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To: Councillor Greig, Convener; Councillor Mennie, Vice Convener; 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, 17 November 2025

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Members of the **EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE** are requested to meet in **Committee Room 2 - Town House** on **TUESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2025 at 10.00am**. This is a hybrid meeting and Members may also attend remotely. Please note the change of venue.

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 There are no items of urgent business at this time

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

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

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

- 3.1 Members are requested to intimate any declarations of interest

DEPUTATIONS

- 4.1 There are no requests for deputation at this time

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 5.1 Minute of Meeting of 16 September 2025 - for approval (Pages 5 - 14)

COMMITTEE PLANNER

- 6.1 Committee Business Planner (Pages 15 - 20)

NOTICES OF MOTION

- 7.1 There are no Notices of Motion at this time

REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL, COMMITTEES & SUB COMMITTEES

- 8.1 There are no referrals at this time

PERFORMANCE AND RISK

- 9.1 Performance Management Framework Report - CORS/25/274 (Pages 21 - 74)
- 9.2 Inspection Reporting - F&C/25/262 (Pages 75 - 100)
- 9.3 Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps - F&C/25/273 (Pages 101 - 130)

EDUCATION

- 10.1 Dyce and Bucksburn - School Catchment Areas - F&C/25/265 (Pages 131 - 140)
- 10.2 Report on Options to Rationalise Early Learning and Childcare Settings - F&C/25/223 (Pages 141 - 196)
- 10.3 Youth Participation in Global Decision Making - F&C/25/263 (Pages 197 - 204)

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

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- 11.1 Update on the Learning outcomes from the Thematic Review of services for Children with Disabilities - F&C/25/271 (Pages 205 - 256)
- 11.2 Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2024/25 - F&C/25/264 (Pages 257 - 308)
- 11.3 Aberdeen City's Child Protection Committee Annual Report 2024-25 - F&C/25/266 (Pages 309 - 348)

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

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EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 16 September 2025. Minute of Meeting of the EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Greig, Convener; Councillor Mennie, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Allard, Blake, Brooks, Buchanan, Clark, Crockett, Fairfull (for articles 9 to 13), Grant, Hutchison (as substitute for Councillor Hazel Cameron), MacGregor, McLeod and van Sweeden (as substitute for Councillor Fairfull for articles 1 to 8). External Members:- Ms Danielle Barclay (Parent Representative - Nursery / Primary) (for articles 1 to 12), Mr Doug Haywood (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools) (for articles 1 to 12), Ms Jacqueline Munro (Teacher Representative - Secondary Schools) (for articles 1 to 10), Dr Alison Murray (Parent Representative - Secondary) (for articles 1 to 12) and Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative) (for articles 1 to 12).

Also in attendance: Councillor Graham for article 10.

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 item 11.1 (School Estate Plan Annual Update 2025 – Appendix C) 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 item so as to avoid disclosure of information of the class described in paragraph 8 of Schedule 7(A) to the Act.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

2. The following transparency statements were intimated:-
 - Ms Munro made a transparency statement in respect of item 9.2 (Inspection Reporting) due to her employment as a teacher at Harlaw Academy which was mentioned in the report;
 - Councillor Blake made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.1 (Music Service Update) as her children took music lessons and her son had participated in one of the trips mentioned in the report. Dr Murray made a similar transparency statement as her child took music lessons;

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- Councillor McLeod also made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.1 due to his previous employment as Music Co-ordinator for Aberdeen City Council;
- Ms Barclay made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.2 (Northfield Area Asset Review), as she had two children who attended schools in Northfield;
- The Vice Convener made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.3 (School Estate Plan Annual Update 2025), as her daughter attended one of the Victorian primary schools;
- Dr Murray also made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.3 as she had a child with a disability but advised that he would not be impacted by her proposed amendment on that item;
- Councillor Hutchison made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.3 as he had a child who attended a Victorian primary school;
- Mr Haywood made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.3 as he was employed at a Victorian primary school;
- Mr Murray made a transparency statement in respect of item 10.3 as his daughter taught at St Joseph's RC School and he had two grandchildren who attended the school; and
- Councillor Grant made a general transparency statement that he had two children who attended Riverbank Primary School, one attended St Machar Academy; and he had a child who had been diagnosed with ADHD.

None of the above-mentioned Members considered that these amounted to interests which required declarations to be made and would prevent them from participating in the meeting for these items.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF 24 JUNE 2025

3. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 24 June 2025 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

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

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the explanation notes at item 6 (Learning outcomes from Care Inspectorate Thematic Review) should read line 20, instead of line 22;

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- (ii) in relation to item 59 on the planner (Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill), to note that the Chief Officer – Children's Social Work and Family Support would provide a service update to Members on the current position with the Bill; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the business planner.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK REPORT - CORS/25/214

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which presented 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.

The report recommended:-

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

The Committee resolved:-

to note the report.

INSPECTION REPORTING - F&C/25/215

6. 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 agreed Quality Improvement Frameworks.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would liaise with Mr McDermott to provide a future update to Members on any improvements identified as a result of the reconfiguration of the school day at Northfield Academy, noting that the project was still at an early stage; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

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ABERDEEN CITY NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN - F&C/25/210

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which sought 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.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the service Self-Evaluation and Plan contained in Appendix A;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to implement the proposed Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan 25/26; and
- (c) instruct 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.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that a report would be presented to a future meeting on the proposed secondary model, building on The Bridge project;
- (ii) to note that the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning had proposed that officers would attend a meeting of the Aberdeen City Parent Forum to discuss the reporting format; and
- (iii) to approve the recommendations.

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (CLD) PLAN 2025-30 - F&C/25/212

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which presented the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan 2025-2030 for approval.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress made towards delivery of the Interim Community Learning and Development Plan 2024/25;
- (b) approve the partnership CLD Plan 2025-2030; and
- (c) 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.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that officers make the Community Learning and Development Strategic Partnership Terms of Reference available to Members, noting that this would likely be shared alongside the CLD Plan on the Community Planning Aberdeen website;

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- (ii) to note that officers would liaise with the Communications Team and provide information to Members outwith the meeting on what made TikTok an ethical social media platform;
- (iii) to note the learner stories shared in the report and to request that officers discuss with partners how these could be shared more widely when the Plan was published; and
- (iv) to approve the recommendations.

MUSIC SERVICE UPDATE - F&C/25/125

9. With reference to article 9 of the minute of its previous meeting of 17 September 2024, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which provided an evaluative overview of the progress made in respect of the music service over the 2024/25 academic session; as well as including data about tuition at primary school level broken down by school, as requested at that meeting.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –

- (a) instruct 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
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to report back on progress in one calendar year.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would ascertain the approvals in place for attendance at the Regensburg visit and advise Councillor McLeod outwith the meeting;
- (ii) to note that the Music Service had identified within the report, that at primary school level the service could be in some ASGs “thinly spread in terms of choice available” and to instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to determine if there were any changed patterns in uptake across secondary as a result of being thinly spread in some areas and include the findings in future annual updates; and
- (iii) to approve the recommendations.

NORTHFIELD AREA ASSET REVIEW - STRATEGIC OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE - F&C/25/216

10. With reference to article 9 of the minute of its previous meeting of 20 February 2024, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – Families and Communities which presented a Strategic Outline Case, which summarised the findings of the recent Northfield Area Asset Review, and included high level options for improving future primary and secondary education and potential consolidation of other assets in the

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Northfield area, to bring about improvements in the delivery of Council services to members of the Northfield community.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the findings of the Northfield Area Asset Review as set out within the Strategic Outline Case at Appendix A of this report, and refer the document to the Finance and Resources Committee for approval;
- (b) instruct 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
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to submit the completed Outline Business Case for approval to the budget setting process for 2026/27.

The Committee was then addressed by Councillor Graham, as a local Member.

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) 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 or otherwise;
- (b) notes with concern that 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;
- (c) notes that 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, therefore calls on the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord to consider deliverability in the outline business case;
- (d) notes 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;
- (e) instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to develop an Outline Business Case, to present detailed options and costs 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

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buildings in Northfield subject to their being no detriment to children's and young person's education in Northfield and safe active travel routes to school being identified;

- (f) instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to contact Mastrick, Summerhill and Sheddocksley Community Council to identify a suitable site for a men's shed as part of any business case being brought forward;
- (g) instructs officers to consult with all Community Councils, Parent teacher Groups in the Northfield ASG prior to finalising the Business case; and
- (h) instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to submit the completed Outline Business Case (OBC) to the Education and Children's Services Committee on 17 February 2026, seeking that Committee's referral of the OBC to the budget setting process for 2026/27.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (8) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; and Councillors Allard, Buchanan, Clark, Fairfull, Hutchison and MacGregor; for the amendment (7) – Councillors Blake, Brooks, Crockett, Grant and McLeod; and Dr Murray and Mr Murray; declined to vote (3) – Ms Barclay, Mr Haywood and Ms Munro.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would ensure that the sites mentioned during deliberation of the report, such as the new 4G park in Northfield, were included in the future outline business case;
- (ii) to note that officers would provide information to Members outwith the meeting on the overall situation city-wide in respect of under-occupancy, over-occupancy and capacity in schools; and
- (iii) to adopt the motion.

SCHOOL ESTATE PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE 2025 - F&C/25/213

11. With reference to article 12 of the minute of its meeting of 17 September 2024, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which presented the 2025 annual update to the School Estate Plan, providing information on progress with implementation of the Plan, and highlighting new priorities which had emerged over the last year.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the updates to the Action Plan which were provided at Appendix A of the report;
- (b) instruct 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 the report;

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- (c) refer the capital and revenue cost implications of the updated Action Plan and Programme, as shown at Appendix C of the report, to the budget setting process for 2026/27;
- (d) instruct 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;
- (e) instruct 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
- (f) instruct 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.

An amendment by Dr Murray had been prepared and previously circulated to Members, and prior to moving of the motion and amendment, both the Convener and Councillor Blake accepted Dr Murray's amendment into their own proposals.

The Convener, seconded by the Vice Convener, moved:-

That Committee:-

- (a) approve the recommendations as set out in the report;
- (b) note that Victorian schools had been assessed for wheelchair accessibility; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to ensure that any future reviews of school buildings, including the planned ASG based asset reviews, include an assessment of accessibility, which gives consideration to all disabilities, in line with the Scottish Government's guidance on "Planning improvements for disabled pupils' access to education: guidance for education authorities, independent and grant-aided schools".

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

That Committee:-

- (a) note that Victorian schools had been assessed for wheelchair accessibility;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to ensure that any future reviews of school buildings, including the planned ASG based asset reviews, include an assessment of accessibility, which gives consideration to all disabilities, in line with the Scottish Government's guidance on "Planning improvements for disabled pupils' access to education: guidance for education authorities, independent and grant-aided schools";

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- (c) note the updates to the Action Plan which were provided at Appendix A of the report;
- (d) instruct 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;
- (e) instruct 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 the report;
- (f) instruct 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;
- (g) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to engage with the people of Aberdeen on the possibility of establishing a Catholic secondary school in the city; and
- (h) as per 4.2 of the report to Committee on 21 November 2023, the S75 agreement for Countesswells did not allow for the Council to use the Secondary School Contribution for a school on a different site, and to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to bring forward a report to the next Committee on the losses from developers' contributions collected, uncollected and no longer applicable by the decision not to proceed with a secondary school at Countesswells.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (8) - the Convener; the Vice Convener; and Councillors Allard, Buchanan, Clark, Fairfull, Hutchison and MacGregor; for the amendment (9) – Councillors Blake, Brooks, Crockett, Grant and McLeod; and Ms Barclay, Mr Haywood, Dr Murray and Mr Murray; absent from the division (1) – Ms Munro.

The Committee resolved:-
to adopt the amendment.

In terms of Standing Order 34.1, the Convener referred the matter to Full Council for a decision, stating that he wished to do so in order to give other Members an opportunity to take part in the discussion and to ensure there was a strong school estate plan for the budget process 2026/2027. The Convener was supported in this regard by the Vice Convener; and Councillors Allard, Buchanan, Clark, Fairfull, Hutchison and MacGregor.

In terms of Standing Order 32.8, Councillor Brooks requested to note his dissent with the aforementioned decision.

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SCHOOL ESTATE PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE 2025 APPENDIX C

12. The Committee had before it an exempt appendix in relation to item 10.3 (School Estate Plan Annual Update 2025).

The Committee resolved:-
to note the appendix.

At this juncture, the External Members left the meeting.

ADOPTION ALLOWANCE SCHEME - F&C/25/199

13. With reference to article 11 of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee of 8 May 2025, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which presented the updated Adoption Allowance Scheme for approval.

The report recommended:-
that the Committee approve the Adoption Allowance Scheme as set out in the report.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the recommendation.

- **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	25 November 2025								
4	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Framework	To present the regular performance update		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		
5	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.		Brian Webb	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
6	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	D	Updated national guidance is awaited from Scottish Government and is expected by March 2026, therefore officers recommend that the reporting of the reviewed policy is delayed until that guidance is available, therefore the report will likely come to the June Committee. The existing policy remains compliant with current guidance.
7	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		
8	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		
9	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		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	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
2	Transitions from Children's to Adults Services / Learning outcomes from Care Inspectorate Thematic Review – Disabled Children and Young People's experiences of Social Work 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. 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	1.1.6		
10	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		
11	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		Amy Anderson	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	2.1		
12	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		
13									
14	17 February 2026								
15	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		
16	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		
17	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		
18	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Framework	To present the regular performance update		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		
19	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		
20	28 April 2026								
21	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		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	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
2	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		
22	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Framework	To present the regular performance update		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		
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									
25	23 June 2026								
26	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		Graeme Simpson	Children's Social Work and Family Support	Families and Communities	2.1		
27	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		Shona Milne	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
28	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		Louise Beaton / Fiona Lawrie	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
29	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		Emma Powell	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
30	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.		Andy Campbell	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
31	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		
32	ASN Spaces in Schools	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 To report to the Committee on the adequacy of spaces for Additional Support Needs (ASN) within each school in the city		Andrew Jones / Emma Powell	Corporate Landlord / Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		A service update was provided in the interim in October 2025

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	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
2	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Framework	To present the regular performance update		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		
33	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		
34									
35	15 September 2026								
	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		
36									
37	Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan (NIF)	To present the plan		Eleanor Sheppard	Families and Communities	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
38	Community Learning and Development Plan	E&CS 16/09/25 - to 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		Margaret Stewart	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
39	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		
40	Music Service Update	E&CS 16/09/25 - to note that the Music Service had identified within the report, that at primary school level the service could be in some ASGs "thinly spread in terms of choice available" and to instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to determine if there were any changed patterns in uptake across secondary as a result of being thinly spread in some areas and include the findings in future annual updates; and to instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to report back on progress in one calendar year.		Beth Edwards	Education and Lifelong Learning	Families and Communities	1.1.1		
41	School Estate Plan Annual Update	To present the annual update. Council 01/10/25 - to instruct 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.		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 1.1.5		
42	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		
43	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Framework	To present the regular performance update		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		

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	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
2	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									
45	17 November 2026								
46	Education and Children's Services Performance Management Framework	To present the regular performance update		Alex Paterson	Data Insights	Corporate Services	1.1.3		
47	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		
48	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		
49	2027								
50	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		
51	REPORTING DATE TO BE CONFIRMED								
52	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 provide 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 A service update was provided in the interim in September 2025
53	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		
54	Grandhome / Oldmachar / Bridge of Don Secondary Provision - Outline Business Case (NA1) / Oldmachar ASG primary school provision	The feasibility study was placed on hold in last year's update to the School Estate Plan, however due to increasing pressure on pupil 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. Council 01/10/25 - to instruct 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		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	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
2	Consultation on proposed new school at Bucksburn / Newhills	Council 01/10/25 - to instruct 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		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		
55									
56	SCHOOL ESTATE PROJECTS - ON HOLD/NOT YET STARTED								
57	City-wide Denominational Primary Schools	<p>EODC 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)</p> <p>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</p> <p>Council 01/10/25 - Project currently on hold as per annual School Estate Plan update</p>		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 1.3		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.
58	Loirston Loch Additional Primary Provision - Outline Business Case (L1)	<p>E&CS 12/09/23 - Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to make arrangements to carry out a feasibility study and stakeholder engagement to identify options for creating the required additional school capacity to serve the planned Loirston Loch development, and report back to the Education and Children's Services Committee with recommendations as appropriate.(Recommendation L1)</p> <p>E&CS 20/02/24 - Revised school estate timeline approved. No immediate requirement for this, revisit post 2024</p> <p>E&CS 17/09/24 - Project currently on hold (as per annual School Estate Plan update)</p> <p>Council 01/10/25 - Annual School Estate Plan update - contained progress update on Loirston Loch as per explanation column</p>		Andrew Jones	Corporate Landlord	Families and Communities	1.1.1, 1.1.3, 1.5		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

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	25 November 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Performance Management Framework Report/National Improvement Framework Progress Update
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/25/274
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS	Andy MacDonald/Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICERS	Martin Murchie/Shona Milne/Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR(S)	Alex Paterson/Shona Milne/Mark Jones
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Committee with (a) the status of key quarterly performance and service standard measures (and recent national publications) relating to the Education and Lifelong Learning and Children's Social Work and Family Support Clusters.(b) a progress update in respect of the Council's National Improvement Framework Plan and (c) early reflections against the initial release of 2025 Senior Phase attainment and achievement data through the Insight and Local Government Benchmarking tools.

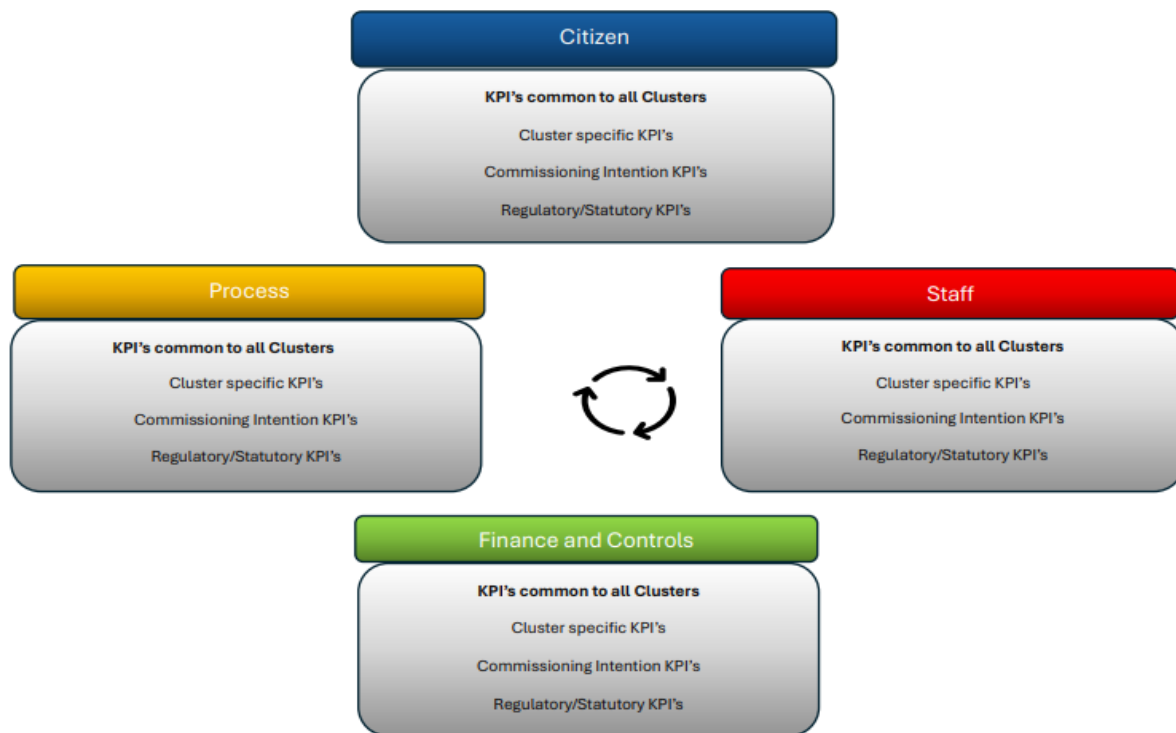
2. RECOMMENDATION

- 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.



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 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 Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2024/25 also being presented to this meeting of the Committee, and:
 - the standing Council Delivery Plan Annual Report proposed for Council in December 2025
- 3.6 Appendix B captures a Progress Update in regards to Aberdeen City Council's current National Improvement Framework Plan, agreed at this Committee in September 2025.
- 3.7 Appendix C reflects (a) initial pre-review reflections against senior phase pupil attainment across the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, which encompasses both SQA and the wider achievements of this cohort during the 2024/25 academic year and (b) the city's comparative tariff score performance derived from the recent Local Government Benchmarking Framework release.
- 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	L	Yes

		data supports the Council's obligations as an employer		
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

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
<u>Aberdeen City Council Partnership Agreement</u>	This report supports the following key Council priorities:
Improving Educational Choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commit to realising the potential of each individual, by seeking to widen curriculum choice and implement progressive choices. - Work with the city's universities, North East Scotland College and businesses to increase educational and training options and the number of care experienced young people and young people from deprived communities, going onto positive destinations, including further and higher education, vocational training and apprenticeships. - Promote the number of apprenticeships on offer through the council.
Creating Better Learning Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work to ensure that every school community provides a safe and respectful environment for young people and staff.
Caring for Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure the Council follows best practice as a corporate parent to get the best outcomes for looked-after young people, those in kinship care and those with additional support needs such as autism, developmental disorders or mental health problems.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcomes Plan Refresh</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes (Children and Young People)	<p>The detail within Performance Management reporting to this Committee evidences how Families and Communities delivery leads, contributes to, or influences, each of the Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes in the refreshed LOIP. This includes the following Outcomes:</p> <p>3. 95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27–30-month review by 2026.</p> <p>4. 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026.</p> <p>5. By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.</p> <p>6. 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.</p> <p>7. 83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026</p> <p>8. 100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/disabilities will experience a positive destination</p>
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes (Adults)	<p>Families and Communities services, through the Improvement Project Aims below contribute to achievement of Outcome 11 - Reduce the rate of both alcohol related deaths and drug related deaths by 10% by 2026</p>

	<p><i>Reduce the average age from 14 to 12 at which children are identified as requiring preventative support to mitigate the risk of future harm in relation to drug and alcohol use by 2026 and ;</i></p> <p><i>Reduce the % of 13–15-year-olds reported as using each sub group of drug by 50% and cannabis by 20% by 2026.</i></p>
Community Empowerment Stretch Outcomes	<p>The detail within Performance Management reporting to this Committee evidences how Families and Community service delivery leads, though the Improvement Project Aim; <i>100% of decisions which impact on children and young people are informed by them by 2026</i> contributes to, or influences Outcome 16:</p> <p>50% of people report they feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026.</p>
Regional and City Strategies	<p>The detail within Performance Management reporting to this Committee evidences how Families and Communities delivery leads, contributes to, or influences outcomes aligned to the City's National Improvement Framework Plan.</p> <p>Data contained in the report also offers contextual evidence of Education & Lifelong Learning and Children's Social Work Service's contributions to the City's Children's Services Plan, along with both regional Economic and Skills strategies.</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	It was confirmed by Chief Officer, Martin Murchie, on 21 st October 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

Appendix B – Progress Update, National Improvement Framework

Appendix C – Insight 2025 Attainment and Achievement Summary

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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

Education and Lifelong Learning

1. Citizen

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








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	98.8%	100%	✓	↑
% of Primary, secondary, and special schools achieving an average evaluation of ‘Good’ in formal inspections of core Quality Indicators by Education Scotland	93.75%	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%	✓	▬

<p>Service Commentary – Table 1</p> <p>Care Inspectorate</p> <p>There have been an additional seven inspection publications against Early Learning and Childcare settings since the previous meeting of this Committee in September 2025. Of these, five fully met the National Standard across all Organisers and all seven achieved at least the baseline standard of Adequate and above across each evaluation area, without any Improvement Recommendations from the inspecting agency. The averaged evaluation score from these seven inspections was 101.7%, indicating that collectively the service collectively was exceeding the Standard across recent inspection activity.</p> <p>Education Scotland</p>

There has been a single publication of Education Scotland inspections since those reported at the previous meeting of this Committee. The rolling 12 month measure shows an improvement of 3.75 p.p. against that reported in September as a result of previous lower graded evaluations falling out with the fixed monitoring period, and the positive outcomes from this inspection.

