. Latest school roll forecasts indicate that there continues to be excess capacity across the schools, however officers recommend that no action is taken at this time, as school rolls may be affected by the planned refurbishment of St Peter's School. **It is recommended that this project remains on hold until the refurbishment of St Peters School is completed, and the impact of this on pupil numbers can be assessed.**
North Area Priorities	Grandhome / Oldmachar / Bridge of Don	NA1: Requirement for secondary school provision for Grandhome / potential over supply of places	Reduce the predicted long term excess secondary school capacity in Grandhome,	*08/09/22:* Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study and stakeholder engagement to identify options for	**Not Yet Started**	The feasibility study was placed on hold in last year's update to the School Estate Plan, however due to increasing pressure on pupil

Area / ASG / School			SEP Priority	SEP Objective	Previous Committee Decisions	Current Status	Update
			across Grandhome, Oldmachar and Bridge of Don	Oldmachar and Bridge of Don	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. **(Recommendation NA1)** *12/09/23:* Instructs 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.		capacity at Bridge of Don Academy and Oldmachar Academy, there is now a requirement for the feasibility study to proceed, and officers have therefore allowed for this in the overall implementation programme. As instructed by the Committee in September 2023, the feasibility study will incorporate options for future primary school provision, as well as for secondary school provision.
	Bucksburn / Dyce		NA2: Forecast long term lack of capacity at Bucksburn Academy / low pupil numbers at Dyce Academy	Ensure sufficient and sustainable long term secondary school provision for Bucksburn and Dyce	*08/09/22:* Instructs 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. **(Recommendation NA2)** *24/06/25:* Instructs the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord in consultation with the Chief Officer	On Track (In Progress)	As instructed by the Committee in June 2025, officers are currently in discussion with Aberdeenshire colleagues regarding the proposal to change the catchment area for Dyce Academy so that it no longer includes areas of Aberdeenshire. Such changes, subject to public consultation, would allow for rezoning and a rebalancing of pupil numbers between Bucksburn Academy and Dyce Academy. Outcomes from the discussions with

Area / ASG / School			*SEP Priority*	*SEP Objective*	*Previous Committee Decisions*	Current Status	Update
					– Education and Lifelong Learning to consult with officers at Aberdeenshire Council on proposals for adjusting the Dyce Academy catchment area to align with the City boundary, therefore removing all areas of Aberdeenshire including Newmachar and Kingseat from the catchment area, and to report back to this Committee on the outcomes of these discussions and recommendations for next steps, within the next two committee cycles.		Aberdeenshire Council colleagues will be reported to the Committee in November 2025.
Central Area Priorities	Victorian School buildings		CA1: Issues with suitability and capacity of Victorian School buildings	Ensure sufficient school places are available within city centre schools and improve the suitability of Victorian school buildings	*08/09/22*: Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements 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. (Recommendation CA1) *29/04/25*: to instruct 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.	On Track (In Progress)	As instructed by the Committee in April 2025, the preferred option from the Victorian Schools Programme Outline Business Case has been incorporated within the updated Implementation Plan. **It is recommended that the cost implications of rolling out the programme in line with the implementation plan are referred to the budget setting process for 2026/27.**

Area / ASG / School		*SEP Priority*	*SEP Objective*	*Previous Committee Decisions*	Current Status	Update
Bucksburn ASG Priorities	Bucksburn Academy	B1: Requirement to increase capacity at Bucksburn Academy in the medium term	Ensure sufficient capacity at Bucksburn Academy in the medium term	*08/09/22:* Notes that officers have completed a feasibility study on the proposed permanent extension to Bucksburn Academy, and instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to report back to the Finance and Resources Committee with an outline business case for consideration. **(Recommendation B1)**	On Track (In Progress)	The design of the new permanent extension is ongoing, and the timescales for work commencing on site will be confirmed once all contractual approvals are in place.
	Brimmond School	B2: Additional primary school provision likely to be required for Bucksburn / Newhills	Ensure sufficient primary school places will be available to serve the new communities in Bucksburn / Newhills	*08/09/22:* Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to engage with developers to track progress with the Bucksburn / Newhills developments, in order to determine options and appropriate timing for new primary school provision to serve the new housing developments, and to report back to the City Growth & Resources Committee with an outline business case. **(Recommendation B2)** *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 area which would be served by the proposed new school.	On Hold	The latest school roll forecast indicates that there is growing pressure on the pupil roll at Brimmond School, and so in line with the Committee's previous instruction, officers intend to launch a consultation in the next year on establishing a new school at Bucksburn/Newhills. Proposals to be consulted on will require to include any plans for establishing the new school within temporary accommodation, prior to a new school building being completed. **It is therefore recommended that officers are instructed to carry out an options appraisal and costing for any required interim arrangements, and to include the costs in the budget setting process for 2026/27.**
Oldmachar ASG Priorities	New Grandhome	O1: New primary school provision may	Ensure sufficient and sustainable primary	*08/09/22:* Notes that officers are currently engaging with	On Track (Ongoing)	The latest school roll forecast indicates that there

Area / ASG / School		SEP Priority	SEP Objective	Previous Committee Decisions	Current Status	Update
	primary provision	be required to meet forecast demand from new Grandhome community	school places will be available to serve the new Grandhome community	developers to track progress with the Grandhome development, to determine any requirements for new primary school provision and to relieve forecast pressure on pupil numbers at Forehill School. **(Recommendation O1)**		is growing pressure on the pupil roll at Forehill School, largely due to increasing numbers of pupils being generated from the Grandhome development. **It is recommended that officers are instructed to undertake a feasibility study**, **on the establishment of a new primary school to serve Grandhome**. The feasibility study will include options for establishing the new school within temporary accommodation, prior to a new school building being completed.
	Danestone School / Glashieburn School / Middleton Park School	O3: Forecast combined over-provision of pupil places at Danestone School, Glashieburn School and Middleton Park School	Reduce predicted excess capacity in primary schools in the Oldmachar ASG	*08/09/22:* Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study and stakeholder engagement to identify options for reducing the number of primary schools in the Oldmachar ASG, in order to minimise potential excess pupil capacity, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee as appropriate. **(Recommendation O3)** *12/09/23:* Instructs 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	**On Hold**	As noted for Priority NA1 above, there is now a requirement for the feasibility study to proceed. The study will incorporate options for future primary school provision in the Oldmachar ASG, as well as for secondary school provision to serve the wider area of Bridge of Don, Oldmachar and Grandhome, as instructed by the Committee in September 2023.