* National Attendance statistics release for 2023/24

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

Performance Measure	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Quarter 2 2025/26	2025/26 Target	Status	Long Trend - Monthly
	Value	Value	Value			
Total No. complaints received (stage 1 and 2) - Education & Lifelong Learning	33	40	33			
% of complaints resolved within timescale (stage 1 and 2) – Education & Lifelong Learning	78.8%	60.0%	66.7%	75.0%		
% of complaints with at least one point upheld (stage 1 and 2) – Education & Lifelong Learning	12.1%	0%	12.1%			
Total No. of lessons learnt identified (stage 1 and 2) – Education & Lifelong Learning	11	Data Pending*	Data Pending*			

Service Commentary - Table 2.

Statistically, the proportion of Complaints that are resolved within timescale experience a dip over the core Summer months in consequence of the extended period of school holidays and a rise in complaints which are associated with the start of the new academic year.

Not infrequently, this latter increase is associated with the period where parents/guardians/pupils familiarise themselves with the available support and guidance being applied within 'new' establishments as part of the transition between phases and may not have, in their understanding, been provided with sufficient accessibility of information in response to their enquiries.

*Lessons learned data is currently unavailable throughout this report is due to inconsistencies having been identified in how data is transferred between our systems, which is affecting the accuracy of reporting. The issue is being addressed by internal teams and the external provider. These data will be made available, and backdated, in future PMF reporting

2. Process

Table 3. Annual Participation Measure for 16-19 year olds – Status Breakdown (%), Aberdeen City

Year	Overall Participation	Education	Employment	Training and Development	Not Participating	Unemployed Seeking	Unemployed Not Seeking	Unconfirmed
2025	91.9	72.6	17.4	1.8	4.6	2.7	2.0	3.5
2024	90.1	73.2	15.0	1.9	4.5	2.4	2.1	5.4
2023	90.2	72.7	15.8	1.7	4.2	2.0	2.1	5.6

Service Commentary

Table 3. Annual Participation Measure

The Annual Participation Measure, collated by Skills Development Scotland, represents the most comprehensive and cohesive national evaluation of post-school participation amongst 16-19 year-olds, tracking the longitudinal outcomes of this cohort across a full 12-month timeline. Aberdeen City Council plays a leading role, through both the Education and Lifelong Learning, and City Regeneration and Development Clusters in delivery against this outcome.

The Annual Participation Measure for 2024/25 records the highest rate of participation to date for Aberdeen, with a material closing of the distance gap to the national figure (93.3%), and the city's Urban Authority benchmark average.(92.7%).There are above national trend improvements in the proportion of 16-19 year olds in Employment and those whose destinations are Unknown which, in combination, are the main drivers of the increase in overall participation.

Each new cohort of 16-19 year olds (in combination with a rising number of individuals surveyed) presents differing needs and levels of support and the timeline for delivering outcome related improvement, particularly among those who are furthest from the employment market in skillsets, may only be evident across more than the 12 month period between these national publications.

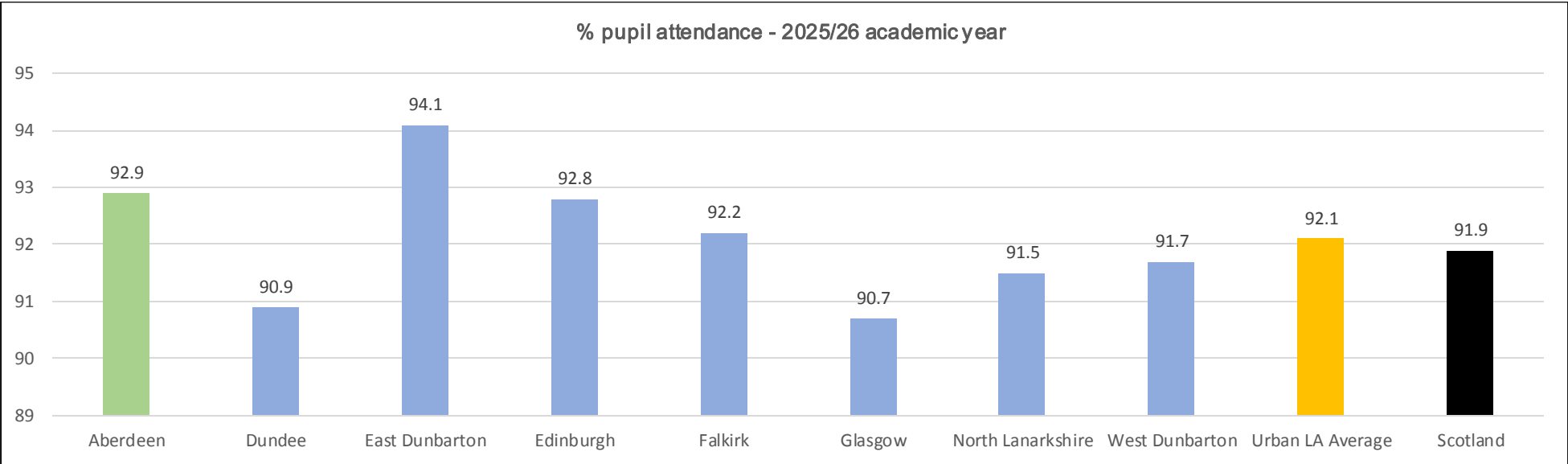
Table 4. Service Level Quarterly Measure - Visits in Person to Library Service Premises

Performance Measure	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Quarter 2 2025/26	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value	
Number of visits in person to library service premises	139,917	136.860	136,374	↓
Number of visits to Library Service provision (in-person and virtual)	420,266	414,779	423,998	↑

Service Commentary – Table 4

The Quarter 2 outcome for visits in person was marginally lower than in the previous quarter, although the combined visits outcome was improved, producing the highest Quarter 2 outcome since 2022/23 for this measure.

Chart 1. National School Attendance Measure - Percentage of attendance (Urban Local Authorities) Academic Year to Date




Service Commentary – Chart 1

Pupil attendance across the academic year to date 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.

The year-to-date attendance level shows a small rise (+ 0.6 p.p.) on that recorded against the 2024/25 full year figure which was 92.3%, against a background where both Urban Local Authority Average and Scotland attendance levels are also showing improvements. The attendance level for Aberdeen City at the comparative end of term point (October) in 2024/25 was 93.0%, with a national figure of 91.9%.

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

Table 5. Function Level National Indicator – Condition of Schools Estate

Performance Indicator	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Status	2024-25 National Figure
	Value	Value	Value		
% of City schools which are evaluated as being in Good (A) or Satisfactory (B) condition	96.7%	96.7%	96.7%		92.0%

Service Commentary – Table 5.

The School Condition measure is influenced year-on-year by the relative size, and uses made of, the Council’s schools estate, including removal of and additions of premises from the operational estate, and refurbishment activity. It is also reflective of the extent of additional condition surveying conducted throughout the year. A scheduled survey of Cults Academy was conducted in this fiscal period, resulting in an evaluation of Good.

At 96.7%, the proportion of schools evaluated as being in Good or Satisfactory Condition was equal to that in 2023-24. Aberdeen City is placed within the second quartile of all Scottish Local Authorities for this measure, representing a small positional gain on 2023-24. This value is equal to the median value across all 32 authorities, and above the National figure which, similar to Aberdeen City Council, has also remained static between years.

The number of schools being evaluated as in Good condition was 20, with 39 being graded as Satisfactory, and 2 being evaluated as Poor (St Peter’s RC Primary and Hazlehead Academy).This is a similar picture to that presented in 2023-24.

Aberdeen City Council’s school estate has consistently been graded more highly for the combined Good and Satisfactory measure than the national outcome over an extended timescale. The overall number and percentage of pupils being educated in Aberdeen City Council settings with a rating of Good and Satisfactory was 25.050* (95.1%) This proportion was the same as in 2023-24 despite an increase in school rolls. In comparison, the Scotland figure for 2024/25 sat at 89.8%, representing a fall of just over 2 percentage points on the previous year,

The 3-year Condition and Suitability report, considered at the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee on the 5th November 2025, outlined a revised approach to the delivery of works, and budgetary provision, in regards to the maintenance and upgrading of Council owned premises, including education establishments. In the body of this report, lists of those works Committed/Completed in 2024/25, and Indicative proposals for future projects was outlined.

*Based on 2024 Pupil Census data

3. Staff

Corporate Measures – Service Level Indicators

Table 6. Establishment (Education and Lifelong Learning)







Performance Measure	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Quarter 2 2025/26	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value		
Establishment actual FTE – Education and Lifelong Learning)	3,270	3,268	3,233		

Table 7. Accidents and Incidents (Education and Lifelong Learning)

Performance Measure	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Quarter 2 2025/26	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value		
H&S Employee Reportable Accidents/Incidents by Cluster – Education and Lifelong Learning	4	5	2		
H&S Employee Non-Reportable Accidents/Incidents by Cluster – Education and Lifelong Learning	479	336	366		







Service Commentary - Table 7

The number of both Reportable and Non-Reportable Accidents/Incidents are showing an improving long trend pattern. In terms of Non-reportable events in particular, this is suggestive of a ‘settling in’ of the efforts made by the Service to ensure that additional guidance around incident reporting is being applied uniformly across establishments.

Whilst the data is scrutinised on a regular and consistent basis, and rapid actions implemented to address outlying datasets, it is perhaps too early to clearly statistically associate this reporting based trend with an evidential reduction in events but there are early signs that there are a reducing number of events relating to dysregulated behaviours,

The Q2 Health and Safety report recently considered at the meeting of the [Staff Governance Committee](#) on the 3rd November 2025, outlined in detail the extent of Accident/Incident reporting recorded against the Cluster, and at school level.

Table 8. Absence Due to Illness (Education and Lifelong Learning) 12 month rolling average



Performance Measure	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Quarter 2 2025/26	Quarter 2 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)	3.70	3.74	3.62	4.92		
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE – Primary and Secondary Schools (12-month rolling figure at quarter end)	4.83	4.90	4.19	4.92		
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE – Early Learning and Childcare (12-month rolling figure at quarter end)	5.05	4.95	5.21	4.92		

Service Commentary – Table 8

Both the Cluster and School level outcomes are showing long term, and quarter -to quarter, improvement. Although ELC is recording a small spike in 12 month rolling absences in Quarter 2, the separate in month data for July, August and September (1.21- 1.55 days).were all lower than the average level that was recorded in the previous seven months of available data (1.72 days)

4. Finance & Controls

Table 9. 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 full year budget – Education and Lifelong Learning	25.9%		51.8%					

Service Commentary - Table 9

As described within the Council Financial Performance – Quarter 2 report to the Finance and Resources Committee on 5th November 2025. The Education Service faces a series of sustained demand pressures, alongside a level of variation in support needs amongst ELC and school pupils at each transition stage which cannot always be fully predicted, even in the context of increasingly sophisticated demand projection tools.








In this context, whilst stringent controls on staff costs are being applied, the end-of year forecast for staff expenditure, occasioned by meeting of the Service's on-going statutory obligations, provides limited evidence that the pressures on staff budget lines are likely to ease within this financial year.

Children's Social Work and Family Support

Corporate Measures – Cluster Level Indicators (Quarterly)

5. Citizen

Table 10. Complaints Handling

Performance Measure	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Quarter 2 2025/26	Status	2025/26 Target	Long Trend Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value			
Total No. of Complaints received (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	11	15	11			
% of Complaints resolved within timescale (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	63.6%	80.0%	63.6%		75%	
% of complaints with at least one point upheld (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	27.3%	13.3%	0.0%			
Total No. of lessons learnt identified (stage 1 and 2) - Children's Social Work	1	Data Pending*	Data Pending*			

Service Commentary – Table 10

Although there were no Complaints Upheld in Quarter 2, and the number of complaints received were improved, the proportion which were resolved within timescale fell below the target of 75%.

As at a corporate level and given the extent of involvement of multiple services and external partners in CSW complaint resolution in particular, staff leave during this period can marginally influence response times during this period. The year-to-date figure for Complaints resolution for the Service currently sits at 73.1%, just below the target.

*Lessons learned data is currently unavailable throughout this report is due to inconsistencies having been identified in how data is transferred between our systems, which is affecting the accuracy of reporting. The issue is being addressed by internal teams and the external provider. These data will be made available, and backdated, in future PMF reporting

Table 11. Service Level Standards 2025/26 (Children's Social Work)

Performance Measure	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Quarter 2 2025/26	Status	2025/26 Target	Long Trend Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value			
% of care provided in Council children's homes, fostering and adoption services achieve a care standard of Good or better	100%	100%	100%	✓	100%	▬
We will ensure care provided by the Council's fostering service achieves a care standard of good or better through regulatory inspections.	100%	100%	100%	✓	100%	▬
We will ensure care provided by the Council's adoption service achieves a care standard of good or better through regulatory inspections.	100%	100%	100%	✓	100%	▬

6. Process

Table 12. Service Level Standards 2024/25 (Children's Social Work)

Performance Measure	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Quarter 2 2025/26	Status	2025/26 Target	Long Trend Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value			
% of children open to Children's Social Work supported to live at home, where safe to do so	75%	76%	76%	✓	80%	↑
% of initial screenings undertaken, and action decided, on new referrals within 7 days.	97%	99%	99%	✓	100%	↑
% Initial Child Protection Planning Meetings held within timescale	70%*	68%*	64%*	⚠	80%	↓
% of Care experienced children and young people with three or more placements in 12 months	4.5%	4.2%	4.4%	✓	5%	↓

Service Commentary - Table 12.

Child Protection Planning Meetings

Of the nine Meetings programmed between August and October, five were completed within timescale, with stakeholder availability in October being the main driver of re-scheduling. This resulted in an average delay of three days in the holding of these 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.

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

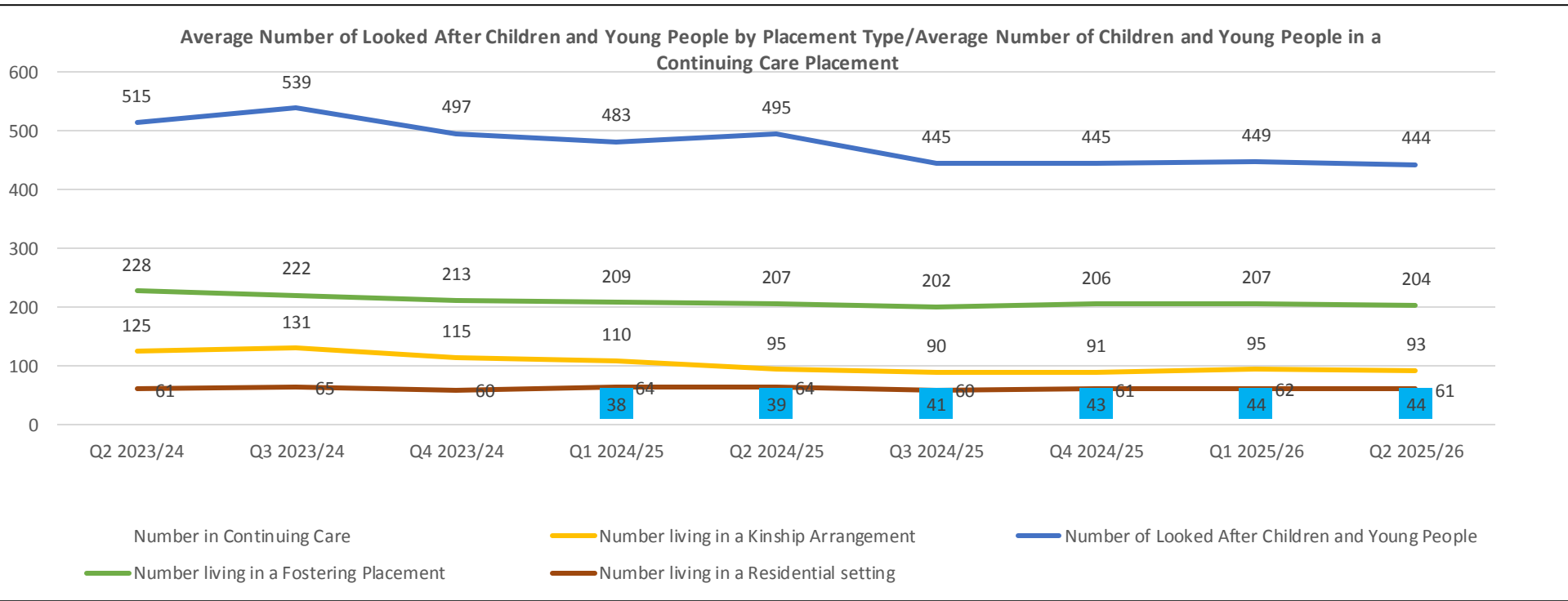


Table 13. Balance of Care -% of Looked After Children by Placement Type – Quarterly Comparisons (Quarter 2)

Period	% Looked After living in a Kinship Arrangement	% Looked After living in a Fostering Placement	% Looked After living in a Residential setting
2023/24	24.3%	44.3%	11.8%
2024/25	19.2%	41.8%	12.9%
2025/26	20.9%	45.9%	13.7%

Service Commentary.**Chart 2 – Looked After Children and Young People and those in Continuing Care**

The number of Looked After Children and Young People overall, alongside the granular figures for both those in Kinship and Foster care settings, showed a continuation of the pattern of reducing the number of children and young people being, or becoming, Looked After. This is in line with the strategic objectives of the Children's Social Work service and the themes of the Promise.

The number of those living in a Residential setting and those requiring support in Continuing Care are materially unchanged in Quarter 2, although with an upwards trend in the latter since presentation of this data commenced at the start of 2024/25.

Table 13 – Looked After Children by Placement Type

With the number of Looked After Children and Young People in total (the denominator) now changing at a rapid pace between each of the quarterly snapshot points, additional caution needs to be exercised around interpreting the % variances between 2023/24, 2024/25 to 2025/26 as being wholly representative of changes in the balance of care.

On this basis, officers within both Children's Social Work and Data and Insights are reflecting on whether this data may be presented in an alternative format going forwards to offer greater clarity to Members.

Staff**Corporate Measures – 2025/26 Service Level Indicators**

Table 14. Establishment (Children’s Social Work)



Performance Measure	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Quarter 2 2025/26	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value		
Establishment actual FTE – Children’s Social Work	351.1	348.6	351.4		

Table 15. Accidents and Incidents









Performance Measure	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Quarter 2 2025/26	Status	Long Trend Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value		
Reportable Accidents/Incidents - Employees (No in Quarter – Children’s Social Work	0	0	0		
Non-Reportable Accidents/Incidents - Employees (No in Quarter - Children’s Social Work	1	1	0		

Table 16. Absence Due to Illness (Children’s Social Work) 12 month rolling average.

Performance Measure	Quarter 4 2024/25	Quarter 1 2025/26	Quarter 2 2025/26	Quarter 2 2025/26 Corporate Figure	Status	Long Trend - Quarterly
	Value	Value	Value			
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE – Children’s Social Work	2.66	3.02	2.98	4.92		

8. Finance & Controls

Table 17. Staff Expenditure (Children’ Social Work)

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 – Children's Social Work *	27.1%		56.8%					




Service Commentary - Table 17





As with the Education and Lifelong Cluster, the report to the Finance and Resources Committee on 5th November 2025 noted that the Children's Social Work Service faces a series of sustained demand pressures, including high and complex caseloads arising from the support generated by recent net immigration factors, alongside evidence of resident families experiencing, and presenting with additional requirements for support.

It is likely that these demand pressures will continue to exert an influence on staff resource, and expenditure levels, to conclusion of the financial year with the potential of a spend to full year budget that exceeds the nominal journal lines.

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

Improve Leadership of Change in Schools		
Build leadership and capacity through:	Progress	RAG
A coordinated professional learning programme focussing on strategic leadership responsibilities	<p>Our professional learning framework and professional learning calendar for session 25/26 have been updated and issued. All professional learning opportunities are focussed on improving learning and teaching and Leadership in our schools.</p> <p>Leadership programmes (Aspire2Lead and LeadWise) run throughout the session and are offered to those in the early phase of leadership and to more experienced middle leaders.</p>	Green
Involving all middle leaders in Quality Improvement Visits to other establishments	<p>Quality improvement arrangements ensure middle leaders are part of improvement visits within their own school and at least one of the visits to schools in their trio. All staff have the opportunity to evaluate their experience, and the feedback is used to support individuals professional development and the annual review of the Quality Improvement Framework.</p>	
Issuing and analysing surveys of staff, parents and learners to inform Quality Improvement Activity Increased professional learning and networking opportunities for all staff	<p>Surveys are being issued to parents, staff and pupils in schools within Category 3 during term 2. Feedback will be used to evidence progress against improvement priorities and support identification of next steps.</p> <p>One of our most experienced secondary head teachers has established learning and teaching and maths and numeracy networks to continue to develop shared resources in order to improve consistency of delivery across all schools.</p> <p>Working with Glasgow University this session, we have 17 primary schools taking part in a spatial reasoning numeracy research project using a spatialised maths programme, MathsBURST. 5 of these schools have also offered control classes. MathsBURST teaches typical mathematical concepts which are expected to be covered in the curriculum but does so using activities that also develop spatial reasoning.</p> <p>Concrete materials, assessments and lesson plans have been provided for the teachers implementing the project through the online STEM SPACE Project portal. Initial feedback is positive, with teachers reporting that pupils are enjoying the lessons and the materials are easy to use. The project commenced in September 2025 and will run through to February 2026.</p>	

Targeted programme of staff development for schools sitting in Category 3

Delivery of a middle leaders' programme which necessitates the application of strategic leadership skills in participant settings. Use of the Northern Alliance Toolkit to link with wider professional learning opportunities

Schools within Category 3 are working with central officers to create bespoke programmes of professional development to address their identified improvement priorities.

Officers and Headteachers are currently reviewing the middle leadership programme in order to improve the pipeline of future senior leaders from staff within our own local authority.



Education professionals engage in professional learning to stimulate thinking, deepen understanding and enhance practice. The National Model of Professional Learning supports this by outlining the key principles and features of effective professional learning, helping us build capacity and foster collaborative approaches across our settings. The model encourages us to be critically informed and responsive to current educational contexts, ensuring our practice remains relevant and impactful.

The ACC Northern Alliance (NA) Toolkit lead is guiding head teachers and school leaders in their use of the Toolkit when sourcing appropriate professional learning to support identified school improvements. The results of a recent audit of professional learning requirements is currently being collated and will inform next steps at the beginning of term 2.

Deliver newly appointed HT programme and review implementation whilst engaging with national partners to help address recruitment

The newly appointed programme continues to be delivered. A working group of headteachers and central officers is reviewing the content and looking to roll out the modules to DHTs to increase their operational knowledge of administration systems.

Review of the Quality Improvement Framework	Following each round of Quality Improvement visits feedback from central officers and headteachers is used to inform updates to processes and procedures .	
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Improve the Quality of Learning Teaching and Assessment

Continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment (pace and challenge) by:	Progress	RAG
Continuing to develop and use the Learning and Teaching Toolkit to support school and individual self-evaluation	<p>The Northern Alliance toolkit provides a collection of resources for educators. These toolkits are designed to support schools with aspects of learning, teaching, and assessment, as well as curriculum development and improvement planning.</p> <p>The funded ACC Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) officers have been using the toolkit with schools to support staff understanding of pace, challenge and differentiation. Currently a majority of primary schools and a few secondary schools have engaged with the toolkit. Individual self-evaluations are now providing Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) with valuable baseline data. Interest in the Toolkit continues to grow across the city and the LTA officers are engaging with head teachers to identify the most appropriate professional learning to address themes indicated by the data.</p>	
The phased deployment of additional digital tools and a new digital identity	<p>All Primary and Secondary Schools now have access to additional digital tools through the education identity. Standalone nursery sites, central staff and Orchard Brae School remain to be migrated late October and through November.</p> <p>Further work is planned to improve identity performance to meet learning and teaching needs. Enhancements are planned where there are currently some challenges for younger and ASN learners to access the identity. Further work is planned by IT colleagues to improve device performance and end-user experience.</p>	
Expand the P4 Writing programme to all schools	Cohort 6 schools have just completed training with spread and scale training commencing after the October break. Cohort 7 schools training is planned for term 3 25/26. All schools with P4 writing data under 85% will then have been offered the programme.	
Continuing to offer data training for all staff to ensure	Understanding Data – Tracking, Monitoring and Interventions: Responsibilities and Accountability guidance has been re-issued. Data Support Material Thinglink	

accountability throughout the system	created by QIOs will be shared with schools after the October break, a tool which contains helpful guides to support staff development.
City-wide moderation programme in Literacy and Numeracy starting with schools in the lower SIMD quintiles	A moderation package has been developed by the QIO team for schools to use to reinforce staff's understanding of the moderation cycle, which will lead to more effective planning and assessing of learning and teaching. The package consists of a detailed presentation and associated activities.
Ongoing evaluation of the Numeracy portal through Maths network meetings	<p>The Maths Network has been established and outcomes agreed in line with the ACC Learning, Teaching and Assessment Improvement Plan. The Multiply/Numeracy Portal has been populated with resources which all teachers can access when planning learning for our young people in the BGE and Senior Phase.</p> <p>All Maths teachers will take part in professional learning activities during the 10 February Inservice day. Workshops are being designed linked to national education reform such as sharing resources on the new Maths Curriculum Improvement Cycle. Also, on components within the National Qualifications where attainment gains can be made. For example, the assignment for Higher Applications. Any resources devised will be quality assured and added to the Portal.</p>
Launch of the Literacy Framework to support children, young people and adult learners and ongoing evaluation through the English Language networks	The Literacy Framework has been developed to support learning in schools and across CLD and the platform to host this currently being evaluated by stakeholders.
Link standards to the ELC framework to increase pedagogical understanding	To increase pedagogical understanding and improve outcomes and experiences for children across our ELC provisions, the Early Years Team have developed a set of ELC Standards. This document is underpinned by quality indicators from the new Quality Improvement Framework for ELC. The ELC Standards will be an additional tool to support settings in their continuous evaluation and drive for improvement, as well as increase their confidence with the refreshed framework being used by regulatory bodies.
Ensure a robust application of the new tracking system and use of digital data tools	Following its pilot last year, Pupil Tracking is now being used across 11 secondary schools, tracking progress in the BGE and Senior Phase. Excel tools have been developed to support schools with analysis. Regular meetings have been held with colleagues in Edinburgh who have

	developed a range of Excel tools to support schools with the data exported from Pupil Tracking.	
Implement and evaluate tracker for care experienced children and young people	Fields have been created within Pupil Tracking to support the Virtual HT and school Pathway Advocates on the status of young people who have been identified in SEEMIS as either Care Experience, a Young Carer, living within SIMD 1 or have simply been identified for closer monitoring. In-person training was given to Pathway Advocates at Harlaw Academy in September 2025 and will be reviewed throughout the year. The development has been tested and the export file for authority data will appear on the authority dashboard once completed by the developer of Pupil Tracking.	

Deliver a broader range of senior phase pathways aligned to growth areas Deliver a broader range of learning pathways through:		RAG
Delivery of Phase 3 ABZ Campus	Phase 3 courses have commenced, with first round of tracking due to take place in November 2025. Analysis of the performance of young people for ABZ Campus courses is now underway. Officers now intend to engage the Link HMIE inspector to support a robust attainment review of ABZ Campus.	
Continuing to develop pathways to support those with a range of additional support needs	A revised ASN Pathway is being delivered through Bucksburn ASN Wing for a second session. The pathways helps realise greater connection between ASN Wing staff and the emerging new Work Experience System.	
Increased pathways to meet needs of all learners, particularly in the context of Excelerate withdrawal	Discussions are underway with neighbouring local authorities (contact made again with Argyll & Bute, Aberdeenshire, Moray & Highland) to identify possible ways to increase pathways for Phase 4 (2026-27). This is in addition to schools continuing to review the local offer to ensure the breadth of the curriculum matches the needs of young people in the school.	
Increased opportunities for CLPL for Computing Science Secondary Staff and staff across BGE	Officers continue to work in partnership with Scottish Teachers Advancing Computing Science (STACS) at Glasgow University. This has realised delivery of a day of professional learning. STACS offer also includes access to the wider "Upskilling" STACS training for Higher, Advanced Higher and BGE Computing Science which will be promoted to schools. Officers are currently promoting Education Scotland opportunities and Computing Science week.	

Improve the quality of environments/supports for those with additional support needs		
Improve the quality of environments and supports by:	Progress	RAG
Continuing to implement the accessibility plan	Communication for parents and carers is being facilitated through the development of the ACC website to ensure information is easy to find and accessible. A group of parents have provided feedback on the draft format, and these points are being addressed by the media team. This includes utilising tools for example the ReciteMe accessibility toolbar and access to interpretation, BSL, translation and transcription services.	
Ongoing roll out of the implementation of the CIRCLE framework	The CIRCLE framework continues to make a significant impact across Aberdeen City. Its consistent use has fostered a shared language, vision, and mindset around inclusive practice, helping staff to better meet the needs of all learners. The framework's impact was formally recognised by HMle and is evident in professional development reviews, classroom, year group and school wide planning. It has become a cornerstone of our approach to inclusion, supporting staff in creating environments where every child can thrive. A highlight of this term was the CIRCLE training delivered to probationer teachers in September. These workshops were enthusiastically attended, sparking rich and reflective discussions around supporting learners and ensuring we get it right for all. The sessions introduced probationers to the framework and will help embed a consistent approach from the outset of their careers. The CIRCLE framework has proven to be a powerful vehicle for upskilling staff city-wide. By promoting a unified approach to inclusive education, it continues to strengthen collective capacity to support diverse learning needs and foster equity in learning environments.	
Implement the Bridge and evaluate to support creation of Secondary Provision	The Bridge has now opened, and the first group of learners and families are attending. Ongoing evaluation of the service is being undertaken with collaboration from home schools and the Educational Psychology Service. A full report will be taken to committee in February. Initial feedback is positive from both families and home schools. A working group, including representation from the third sector, has been established to explore options for the secondary version of the Bridge including the provision of employability and skills pathways.	

Ongoing delivery of the behaviour plan

Good progress continues to be made on delivering against our shared Behaviour Plan. There is considerable evidence that engagement with the E-learning Module and shared messaging with Trade Unions is leading to more consistent reporting. As a result, and as anticipated, this has led to a slight increase in reporting.

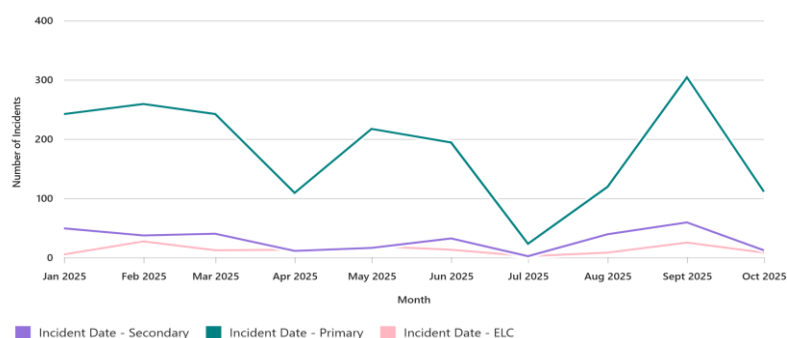
The Data Group, comprising officers and Trade Union representatives, convenes monthly to review the data in detail. This includes drilling down to individual schools where an increase in reporting has been identified, thereby facilitating the consideration of targeted interventions or support from officers or outreach services for those schools. The outcomes of any interventions are subsequently reported to the Safeguarding Group for consideration of appropriate next steps. This process ensures that all stakeholders are afforded a voice and that best practices are shared across the city. It also ensures that professional learning opportunities aimed at supporting learners can be strategically targeted to address the trends identified within the data.

The developed Module on how to report an incident is now part of the mandatory training requirements for all staff. A bespoke professional learning offer to support secondary SFL teams is currently being piloted at Aberdeen Grammar School with a plan to deliver Associated School Group specific training to all SFL/ASN PTs/DHTs over the course of this session.

In addition to the established arrangements outlined above, officers are currently working to identify and analyse trends across the three sectors (Early Learning and Childcare, primary and secondary).

Early analysis shows that:

- there is a rise in reporting across Early Learning and Childcare when new children are enrolled in settings and that incidents are most likely to happen on a Monday
- the highest number of school incidents are reported in September as young people are settling into new classes and routines



Encouragingly, the language used to report incidents is becoming more consistent—enabling officers to provide more targeted advice and guidance, however the quality of reporting remains variable and will continue to be an area of focus for the Safeguarding Group who are developing clear guidance for staff to ensure that essential information is captured, thereby allowing for a greater understanding of antecedents.

PCRA Guidance has been developed and will be shared with schools this term. Relationships guidance, taking account of the consequences guidance issued by Scottish Government, has also been updated and is to be presented to the safeguarding group prior to being issued to schools.

Review the provision for supporting learner's needs

Review of the spaces available was undertaken by the Corporate Landlord team and this will be shared as a separate Service Update. Good practice was shared in a range of areas, and all schools had spaces where sensory diet activities could occur.

Continue to shape and deliver a whole system approach to healthy weight of children and young people

Following the summit over 60 potential priorities or actions have been identified, the next steps for the group are to further prioritise these to ensure that any actions are manageable and achievable. A commonplace survey will be issued to stakeholders to gather information to allow for a top 10 to be developed and actioned.

Close the poverty related attainment gap

Help address the gap and Progress

RAG

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

Schools continue to use the Equity Tracker to plan, monitor and evaluate the impact of PEF funded interventions across the school year. This is discussed with central officers as part of the QI process and ongoing support and challenge meetings. Best practice and success stories are shared through the ACC Equity Network.

	<p>Two representatives from six schools across the city and two central officers are taking part in the pilot of a national professional learning focusing on mitigating the impact of poverty on our children and young people as well as equity within schools and communities. The programme, supported by Education Scotland is in line with the National Improvement Framework and the Scottish Attainment Challenge and designed for use by local authority leads and senior or middle establishment leaders, to facilitate professional learning across their whole authority, cluster, school or setting. The programme is being introduced in an initial pilot phase throughout session 2025/26 to 4 local authorities.</p>
Reviewing Cost of the School Day statements with the school community	<p>We have taken steps to remove all costs relating to participation in core curriculum subjects for all learners in our schools. Schools monitor other costs to ensure that any parental contributions are manageable and that parents are given prior notice of any costs. All schools have Cost of the School Day statements which have been shared with their school communities. During session 2025/26 all schools will review these with stakeholders to ensure they continue to reflect the needs of the wider school community.</p>
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)	<p>Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance training and materials remain available for all school staff. Updates to this programme are taking place over the next term, alongside work with wider Education & Lifelong Learning partners such as Family Learning. Work is being developed currently with some schools post their professional learning and leadership in this area, to develop bespoke resources for their families.</p> <p>The Educational Psychology Service has newly produced materials for parents and carers. <u>Educational Psychology Service - Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance</u></p>
Sharing clear expectations around standards across all quality indicators	<p>Care Inspectorate/Education Scotland published the final Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare Sector in September 2025. The Early Years team have developed a new QI Framework to support this. As part of the Framework the team have developed a set of standards which are underpinned by quality indicators from the new Quality Improvement Framework. These standards set out clear expectations of staff and outcomes for children.</p>
Targeting families most in need of our help by sharing data	<p>The service continues to use data effectively to identify vulnerable young people and ensure they have access to the most impactful interventions. Schools continue to</p>

	signpost vulnerable families to universally available supports.	
The provision of Money Advisors, working with the third sector to support foodbanks and uniform swaps and targeting families in need of assistance	<p>Schools provide support for items such as school trips, uniforms, and learning materials for use at home. Families are regularly informed about Free School Meals and School Clothing Grants, with information sent out through the Support for Families booklet produced by Financial Inclusion Team three times per year to ensure no eligible family misses out.</p> <p>We continue to monitor the cost of the school day and share best practice through our established Equity Network. The Education Service will continue to share targeted information with parents and carers to help them access their full entitlements by helping fund access to Money Advisors.</p>	

Addressing inequality		
Continue to address inequality by:	Progress	RAG
Ensuring all secondary schools are employing Equally Safe at School strategies and all key staff have completed the e-module	All Secondary Schools have registered with ESAS and key lead staff have been identified. The ESAS School Coordinator has been in contact with several of the leads to support our approaches to preventing and responding to gender-based violence. The UN Women (For All Women and Girls) resource has been shared with all Schools to ensure that conversations around gender equality take place at an early stage so stereotypes and gender attitudes can be challenged.	
Using the SHINE data to identify areas of vulnerability and targeting support from the Educational Psychology service to ensure improved outcomes	<p>Improvement continues to be seen in the Mental Health and Wellbeing of learners across Aberdeen. A recent input at Head Teacher's meeting highlighted the many areas of improvement (such as improvements in reporting around appearance and liking school, and a decrease in feelings of loneliness and risk of depression) but also the areas for us to continue to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Differences in outcomes by Family Affluence -Differences in outcomes by Gender, including poorest outcomes for learners who did not disclose their gender. <p>Schools can request Early Intervention Consultations with the Educational Psychology Service for support with their own SHINE data, as well as supporting these areas more generally, using their own local data. To date this year 123 Early Intervention Consultations have taken place from the Educational Psychology Service with Education staff.</p>	

	<p>There is currently no discernible difference, after one term, in the rate of request of provision based on the family affluence of their school communities. Most discussed support areas – emotional regulation, Trauma, Sensory presentations, and Learning Progress & Achievement.</p> <p>Most requested universal training offers relate to Emotion Coaching – a relational approach to communication and behaviour, and Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance – designed to address and support emotional factors that can affect attendance.</p> <p>The Educational Psychology Service relaunched their Digital Resource Hub, to offer support on a wide array of topics in relation to supporting the mental health and wellbeing including anxiety, emotional regulation and supporting school attendance: Educational Psychology Service - Topics Universal supports remain available to all settings covering a range of wellbeing areas.</p>
Secondary schools having agility in their PSE and RSHP curriculum to be able to respond to local issues as they arise	<p>Schools continue to ensure that PSE and RSHP are delivered within the Curriculum for Excellence, allowing schools flexibility to tailor content to their learners and communities and adapt to local and societal issues. This enables schools to address topics like domestic abuse, gender-based violence, and online safety in ways that reflect local concerns. Schools co-design and deliver PSE and RSHP, incorporating input from pupils, parents, and community stakeholders to ensure relevance and responsiveness. SHINE and Physical Health annual surveys carried out in term 2 provide school level data to further inform curriculum content.</p>
Maintain the Mentors Against Violence training to ensure all secondary schools have trained staff and implement the primary version when available	<p>No definitive release date is currently available for a formal, official Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) primary school version, although it is expected in session 25/26. The secondary programme continues to be supported in Secondary schools with update training being provided where necessary.</p>
Continue to amplify the voice of children and young people across the organisation	<p>The commencement of a new school session sees the relaunch of a range of pupil participation groups in schools across the city. These include the “traditional” pupil council structures of pupil voices but also extend to cover a range of themes and areas, including community action groups, health, eco, LGBTQ+ groups and more.</p> <p>Aberdeen City Council remains firmly committed to embedding the rights of children and young people, in-line</p>

	<p>with The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024. Securing significant discount due to our ability to self-sustain the Rights Respecting Schools Award. At present, we have 49 schools in the city actively engaged in the award with further interest shown by a number of schools.</p> <p>Our UNCRC plan continues to be implemented across all services with advice and support being provided, as necessary.</p>	
Delivery of the promise through:		
Reviewing data trends and interventions as part of the Promise Board.	The Promise Board meets on a monthly basis. Evaluations for all intensive support services have been submitted for review by the Board. A Power BI dashboard is under development to provide the Board with data to support review and analysis of trends.	
Continuing to review arrangements for those who are cared for out of authority.	Multiagency meetings continue to review young people cared for out of authority. Systems ensure rigorous evaluation to consider how to bring young people back into the local authority when appropriate.	
Evaluating the impact of the expansion of Edge of Care pilots.	A service update was provided for 2024-25 which evaluated the impact to date. A termly evaluation will be undertaken and made available for term 1 2025-26 and will be available early November 2026.	

RAG Status

On track to complete	
Started not likely to complete on time	
Not yet started	

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Aberdeen City Council

2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary

Introduction

Formally benchmarked educational attainment and achievement data are released at various points throughout the course of each subsequent academic year with an emphasis on the provision, and use of two main sets of comparable measures, for the purpose of detailed analysis by education authorities and schools.

The first of these releases, the **Local Benchmark Measures**, which are reflected in the summary below, offer a pre-review (i.e. prior to completion of the appeals process) evaluation of outcomes from examination diet and end of year achievement assessments of all Senior Phase pupils undertaking evaluated work aligning with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

The Framework encompasses Scottish Qualification Authority, Vocational, Skills for Work and Foundation Apprenticeship qualifications, along with a range of personal development courses and activities. Each of these in combination contribute to a holistic assessment of the educational progress and achievement being made by our young people.

Evaluation of the data provided through each release of the Insight Tool is provided through an extensive, and on-going, analysis by the education authority and its partners which 'tests' the validity of the current National Improvement Framework Plan and informs the development of future Plans.

Summary

This represents a summary of the Aberdeen City Council data post-INSIGHT in September and replicates the content and format of discussions with individual schools. The focus is on Literacy and Numeracy, Attainment For All and Breadth & Depth, aspects which align directly with priorities within National Improvement Framework planning at local and national levels.