Area / ASG / School		SEP Priority	SEP Objective	Previous Committee Decisions	Current Status	Update
				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.		
Bridge of Don ASG Priorities	Scotstown School / Braehead School	BD1: Short term excess capacity at Scotstown School and lack of capacity at Braehead School	Ensure appropriate balance of provision across Scotstown School and Braehead School	*08/09/22:* Notes that officers will continue to monitor forecast rolls at Braehead School and Scotstown School, and that any required actions will be reported in future updates to the School Estate Plan. **(Recommendation BD1)**	Proposed for Removal	The latest school roll forecasts indicate that pupil numbers across these two schools will peak over the next two to three years, after which they will begin to fall, so no further action in the short to medium term is anticipated.. In the longer term, sites allocated for new housing within the Scotstown School catchment area could lead to an increase in pupil numbers, however this is beyond the time range of the current roll forecast. It is proposed that this priority is removed from the School estate Plan at this time, and should action be required in the future, recommendations will be included in an appropriate future update.
St Machar ASG Priorities	Riverbank School	S1: New school building at Tillydrone under way to replace Riverbank School, which will provide additional pupil capacity which is no longer required by Riverbank School.	Consider options to avoid potential excess capacity at the new school	*08/09/22:* Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to carry out an options appraisal on potential uses of the additional capacity to be provided by the new school at Tillydrone, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with recommendations as appropriate. **(Recommendation S1)**	Complete	Following the instruction by the Committee in November 2024, the new Early Intervention Unit within the new Riverbank School building was established in August 2025. Officers will continue to monitor numbers at Riverbank School, Sunnybank School, and St Peter's School, although at

Area / ASG / School		SEP Priority	SEP Objective	Previous Committee Decisions	Current Status	Update
				26/11/24: (i) to approve and welcome the proposal to relocate the Autism Outreach Service from the Ashgrove Children's Centre building, and to establish an Early Intervention Space at the new Riverbank School building, as outlined under Option 3 Appendix 1 of the report; and… (iii) 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 School building and to provide updates on any further action required in the future, through the annual School Estate Plan update reports		present no further action on the capacity of these schools is deemed to be required.
	Sunnybank School	S2: Forecast lack of capacity at Sunnybank School	Ensure sufficient capacity is available at Sunnybank School for rising pupil numbers	*08/09/22:* Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to consider the options for relocating other services accommodated within the Sunnybank School building, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with recommendations. **(Recommendation S2)** *26/11/24*: (iii) 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	Proposed for Removal	The latest school roll forecasts indicate that pupil numbers at Sunnybank School will peak in the next two years, and are then expected to begin to fall. There is sufficient capacity at the school to accommodate the expected numbers of pupils, so it is proposed that this priority is removed from the School Estate Plan at this time. Officers will continue to monitor numbers at this school as with all other schools in the city, and should action be required in

Area / ASG / School			*SEP Priority*	*SEP Objective*	*Previous Committee Decisions*	Current Status	Update
					space at the new Riverbank School building and to provide updates on any further action required in the future, through the annual School Estate Plan update reports		the future, recommendations will be included in an appropriate future update.
	St Machar Academy		S3: Requirement for investment in outdoor space at St Machar Academy	Ensure there is sufficient and good quality outdoor space available at St Machar Academy	*08/09/22:* Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study to consider the options for the removal of unused modular classroom buildings at St Machar Academy, and for carrying out general improvements to the outdoor space at the school, and to present a costed outline business case to the Finance and Resources Committee for consideration. (**Recommendation S3**)	Complete	Works to improve the outdoor space at St Machar Academy were carried out in Spring / Summer 2025, and are now complete.
Northfield ASG Priorities	Westpark School and Heathryburn School		N1: Forecast lack of capacity at Heathryburn School and over-provision of places at Westpark School in the short to medium term	Ensure appropriate balance of provision across Westpark School and Heathryburn School in the short to medium term and in the longer term to accommodate pupils generated by the planned Greenferns development	*08/09/22:* Notes that officers will continue to monitor pupil numbers at Westpark School and Heathryburn School, considering the likely long term impact of the planned new Greenferns development, and that recommendations as required will be included in future updates to the School Estate Plan. (**Recommendation N1**)	Proposed for removal	Latest forecast data indicates that pupil numbers at Heathryburn School will begin to fall back within the school's capacity from 2027. In light of the Northfield Assets Review (to be reported on separately to the Committee in September 2025), which considers the future of all schools in Northfield, it is proposed that this priority is removed from the School Estate Plan. Any future requirements for these schools would be addressed through the Northfield Assets Review project.

Area / ASG / School		*SEP Priority*	*SEP Objective*	*Previous Committee Decisions*	Current Status	Update
	All Northfield schools	N3: Presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) within the Northfield Academy building, and forecast combined over-provision of pupil places at primary schools in the Northfield ASG	Provide a solution to address the presence of RAAC within the Northfield Academy building, and reduce predicted excess capacity in primary schools in the Northfield ASG	*17/09/24:* to agree the intended scope of the proposed asset review in Northfield to include all public assets, and instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to proceed with the review and to commence engagement with all partners working in the wider Northfield area	On Track (In Progress)	A separate report on the outcomes of the Northfield Asset Review, which includes options for addressing the presence of RAAC n the building, is due to be presented to the Committee in September 2025.
Hazlehead ASG Priorities	Hazlehead Academy / Countesswells secondary provision	HH1: Concerns about condition and suitability of Hazlehead Academy building / requirement for new secondary school provision to serve Countesswells	Improve the condition and suitability of the Hazlehead Academy building and ensure there is sufficient secondary school provision to serve Hazlehead and Countesswells	*08/09/22:* Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to assess the feasibility of creating new secondary school provision to serve the communities of Hazlehead and Countesswells, to put this forward to the Scottish Government as a priority project for funding in Phase 3 of the Learning Estate Investment Programme, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with an update on the outcomes of the funding bid and recommendations on next steps. (**Recommendation HH1**) *02/07/24:* Notes the decision of Council on 13 December 2023, to construct a new 1600 pupil campus on the current Hazlehead Academy playing fields to provide secondary school provision for the Hazlehead and Countesswells Associated School Groups; and:	On Track (In Progress)	Design work for the planned new school building at Hazlehead is currently in progress.

Area / ASG / School		SEP Priority	SEP Objective	Previous Committee Decisions	Current Status	Update
				Agrees to implement changes to the existing Countesswells and Hazlehead secondary school catchment areas, …to create a new catchment area which will be served by the new Hazlehead Academy, with effect from 1 August 2027;		
	Countesswells School	HH2: Additional pupil capacity may be required in the future to accommodate pupils from the new Countesswells development.	Ensure there is sufficient school capacity available to accommodate future pupil numbers likely to be generated by the Countesswells development	08/09/22: Notes that officers will continue to monitor the situation with the housing development at Countesswells and will bring forward recommendations as appropriate regarding requirements for additional primary school capacity to serve the development, in future annual updates to the School Estate Plan (Recommendation HH2)	Proposed for removal	The latest school roll forecasts indicate that there will be sufficient pupil capacity at Countesswells School until at least 2032. It is proposed that this priority is removed from the School Estate Plan at this time. Officers will continue to monitor numbers at this school as with all other schools in the city, and should action be required in the future, recommendations will be included in an appropriate future update.
	Hazlehead School	HH3: Possible increase in pupil numbers which may result in Hazlehead School exceeding its available pupil capacity	Ensure there will be sufficient capacity at Hazlehead School to accommodate pupil numbers	08/09/22: Notes that officers will continue to monitor pupil numbers at Hazlehead School and will include any required recommendations for action in future updates to the School Estate Plan. (Recommendation HH3)	Proposed for removal	The latest school roll forecasts indicate that pupil numbers at Hazlehead School will peak in 2026, and are expected to begin to fall after that. There is sufficient capacity in the school to accommodate the expected pupil roll. It is proposed that this priority is removed from the School estate Plan at this time. Officers will continue to monitor numbers at this school as with all other schools in the city, and

Area / ASG / School		SEP Priority	SEP Objective	Previous Committee Decisions	Current Status	Update
						should action be required in the future, recommendations will be included in an appropriate future update.
Aberdeen Grammar ASG Priorities	Aberdeen Grammar School	AG1: Possible further additional capacity requirements at Aberdeen Grammar School	Ensure there will be sufficient capacity at Aberdeen Grammar School to accommodate pupil numbers	08/09/22: Notes that officers will continue to monitor pupil numbers at Aberdeen Grammar School and will include any required recommendations for action in future updates to the School Estate Plan. (**Recommendation AG1**)	On Track (Ongoing)	Officers are continuing to work closely with colleagues at the school to identify opportunities for repurposing space and creating additional capacity. Further work on this is planned for the coming year, to provide increased capacity from August 2026. Proposed improvements for this school within the Victorian Schools Programme, if approved, will provide further increases in space for learning and teaching.
	Mile End School	AG2: Pupil numbers at Mile End School are over the school's stated capacity and are likely to rise again from August 2022.	Ensure there is sufficient capacity at Mile End School to accommodate pupil numbers	08/09/22: Notes that officers will continue to monitor pupil numbers at Mile End School, and include any required recommendations in future annual updates to the School Estate Plan. (**Recommendation AG2**)	Proposed for removal	The latest school roll forecasts indicate that pupil numbers at Mile End School will peak this year, and are expected to begin to fall after that. It is proposed that this priority is removed from the School estate Plan at this time. Officers will continue to monitor numbers at this school as with all other schools in the city, and should action be required in the future, recommendations will be included in an appropriate future update.
Harlaw ASG Priorities	Harlaw Academy	H2: Harlaw Academy is expected to exceed its capacity, and the age and layout of the	Identify costed options for future improvements to the suitability of the	08/09/22: Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study to identify	On Track (In Progress)	Construction work for the extension of the Harlaw Academy building is under way. The expected

Area / ASG / School			SEP Priority	SEP Objective	Previous Committee Decisions	Current Status	Update
			building present challenges for effective curriculum delivery	Harlaw Academy building and to ensure the school will have sufficient capacity to accommodate future pupil numbers	potential future options for improving the condition and suitability of the Harlaw Academy building, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with recommendations and costs. (**Recommendation H2**) *F&R Committee, 08/05/24:* Approves in principle the preferred option… to improve the suitability of the Harlaw Academy building, in line with the allocation of funding for this project within the Non-Housing Capital Programme, which was approved by Council on 6 March 2024; Approves the use of resources to take forwards detailed design development for the preferred option;		completion date is Summer 2026.
		Ferryhill School	H3: Insufficient dining space and issues with building layout creates difficulties for ELC provision, flow of pupils and supervision of children	Ensure there is sufficient dining capacity, appropriate ELC facilities, and that the layout of the building is suitable	*08/09/22:* Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study to identify potential options for improving the dining capacity, layout and ELC facilities at Ferryhill School, and to report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with recommendations and costs. (**Recommendation H3**) *F&R Committee, 06/08/25:* (a) note the advance and enabling development works undertaken to date to reduce risk to the main construction works	On Track (In Progress)	Construction of the new Nursery building at Ferryhill School was completed in Summer 2025, and the building is now in operation. The temporary relocation of the school's P1-7 classes at to the Walker Road building also took place in Summer 2025, and construction work for the refurbishment and extension of the main school building is now under way.

Area / ASG / School			SEP Priority	SEP Objective	Previous Committee Decisions	Current Status	Update
					and mitigate educational disruption; (b) note that the works carried out to date remain within the Capital Plan budget envelope and that work continues towards collating the main costs that will allow completion of the full business case; and (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Capital to continue to progress all necessary procurements, approvals, permissions, licenses, agreements and consents required to develop and implement the projects within the Capital Programme budget, reporting progress through the regular capital programme monitoring reports to this committee and to circulate for information the full business Cases for each project to committee members once completed;		
Cults ASG Priorities	Cults Academy		C1: Possible further additional capacity requirements at Cults Academy	Ensure there will be sufficient capacity at Cults Academy to accommodate pupil numbers	*08/09/22:* Notes that officers will continue to monitor pupil numbers at Cults Academy, and include any required recommendations in future annual updates to the School Estate Plan. (**Recommendation C1**)	On Track (Ongoing)	Reconfiguration work has been carried out over the last year to provide additional capacity in the school, funded by developer contributions. The bulk of this work was completed in Summer 2025 and the newly created spaces are now in use, with some remaining minor works planned to be completed in October 2025. School roll forecasts indicate that there should now be sufficient pupil capacity at

Area / ASG / School			SEP Priority	SEP Objective	Previous Committee Decisions	Current Status	Update
							the school for the foreseeable future.
		Culter School	C2: Forecast over-provision of places at Culter School	Ensure sufficient and sustainable primary school provision for the Peterculter community	*08/09/22:* Notes that officers will monitor pupil numbers and use of space at Culter School, and consider options for alternative use of any available space, with any recommendations to be included in future updates to the School Estate Plan as appropriate. (**Recommendation C2**)	On Track (Ongoing)	Officers have assessed that no further action is required at this time, however they will continue to assess opportunities for making use of any excess space at the school. Any required changes will be also considered as part of the Victorian Schools Programme.
Lochside ASG Priorities		Loirston Loch	L1: New primary school places required to serve new housing at Loirston Loch	Ensure sufficient and sustainable primary school places are available to serve the new Loirston Loch development	*08/09/22:* 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**)	On Track (In Progress)	The latest school roll forecasts indicate that pupil numbers at Charleston School are expected to rise above the school's capacity in future, as a result of the development at Loirston Loch, although it may be some years before a viable number of pupils is reached to justify the construction of a new school. Officers anticipate that work on a feasibility study will likely need to commence from 2028/29, to identify options for mitigating this rise in pupil numbers.