Glossary

ASN – Additional Support Need

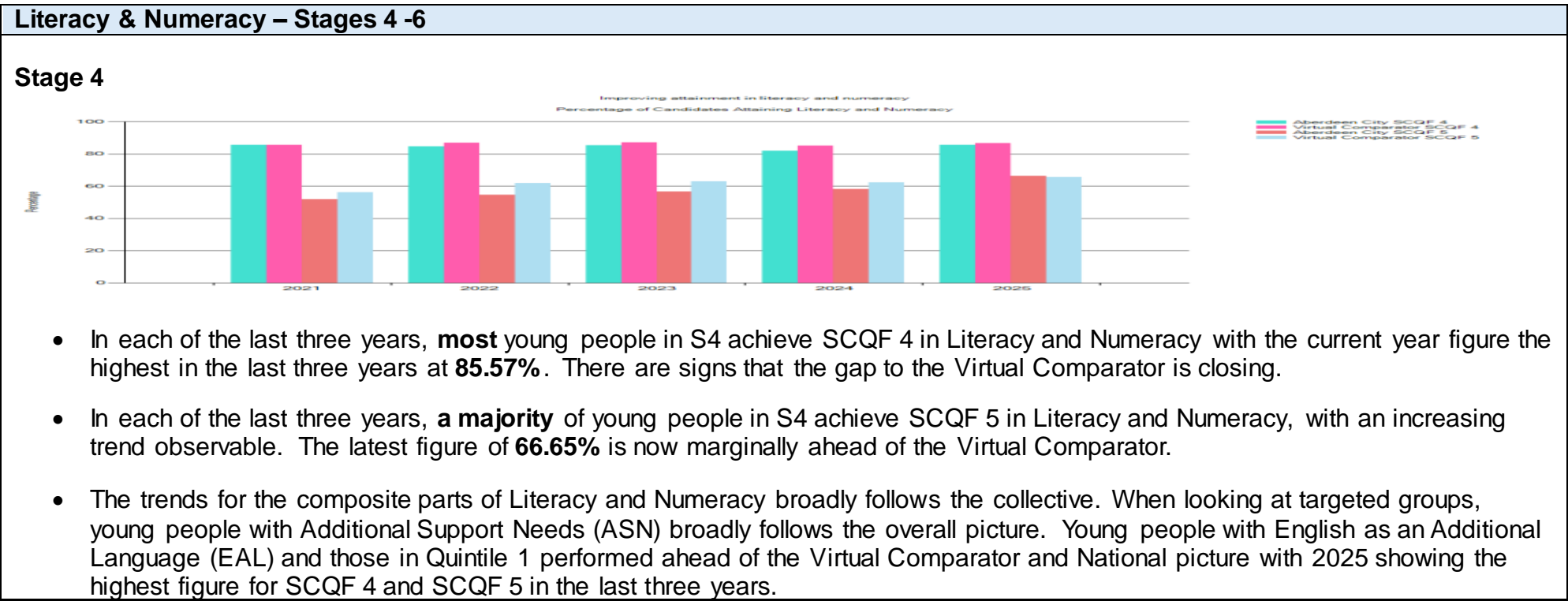
CECYP/CE – Care Experienced Children and Young People

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Aberdeen City Council 2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary

EAL – English as an Additional Language
 FSM – Free School Meals entitlement
 SCQF – Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
 VC – Virtual Comparator

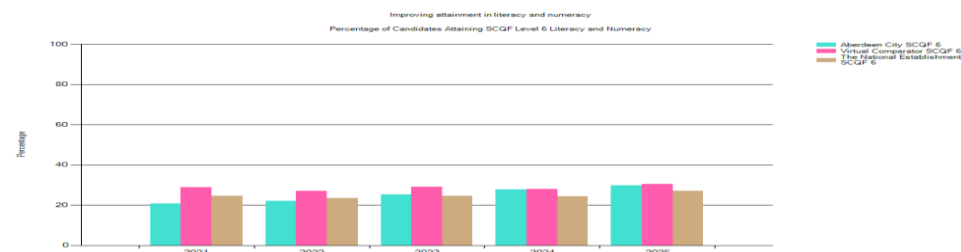
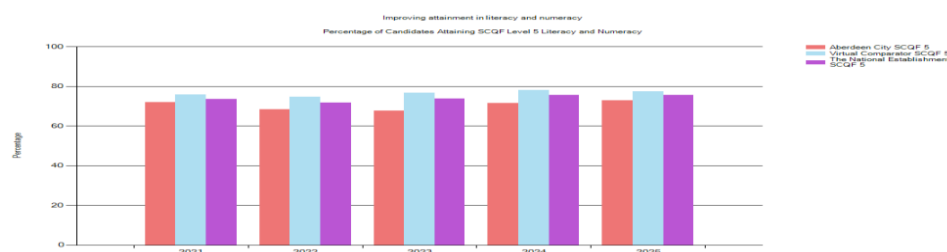


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Aberdeen City Council

2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary

Stage 5

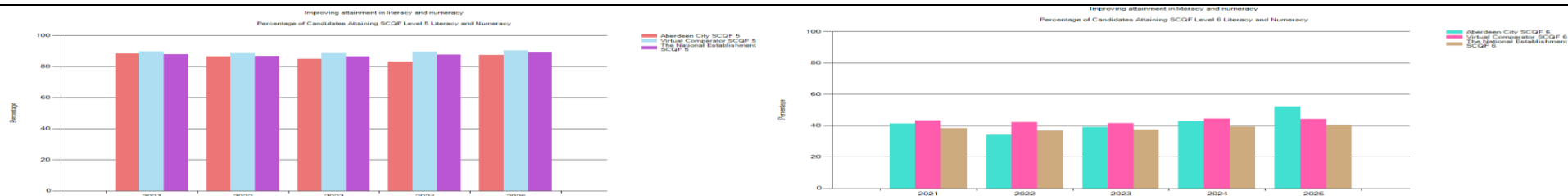


- In each of the last three years, **a majority** of young people in S5 (on S5 roll) achieve SCQF 5 in Literacy and Numeracy, with the current figure of **72.93%** the highest in the last three years and showing an increasing trend. The figure remains behind the Virtual Comparator
- **Just under half** of young people over the last three years have achieved both Literacy and Numeracy at SCQF 6, although the current figure of **29.84%** is part of an improving three year trend. The ACC figure is now only marginally behind the Virtual Comparator and ahead of the national establishment.
- The literacy contribution to the collective figure has broadly held steady for both SCQF 5 and 6, with improvements in the collective being down to gains in numeracy particularly in SCQF 6 which is now ahead of the Virtual Comparator as a standalone measure.
- When looking at targeted groups, the performance of young people with Additional Support Needs in S5 (on S5 roll) broadly follows the overall picture. Young people with English as an Additional Language continue to outperform the cohort at both SCQF 5 and SCQF 6. However, there is continued focus required on young people in Quintile 1 but particularly those with Free School Meal entitlement and Care Experience (although there are only ten young people in this latter group)

Stage 6

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Aberdeen City Council 2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary



- In each of the last three years, **most** young people in S6 (on S6 roll) achieved SCQF 5 Literacy and Numeracy, with the current figure (**87.39%**) the highest in this period. However, the figure remains behind the Virtual Comparator.
- For the first time in three years, **a majority** of young people in S6 achieved SCQF 6 Literacy and Numeracy with the current figure (**52.10%**) the highest in an increasing three-year trend. This figure appears now some way ahead of the Virtual Comparator.
- Composite Literacy and Numeracy data largely follows the collective figure but the more than eight percent improvement at SCQF 6 in Numeracy is particularly notable as part of this data-set, with this figure more than ten percent ahead of the Virtual Comparator.
- When looking at targeted groups, the performance of young people with ASN and EAL in S6 (on S6) perform in line with the whole cohort. The performance of young people in Quintile 1 follows the cohort for SCQF 6 but not at SCQF 5 which is behind the trajectory.

Attainment For All

Attainment for All converts learner success in qualifications into *tariff points*, which numerically represents the cumulative attainment of our pupils across the Senior Phase stages. This is presented within INSIGHT by percentile quintiles of candidate attainment that enables comparative analysis of trends across the spectrum of abilities.

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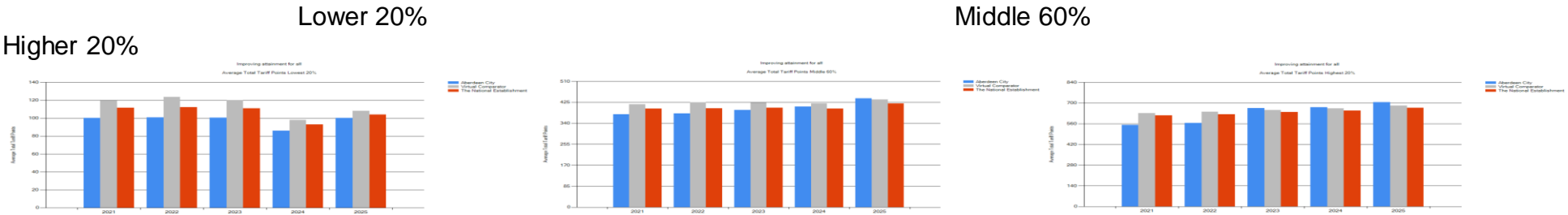


Aberdeen City Council
2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary

The graphs below shows the performance of learners split into the Lower 20 percentile (L20), Middle 60 percentile (M60) and Highest 20 percentile (H20) quintiles of candidate attainment. The charts below outline outcomes from leavers across all Senior Phase stages. It should be borne in mind that completion of a proportion of course activity may be undertaken across more than a single stage.

Attainment for All - S4 -S6

Stage 4



- The lowest 20% performance has increased compared to 2024 although the overall picture remains mixed. The figure remains behind the Virtual Comparator although the gap has narrowed this year.
- The middle 60% performance shows an increasing three-year trend with the current year now showing ahead of the Virtual Comparator.
- The Highest 20% performance shows an increasing three-year trend with the figure showing ahead of the Virtual Comparator for three consecutive years.
- The performance of targeted groups in the Lowest 20% is mixed, broadly reflecting the mixed picture in this group as a whole. Young people with English as an Additional Language, and in Quintile 1 have shown an improvement in 2025 and are ahead of the

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Aberdeen City Council
2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary

VC whilst the three-year trend is mixed. However, the performance of young people with Additional Support Needs and entitled to Free School Meals shows behind the Virtual Comparator.

- The performance of targeted groups in the Middle 60% represents a broadly positive picture, reflecting improvements in the group overall. Young people with Additional Support Needs, and Quintile 1 show a three-year improving trend with the figure ahead of the Virtual Comparator.
- Young people with English as an Additional Language have shown an increase compared on the previous year with the figure ahead of the Virtual Comparator. Performance for young people entitled to Free School Meals, and with Care Experience shows improvement on the previous year but is still behind the Virtual Comparator.

The performance of targeted groups in the Highest 20% represents something of a mixed picture.

- Young people with English as an Additional Language continue to perform well with an increasing trend and ahead of the Virtual Comparator. Young people with Additional Support Needs show an increase on the previous year and are ahead of the Virtual Comparator. However, young people with entitlement to Free School Meals, Care Experience and those in Quintile 1 show behind the Virtual Comparator despite a mixed picture across the last three years.

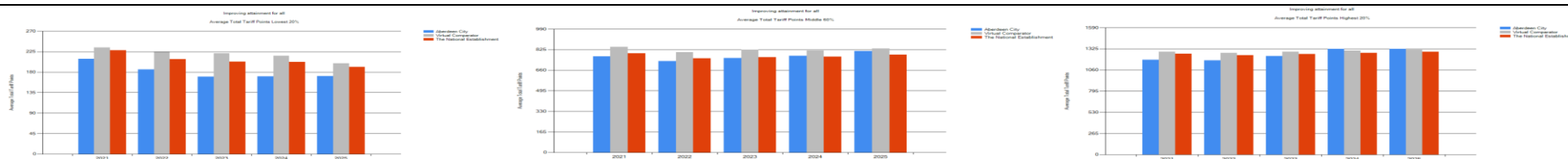
Stage 5

	Lower 20%	Middle 60%
Highest 20%		

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Aberdeen City Council

2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary

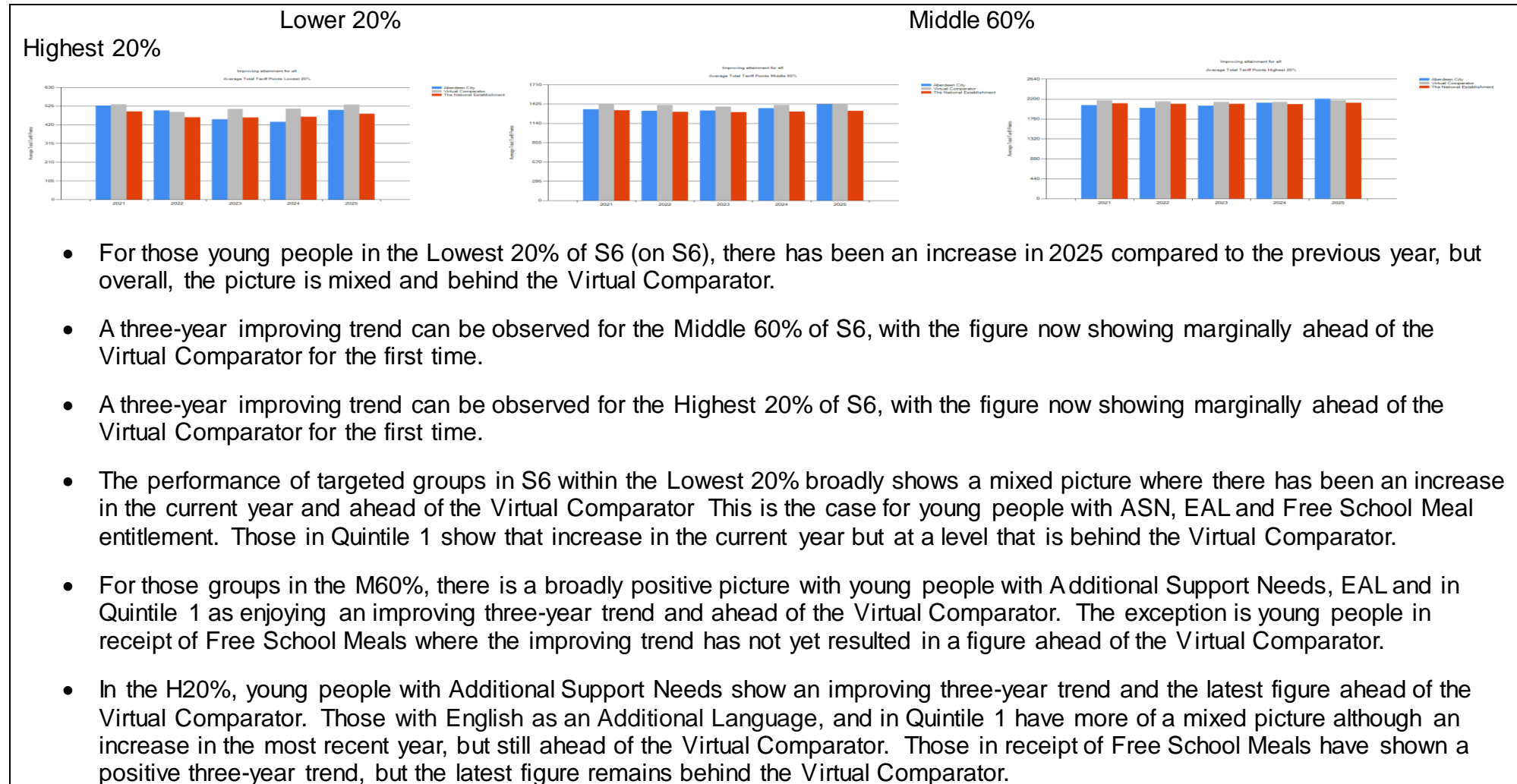


- For young people in the Lowest 20% of S5 (on S5 roll), there has been a slight increase in 2025 compared to the previous year with the overall figure holding steady and showing behind the Virtual Comparator.
- For those in the Middle 60%, there is an increasing three-year trend, and the figure shows as approaching the Virtual Comparator.
- For those in the Highest 20%, there is a slight increasing three-year trend, and the figure shows ahead of the Virtual Comparator for the second consecutive year.
- The performance of targeted groups in the Lowest 20% largely shows a mixed picture and figures that are behind the Virtual Comparator. Young people with ASN, FSM and those in Quintile 1 fall into this category. Young people with EAL show an increasing trend and are ahead of the Virtual Comparator.
- For targeted groups in the Middle 60%, the picture is broadly positive.
- Young people with ASN, EAL and those in Quintile 1 show figures following a three-year increasing trend and now ahead of the Virtual Comparator. The exceptions are for those in receipt of Free School Meals or Care Experience where the picture is mixed and behind the Virtual Comparator.
- In the Highest 20%, the same targeted groups are performing well. Those with ASN, EAL and those in Quintile 1 are on a three-year increasing trend and with a figure ahead of the VC. Again, those with FSM and Care Experience contexts are behind the VC.

Stage 6

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Aberdeen City Council 2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary



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Aberdeen City Council
2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary

- The figure for young people with Care Experience is too small to be reliable.

Breadth & Depth – S4 (on S4), S5 (on S5), S6 (on S6)

Breadth & Depth

Breadth & Depth information provides data to show the number of learners as a percentage of their cohort who achieve a series of passes in a particular SCQF level -for example those who achieve more than one pass at Level 5 in S4. The number of passes and levels selected align with those key measures highlighted within National Improvement Framework Evidence Reporting (NIFIER) and Scotland’s National Performance Framework.

Stage 4 (SCQF)

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Aberdeen City Council

2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary

S4 (onS4) SCQF 2025 VC Comparison	Cohort	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Number in Cohort
1 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	96.92%	94.57%	87.68%	33.69%	2045
1 or more	Virtual Comparator	97.36%	94.67%	85.73%	12.53%	20450
3 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	91.34%	88.51%	74.57%	0.39%	2045
3 or more	Virtual Comparator	93.17%	89.01%	73.46%	0.15%	20450
5 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	85.38%	81.66%	61.08%	0.00%	2045
5 or more	Virtual Comparator	87.24%	82.01%	60.02%	0.00%	20450

S4 (onS4) SCQF Three-Year Trend	Cohort	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Number in Cohort
1 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	96.92%	94.57%	87.68%	33.69%	2045
1 or more	2024 Aberdeen City	96.37%	93.48%	84.03%	17.56%	2010
1 or more	2023 Aberdeen City	96.60%	94.90%	84.70%	4.33%	1941
3 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	91.34%	88.51%	74.57%	0.39%	2045
3 or more	2024 Aberdeen City	90.25%	86.32%	70.35%	0.20%	2010
3 or more	2023 Aberdeen City	91.60%	89.23%	67.85%	0.00%	1941
5 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	85.38%	81.66%	61.08%	0.00%	2045
5 or more	2024 Aberdeen City	81.24%	77.71%	55.72%	0.00%	2010
5 or more	2023 Aberdeen City	80.94%	77.85%	52.70%	0.00%	1941

- **Almost all** young people in S4 (94.57%) achieved at least one Level 4 pass. **Most** (87.68%) achieved a least one Level 5 pass. **A minority** (33.69%) of young people in S4 achieved at least one Level 6 pass.
- **Less than half** of measures in 2025 for breadth and depth show ACC figures behind the VC.
- **All** measures comparing 2025 to prior year's show an increase on 2024, with **less than half** now showing a progressive three-year positive trend.

Stage 5 (SCQF)

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Aberdeen City Council

2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary

S5 on S5 2025 with VC		Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Number in Cohort
1 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	90.96%	77.36%	1.79%	1736
1 or more	Virtual Comparator	92.00%	76.64%	1.59%	17360
3 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	83.70%	58.12%	0.00%	1736
3 or more	Virtual Comparator	84.87%	58.01%	0.01%	17360
5 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	74.60%	38.25%	0.00%	1736
5 or more	Virtual Comparator	76.17%	35.87%	0.00%	17360

S5 on S5 2025 Three-Year Trend		Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Number in Cohort
1 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	90.96%	77.36%	1.79%	1736
1 or more	2024 Aberdeen City	90.84%	71.62%	1.25%	1681
1 or more	2023 Aberdeen City	91.53%	70.48%	1.14%	1582
3 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	83.70%	58.12%	0.00%	1736
3 or more	2024 Aberdeen City	82.45%	53.90%	0.00%	1681
3 or more	2023 Aberdeen City	82.05%	53.41%	0.13%	1582
5 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	74.60%	38.25%	0.00%	1736
5 or more	2024 Aberdeen City	71.74%	33.67%	0.00%	1681
5 or more	2023 Aberdeen City	69.91%	30.03%	0.00%	1582

- **Almost all** young people in S5 achieved at least one Level 5 SCQF pass. **Most** young people in S5 achieved at least one Level 6 SCQF pass. **A few** young people in S5 achieved a Level 7 SCQF pass.
- **Almost all** measures in S5 comparing ACC performance with prior years showed an improvement in breadth and depth for SCQF. **A majority** of these show a clear three-year improving trend.

Stage 6 (SCQF)

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Aberdeen City Council

2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary

S6 on S6 SCQF Comp with VC		Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Number in Cohort
1 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	96.77%	93.84%	44.09%	1023
1 or more	Virtual Comparator	97.97%	93.64%	48.46%	10230
3 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	95.60%	85.53%	13.49%	1023
3 or more	Virtual Comparator	95.82%	84.08%	9.26%	10230
5 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	91.69%	70.97%	0.39%	1023
5 or more	Virtual Comparator	91.49%	69.42%	0.09%	10230

S6 on S6 SCQF Three-Year Trend		Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Number in Cohort
1 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	96.77%	93.84%	44.09%	1023
1 or more	2024 Aberdeen City	96.57%	91.43%	43.15%	992
1 or more	2023 Aberdeen City	96.84%	91.36%	44.68%	949
3 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	95.60%	85.53%	13.49%	1023
3 or more	2024 Aberdeen City	93.85%	80.34%	12.40%	992
3 or more	2023 Aberdeen City	94.52%	81.35%	10.75%	949
5 or more	2025 Aberdeen City	91.69%	70.97%	0.39%	1023
5 or more	2024 Aberdeen City	87.90%	66.63%	0.30%	992
5 or more	2023 Aberdeen City	89.78%	63.86%	0.32%	949

- **Almost all** young people achieved at least one Level 6 SCQF award in Stage 6. **Just under half** of S6 achieved a Level 7 SCQF award.
- **All** measures for SCQF performance in breadth and depth in Stage 6 showed progression compared to the prior year. In **a minority** of cases, this represents a positive three-year journey.

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Aberdeen City Council

2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary

As a supplement to the INSIGHT data presented above, the Scottish Local Government Benchmarking Framework has recently released benchmarked Tariff Score data which encompasses the fourth core focus of attainment 'Attainment in the Context of Deprivation'. Summary comments around the outcomes from this release, derived from data shared by the Scottish Government with the Improvement Service are captured below.

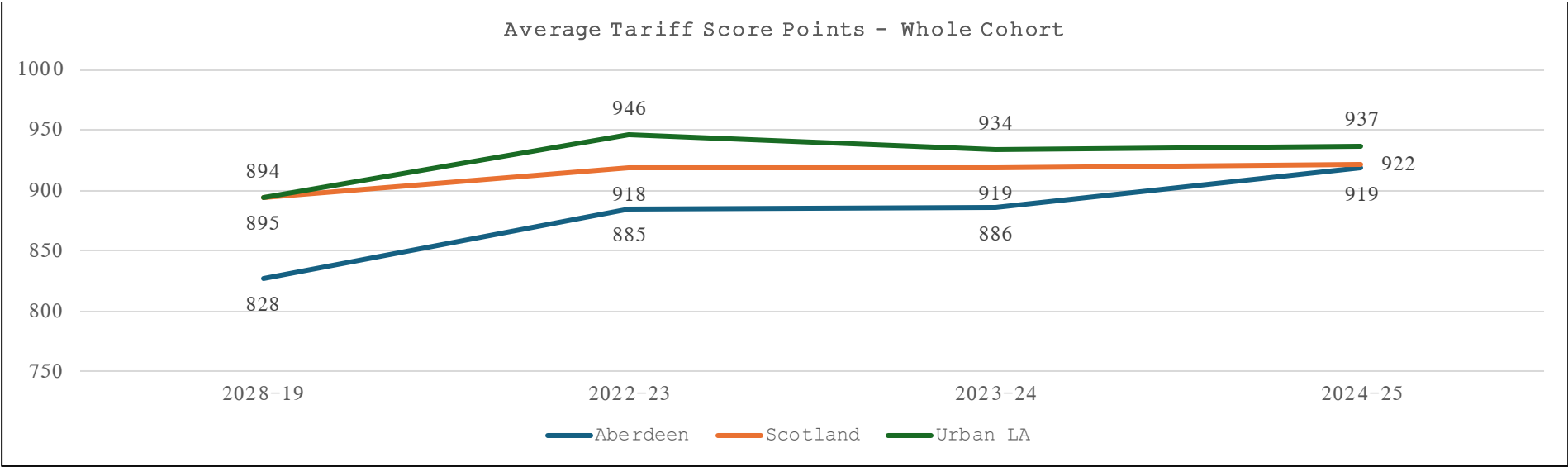
These data are not classified as Official Statistics but assist local authorities to understand the relative outcomes of Senior Phase pupils out with the context of formal SCQF National and Virtual Comparator benchmarks.

As with the INSIGHT data, year-to year variations, and those between comparators, which are less than 1% should generally be regarded as representing stable or equal performance, respectively. This principle takes some account of natural variations in cohort sizes and profiles between years and across benchmarks.

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Aberdeen City Council
2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary



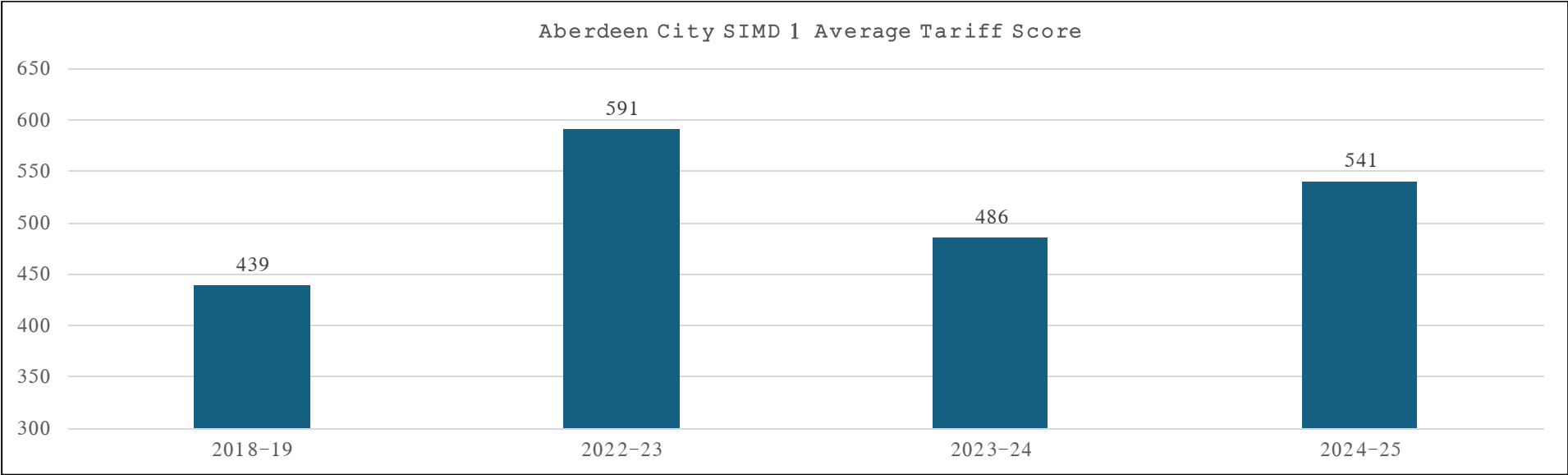
- In contrast to the National and Urban LA benchmarks, which are stable, **the SCQF Average Tariff Score for all pupils presented in 2024/25 has risen substantially in comparison with each previous year (with the exception of 2021/22) of this measure.** The distances to both the National figure and the Large Urban Average benchmark are on a materially closing trend.
- In 2024/25, Aberdeen City is ranked **12th out of 32 Local Authorities for this measure, the highest placing to date**

SIMD 1

Appendix C



Aberdeen City Council
2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary



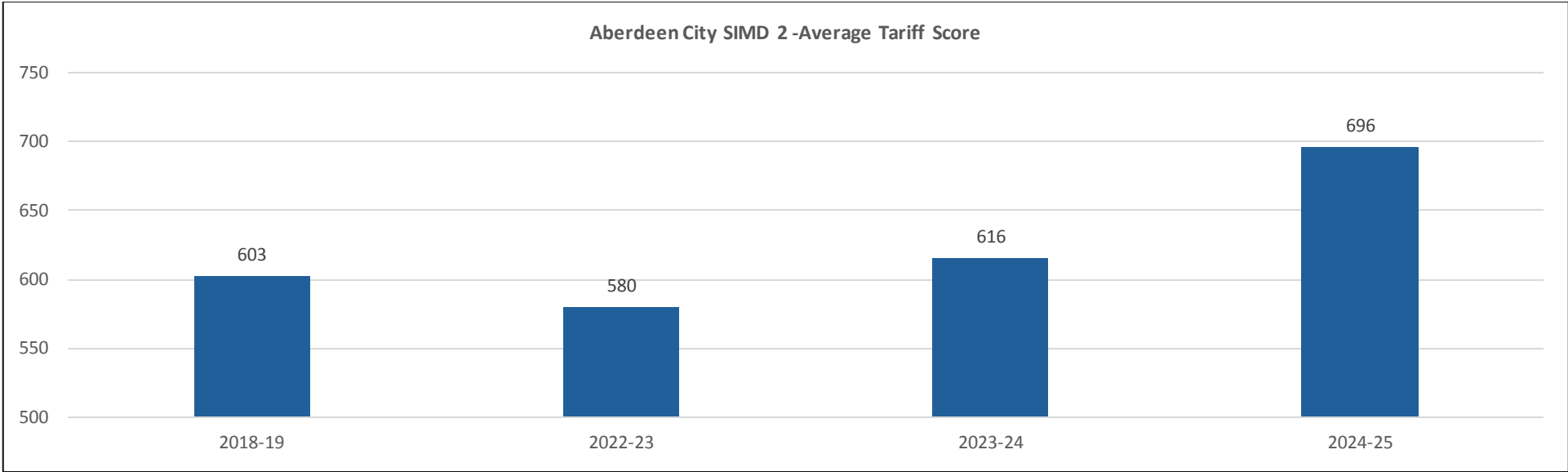
- Average Tariff Scores for Aberdeen pupils in the **Most Deprived Quintile (SIMD 1)** have risen (**+11%**) **year-on-year** faster than at National level, in comparison with almost all other authorities, each of the city’s Large Urban comparators, and in the context of the Urban Average figure.
- **Just under half of all Scottish Local Authorities recorded a fall in Average Tariff Scores for this SIMD cohort in 2024/25.**
- **The city has moved upwards into the 3rd Quartile** of LA rankings for this measure, equalling the previous highest placing (excluding 2022/23) over the timeline of this measure.

SIMD 2

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Aberdeen City Council
2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary



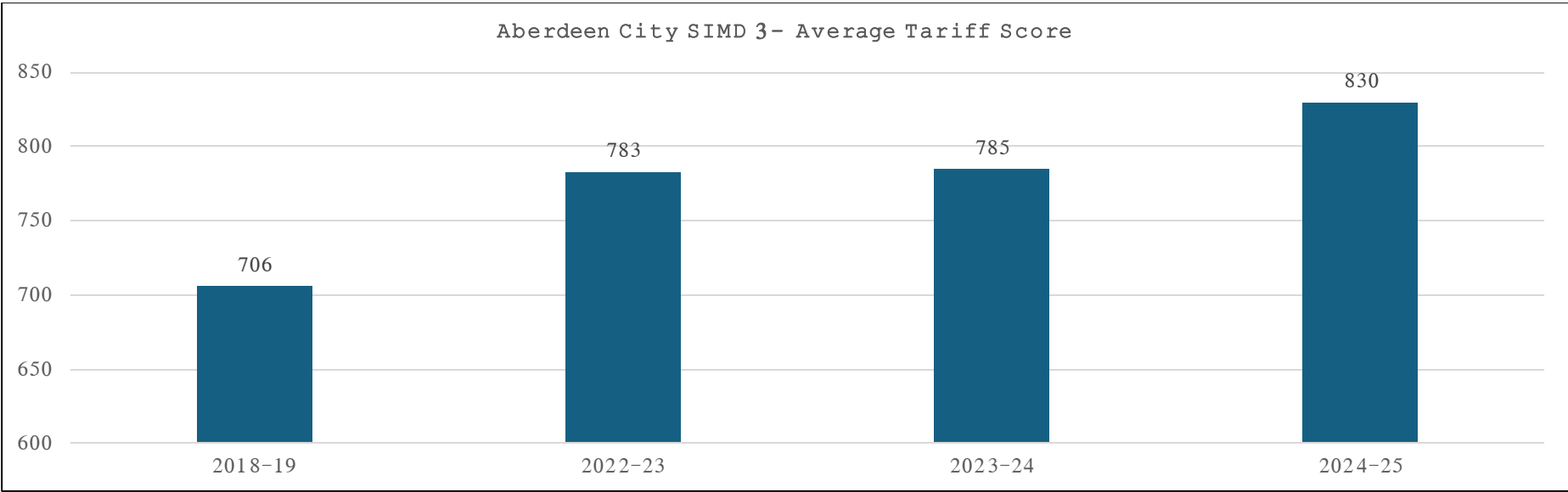
- The city has recorded a significant increase in Tariff Scores of pupils within SIMD 2, **achieving the highest score to date over the full course of this measure.**
- **The year-on year % increase of 12.9% is amongst the largest annual improvements** to date for Aberdeen, and amongst all local authorities in 2024/25. It also represents a substantial closing of the distances to those outcomes at National (772 points) and Urban Comparator levels.
- The city is placed 21st out of 32 Scottish Local Authorities, a material improvement in the city’s relative placement after a period of comparatively low performance for this measure. **This is particularly pleasing given the focus on attainment in SIMD 2 that had been applied during the 2024/25 academic year.**

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Aberdeen City Council
2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary

SIMD 3



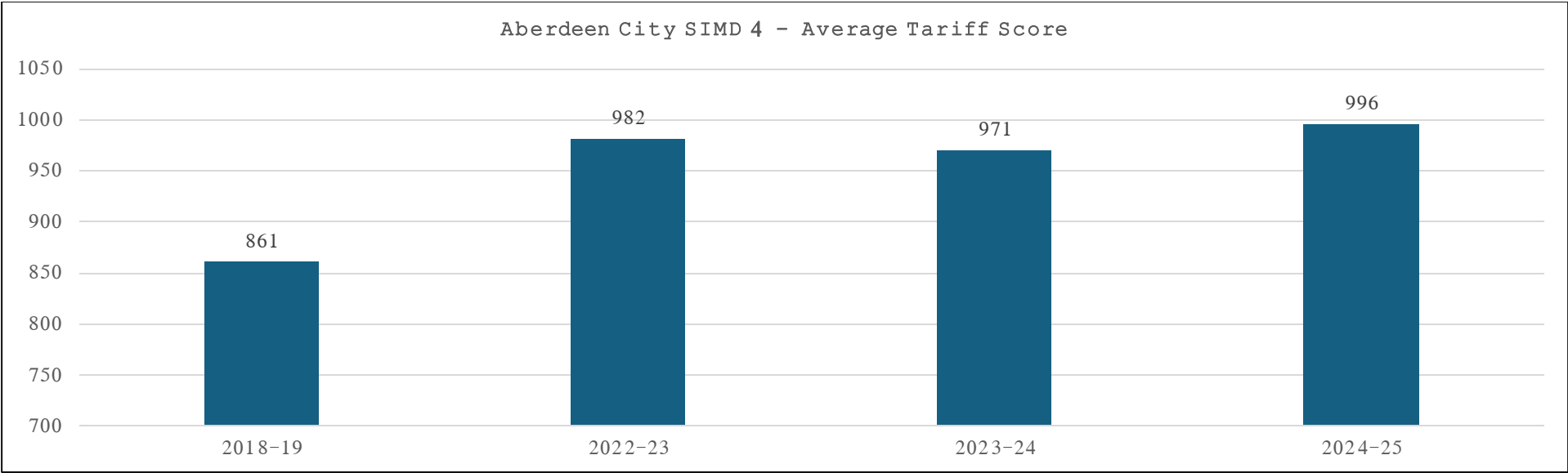
- With an improvement rate of 5.7%, **the 2024/25 Tariff Score for pupils in SIMD 3 equals the previous high for this measure recorded in 2021/22.**
- Against a background of static year-to-year change at National and Urban comparator levels, there has been some closing of the distances to both of these comparators, and **an improvement in the city’s relative standing into the 3rd Quartile of Local Authority performance.**
- **Just under half of all LA’s recorded a year-on-year fall in this outcome** in comparison with 2023/24, of which six are either geographic or affluence related benchmarks for the city.

SIMD 4

Appendix C



Aberdeen City Council
2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary



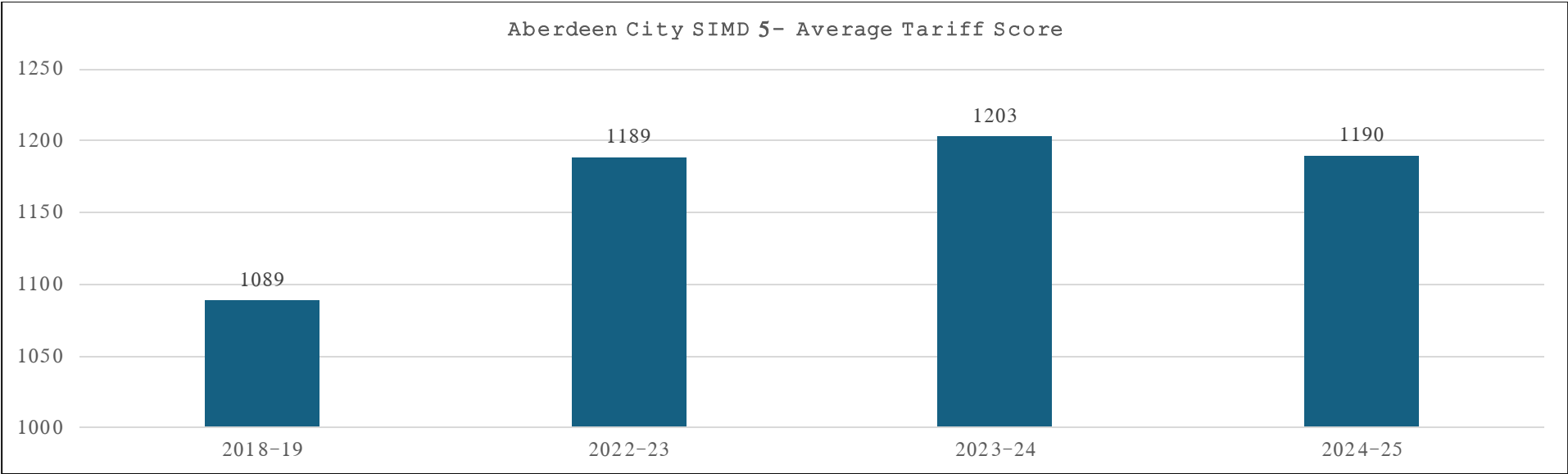
- In contrast to the majority of the city’s Large Urban comparators and the National landscape, **Aberdeen saw it’s 2024/25 outcome for SIMD 4 rise slightly (+2.5%)** and at a faster rate than the affluence based comparator.
- In 2024/25 more than half of all Scottish Local Authorities experienced a fall in the Tariff Score for this SIMD cohort whilst **Aberdeen recorded the highest Tariff Score for SIMD 4 pupils to date.**
- This has closed the distances between Aberdeen and each of its comparators and **represents a third consecutive year in which the city’s relative standing is improved.**

SIMD 5

Appendix C



Aberdeen City Council
2025 Post-INSIGHT Attainment Summary



- **The Tariff Scores for those in the Least Deprived Quintile has remained stable for a second consecutive year.** This pattern is consistent with the picture for National and Large Urban comparators, although marginally below both benchmarks.
- The 2024-25 outcome **closes the distance to the affluence based Family Group Average** which saw a small decline year-on-year (-2.7%) to 1257 points and has resulted in Aberdeen City making gains in the ranked position within the second quartile of performance, which is the **highest relative standing to date for this measure.**
- **This is only the third year in which Aberdeen City has been placed in the second quartile of performance for this measure and represents a four year improvement trend in our relative standings.**

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	25 November 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Inspection Reporting
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/262
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne/Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR	Shona Milne/Graeme Simpson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.6

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report details the outcome of inspection reports published by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and The Care Inspectorate since the last meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 Notes the content of this report;
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools to implement continuous improvement in keeping with agreed Quality Improvement Frameworks.

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*.

3.3 EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTIONS

3.3.1 Education Scotland Inspection of Seaton Primary School

In May 2025, a team of HM Inspectors visited Seaton school to undertake a full model inspection. They did not visit the ELC as this had been inspected within the last 18 months by the Care Inspectorate. During the visit they talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the acting HT and staff in the school.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- Children across the school benefit from a calm and positive climate for learning. This reflects the school values and leads to positive learning experiences for children.
- The acting headteacher and her leadership team have worked well with staff, children and the wider school community to identify changes required in the school. They have worked together to develop a shared vision and understanding which are making a positive difference in improving experiences for children.
- Children's wellbeing needs are supported very well by school staff. Children's wellbeing and experiences are enhanced by nurturing staff and highly effective partnership working.
- Children who require additional support receive high-quality targeted provision. This supports them well to participate in school life.

The following areas for improvement were identified.

- Senior leaders need to continue to ensure that the many improvement activities underway remain clearly linked to whole school priorities. These improvement activities would benefit from being streamlined and prioritised to ensure that they are focused on the maximum positive outcomes for children.
- Teachers should continue to develop their universal approaches to planning learning, that ensures all children's learning is at the correct level of difficulty including all children in classes with additional support needs.
- Senior leaders need to develop further their processes around the overall monitoring of children's attainment. This should help them to create more useful overviews of children's and groups of children's attainment which teachers can use to support children as they move through the school.

Evaluation Gradings for Seaton Primary School

School Quality Indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of Change	Good
Learning Teaching and Assessment	Good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Good
Raising attainment and achievement	Good

Inspectors noted the positive impact of the consistent approaches to learning and teaching and how this had supported a constructive climate for learning. Negotiated classroom charters successfully supported children to have ownership of agreed expectations and this had resulted in high expectations for all.

They commented on the success of the work the acting headteacher had done with the community to develop a shared understanding of the need for change. The acting head teacher's approach has ensured all members of the school community are involved in the improvements in school.

Inspectors reported that both staff and children benefit from the welcoming, caring and nurturing ethos of the school. They commented that the curriculum provides opportunities for children to focus on their own areas of interest ensuring high levels of motivation and engagement.

Children's wellbeing is supported well by all staff and children are confident in accessing support from staff confident the response will be prompt and helpful. Data is used effectively to support the design and delivery of the wellbeing curriculum.

Inspectors noted the importance of the tracking meetings held termly with class teachers and the positive impact this was having on the pace of learning and attainment for all children.

Central officers and school staff are pleased with the report and feel it accurately reflects their own self-evaluation. The school was in Category 2 prior to the inspection and will now move to Category 1.

A copy of the report can be found [here](#)

3.3.2 Education Scotland Return Inspection to Tullos Primary School

In September 2025, a team of HM Inspectors visited Tullos school to undertake a follow up inspection focussed on the areas for improvement identified during the original inspection in June 2024. They did not visit the ELC as this had been graded good in the previous inspection.

The Progress made against original areas for improvement is described below.

Teachers need to improve the quality of learners' experiences across the school. This should include planning more enjoyable, challenging and relevant learning experiences.

Inspectors noted significant improvement in this area, including improved classroom environments. Inspectors noted that the professional learning undertaken by the whole staff team and new learning and teaching policy had led to more consistently high standards. Inspectors suggested that having these foundations in place now enables staff to ensure there is a balance of child-led, child-initiated and adult-led learning throughout the day.

Teachers are now clear about the expectations in relation to planning and feedback, which is making learning more relevant and enjoyable for learners and supporting them to make progress. There is still a need to improve access to, and use of, technology across the curriculum. The roll out of the Northern Lights programme should support this and will ensure all classes have access to high quality technology.

School leaders should work with teachers to ensure strategies to promote positive relationships and behaviour are applied consistently across the school. There is a need to improve attendance of children to school

Inspectors noted that there had been positive work undertaken in this area and children reported that they feel respected both by staff and by other children in school and they understand what behaviour is expected of them. Staff have worked collaboratively across school to improve behaviour and relationships. They consistently use agreed strategies and language to support children. As a result, almost all children behave well and have positive relationships with adults and their peers.

Senior leaders have implemented robust daily attendance checks, identifying reasons for absences and providing targeted support to families, which has led to improved attendance. The headteacher has developed systems to support families and increase attendance through working with the family to understand and overcome barriers to attendance.

Inspectors felt there was a very positive ethos in the school which offered young people the opportunity to celebrate successes and achievements.

Teachers should, with the support of the local authority, ensure that they quickly and consistently identify the needs of individuals and groups of children. To support this, teachers should plan tasks, activities and resources more effectively to meet the identified needs of children.