New Priorities and Recommendations – September 2025

<u>Programme of ASG based Asset Reviews</u>
Following on from the Victorian Schools Programme, officers have recommended that a programme of further asset reviews should be built into the School Estate Plan, to ensure that any investment requirements to upgrade and improve school buildings constructed later than the Victorian era are also fully considered. It is proposed that the approach taken in the Northfield Area asset review is used as model for these future reviews, so that a holistic assessment of all public buildings within each Associated Schools Group (ASG) can be obtained, and used to inform future priorities for the School Estate Plan.

It is therefore recommended that the following new priority is added to the School Estate Action Plan:

Area / ASG / School	Issue	Objective	Proposed Action	Resource Requirement	Priority
	Where are we now?	*Where do we want to be?*	*How do we get there?* **It is recommended that the Committee:**	*What additional resource is needed to carry out the proposed action?*	*How soon does the Objective need to be fully realised?*
City-wide Strategic Priorities	A8: Requirement to review condition and suitability of all school building types, to inform future School Estate Plan priorities	Ensure all school building types remain suitable, fit for purpose and in adequate condition.	Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to further develop proposals and timescales for future ASG based asset reviews, and to build these in to future updates of the School Estate Plan.	No additional resource required at this stage	Long Term (5-10 years)

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School Estate Plan
Long Term Programme 2025 - 2040
September 2025

Page 1: Summary / Overview
(See Page 2 below for full Gantt Chart)

Project / Workstream	Target Dates	
	Start	End
Existing Projects In Progress		
Ferryhill School Suitability Improvements (H3)	*n/a*	*Autumn 26*
Harlaw Academy Suitabiliity Improvements (H2)	*n/a*	*Summer 26*
St Peter's School Refurbishment	*n/a*	*Autumn 27*
Bucksburn Academy Extension (B1)	*n/a*	*Spring 28*
Hazlehead Academy Replacement (HH1)	*n/a*	*Summer 29*
Northfield Asset Review (N3)	*n/a*	*Spring 27*
New Projects Commencing 2025/26		
Victorian Schools Programme: Aberdeen Grammar School	*Autumn 25*	*Summer 29*
Bucksburn/Newhills Primary Provision (B2) (including interim arrangements)	*Autumn 25*	*Autumn 26*
New Grandhome Primary School Provision (O1)	*Autumn 25*	*Autumn 28*
New Projects Commencing 2026/27		
Adequacy of ASN Spaces (A7)	*Spring 26*	*Summer 26*
Asset Review: Methodology (A8)	*Spring 26*	*Summer 26*
Oldmachar / Bridge of Don - Primary & Secondary (NA1/O3)	*Autumn 26*	*Autumn 28*
Victorian Schools Programme: Gilcomstoun School	*Autumn 26*	*Summer 29*
Asset Review: ASG1	*Winter 26/27*	*Summer 27*
Asset Review: ASG2	*Autumn 27*	*Winter 27/28*
New Projects Commencing 2027/28		
Loirston Loch Primary Provision (L1) (incl. interim measures)	*Autumn 27*	*Spring 30*
Victorian Schools Programme: Woodside School	*Autumn 27*	*Autumn 29*
Victorian Schools Programme: Skene Square School	*Autumn 27*	*Autumn 30*
New Projects Commencing 2028/2029		
Asset Review: ASG3	*Spring 28*	*Autumn 28*

Project / Workstream	Target Dates	
	Start	End
New Projects Commencing 2029/2030		
Asset Review: ASG4	*Winter 28/29*	*Summer 29*
Asset Review: ASG5	*Autumn 29*	*Winter 29/30*
Victorian Schools Programme: Ashley Road School	*Autumn 29*	*Spring 32*
New Projects Commencing 2030/2031		
Asset Review: ASG6	*Spring 30*	*Autumn 30*
Victorian Schools Programme: Broomhill School	*Autumn 30*	*Summer 33*
Victorian Schools Programme: St Joseph's School	*Autumn 30*	*Summer 35*
Asset Review: ASG7	*Winter 30/31*	*Summer 31*
New Projects Commencing 2031/2032		
Asset Review: ASG8	*Autumn 31*	*Winter 31/32*
New Projects Commencing 2032/2033		
Asset Review: ASG9	*Spring 32*	*Autumn 32*
Asset Review: ASG10	*Winter 32/33*	*Summer 33*
New Projects Commencing 2033/2034		
Asset Review: ASG11	*Autumn 33*	*Winter 33/34*
Victorian Schools Programme: Culter School	*Autumn 33*	*Summer 36*
New Projects Commencing 2034/2035		
Asset Review: ASG1	*Spring 34*	*Autumn 34*
Victorian Schools Programme: Sunnybank School	*Autumn 34*	*Spring 38*
Asset Review: ASG2	*Winter 34/35*	*Summer 35*
New Projects Commencing 2035/2036		
Asset Review: ASG3	*Autumn 35*	*Winter 35/36*
New Projects Commencing 2036/2037		
Asset Review: ASG4	*Spring 36*	*Autumn 36*
Victorian Schools Programme: Kittybrewster School	*Autumn 36*	*Autumn 39*
Asset Review: ASG5	*Winter 36/37*	*Summer 37*

Notes

1 The programme is based on an assumption that **an additional full time Project Manager post** will be added to the School Estate Team - this will be required to deliver projects within the timescales indicated.

2 The programme (particularly in later years) is subject to change and will be updated annually, as new priorities may emerge which could impact on existing projects.

APPENDIX B : Full Gantt Chart
School Estate Plan
Long Term Programme 2025-2040
September 2025

Key to Staffing Resource Bars
Moderate Demand
High Demand
Very High Demand

Notes
1. The programme and staffing resource indicators below are based on an assumption that **an additional full time Project Manager post** will be added to the School Estate Team - this will be required to deliver projects within the timescales indicated.
2. The programme (particularly in later years) is subject to change and will be updated annually, as new priorities may emerge which could impact on existing projects.
3. Workstreams marked with an *asterisk are subject to future committee decisions, and are included here only to give an indication of timescales required, if they were to be approved.

	Target Dates	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	2035-36	2036-37	2037-38	2038-39	2039-40

Existing Projects in Progress

Ferryhill School Suitability Improvements (AB) — n/a — Autumn 26
Darvel (Waller Rd)

Harlaw Academy Suitability Improvements (AB) — n/a — Summer 26
Construction

St Peter's School Refurbishment — n/a — Autumn 27
Enabling Works / Construction
Decant (Old Rd)

Rocksburn Academy Extension (RE) — n/a — Spring 26
Design Development & Procurement
Construction

Hazlehead Academy Replacement (HHE) — n/a — Summer 29
Design Development & Procurement
Enabling Works / Construction
Decant to new building
Demolition of existing building

Northfield Asset Review (NE) — n/a — Spring 27
Outline Business Case
Consultation

New Projects Commencing 2025/26

Aberdeen Grammar School — Autumn 25 — Summer 29
Refresh Outline Business Case*
Design Development & Procurement*
Construction - Phase(s)*
Construction - Home Economics*
Construction - School*
Construction - Dining*
Construction - Technology*
Decant (temp accommodation)

Rocksburn/Hewittts Primary Provision (RE) (including interim arrangements) — Autumn 25 — Autumn 28
Interim Arrangements/Options Appraisal
Consultation

New Grandhome Primary School Provision (GS) — Autumn 25 — Autumn 28
Strategic Outline Case
Feasibility Study
Outline Business Case*
Consultation*

New Projects Commencing 2026/27

Adequacy of ASN Spaces (AT) — Spring 26 — Summer 26
Report

Asset Review: Methodology (AB) — Spring 26 — Summer 26
Develop Asset Review Methodology

Oldmachar / Bridge of Don - Primary & Secondary (MA1/DS) — Autumn 26 — Autumn 28
Strategic Outline Case
Feasibility Study
Outline Business Case*
Consultation*

Victorian Schools Programme
Gilcomstoun School — Autumn 26 — Summer 29
Refresh Outline Business Case*
Design Development & Procurement*
Construction*
Decant to Walker Road*

Asset Review: AR01 — Winter 26/27 — Summer 27
Asset Review

Asset Review: AR02 — Autumn 27 — Winter 27/28
Asset Review

New Projects Commencing 2027/28

Leeston Loch Primary Provision (LL) (incl. interim measures) — Autumn 27 — Spring 30
Strategic Outline Case
Feasibility Study
Outline Business Case*
Consultation*

Victorian Schools Programme
Woodside School — Autumn 27 — Autumn 29
Refresh Outline Business Case*
Design Development & Procurement*
Construction*
Decant to Gilcomstoun/Old (if required)*

Victorian Schools Programme
Skene Square School — Autumn 27 — Autumn 30
Refresh Outline Business Case*
Design Development & Procurement*
Construction*
Decant to Walker Road*

New Projects Commencing 2028/29

Asset Review: AR03 — Spring 28 — Autumn 28
Asset Review

New Projects Commencing 2029/30

Asset Review: AR04 — Winter 28/29 — Summer 29
Asset Review

Asset Review: AR05 — Autumn 29 — Winter 29/30
Asset Review

Victorian Schools Programme
Ashley Road School — Autumn 29 — Spring 32
Refresh Outline Business Case*
Design Development & Procurement*
Construction*
Decant to Walker Road*

New Projects Commencing 2030/31

Asset Review: AR06 — Spring 30 — Autumn 30
Asset Review

Victorian Schools Programme
Broomhill School — Autumn 30 — Summer 33
Refresh Outline Business Case*
Design Development & Procurement*
Construction*
Decant to Walker Road*

Victorian Schools Programme
St Joseph's School — Autumn 30 — Summer 33
Refresh Outline Business Case*
Design Development & Procurement*
Construction*
Decant to Walker Road*

Asset Review: AR07 — Winter 30/31 — Summer 31
Asset Review

New Projects Commencing 2031/32

Asset Review: AR08 — Autumn 31 — Winter 31/32
Asset Review

New Projects Commencing 2032/33

Asset Review: AR09 — Spring 32 — Autumn 32
Asset Review

Asset Review: AR10 — Winter 32/33 — Summer 33
Asset Review

New Projects Commencing 2033/34

Asset Review: AR11 — Autumn 33 — Winter 33/34
Asset Review

Victorian Schools Programme
Cults School — Autumn 33 — Summer 36
Refresh Outline Business Case*
Design Development & Procurement*
Construction*
Decant to Walker Rd (if reqd)*

New Projects Commencing 2034/35

Asset Review: AR01 — Spring 34 — Autumn 34
Asset Review

Victorian Schools Programme
Sunnybank School — Autumn 34 — Spring 38
Refresh Outline Business Case*
Design Development & Procurement*
Construction*
Decant to Walker Road*

Asset Review: AR02 — Winter 34/35 — Summer 35
Asset Review

New Projects Commencing 2035/36

Asset Review: AR03 — Autumn 35 — Winter 35/36
Asset Review

New Projects Commencing 2036/37

Asset Review: AR04 — Spring 36 — Autumn 36
Asset Review

Victorian Schools Programme
Kittybrewster School — Autumn 36 — Autumn 39
Refresh Outline Business Case*
Design Development & Procurement*
Construction*
Decant to Walker Road*

Asset Review: AR05 — Winter 36/37 — Summer 37
Asset Review

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	16 September 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Adoption Allowance Scheme
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/199
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR	Isabel McDonnell
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 Following an internal audit of payments made to Kinship, Fostering and Adoption a report was presented to Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee on 8th May 2025, with the recommendation that the updated Adoption Allowance Scheme be presented to Committee for approval.

1.2 This report presents the updated Adoption Allowance Scheme to Committee for approval.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

2.1 Approve the Adoption Allowance Scheme as set out below.

3.1 RATIONALE FOR ADOPTION ALLOWANCE SCHEME

3.1.1 Adoption is a permanence option for a child, in the care of Aberdeen City Council, where a decision has been made that there is no possibility of reunification with their birth family and no suitable Kinship options are available.

3.1.2 The Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 requires local authorities to assess the needs and provide support to those who are impacted by adoption. Many children who are adopted are likely to need additional support at various stages throughout their childhood up to the age of 18 years.

3.1.3 When a child's plan for adoption is presented to the independent Adoption and Permanence Panel, the Panel consider whether the child's needs meet the criteria for an Adoption Allowance. This is considered by the Panel in consultation with the Medical Advisor representing the child's health and developmental progress alongside their family medical history. The Panel make a recommendation about the child's eligibility for an adoption allowance to the Agency Decision Maker (Chief Social Work Officer) who makes the final decision.

3.1.4 A child's needs might change as they grow and develop and therefore a child may become eligible for an Adoption Allowance later in their childhood. These can be situations when a child is diagnosed with a life limiting condition or illness which requires additional support to the family in terms of accessing equipment, modifications which cannot be fully met through universal supports. Another situation may be a child being diagnosed with a significant developmental difficulty that arises later in childhood which may manifest in emotional dysregulation impacting on the family therefore requiring financial support to access therapeutic intervention. In addition, the financial support may be considered to ensure the parents' availability and to avoid any financial hardship. Adopters are encouraged to contact the Adoption Service for support, where they will be helped to explore their welfare entitlement and alternative supports before consideration is given to an application for an Adoption Allowance. Where an Adoption Allowance is requested or deemed appropriate, the Adoption Team will complete an assessment of need which will include a Financial Assistance Request to be considered by the Service Manager with responsibility for the Adoption Service.