Inspectors noted strong progress in this area with teachers able to discuss and plan appropriately for the full range of needs in their classes. Senior leaders use the tracking system to effectively review the impact of interventions. They use the data gathered to support teachers to plan and provide effective support to meet children's changing needs.

Teachers and support staff are working well together to provide support to those children who need it. The work pupil support assistants are undertaking with children is planned and reviewed together and this ensures all staff have an understanding of how children are progressing.

Senior leaders and staff need to work together to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school. Staff should develop and implement approaches to track children's progress, attainment and achievements more effectively. This will help them to better monitor children's progress and evaluate the impact of interventions to remove barriers to learning.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy has improved. Teachers are now making use of a range of assessments to check children's knowledge and understanding, and this is resulting in more effective planning to meet learner needs.

The school has begun to track and celebrate achievements out of school. All children have access to clubs at lunchtime and after school which is increasing wider opportunities for families. Children are proud of their achievements and enjoy sharing them through the achievement board at the front of school.

HMIE will make no further visits in relation to the original inspection. Central officers and school staff are pleased the report acknowledges the significant work of the headteacher and wider team and feel it accurately reflects their own self-evaluation. The school was in Category 3 prior to the inspection and will now move to Category 1.

A copy of the report can be found [here](#)

3.3.3 COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (CLD)

HM Inspectors carried out a Progress Visit to the Community Learning and Development Team in June 2025. The Progress Visit was designed to determine progress against the improvement point of May 2024.

Senior leaders and CLD partners need 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.

Inspectors reported that CLD partners and the Local Authority are taking appropriate steps to address the main point for action. CLD is now more clearly linked to the Community Planning Partnership. Inspectors noted that governance arrangements are now clear.

Inspectors commented positively on the significant community engagement carried out to shape the latest Community Learning Plan and how this has provided partners with the confidence that the plan is reflective of the needs and expectations of learners and communities in Aberdeen.

Following their engagement Inspectors are now confident that the local authority and partners are taking steps to address the actions identified in the Progress Visit and as a result they will make no further visits in relation to the inspection.

The full letter can be found [here](#) .

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 Riverbank ELC**, a local Authority setting in Tillydrone, received an unannounced Inspection which took place on 27 and 28th August 2025. The two inspectors inspecting the setting spoke to staff, children and parents as well as undertaking observations.

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?	Adequate (3)	Very Good (5)
How good is our leadership?	Adequate (3)	Very Good (5)
How good is our staff team?	Adequate (3)	Very Good (5)

The nursery team have been working hard to address the recommendations from their previous report and are delighted that this hard work has been recognised.

Inspectors noted the improvement in personal plans and how effectively these are used to support children's health and wellbeing. They were impressed with the interactions between staff and children and commented on how this ensured children experienced caring and loving interactions which were responsive to children's needs.

Staff were praised for their use of the local environment to enhance learners' experiences and provide contextual learning as part of the curriculum.

Inspectors recognised the impact of the leadership of the senior who is highly motivated and supports staff to be reflective practitioners as well as ensuring self-evaluation and quality assurance processes are fully embedded.

The service is now confident the setting will continue to improve and as a result 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 Gilcomstoun ELC**, a local Authority setting, received an unannounced Inspection which took place on 9 and 10 September 2025. Inspectors spent

time in the playrooms, spoke to children, staff and parents, carried out observations and reviewed paperwork.

Inspectors noted staff were knowledgeable about children and their needs resulting in nurturing interactions and inclusive and stimulating experiences which supported progress in learning. The setting allowed children to free flow between indoors and outdoors ensuring access to a wide range of learning experiences. All staff have a clear understanding around their role in terms of safety and safeguarding and process and procedures are prioritised.

Aspect being inspected	Previous evaluation Nov 23	Recent Evaluation September 25
How good is our care, play and learning?	Very Good (5)	Good (4)
How good is our setting?	Good (4)	Good (4)
How good is our leadership?	Very Good (5)	Very Good (5)
How good is our staff team?	Very Good (5)	Very Good (5)

The team are pleased with the report and feel it reflects their own self-evaluation. Suggestions from the Inspectors will be implemented and monitored through routine Locality Lead visits to the setting.

The setting will remain in **Category 2** of the Quality Improvement Framework.

The full report can be read [here](#).

3.4.3 Links Nursery and Hub, a Local Authority setting on Regent Walk, received an unannounced inspection which took place on 9, 10 and 11 September 2025. Inspectors spent time in the playrooms, spoke to children, staff and parents, carried out observations and reviewed paperwork.

Inspectors noted some major strengths and examples of outstanding practice. However, concern was raised during the inspection about some aspects of safety within the setting which had the potential to put children at risk. These included:

- A sealed packet of batteries left on a high ledge could be accessed by climbing on nearby furniture.
- Dishwasher tablets stored in base units, potentially reachable despite child locks creating a risk of ingestion and serious health issues.
- A sharp-edged tap hole on the adult sink in the playroom kitchen posed a risk of cuts or abrasions if a child reached up and put their fingers in the gap.
- An extension cable in the sensory room was located near to a bottle of water, which raised a potential safety harm.
- The self-closer on the door which leads from the main corridor to the staff tea room was not reliably self-closing.

Inspectors acknowledged that the manager addressed these concerns prior to the completion of the inspection and mitigations were put in place to ensure that

risk assessments are carried out in every area of the nursery prior to children entering the space.

Care Inspectorate shared some very positive key messages. They reported that children were supported by caring and nurturing staff who were very responsive to their individual needs. A holistic approach ensured that families felt very well supported and cared for. Children enjoyed a variety of stimulating and exciting play and learning experiences supported by skilled staff and a rich learning environment both indoors and outdoors. Strong leadership and a motivated staff team had supported continuous improvement which led to high quality play. Although the concerns raised were addressed by the manager before the inspection was concluded, these have impacted on the overall evaluations.

Aspect being inspected	Previous evaluation Nov 23	Recent Evaluation September 25
How good is our care, play and learning?	Very Good(5)	Very Good (5)
How good is our setting?	Very Good (5)	Adequate (3)
How good is our leadership?	Excellent (5)	Good (4)
How good is our staff team?	Very Good(5)	Good (4)

Links nursery was in Category 1 before inspection and will remain in Category 1. The action plan evidences how the concerns were addressed, and the mitigations put in place will be monitored to reduce the risk in the future. The action plan can be found at Appendix A.

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

3.4.4 Little Dreams a funded provider setting in Bon Accord Street received an unannounced Inspection which took place on 21 and 22 July 2025. Inspectors spent time in the playrooms, spoke to children, staff and parents, carried out observations and reviewed paperwork.

Inspectors noted that due to the variation in staff skills and knowledge children did not always experience highly nurturing interactions. Some staff missed opportunities to fully support the needs of all learners.

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

A new area for development has been identified in relation to pupil planning and record keeping. Managers require to consider staff deployment as the area for improvement identified in August 2023 has only been partially met.

Both of these areas will be supported through regular locality lead visits and setting action plans. Staff will be given the opportunity to visit other settings and see examples of good practice in both areas.

The setting was in Category 2 before inspection and will remain in Category 2 until they overcome both areas for development.

Action plan can be found at Appendix B

The full report can be read [here](#).

3.4.5 Little Trees is a funded provider setting in Campus 3, Balgownie Science And Technology Park received an unannounced Inspection which took place on 29 and 30 July 2025. Inspectors spent time in the playrooms, spoke to children, staff and parents, carried out observations and reviewed paperwork. Children benefitted from nurturing interactions and well planned positive learning experiences in the indoor and outdoor environment.

Inspectors noted that staff were developing their skills and confidence in extending children's experiences and learning through interactions. They had formed a strong team and worked well together to promote children's safety and meet their needs. Children's health benefitted from daily access to the outdoors. There was an ethos of continuous improvement which promoted positive experiences for children.

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

The setting continues to make steady progress and build on the staff knowledge and skills.

Little Trees was in Category 1 before inspection and will remain in Category 1

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

3.4.6 Little Clouds Nursery, a funded provider setting in the Nigg area of Aberdeen, received an unannounced inspection in July 2025. Inspectors noted that children experienced nurturing, supportive interactions which resulted in them feeling confident and happy in the setting. Staff knew children's needs well and planned for these effectively. Improvements to staff's knowledge of how to

effectively support children's play and learning had impacted positively on experiences and outcomes for children. They felt children benefitted from an improved learning environment, where they had access to interesting resources and activities. Quality assurance practices had been improved and were impacting positively on children's experiences and outcomes. Managers and staff had undertaken training and used their learning to develop practices in promoting children's play, care and learning. Staff were deployed effectively to meet children's needs and support their care and learning.

Aspect being inspected	Previous Evaluation Nov 24	Recent Evaluation August 25
How good is our care, play and learning?	Weak (2)	Good (4)
How good is our setting?	Weak (2)	Very Good (5)
How good is our leadership?	Adequate (3)	Good (4)
How good is our staff team?	Adequate (3)	Very Good (5)

The team are delighted that Care Inspectorate had identified the hard work of the team and the progress made over a short period of time.

The service is now confident the setting will continue to improve and as a result the setting will move from Category 3 to Category 2 of the Quality Improvement Framework.

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

3.4.7 Danestone ELC, a Local Authority setting in the Bridge of Don, received an unannounced inspection which took place on 9 and 10 September 2025. Inspectors spent time in the playrooms, spoke to children, staff and parents, carried out observations and reviewed paperwork.

Inspectors noted that staff were kind, caring and nurturing in their approach with children. They knew the children well and supported their individual needs. Staff had developed good relationships with parents who felt well informed and involved in their child's experiences and learning.

Staff were passionate about their role and were keen to extend their professional development to further improve outcomes for children. Inspectors identified the need to review personal plans to ensure meaningful information is gathered and is recorded clearly.

Mealtimes should also be reviewed to ensure children are experiencing a nurturing, relaxed unhurried lunch.

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

Staff will continue to work on the actions identified in the action plan to ensure improvements are further embedded.

The setting was in Category 2 before inspection and will remain in Category 2 until they overcome areas for development. The locality lead linked to the school will continue to support through regular announced and unannounced visits to the setting.

Action Plan can be found at Appendix C.

The full report can be read [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 **Orchard Brae Out of School Care** is run by Aberdeen City Council and is registered to provide care to a maximum of 8 children of primary school age at any one time. The club runs within Orchard Brae School and has access to spaces within the school building, this includes a soft play and sensory room. The service also has direct access to outdoor spaces. The service, which provides after school and holiday care provision, received an unannounced inspection between 3rd and 4th September 2025. The inspector spent time with children using the service and spoke with parents and carers, received responses to their request for feedback from families, received responses to their request for feedback from staff, spoke with staff and management, observed practice and children's experiences and reviewed documents.

Inspectors noted that children were treated with kindness and respect, children received nurturing care and support from staff who knew them well, children had fun and took part in experiences they enjoyed and children led their own experiences through a mix of activities both indoors and outside.

Inspectors also noted the settings vision, values and aims clearly reflected the service provided, which included offering an inclusive, tolerant, respectful and

fun environment. The ethos was evident during the inspection. Children were well supported by experienced and skilled staff. They communicated well together and were confident and happy in their role. They were supportive of each other, offering help and direction. This led to a continuity of care across the session. Deployment of staff supported the smooth running of the club. There were enough staff to keep children safe when playing out with the classroom and outdoors. This ensured children's experiences were positive and they were kept safe.

To ensure children's safety and wellbeing, the provider and manager must ensure entrances within the school building are secure and the setting should evaluate their improvements. This will support them to consider any need for further development. Sharing this with staff, families and children will support everyone to be clear on the service focus for improvement.

As a result of feedback, quality assurance processes will be further embedded to continue to support quality care and experiences. A requirement to ensure that the internal school door opposite the classroom is fixed and effectively secured has been actioned, with the necessary works completed.

Staff and management are proud of the service delivered at Orchard Brae and welcome the positive feedback. They are committed to the continued development of the service.

Aspect being inspected	Evaluation
How good is our care, play and learning?	Good (4)
How good is our setting?	Adequate (3)
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

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement Commit to realising the potential of each individual, by seeking to widen curriculum choice and implement progressive choices.	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

Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners across the city.	to support a closing of the poverty related attainment gap.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous People - 95% of all our children, including those living in our priority neighbourhoods, will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.	Engagement with inspectors provides an opportunity to learn from national best practice and validate self-evaluation evidence available. The support and challenge received by Inspectors helps to shape improvement plans for the coming sessions in keeping with the LOIP stretch aims.
Regional and City Strategies Regional Cultural Strategy Prevention Strategy Children's Services Plan National Improvement Framework Plan	Engagement with the Inspectorate is fully aligned to the city prevention strategy. Work to address poverty and improvement in the Children's services plan, the Child Poverty Action Plan and the National Improvement Framework Plan is also supported through external scrutiny.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	No assessment required. I confirm this - Shona Milne , Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning
Data Protection Impact Assessment	No DPIA is required.
Other	

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Links Nursery Action Plan
Appendix B – Little Dreams Action Plan
Appendix C - Danestone Nursery Action Plan

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Shona Milne/Graeme Simpson
Title	Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning/Chief Officer Family Support
Email Address	shmilne@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Appendix A

Name of Setting: Links Nursery and Hub

Areas for improvement	Action required	Stakeholders & timescale	Desired outcomes for children	Evidence and review/confirmed completion	RAG Rating
How good is our setting ? 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By 8 October 2025, the provider must ensure that children are cared in a safe environment free from potential hazards. - Staff are knowledgeable and competent in assessing and addressing safety risks and take action to ensure a safe environment. - Robust and outcome focused quality assurance processes are in place to ensure that any potential safety risks are identified and addressed promptly. <p>This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).</p>					
a) Ensure all staff have sufficient knowledge and are competent in assessing and addressing safety risks and take action to ensure a safe environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff will take part in mandatory – Hazard and Dynamic Risk assessment training delivered by ACC Health and safety advisor. 	Management All practitioners	All children	<p>All staff including relief have undertaken hazard and Dynamic risk assessment training</p> <p>Tuesday 23rd of September 2025</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate a dedicated health and safety focus in monthly staff meetings to deepen practitioners' understanding. Include health and safety as a regular item in parent voice agendas to gather views and feedback. Collect and document parent feedback on health and safety at each parent voice session; aim for at least 3 actionable suggestions per term. Strengthens partnership with parents and ensures their input informs health and safety practices. 	Management All practitioners Families		<p>Meeting agenda's, training content, ongoing monitoring.</p> <p>Parent voice- Thursday 9th of October 2025</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update Health and Wellbeing Policy and create a Health and Safety notice board with key information for all practitioners 	Management All practitioners		<p>Email sent to all practitioner on 17/09/2025</p>	

	<p>Ensure t updated policy and notice board are completed and visible in the staff area, and confirm that all practitioners have received the information via email and team briefing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate time and resources to review the policy, notice board, and cascade information. 			<p>Links Nursery and Hub Health and Safety policy 2025</p> <p>Detailed within Quality assurance calendar</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More frequent health and safety walk rounds. • Daily health and safety checks 	<p>All practitioners</p> <p>Families</p> <p>Corporate landlord</p> <p>Janitor</p> <p>Aberdeen city council health and safety advisor</p>		<p>Tuesday 16th of September 2025</p> <p>Thursday 10th of October 2025</p> <p>Wednesday 29th of October 2025</p>	

Improvement Action Plan

Action Plan

Name of Setting: Little Dreams Nursery

Appendix B

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					
1.1 Promote children's health, safety and wellbeing	Ensure effective procedures are in place for all staff to fully support children's health needs.	Immediate start, improvements to be visible within one month	<p>All staff are aware of children's specific health needs.</p> <p>All information regarding medication is easily accessible and understood by all staff.</p> <p>Children are safe and healthy while at nursery.</p>	<p>Medication forms have been altered to ensure staff administering medication are aware of what it is, where it is and why the child has it. Specific shelves within each playroom are labelled for medication only.</p> <p>All medication boxes have copies of long-term medication forms within them</p> <p>Children's folders are up-to-date with the information required for children with a health need.</p> <p>Management check medication forms and boxes at the end of each month and will continue to do so.</p> <p>Medication has been added to the induction pack for staff who will administer any medication.</p> <p>N Park 30th July 2025</p>	Green
1.3 To ensure children have the opportunity to experience positive interactions to support their play and learning	Ensure staff have opportunities to support and further develop their knowledge and understanding of child development and how children play and learn.	Immediate start and improvements to be visible within 3 months	Staff have a greater knowledge and understanding of child development and provide experiences to	In-house training on Wed 27 th August on Interactions part one. We discussed the purpose of play and the benefits. Staff set up experiences and discussed how	Amber

	Ensure staff have opportunities to extend and develop their skills to support high quality interactions and further develop children's play and learning.		<p>show this.</p> <p>Staff have a stronger understanding of how children play and learn.</p> <p>Children's learning and development is being extended appropriately.</p> <p>Staff have high-quality interactions with the children and extending children's thinking and skills with ease.</p> <p>Children are curious, creative and lead their own play with less support from staff.</p>	<p>these could be extended, what questions could / should be asked and what next steps could be taken. Part two will take place at the end of September.</p> <p>Child development training has been sent to staff requiring a refresher after one year.</p> <p>Training policy has been implemented.</p> <p>Garden and room set ups are being closely monitored by management.</p> <p>Oral questions have been asked during supervisions to help staff develop their interactions and understanding of why. These will be continued.</p> <p>N Park 28th August 2025</p>	
How good is our staff team? – 4.3 Staff deployment					
4.3 To support children's wellbeing, play, learning and development	<p>Ensure staff are deployed effectively to meet the individual needs of children and promote high quality outcomes.</p> <p>Staff deployment should support effective mentoring and enable staff to support each other.</p>	Immediate start and improvements to be visible within 2 months	<p>Staff are deployed effectively and meet children's individual needs.</p> <p>Staff promote high quality outcomes for all children.</p> <p>Staff support effective mentoring.</p>	<p>Due to numbers the 0-2 room is currently closed with all children within the 1-3 room. The nursery Supervisor is now in those room and is supporting / role modelling the staff within there.</p> <p>Michelle has implemented a timetable for myself and Kelly to allow us to spend tie in rooms to support and role model for staff and work with senior staff to</p>	Amber

			<p>Staff support each other.</p> <p>Children's needs are being met by all staff.</p> <p>Children are learning in relation to their own capabilities.</p>	<p>identify areas more support is required.</p> <p>An All About Me form has been implemented for keyworkers to complete for children's individual folder to give new / covering staff a quick insight into each individual child.</p> <p>Planning is checked by management at weekly planning meetings to ensure it is completed correctly and is covering children's interests and individual needs.</p> <p>Staff continue to form positive relationships with children and families to ensure the child is receiving the best possible care and their individual needs are being met by all.</p> <p>Management continues to complete monthly supervisions within each of the rooms.</p> <p>N Park 28th August 2025</p>	
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Improvement Action Plan

Appendix C

Name of Setting: Danestone ELC

Areas for improvement	Action required	Stakeholders & timescale	Desired outcomes for children	Evidence and review/confirmed completion	RAG Rating
How good is our care, play and learning? 1.1 Nurturing care and support & 1.3 Play and learning					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provider, manager and staff should ensure children's overall wellbeing is supported through effective use of personal planning. To ensure children are nurtured and supported through their daily experience, the provider, manager and staff should ensure that mealtimes are a relaxed and unhurried experience that meets the individual needs of children. To support children's learning and development, the provider should ensure children experience high quality play and learning relevant to their age and stage of development. 					
Review Personal Plans to ensure information collated is effective in creating continuity of care from home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the wording of questions on the child's personal plan to be more positive and inclusive to give true reflection of the child and ensure continuity of care from home to setting. 	Management	Consistent approach in information collated and shared would ensure continuity of care for children.	Copy of new format shared with staff and saved on drive for future use. 12/9/25	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with parents to update personal plans to the new format. Each family will attend a 10 minute family consultation with child's key worker to update Personal Plan 	All staff 3 months		New Personal Plans for all learners.	
To ensure the lunch experience for all children is a relaxed and unhurried experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit of current lunch time procedures through observations by ELC team. 	All staff	Relaxed and enjoyable lunch experience for all children.	Mindmap - collating information from observations and creating a setting expectation for lunch experience. Ongoing Update EBook	

KEY:

R = Red – No progress

A = Amber – Partial progress

G = Green – Good Progress

Improvement Action Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit of learner experience - gather children's views on their lunchtime experience to help with improvement. 	Management Children		Create a mindmap using child voice to evidence experience and suggestions for improvement. Update EBook!	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate staff observations and child's voice to pull out main areas of concern to then make adjustments to the lunch time process. Share any lunch procedure adjustments/changes with all staff. 	All staff Children Management		Record Information in the 'You said, We did' format within the EBook	
Ensure staff have sufficient knowledge and understanding of child development and how to support children's learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduled staff meetings will be used as an opportunity to gather information and identify areas of focus for team development around child development. 	Management	Children will be supported by reflective staff who endeavour to provide quality learning experiences. Children's learning experiences will be catered to their individual needs, preferences, age and stage of development. Children will have the opportunity to experience stimulating and inviting	Quality Assurance Calendar Minutes of Staff Meetings	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule peer on peer observations for particular areas of focus which will be identified by team prior to observation. Create observation format to be completed during the peer observation, time will then be given to allow peer feedback which will then be followed up by the SEYP and areas for development shared with the wider team. 	Management All Staff		Quality Assurance Calendar Completed Observation forms Forms uploaded to EBook	

KEY:

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Improvement Action Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer further staff training opportunities for staff to deepen their understanding of aspects of play and learning, such as schemas as well as appropriate ways for staff to extend/expand children's interests. 	Management	learning experiences based on their interests.	Staff Training Records Staff evaluations and reflections collected and shared (anonymously) within EBook	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss possible training on quality interactions with Locality lead. 	Management Locality Lead			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange networking with other settings for staff specifically with settings performing well within play & learning to support and develop understanding further. 				
How good is our setting? 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support children's development needs and learning, the provider should ensure there are appropriate areas, resources and materials to support children's interests, creativity, and curiosity. 					
Ensure children consistently have access to a wide variety of high-quality, stimulating resources that support creativity, exploration, and learning through play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a full audit of current resources in targeted areas - creative and construction area. Make use of Circle Framework documentation to support audit (Up Up & Away ELC - Literacy rich environment tool) 	Management Staff Team	Children will have access to resources and experiences that contribute to the development of their curiosity, literacy and creative skills	Completed Audit documentation - evidenced in the EBook	