3.1.5 The payment of allowances is only one part of the overall Adoption and Post Adoption Support offered by the Council and its partner agencies in the statutory and voluntary sector.

3.2 Legislative and Eligibility Framework

3.2.1 The [Adoption Support Services and Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2009](#) enable Aberdeen City Council to pay an adoption allowance within the parameters set by the Regulations and the [Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007](#). The Council is required to consider the circumstances of each individual child to determine eligibility and the amount of an adoption allowance.

3.2.2 The underlying philosophy is that adoptive parents would normally be expected to meet the costs usually associated with caring for a child (considering Child Benefit and any other welfare entitlement) but Adoption Allowances should be available where the profile of need for a child and/or adopter meets clear criteria.

3.3 Circumstances in which adoption allowances may be paid.

3.3.1 An Adoption Allowance is payable to an adoptive parent for the purpose of supporting the health and development of an adoptive child.

3.3.2 An Adoption Allowance is payable from the point that a child moves to their adoptive family.

3.3.3 An application for Adoption Allowance can be considered at a later stage in their childhood, if the child's developing needs are assessed to be within the legal criteria, the allowance will be approved by Service Manager responsible for the Adoption Service as delegated by Agency Decision Maker.

3.3.4   An Adoption Allowance is not a maintenance allowance, unlike Fostering Allowances, but is there to meet additional needs of a child by virtue of their adoptive status. An adoptive child is a child who has been adopted; or a child whom the Council has matched with a prospective adopter and placed for adoption. An adoptive parent is a person who has adopted a child; or a person with whom the Council has matched a child or has placed a child for adoption.

3.3.6   The Adoption Support Services and Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2009 explicitly outlines the circumstances in which Adoption Allowances will be considered.

3.3.7   An Adoption Allowance will only be payable after the prospective adoptive parents and social work practitioners have completed and agreed an assessment of the support needs for the child (Adoption Support Plan). The Plan will be scrutinised by the Adoption and Permanence Panel and the Agency Decision Maker will have oversight in regard to eligibility.

Further grounds to consider are:

(i)   The adoptive parents cannot afford to adopt the adoptive child without an allowance, or
(ii)   The adoptive parents' financial resources would be significantly reduced by meeting the needs of the adoptive child without an allowance
(iii) The adoptive child or any other child in the adoptive parents' family would be materially deprived if an allowance was not paid.

3.3.8   The existence of any of the circumstances in paragraph 3.3.6 and/or 3.3.7 above does not automatically entitle the adoptive parents to an Adoption Allowance, this remains at the discretion of the Service Manager responsible for the Adoption Service. Equally, some prospective adopters may prefer to assume the responsibility for meeting the child's needs without financial assistance, even though they might otherwise have been eligible for an allowance.

3.3.9   Where siblings attract an Adoption Allowance only by virtue of paragraph 3.3.6 (c)(ii) above (i.e. desirability to place sibling group together) and neither of them attract an allowance for any other reason, the siblings will collectively attract one single allowance between them. Where siblings each attract an allowance in their own right an Adoption Allowance will be payable in respect of each child.

3.3.10   With regard to a sibling group, the Adoption Allowance is attached to the eldest child unless he/she attracts an allowance in their own right. In such circumstances the allowance will attach to the next child (if the child does not attract an allowance in their own right). This will be the case where the sibling group is placed at the same time. It will also be the case when one child is placed, and a sibling subsequently placed. If each child in a sibling group attracts an allowance in his or her own right, then the adopters will receive an allowance for each child.

3.3.11   The Service may also provide an additional payment to adoptive parents. Such payments are separate and distinct from an Adoption Allowance. An additional payment can be paid when a payment is required, in accordance with an

individual child's circumstances, for an adoption to proceed e.g. to purchase a specific piece of equipment for the child. Any additional payment is agreed by the Team Manager or Service Manager responsible for the Adoption Service.

3.4   Allowance Eligibility of Adopters

3.4.1   The Adoption Allowance Scheme is shared and discussed with prospective Adopters during the 'Preparation to Adopt' course and home study phases of the adoption approval process, and specifically during the linking and matching process. The information given to prospective adopters outlines that eligibility for an Adoption Allowance will be based on an assessment of financial circumstances and of the child's support needs.

3.5   Allowances for Foster and Kinship Carers who apply to Adopt

3.5.1   There are circumstances which allow the Local Authority to pay an Adoption Allowance to prospective adopters who are Foster Carers or Kinship Carers when it is agreed that as part of the Child's Plan that the child should be placed with their existing carers. There continues to be a small but noticeable increase in the number of foster carers claiming children in their care through adoption.

3.5.2   Kinship Care is the term used to describe the placement of children with extended family members or friends where they cannot live with their parents. In October 2015 the Scottish Government announced that Kinship carers who were caring for a child who had previously been looked after or placed with involvement by the Local Authority and were subject of a Section 11 Order (Children (Scotland) Act 1995) were entitled to receive a Kinship Allowance equal to that paid to foster carers. The Local Authority has responsibility for children it places with family members and/or are subject to statutory orders. The Service does not have responsibility for arrangements which family members independently make. Many kinship carers both locally and nationally are within lower socio-economic groupings.

3.5.3   In June 2015, the former Finance, Policy and Resources Committee agreed to increase the level of allowance paid to approved Kinship Carers to equal that paid to Foster carers.

3.5.4   In the case of Foster Carers, the Local Authority can pay existing Foster Carers the same level of fostering fee for a period of up to two years following the Adoption Order being granted. This is to allow Foster Carers a period of adjustment to enable them to continue to care for the child without experiencing significant financial hardship which might impact the child during the early stages of adoption. In all circumstances, the Council expects prospective Adopters, including Foster Carers, to recognise and accept adoption places a legal responsibility on them to provide for the child throughout their childhood and in the case of Foster Carers who might cease fostering, to have considered their financial circumstances which will enable them to meet this responsibility.

3.5.5 There may be some instances where payments may need to continue post two years, and these exceptional circumstances would be identified in the linking and matching process and before any order is made. Any additional or discretionary payments will be considered and approved by the Service Manager responsible for the Adoption Service.

3.5.6 In all instances relating to Foster Carers and Kinship Carers, the Carers will be provided with full information outlining the available financial support ahead of a meeting to consider the viability of the Carer's request to adopt. Pending a positive outcome, a viability assessment will be undertaken to inform the recommendation to support the request to adopt.

3.5.7 Any financial support provided by the Council must be agreed by the Service Manager with responsibility for the Adoption Service, prior to the match being considered by the Adoption and Permanence Panel and prior to any legal assistance being sought in respect of the child's adoption.

3.5.8 Where the needs of the child are such that a Foster Carer is required to cease fostering, the Council may consider appropriate remuneration, this might be in the form of an adoption allowance, with expectation outlined that should the carer's circumstances change the allowance will be subject to further review.