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Improvement Action Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gather children's voice through observations and discussions	Children Keyworkers		Mindmaps showing children's voices	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Research and source sustainable, diverse materials through reaching out to local community(e.g. natural, recycled, open-ended)	Keyworkers Management		Evidenced with pictures within the EBook	

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Improvement Action Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a wish tree in the nursery for families to support the setting with donations.	Management		Evidenced with pictures within the EBook	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reorganise and label areas to improve accessibility and independence	All staff		Seen within the nursery setting.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a rotation system to keep areas fresh and engaging	All Staff Children		Resources rotated regularly and documented	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide staff training on resource-rich environments and loose parts play.	All Staff School Staff to support training		EBook evaluations SeeSaw posts showing children engagement	
How good is our leadership? - 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To ensure quality care and experiences for children, the provider should ensure effective quality assurance and self-evaluation is in place.					
Embed robust quality assurance and self-evaluation processes to improve care and experiences for children to create a culture of continuous improvement through inclusive feedback, consistent staff support, and effective monitoring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and implement a self-evaluation calendar aligned with HGIOELC and Care Standards.	Management	Through the development and use of robust quality assurance and self-evaluation procedures will ensure children experience quality care and learning.	Quality Assurance Calendar	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce feedback mechanisms for children, families, and staff (e.g. surveys, suggestion boxes, focus groups)	Management All Staff Families Children		Room displays showing - 'You said, We did'	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff observations and support meetings scheduled as part of quality assurance processes to highlight good practice and areas for development.	Management All staff		Quality Assurance Calendar	

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Improvement Action Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create format to record meetings, discussion and areas for improvement 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an improvement plan with clear targets to share with all staff which shows progress. Include improvement discussion as a standing item on staff meetings to ensure regular updates. Display improvement plan within the setting. Track improvements via the EBook 	Management All staff		Improvement Plan EBook	
How good is our staff team? – 4.3 Staff deployment					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to ensure children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider should support staff in furthering their reflective practice by encouraging them to make connections with training, skills development and the impact their practice has on outcomes for children and families in the setting. 					
For staff to further develop understanding of and practices around reflective practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make use of staff training records and existing knowledge to identify areas of strength/knowledge in the team that could be used to support the wider staff team. Build in time into staff meetings to allow staff to share knowledge and support others. Staff will be encouraged to model/scaffold skill for wider team members to develop and extend practice. Develop an evaluation system for the team to feedback and reflect on the impact new learning/skill/understanding has had on practice. 	Management All Staff		Staff Training Log Staff Evaluation Records	

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G = Green – Good Progress

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	25 November 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/273
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard, Executive Director, Families and Communities
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne, Chief Officer, Education and Lifelong Learning and Graeme Simpson, Chief Officer, Children's Social Work and Family Support
REPORT AUTHOR	Chief Officers
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.4

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps in accordance with Education and Children's Services Committee Terms of Reference to provide assurance that risks are being managed effectively within the Clusters as detailed in 3.2 below.
- 1.2 When the Risk Registers were last considered by the Education and Children's Services Committee on 28th November 2024, Members asked that officers consider the use of a matrix to reflect the previous year's situation. This request has been actioned within this Report.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps set out in Appendices A to D.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

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

- Education & Lifelong Learning (Education risks)
- Children's Social Work and Family Support

Risk Registers

- 3.3 The Council's Risks Registers are tools used by Functions and Clusters to capture and manage the risks which could prevent achievement of organisational outcomes and service delivery.
- 3.4 The Council's Corporate Risk Register (CRR) captures the risks which pose the most significant threat to the achievement of the Council's organisational outcomes and have the potential to cause failure of service delivery. The CRR is scrutinised annually by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.5 The Cluster Risk Registers are set out in appendices A and B and these reflect the risks which may prevent each Cluster from delivering on organisational outcomes and services, these risks may be escalated to the CRR where deemed necessary.
- 3.6 The risks contained within the Risk Register for each Cluster are grouped by risk category in appendix E and show the Council's corresponding risk appetite for each category as set within the Council's Risk Appetite Statement (RAS) which was approved by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee in May 2025.

The Clusters are working towards a target risk score which aligns with the risk appetite.

- 3.7 The Cluster Risk Registers provides the organisation with the detailed information and assessment for each risk identified including:
- **Current risk score** – this is current assessment of the risk by the risk owner and reflects the progress percentage of control actions required in order to achieve the target risk score.
 - **Target risk score** – this is the assessment of the risk by the risk owner after the application of the control actions. This is aligned with the risk appetite for this particular category of risk.
 - **Control Actions** – these are the activities and items that will mitigate the effect of the risk event on the organisation.
 - **Risk score** – each risk is assessed using a 4x6 risk matrix as detailed below.

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

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

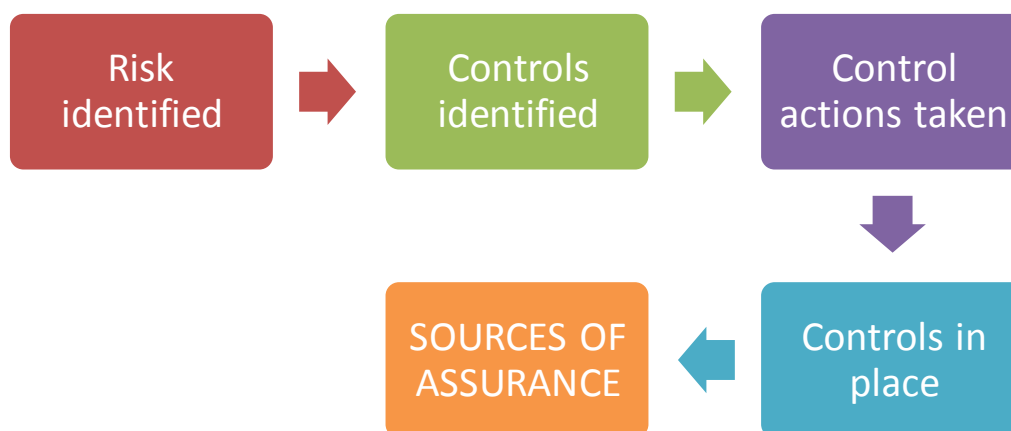
3.8 Development and improvement of the Cluster Risk Registers and associated risk management processes has continued since the Cluster Risk Register was last reported to Committee:

- The Council's Risk Appetite Statement (RAS) was reviewed and updated.
- Work to complete the recommendations from the internal audit of the Council's Risk Management arrangements including enhancements to Cluster Risk Management reporting which are incorporated within this report.
- On-going improvements and updates to the "Managing Risk" pages published on the Council's intranet pages which contains information and links for officers and elected members on the Council's RAS, Risk Management Policy, Guidance and Training. This supports the further embedding of our risk management culture and ensures that everyone knows the part they play in managing risks within the wider system.
- Risk owners and leads continue to review and update risk registers to improve monitoring and reporting across the organisation. These are mechanisms which reflect the day-to-day business of assessing and mitigating the risks and opportunities inherent in delivering public services.

Assurance Maps

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

Presentation of each Cluster's assurance map provides full sight of the defences we have in place as an organisation to manage the risks facing local government.



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

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

Risk Overview and Comparison

- 3.11 Below is a comparison with the Cluster risks last reported to Committee in November 2024 by each Cluster:

Education and Lifelong Learning Overview

- 3.12 At fortnightly Service Manager meetings risks and mitigations are reviewed and updated to take account of any emerging issues or demands.

The work of the safeguarding group has improved the incident reporting procedures for staff and the service is confident all staff in school now know how to report incidents and seek support from their line manager. The group is successfully supporting identified schools to implement mitigations and undertake bespoke training to reduce the number of incidents. Mandatory training for all staff in de-escalation continues to be delivered at the start of each term

We continue to have challenges around the recruitment of senior leaders. This is a national issue and central officers are working with our Associate Assessors to review the current leadership programme to provide more opportunities for teachers within our system to have leadership experience.

In order to mitigate against the lack of specialist teachers in some subjects we are re-establishing subject networks. This will provide support for staff and also help to ensure consistency of delivery. This along with the use of ABZ campus and other consortium arrangements will increase the level of mitigation in place.



Risks de-escalated to Operational level or closed:



The risk relating to Education Demographic Demands was closed as demands have reduced. The inward migration of families has reduced and the mitigations in place, including the partnership work with corporate landlord, have supported schools in their response to greater numbers of learners. We will continue to monitor and will reinstate the risk should there be any future sharp increases in families settling in the city.

New risks added or escalated to Cluster level:

None.

Risks Remaining on the Education and Lifelong Learning Risk Register:

Risk Title	Current Risk Score 2024	Current Risk Score 2025	Movement
The perception of failure to record incidents of violence and aggressive behaviour against school staff.	12	9	
Removal of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding	12	9	

Risk that the number of Senior Leadership vacancies leads to staff in posts that are not of required quality	15	12	
Specialist teacher shortage in secondary schools	8	4	

3.13 **Children's Social Work and Family Support**

On a monthly basis risks and mitigations are reviewed and updated to take account of any emerging issues or demands.

The average length of career for a social worker remains concerningly short – 6.2 years. Efforts to 'grow our own' persist with some success. The main pipeline for new staff remains graduates from Robert Gordon's University. Discussions are continuing with the University to enhance connections, strengthening the pathways for newly qualified staff as well as exploring how they can support the development of our workforce. Due to recruitment challenges, work to deliver the Workforce Development Plan has been hindered. In recent weeks we have however recruited a L&D Coordinator. This will support and drive forward our efforts to support the development and wellbeing of the workforce.

All agencies are recognising that the needs of young people needing care and protection support are more complex and need consequently more resource. Ensuring we have the capacity at a local level to meet this need can be challenging. Work to support young people at an early and preventative stage is providing valuable support but there are other young people whose needs are beyond what these supports can hold. The developing Family Support Model will continue to ensure a focus on preventative support. We are also exploring with the University of Strathclyde how we can better align a more intensive support to keep children in their family network.

The national fostering crisis, the impact of poverty and the cost of living crisis, supporting asylum seeking young people as well as legislative and policy change is stretching social work resources. It is anticipated these challenges will persist in the coming year. The refresh of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan provides the opportunity to revisit how as a City we can mitigate these challenges and use our resources to best effect.

Risks de-escalated to Operational level or closed:

None.

New risks added or escalated to Cluster level:

None.

Risks Remaining on the Children's Social Work and Family Support Risk Register:

Risk Title	Current Risk Score 2024	Current Risk Score 2025	Movement
Budget Constraints/Pressures	24	9	↓
Child Migration including unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people (UASC) and all families requiring resettlement or with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)	9	6	↓
External factors – increase in service demand.	12	9	↓
Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI)	16	9	↓
Service Standards/ Performance	9	9	→
Workforce – Children's Services	12	9	↓

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. This report deals with risk management at Cluster level and this process serves to identify controls and assurances that finances are being effectively managed.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. RISK

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

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

8. OUTCOMES

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

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	No assessment required at this stage. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Shona Milne Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning and Graeme Simpson Chief Officer Children's Social Work and Family Support.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	Not applicable.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None.

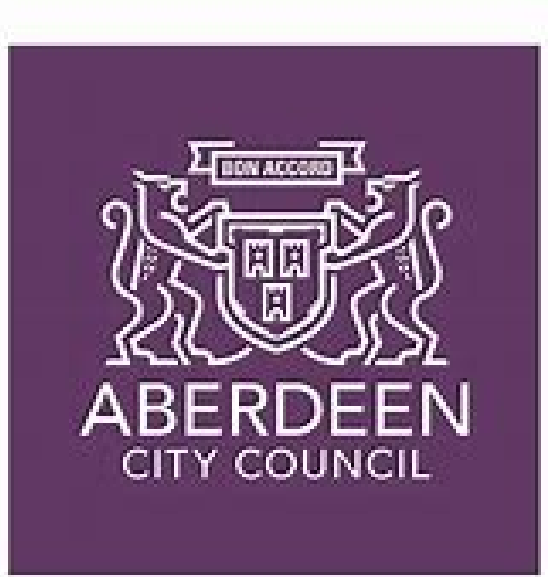
11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A and B - Cluster Risk Registers for Education and Lifelong Learning and Children's Social Work and Family Support.
- 11.2 Appendix C and D - Cluster Assurance Maps for Education and Lifelong Learning and Children's Social Work and Family Support.
- 11.3 Appendix E – Cluster Risks grouped by category.

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Shona Milne and Graeme Simpson
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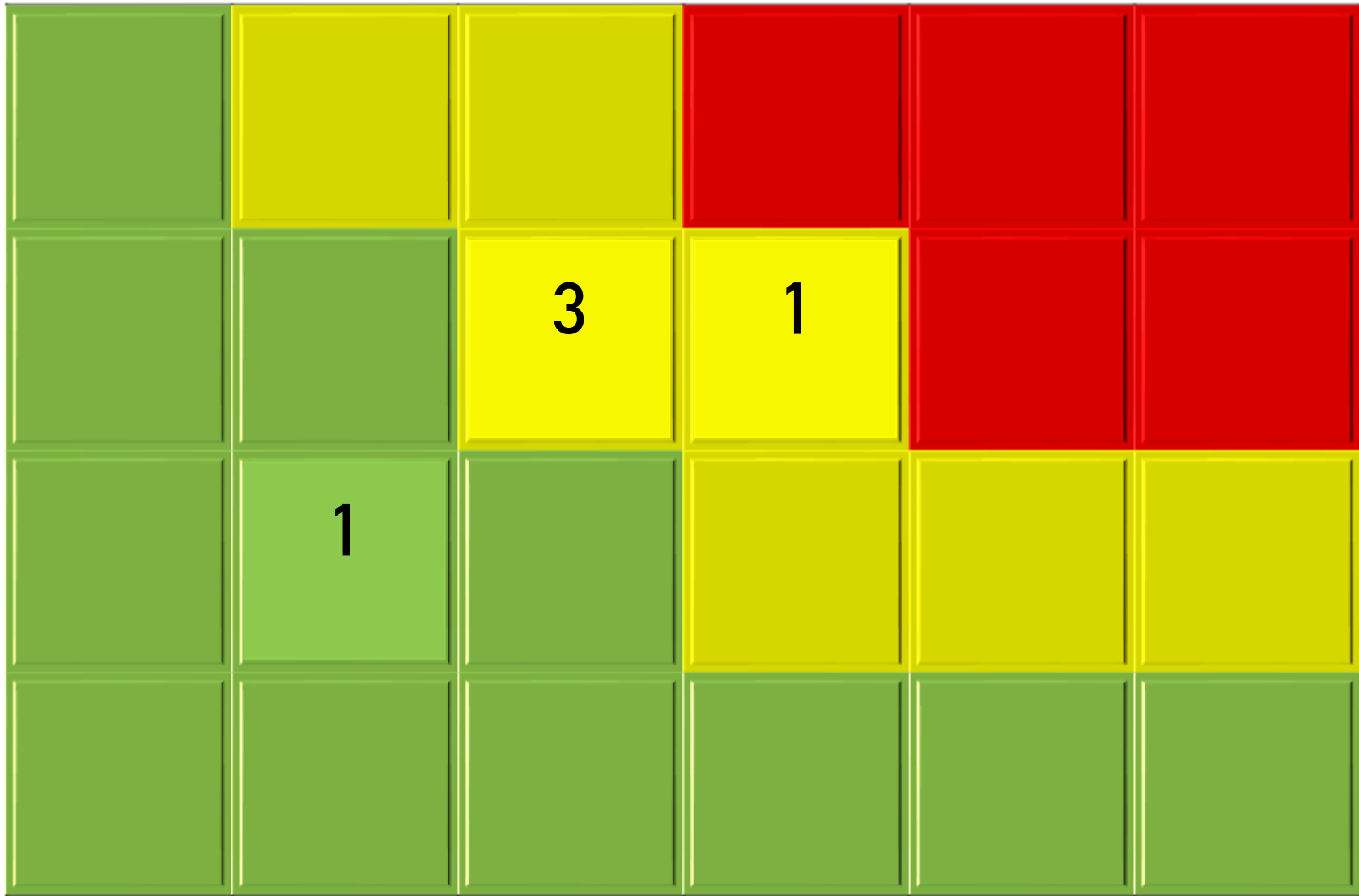
Education & Lifelong Learning Risk Register

CURRENT CLUSTER RISKS	CURRENT RISK SCORE
Library Service Failure	9
Removal of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding	9
Risk that the number of Senior Leadership vacancies leads to staff in posts that are not of required quality	12
Specialist teacher shortage in secondary schools	4
The perception of failure to record incidents of violence and aggressive behaviour against school staff.	9

Number of Cluster Risks

5

Risk Matrix by Likelihood (6) and Impact (4)



FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Families and Communities	Education & Lifelong Learning	Shona Milne	Caroline Johnstone

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Removal of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding	If the Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding is removed schools will be unable to continue to afford interventions in place to support young people	<div>1) Desktop review of PEF plans with HT to identify risks at school level Greater consideration of sustainability in PEF Plans - May 2025</div> <div>2) Collation of school information on staff employed through PEF funding to determine risks around contracts - Complete Jan 2025.</div> <div>3) Working group of HTs and Officers to undertake scenario planning based on the information gleaned - Completed May 2025</div> <div>4) Greatest risk is around staffing paid for by PEF - Central officers working with schools to plan how to reduce reliance on PEF - school by school discussions during session 25/26</div> <div>5) Participation in Equity professional learning pilot led by Education Scotland - upskilling school leaders to support teaching staff to :<div>a) know and understand the practice and approaches that can improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty.</div><div>b) develop and apply knowledge and skills to effectively plan for equity and ensure measurable impact. - August 2025</div></div>	8	9	3	3	29 June 2026

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Families and Communities	Education & Lifelong Learning	Shona Milne	Caroline Johnstone

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Risk that the number of Senior Leadership vacancies leads to staff in posts that are not of required quality	Very few applications for senior leader posts and the quality is not as high as would be expected.	1) Clear signposting to leadership development programmes at all levels . Ongoing monthly throughout the session 2) Leadership programmes shared regularly with HTs. Monthly through HT communication channels 3) Annually review the quality of leadership programmes - Pathways created to identify staff 7-10 from leadership to those who have just completed into headship. August 2025 ongoing 4) Increase the remit of Associate Assessors to include support development of middle leaders - now leading subject networks 5) Headteacher induction programme in place. August 2024 6)Elements of HT programme to be delivered to current DHTs to increase their operational knowledge and encourage them to apply for headships. - January 2026	9	12	4	3	21 December 2025

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Families and Communities	Education & Lifelong Learning	Shona Milne	Mark Jones

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Specialist teacher shortage in secondary schools	Risk that attainment in particular subjects will be impacted by the shortage of secondary specialist teachers.	<div>1 - Create subject networks across the City. Use of teams to support shared areas for subjects in place - ongoing starting with Maths and Learning Teaching and Assessment August 2025</div> <div>2 - ABZ Campus Courses offered in all secondary schools. promoted to staff and families in Jan 2026</div> <div>3 - Provide probationers with high quality professional learning and opportunities to shadow in other schools to attract them to stay within the local authority . - ongoing</div> <div>4 - Currently linking with other local authorities to look at delivery of anytime courses - ongoing</div> <div>5 - Develop and promote leadership pathways and opportunities to encourage you staff to remain in the local authority - new pathways in place January 2026</div>	2	4	2	2	30 December 2025

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Families and Communities	Education & Lifelong Learning	Shona Milne	Shona Milne

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
The perception of failure to record incidents of violence and aggressive behaviour against school staff.	The existing recording system does not provide accurate data to allow for investigation and accurate reporting of incidents.	1. Develop and implement a behaviour action plan – Complete 2. Co designing mandatory eLearning module with trade Unions to include procedures for H&S, PCRA’s and exclusion – Complete 3. All schools to add H&S to staff meeting agendas – Complete 4. Short H&S briefings to be developed in collaboration with TU’s and used for staff training – October 25 5. All school policies to be reviewed and updated to incorporate the National Behaviour Plan – May 25 6. Review incident reporting system to ensure reporting procedures are clear - Complete 7. Develop and provide guidance to support post incident discussion – Complete 8 - Continue to meet fortnightly with Trade Unions to identify good practice - on-going 9 - Educational psychology review of support for learners completed November 24 10 - review progress against the national plan to ensure workstreams are aligned	3	9	3	3	31 December 2025

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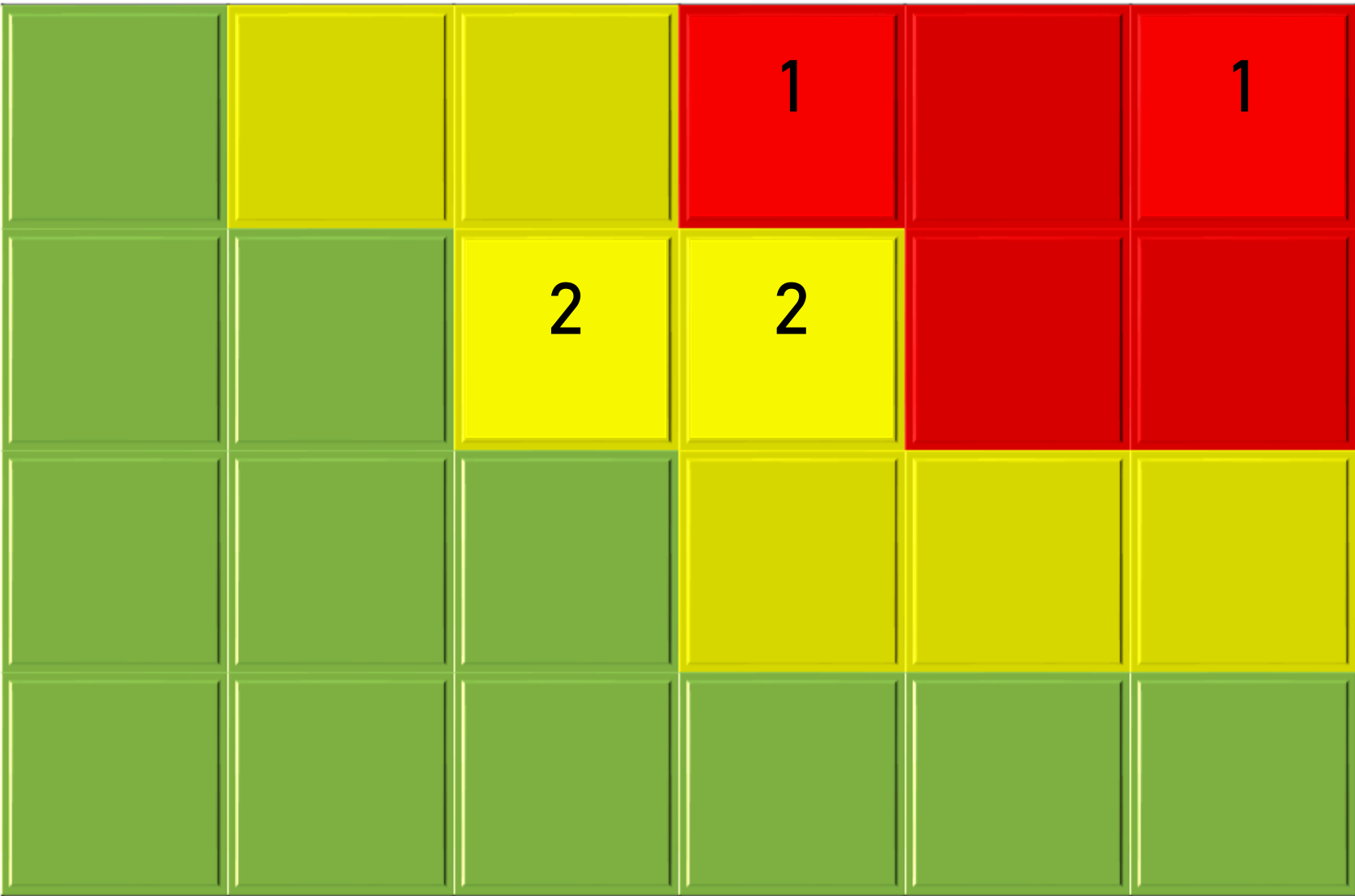
Children's Social Work & Family Support Risk Register