3.6 Adoption Support

3.6.1 The placing Local Authority and the Adoption Service is responsible for assessing the child's support needs for the first three years after the Adoption Order is granted. After three years the Local Authority for where the child resides becomes responsible for providing any post adoption support except for the payment of a previously agreed Adoption Allowance.

3.6.2 The Adoption Support Plan should include the details and responsibilities of each stakeholder including any financial arrangements. The Plan should be completed and signed by the prospective adopters, their agency representatives, and by any other contributor to the plan, prior to the adoptive match being approved by the Adoption and Permanence Panel. The Agency Decision Maker will have oversight and authority to make comment about the appropriateness of the Adoption Support Plan.

3.6.3 The Adoption Support Plan will be reviewed prior to the child being placed with adopters at the Coordination and Mid-point transition meeting and thereafter the Plan will be reviewed at the six-week Looked After Review from the point of placement, then six months following the placement and thereafter reviewed a minimum of six monthly until the point of the Adoption Order being granted, and at the point of the Order being granted. Thereafter, and where a child is placed with Aberdeen City adopters, the Plan will be reviewed as befits the needs of the child. In regard to children placed with external agency adopters, the Adoption Service will review the Adoption Support Plan annually up to three years in line with the Adoption (Scotland) Act 2007 which places a duty on the placing Local Authority and thereafter if an Adoption Allowance is being paid on an annual basis in line with the Adoption Allowance Scheme.

3.7   Adoption Allowance Rate:

3.7.1   The Adoption Allowance is based on two-thirds of the Fostering and Kinship allowance and is subject to regular review, it is not automatically increased annually. In 2023 the Scottish Government introduced a Scottish Recommended Allowance for Fostering and Kinship Carers, and an uplift has recently been announced by Scottish Government for 2025.

3.7.2   At August 2025 there are 92 adoptive families in receipt of Adoption Allowances, and the breakdown of age and weekly rate is detailed below:

Age Range	Amount Paid	Total Number
0-4	£88.34	6
5-10	£109.64	43
11-15	£136.46	29
16-18	£176.70	14

3.8   Payment of Adoption Allowances/ Single Payment for Specific Costs

3.8.1   Regulation 10(2)(e) Adoption Support and Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2009, permits Aberdeen City Council's Adoption Service, where they consider it appropriate, to meet costs in respect of:

   i)   *Legal Costs - Adoption is a private legal action and not something that the Local Authority can be party to*. The Adoption Service encourages prospective adopters to seek independent legal advice where it is anticipated a child's adoption will not be contested. Where it is anticipated that the adoption will be contested, the Adoption Service encourages prospective adopters to seek independent legal advice through the Council's 'Legal Framework' arrangement (tendering process), ensuring best value. The legal costs for contested adoptions are covered by the Council and scrutinised by Legal Services. Should the prospective adopters opt to use their own legal representative, legal costs, covered by the Council, are capped in line with the costs incurred using the 'Legal Framework' arrangement.

   ii)   *Payment of costs for the purpose of introducing a child to the child's prospective parents.* This may include travel, reasonable subsistence and accommodation if required. The Adoption Social worker should advise the applicants how to claim these costs which will be approved by Team Manager and or Service Manager responsible for the Adoption Service.

   iii) *A "Settling In" grant required to meet the needs of a child.* Aberdeen City Council Adoption Service may pay up to £750 per child, for the purchase of necessary furniture or equipment. Such a payment would only be available to prospective adopters on benefits and where there is a risk of hardship in preparing for the arrival of the prospective adoptive child. The

Adoption Social Worker will clarify with the prospective adopters and their Assessing Social worker if such assistance is required during the linking and matching process or at the Coordination Meeting.

3.8. Periodic Payments

3.8.2 The Service may meet the identified costs for specific expenditure known as "periodic payments". This may be where there are significant travel costs in maintaining contact with the child's birth family or a specific expenditure necessary to support the child which is not available from other agencies or services. These costs should, as far as possible be identified by the Adoption social worker and approved by Adoption Team Manager

3.8.3 Where a regular Adoption Allowance is being paid these payments would be expected to meet any requirement for a periodic payment. They may be paid in addition to the regular Adoption Allowance at the discretion of the Adoption Team Manager and/or Service Manager responsible for the Adoption Service.

3.8 Regular Payments

3.8.4 Circumstances in which regular Adoption Allowances may be paid (Regulation 10) are outlined within 3.36 and 3.37. Currently the Adoption Service pay Adoption Allowances on a quarterly basis. The Service intends to move to a position where the Allowances are paid fortnightly in advance and the timeframe for this would be by June 2026 and managed through the D365 system.

3.9 Calculating Financial Eligibility for Adoption Allowance

3.9.1 Aberdeen City Council means tests adopters income to determine eligibility for an Adoption Allowance. National benchmarking indicates that some Local Authorities do not apply a means test. Aberdeen City Council's Adoption Allowance Scheme has been recognised in national forums and has been adapted by other agencies seeking to review their Adoption Allowance Scheme.

3.9.2 Income and expenses are calculated by Adoption Service Business Support to determine eligibility for Adoption Allowance and are provided with a Financial Circumstances Pro-Forma to inform the calculations.

3.9.3 When determining what income is taken into account, the Adoption Service has recognised the need for increasing its scrutiny when considering what should be included as household income to ensure greater fairness and transparency. The Service is placing greater emphasis on income maximisation, and it is the Service's intention to strengthen its relationship with the Financial Inclusion Team in relation to welfare entitlement. The following is included:
- Earnings from employment or self-employment minus Income Tax and National Insurance. This information is obtained from a P60 or from the Adopter's taxable earnings, Income Tax and National Insurance payments made during the year to date. An average is not accepted.
- Welfare benefits; including Universal Credit, Carers Allowance, Job Seekers Allowance

- Pension Income
- Income from Property
- Child support payments received
- Foster Carer Fees
- Taxable Income from savings and investments.

3.9.4   Not included:
- Child Benefit - (As this is deducted from the Adoption Allowance)
- Welfare payments regarding other children in the household
- Contributions to the household income by a non-adoptive parent in a reconstituted family
- Savings up to £10,000.
- Disability Living Allowance for the child in receipt.

3.9.5   In reviewing the Personal Allowances attributed to adopters within the Means Test, and bringing these up to date, the Service has revised the Personal Allowances for both adopters and children based on data provided by the Office of National Statistics relating to the average household cost of living and costs associated with bringing up a child to the age of 18 years. The increase in Personal Allowances is largely offset by widening the scope of what is considered as household income. Additionally, the revised personal allowances addresses the longstanding inequality in meeting childcare costs for single parent households. When determining adopters expenses the following is included which are revised rates:

- A personal allowance for adoptive couples is £28,250.00.
- The personal allowance for the first child living in the family home of an adoptive couple is £3869.00 and half the amount for every other child in the household.
- The personal allowance for a single adopter is £24,125.00
- The personal allowance for the first child living in the home of a single adopter is £6283 and half that for subsequent children.

3.9.6   Allowances payable according to % of outgoings:

Less than 70%	0%
70-77%	50%
78-84%	75%
85% or more	100%

3.10   Information for Adopters about Adoption Allowances:

3.10.1   The Agency Decision Maker will notify Adopters in writing, following the Adoption and Permanence Panel where the Match is considered, of their eligibility to apply for an Adoption Allowance. Alternatively, that they are not eligible, but should there be a change in circumstances later in the childhood they can contact the Adoption Service to request that an assessment regarding eligibility be undertaken.

3.10.2 Once the Adoption Service has agreed to payment of an Adoption Allowance the following information will be provided within an Adoption Allowance Agreement:

- The basis by which the Adoption Allowance has been determined.
- The amount of Allowance to be paid.
- The date on which the first payment will be made.
- The method by which the Allowance will be paid, the frequency of payments and the period of payments.
- The arrangements and process for review, variation and termination of the allowance.
- The responsibilities of Adopters to notify the Council of any changes in their circumstances or those of the child.

3.10.3 It is a requirement of the Adoption Service that both parties sign the Adoption Allowance Agreement, this document is saved within D365.

3.11 Requirements of Adopters

3.11.1 Adopters are required to provide the necessary evidence to the Adoption Service that will support the assessment and review (see review of adoption allowances) of the Adoption Allowance.

3.11.2 The Adoption Service reserves the right to cease payment of allowances and to demand repayment of any Adoption Allowances where Adopters have failed to disclose financial circumstances.

3.11.3 Should adopters not return the Adoption Allowance Application Form within the advised timescale to afford documents being available for review they shall be reminded to respond within 28 days, or the Adoption Allowance shall cease.

3.11.4 Where adopters notify the service of reasonable difficulties in providing evidence this will be taken into consideration.

3.12 Review of Adoption Allowances:

3.12.1 The Adoption Service is required to review the Adoption Allowance to ascertain whether there is a need for the Adoption Allowance to continue and if so whether it should be maintained at the same level, increased or reduced.

3.12.2 Reviews will be undertaken annually. If there are exceptional circumstances that require to exceed this timescale the adopters will be notified in writing of this. The Review will be held with the Adoption Team Manager, Business Support and Service Manager responsible for the Adoption Service.

3.12.3 The continuance of any Adoption Allowance will be based on the child's needs. In rare occasions, given the complexity of need to disregard the means test process, to ensure support for specific needs. These decisions will be evidence based and made in line with the Regulations by Adoption Team Manager and Service Manager responsible for the Adoption Service. The reason for this will be recorded in the child's case record.

3.12.4 To satisfy the annual review the following information must be provided by the adopter, evidence of household income, bank statements, evidence of child's needs and how the allowance will be used to meet these needs. In all instances evidence of exploring welfare entitlement to meet the child's needs. They should also make available confirmation of the child's residence with them, such as school report.

3.13 Termination of Adoption Allowance:

3.13.1 The circumstances within which the Adoption Service will terminate the payment of an Adoption Allowance are:

- When a child leaves an adoptive home as permanent arrangement.
- When a child leaves full-time secondary education.
- When a child qualifies for Universal Credit or Job Seekers Allowance
- When a child reaches the age of 18, unless he/she is in full time education. The allowance can continue until the young person reaches the age of 21, if they remain in full-time education.
- Any pre-determined period for the payment of allowance agreed between the Adoption Service and Adopters has expired.

3.14 Appeals

3.14.1 Appeals against a decision regarding Adoption Allowances should be raised in writing explaining the reason for the appeal. The Service Manager will review the decision and present the information to Agency Decision Maker to confirm the outcome of the appeal and the reasons for the decision in writing within 14 days.

3.15 Financial Under or Over Payments:

3.15.1 The Adoption Service will make every effort to ensure that payments are correct. Adopters are expected to check their payments and remittance to ensure accuracy. In the event of an over payment the Adopter should contact the Adoption Service to discuss how to return the overpaid monies. Overpaid monies should be returned immediately. However, in certain circumstances the Council will negotiate a payment arrangement to recoup these funds over an agreed period. The Adoption Service will take into account any mitigating circumstances

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report as the allowances are already considered within the existing budget.

4.2 The Adoption Allowance provides essential support that can mitigate against an escalation of need. Support is essential to reduce any fragility to the adoptive arrangements, which otherwise may result in children requiring alternative care in out of authority provision, which is at a high cost to the Council.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Aberdeen City Council has a statutory duty to provide care to those children who cannot be looked after in parental care.

5.2 Aberdeen City Council has a duty to provide a Fostering and Adoption Service which is regulated by the Care Inspectorate

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	Target Risk Level (L, M or H)	Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	The Council has a responsibility to ensure that carers are supported to provide care to children.	A clear adoption allowance scheme sets out the process and clear expectations of the levels of support that will be provided and accountabilities.	M	**Yes**
Compliance	We have a responsibility to provide a statutory service for children who require alternative family care. We would be in breach of our duty.	Increased resources enable the Service to meet statutory duties and fulfil our Corporate Parenting responsibilities and improvements in practice.	M	**Yes**
Operational	Children placed out with the City don't have access to support systems as readily as being placed locally.	Having carers supported locally is crucial to the stability of provision.	L	**Yes**

Financial	Revising the adoption allowance scheme sets out clear decision-making processes in relation to spend.	A clear adoption allowance scheme will aid recruitment of adopters which will reduce expenditure in purchasing external adoptive placements which is significant cost to the Council.	L	**Yes**
Reputational	Not viewed by Carers and other Adoption Agencies as being able to provide the level of service expected.	Will make it more attractive option for prospective adopters who seek reliable and consistent adoption support.	L	**Yes**
Environment / Climate	N/A			

8. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement **Working in Partnership for Aberdeen**	Referencing Aberdeen City Council's Delivery Plan 2025-2026 there is a woven theme and supporting data which evidence increasing financial insecurity which can impact children and families and adoptive families falls within this remit. By supporting both a flexible but robust system around Adoption Allowances we are aiming to address this area and hopefully, alongside other support available, impact positive outcomes for children.
Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The function of our Kinship, Adoption and Fostering Service is central to supporting and assuring that we deliver on the outcomes of the LOIP Prosperous People-Children are our Future and they have "the best start in Life", that they are "safe and responsible" and "protected from harm". Children who are protected from harm are more likely to prosper than those who are not.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Children who grow up within their local community have an increased sense of identity which can help provide opportunities and mitigates the risk of harm.

9.   IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

10.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1   Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007
10.2   Adoption Support Services and Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 2009

11.   APPENDICES

11.1   None

12.   REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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