CURRENT CLUSTER RISKS	CURRENT RISK SCORE
Budget Constraints/Pressures	24
Child Migration including unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people (UASC) and all families requiring resettlement or with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)	9
External factors – increase in service demand.	12
Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI)	9
Service Standards/ Performance	16
Workforce – Children’s Services	12

Number of Cluster Risks

6

Risk Matrix by Likelihood (6) and Impact (4)



FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Families and Communities	Children's Social Work & Family Support	Graeme Simpson	Ali McAlpine

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Budget Constraints/Pressures	Risk that budget reductions and budget allocation within the Cluster for service delivery, staff training and development and CPD impacts capacity of services and income.	<div>Existing control action from Budget/Cost of Care Risk:</div> <div>1) Prioritisation of critical cases – all Service Managers. CSSF to oversee all specialist residential ooc placements for children. Any over £7k per week to be endorsed by CSWO.</div> <div>2) Review of data projections for resources – Service Manager oversight</div> <div>3) Develop and design Family Support Model to incorporate learning from Northfield/Lochside pilots in order to identify and maximise early intervention opportunities.</div> <div>4) Co-ordinate intervention with multi-agency partners to avoid duplication of support – oversight by Children’s Services Board (CSB) and Child Protection Committee (CPC)</div> <div>5) Children’s Service Managers will monitor/track budget risk areas to establish corrective actions.</div> <div>6) Identify and create critical/statutory related training requirement plan with L&D coordinator and P&OD</div>	9	24	6	4	30 March 2026

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Families and Communities	Children's Social Work & Family Support	Graeme Simpson	Ali McAlpine

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Child Migration including unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people (UASC) and all families requiring resettlement or with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)	<div>Risk is that there is insufficient resource to meet demand and that this position compromises the care, protection and wellbeing of already vulnerable children and their families including –</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• UASC• Child Migration• Refugees• Child criminal and sexual exploitation• Children and families of foreign students</div>	<div>1) Alignment between children’s social work/education and adult services to ensure GIRFEC approach. This will allow for specialist social work services to respond when required.</div> <div>2) Additional fixed term resource implemented to manage needs of older UASYP within Youth Team</div>	6	9	3	3	31 December 2026

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Families and Communities	Children's Social Work & Family Support	Graeme Simpson	Graeme Simpson

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
External factors – increase in service demand.	Risk that increasing complexity of need, asylum presentations, growth in children with enduring and complex disabilities as well as the cost of living crisis and increased mental health challenges of our population, is seeing a continuing high demand for social work intervention at a time when there is a contraction of public services increases pressure to meet demand. This at the same time we are experiencing an expanding and fast changing legislative and policy programme.	1) Unintended consequences resulting from budget savings across partner and public sector organisations are shared across partnerships via CSP and CPC. 2) Interagency integration and collaboration to identify opportunities to reduce likelihood of family entering crisis. 3) Close alignment with Adult Services to share expertise and workload appropriately. 4) Keeping pace with future needs resulting from legislative changes 5. A local NCS Board has been established to consider and influence the development of a NCS and ensure early planning to respond to proposed change. 6. Continuing focus on developing a Family Support Model that mitigates the need for social work intervention.	9	12	4	3	31 December 2026

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Families and Communities	Children's Social Work & Family Support	Graeme Simpson	Ali McAlpine

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI)	Resource and Capacity of Aberdeen City Council to research and respond to statutory notices and requests for information within statutory and practice set timescales, including not exhaustively s21 notices, criminal and civil proceedings, Scotland’s Redress Scheme and Right of Access.	<div>1. Resource – flexible use of wider ACC resourcing. SCAI and Customer Feedback Team retain close connection due to interdependencies between SCAI portfolio and those with care experience seeking records.</div> <div>2. Governance – SCAI Programme Board (6 weekly) to maintain oversight, scrutiny and mobilisation of resource allocation requirements, monitoring performance and identification of potential risks and strengths in accordance with ToR.</div> <div>3. Performance reporting shared with Chief Officers from CSW and CFT.</div> <div>4. Monitor of financial implications associated with the portfolio.</div> <div>5. Record keeping – Embed practice-based system improvements to mitigate risk of record misplacement or loss.</div>	6	9	3	3	31 December 2026

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Families and Communities	Children's Social Work & Family Support	Graeme Simpson	Ali McAlpine

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Service Standards/ Performance	Risk that service standards and performance are not achieved, and risk of budget overspend on external services and resource.	1) Review and update service standards to reflect resource available. 2) Prioritise statutory work on priority basis. 3) Enhancing family support model. 4) Continue to review existing processes for efficiency, duplication and wastage. 5) Explore and develop new digital solutions to data gathering and recording within new electronic recording system D365.	9	16	4	4	31 December 2026

FUNCTION	CLUSTER	RISK OWNER	RISK LEAD
Families and Communities	Children's Social Work & Family Support	Graeme Simpson	Ali McAlpine

RISK TITLE	RISK DESCRIPTION	CONTROL ACTIONS	TARGET RISK SCORE	CURRENT RISK SCORE	CURRENT LIKELIHOOD	CURRENT IMPACT	TARGET COMPLETION DATE
Workforce – Children’s Services	"Risk that staff recruitment/retention challenges within social work/social care reduces staff capacity and resilience whilst service demand continues to increase. Staff training requirements in complexity and under budget pressure. New demands placed on managers and organisations to deliver duties to NQSW and early career social work practitioners add a further challenge to deliver within current resources and capacities."	1) Newly qualified social work training programme in place. 2) Realign service priorities and workload on a risk-based basis. 3) Grow your own approach implemented and ongoing. 4) Close links to Robert Gordon University and participation in recruitment fairs. 5) Enhancing, creating and monitoring of “leavers” data to inform learning and support. 6) Refreshed WFDP supports a prioritisation of activities to ensure the needs of the workforce are aligned to our strategic priorities. 7) Ensure CSW salary scales are not a barrier to effective recruitment and retention. Work underway to re-evaluate, commencing with job profile of G13 Qualified Social workers. 8) Enhancement of wellbeing supports at corporate and targeted level in recognition of complexity of trauma-laden work across CSW.	9	12	4	3	31 December 2026

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Assurance Map		
Cluster – Education and Lifelong Learning		
Cluster Risk Register Risks (Education - Reported to Education and Children's Services Committee)		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The perception of failure to record incidents of violence and aggressive behaviour against school staff. Removal of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding - If the Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding is removed schools will be unable to continue to afford interventions in place to support young people Risk that the number of Senior Leadership vacancies leads to staff in posts that are not of required quality Specialist teacher shortage in secondary schools - Risk that attainment in particular subjects will be impacted by the shortage of secondary specialist teachers. 		
Cluster Risk Register Risks (Reported to Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee)		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Library Service Failure - There is a risk that we are unable to deliver library services across all sites within current opening hours due to lack of staffing resource. 		
First Line of Defence (Do-ers)	Second Line of Defence (Helpers)	Third Line of Defence (Checkers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained and qualified staff Reviewing library opening hours to rotate closures Partial closures to cover shortages of staff School Leadership Team oversight and quality assurance of day to day operations and finances in school Targeted leadership training to develop leaders from within our current workforce Use of teams to create support networks across subject areas in secondary School health and safety procedures agreed annually All staff involved in risk assessment process Designated school Health and Safety Reps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMT Boards Council Committees Health and Safety guidance for schools Identified health and safety team link for all schools and libraries Child protection and safeguarding guidance and professional learning available to schools and libraries Range of policies/procedures for schools to support consistent practice Quality Improvement Framework setting expectations around accountability Quality Improvement Visits to schools and Early Learning and Childcare provision Quality Improvement Team monitoring of live data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Scotland inspections Care Inspectorate Inspections HSE inspections Health and Safety Team compliance visits to schools ECMT data reviews External Audit Monthly budget print outs Annual Internal Audit Plan Audit Scotland and National Audit reports Internal Audit – ELC Funded Provider Places December 2024 Internal audit Assurance Review of Early Learning and Childcare setting – August 2025 Monthly data around library usage Review of how library services are used

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessments shared with all staff including Trade Union reps • School risk registers in place in all schools with effective mechanisms in place for review and escalation • School Business Continuity Plans in place • Tracking and monitoring arrangements in place in all schools to track attainment • School positive behaviour management procedure agreed yearly • Supply library staff created to support vacancies • School child protection and safeguarding procedures agreed yearly • Yearly analysis of school community data to inform the school improvement plan • Regular review of applications for school placements in order to identify emerging trends • In house middle leadership training to support increase in internal candidates for Headship. • Regular meetings with Higher Education to understand demand for school placements from international students • Calendar of data gathering around the health and wellbeing needs of pupils • Monitoring of levels of vacancy in schools and ELC provisions • Continued expansion of ABZ campus • In-service days and staff meetings to address any identified vulnerabilities • Headteacher induction programme • Induction training for support staff • School Business continuity plans in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Business Continuity Plan • Monitoring of complaints • Improvement groups comprising central Officers and school staff identify and address emerging risks • Fortnightly Trade Union meetings • Fortnightly safeguarding meetings • Engagement with library users to review opening hours • Engagement with Parents and Carers • Data dashboard and Risk Register discussed fortnightly by Senior Leadership Team • Regular finance meetings with Senior Leadership Team • Assurance Team • Regular contact with Association of Directors of Education Scotland Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) • Regular contact with Scottish Libraries and Information Council (SLIC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of library processes
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Assurance Map		
Cluster – Children's Social Work and Family Support		
Cluster Risk Register Risks:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Constraints/Pressures - Risk that budget reductions and budget allocation within the Cluster for service delivery, staff training and development and CPD impacts capacity of services and income. Child Migration including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people (UASC) and all families requiring resettlement or with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) External factors – increase in service demand from a variety of external factors. Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI) Service Standards/ Performance - Risk that service standards and performance are not achieved, and risk of budget overspend on external services and resource. Workforce – Children's Services - Risk that staff recruitment/retention challenges within Social Work and Social Care reduce staff capacity and resilience whilst service demand continues to increase. Staff training requirements increase in complexity and budgets are under pressure. 		
First Line of Defence (Do-ers)	Second Line of Defence (Helpers)	Third Line of Defence (Checkers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trained and qualified staff Professional Supervision in place for all CSW staff ensuring day to day service delivery. Team Managers/SM's oversight of finances for teams Agreed health and safety procedures – all staff supported to familiarise as part of induction. All staff involved in risk assessment process Team Business Continuity Plans in place Tracking and monitoring arrangements in place in all schools to track performance and delivery of statutory duties. Learning from case reviews considered on single and multi-agency basis and embedded at practitioner level. Voice of children and young people at the heart of service planning and improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMT Boards Council Committees Health and Safety guidance for services, including Lone Working Identified health and safety team link for all teams Child protection and safeguarding guidance and professional learning available Range of policies/procedures for schools to support consistent practice SM QA activity within teams and through professional supervision. Multi-agency Quality Improvement activity Service Business Continuity Plan Improvement groups comprising central Officers and school staff identify and address emerging risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care Inspectorate Inspections HSE Covid-19 inspections Health and Safety Team compliance visits to work settings ECMT data reviews Performance reports to Committee Annual reporting of Risk Registers to Committee Regular contact with Scottish Government OCSA Team External Audit Monthly budget print outs • Annual External Audit and report • Annual Internal Audit Plan approved and overseen by Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee Audit Scotland and National Audit reports

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

Risk Title	Risk Category	Target Risk Appetite	Aligned with RAS?
1. The perception of failure to record incidents of violence and aggressive behaviour against school staff.	Reputational	Averse	No
2. Removal of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding.	Operational	Cautious	Yes
3. Risk that the number of Senior Leadership vacancies leads to staff in posts that are not of required quality	Operational	Cautious	Yes
4. Specialist teacher shortage in secondary schools	Operational	Averse	No

Integrated Children's and Family Services

Risk Title	Risk Category	Target Risk Appetite	Aligned with RAS?
1. Budget Constraints/Pressures	Operational	Cautious	Yes
2. Child Migration including unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people (UASC) and all families requiring resettlement or with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)	Operational	Cautious	Yes
3. External factors – increase in service demand.	Operational	Cautious	Yes
4. Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI)	Compliance	Averse	Yes
5. Service Standards/ Performance	Reputational	Cautious	Yes
6. Workforce – Children's Services	Compliance	Cautious	No

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	25 November 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Dyce and Bucksburn - School Catchment Areas
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/265
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 the outcomes of recent discussions with officers at Aberdeenshire Council, relating to proposals for making changes to school catchment areas for Dyce Academy and Dyce School, along with recommendations for next steps.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes the outcomes of officers' recent discussions with colleagues at Aberdeenshire Council, relating to proposals for making changes to school catchment areas for Dyce Academy and Dyce School;
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to commence planning, in collaboration with Aberdeenshire Council, for a statutory public consultation to be held in Winter 2026/27, on proposals to adjust the catchment area boundaries for Dyce Academy and Dyce School, so that they align with the boundary line for the City, and with a view to these changes being implemented from August 2027;
- 2.3 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to review the catchment areas for all schools within the Bucksburn and Dyce Associated Schools Groups (ASGs), in light of the proposed alignment of the Dyce Academy and Dyce School catchment areas to the City boundary, and to draft proposals for any required further changes to catchment areas, to achieve an appropriate balance of pupil numbers within all schools in these ASGs in future years;
- 2.4 Instructs the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to report back to the Committee with details of all proposed catchment area changes and recommendations for statutory public consultation on these, as part of the annual School Estate Plan update report in Autumn 2026.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 As shown in the maps at Appendices A and B, the catchment areas for Dyce Academy and Dyce School currently extend beyond the City boundary line and into Aberdeenshire. The Dyce Academy catchment area encompasses the Aberdeenshire communities of Newmachar and Kingseat, whilst the Dyce School catchment area covers a smaller area of Aberdeenshire, south of Newmachar.
- 3.2 At its meeting of 24 June 2025, after considering an outline business case on options for future secondary education provision at Dyce and Bucksburn, the Committee instructed officers to consult with colleagues at Aberdeenshire Council, on a proposal for the catchment area for Dyce Academy to be adjusted to align with the City boundary, therefore removing all parts of Aberdeenshire from the school's catchment area, and to report back to the Committee on the outcomes of these discussions.

Dyce Academy

- 3.3 Aligning the Dyce Academy catchment area boundary with the City boundary would mean that secondary school aged children living in the Aberdeenshire communities of Newmachar and Kingseat would no longer be entitled to a place at Dyce Academy, and so there would be a requirement for Aberdeenshire Council to include these communities within a catchment area for an alternative secondary school in Aberdeenshire.
- 3.4 The changes to the Dyce Academy catchment area were proposed in order to help free up pupil capacity at the school, which could subsequently be used to rebalance pupil numbers between it and Bucksburn Academy, where the pupil roll is expected to exceed available capacity in future years.
- 3.5 Discussions between officers at Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council took place during Summer 2025, in which Aberdeenshire Council colleagues confirmed they would be willing to propose making changes to the catchment area for an identified Aberdeenshire secondary school, so that this could accommodate the communities of Newmachar and Kingseat. This would make it possible for the Dyce Academy catchment area boundary to be realigned with the City boundary.

Dyce Primary School

- 3.6 During discussions with Aberdeenshire officers it was agreed that, if the proposed changes to the Dyce Academy catchment area were to go ahead, it would be necessary also to make changes to the boundary line of the catchment area for Dyce (Primary) School, which currently also extends into Aberdeenshire, so that this also aligns with the City boundary.
- 3.7 As shown at Appendix B, the Dyce School catchment area extends into a smaller area of Aberdeenshire than that of Dyce Academy, and the Aberdeenshire land included in the Dyce School catchment area is mostly rural, with only a small number of residential properties within it. Any primary school aged children living within these properties are currently entitled to a place at Dyce School (and also Dyce Academy), whilst other primary aged children living in the wider area of Newmachar and Kingseat would be entitled to a place at New Machar School in Aberdeenshire, and Dyce

Academy. New Machar School is part of the Inverurie CSN (Community Schools Network) in Aberdeenshire.

- 3.8 If changes were to be made to the Dyce Academy catchment area to align it with the City boundary, without making similar changes to the Dyce School catchment area, this is likely to create some confusion for families in the future, as it would mean that children living in the area of Aberdeenshire highlighted in Appendix B would be entitled to a place at Dyce School, but not at Dyce Academy, and they may therefore be required to move to a different secondary school to the rest of their peers at the end of their P7 year.
- 3.9 Aberdeenshire Council colleagues therefore agreed that, alongside proposals for changes to the secondary school catchment areas, it would be appropriate to propose a change to the Dyce School catchment area, so that the rural area of land in Aberdeenshire (highlighted in Appendix B) is in future included in the New Machar School catchment area, and not the Dyce School catchment area, thus realigning the Dyce School catchment area with the City boundary.

Statutory Consultations

- 3.10 It was also agreed that, given the proposals would be very closely linked, the required statutory public consultations on proposed changes to the Dyce Academy and Dyce School catchment areas (to be led by Aberdeen City Council), and on proposed changes to the New Machar School and identified Aberdeenshire secondary school catchment areas (to be led by Aberdeenshire Council), should be held at the same time, to give stakeholders in all affected schools and communities the opportunity to consider the full extent of the proposed changes, and to provide their feedback on these at the same time, to one or both Councils.
- 3.11 Officers at both Councils agreed that the optimum timing for the implementation of changes to the catchment areas would be from August 2027, and that the required statutory public consultations should therefore ideally take place in late 2026 or early 2027.
- 3.12 It is therefore recommended that officers are instructed to commence planning for a statutory public consultation, in collaboration with officers at Aberdeenshire Council, on the proposals to adjust the catchment areas for both Dyce Academy and Dyce School, so that they align with the City boundary, with a view to the consultation being undertaken in Winter 2026/27, and if approved following the consultations, for the changes to take effect from August 2027.

Further catchment area proposals

- 3.13 As highlighted above and in the outline business case reported to the Committee in June 2025, the proposals for the above initial changes to the Dyce Academy catchment area are intended to free up capacity at the school, which could be used subsequently to help alleviate forecast future pressure on space at Bucksburn Academy. This would be achieved by altering the boundary line between the catchment areas for the two schools, so that areas of land currently included within the Bucksburn Academy catchment area, instead become part of the Dyce Academy catchment area. Over time, the result of this would be a reduction in pupil numbers at

Bucksburn Academy, and an increase in pupil numbers at Dyce Academy, thus balancing pupil numbers more evenly across the two schools.

- 3.14 Any realignment of catchment areas for the two secondary schools would also impact on one or more primary schools within the Bucksburn and Dyce Associated Schools Groups (ASGs), as it would be desirable to ensure that P7 cohorts have the opportunity to move to the same secondary school together, rather than being zoned to different secondary schools. It may therefore be necessary to make some adjustments to primary school catchment areas, so that they remain in alignment with the secondary school catchment areas.
- 3.15 Given that Stoneywood School is located in the northern part of the Bucksburn Academy catchment area and is closest to Dyce Academy, and given that Dyce School is the only City primary school within the Dyce ASG, these two schools would likely be impacted most by changes to the secondary school catchment areas.
- 3.16 The pupil roll at Dyce School is currently at around 73% of the school's planning capacity, and forecasts indicate that pupil numbers there are likely to continue falling over the next eight years, to around 64% of available capacity by 2032. In contrast, pupil numbers at Stoneywood School currently exceed the school's planning capacity, and the school is expected to remain over capacity until at least 2032.
- 3.17 There may therefore be an opportunity to make adjustments to the catchment areas for these primary schools, alongside changes to the secondary school catchment areas, to help balance pupil numbers between the two schools, and help to relieve pressure on space at Stoneywood School, whilst also minimising any excess unused capacity at Dyce School.
- 3.18 Further work is required to assess what further catchment area changes could be made to achieve a better balance of pupil numbers in the primary and secondary schools in these ASGs in future, should the proposed adjustment of the Dyce catchment areas to align with the city boundary go ahead.
- 3.19 It is therefore recommended that officers are instructed to undertake a review of all catchment areas in the Dyce and Bucksburn ASGs, and to report back to the Committee with recommendations as appropriate, as part of the School Estate Plan update report in Autumn 2026.
- 3.20 Any proposals to make changes to school catchment areas would be subject to statutory public consultation, prior to any decisions to implement changes being made. Where changes to catchment areas are made, any pupils affected by the changes would be entitled to remain at their current school; they would not be expected to move to a new school as a result of a change in the catchment areas. Similarly, younger siblings of children already attending an affected school when changes are implemented, and who find they are no longer living in the catchment area for that school as a result of the changes, would be entitled to attend the same school as their older brother or sister, in order to keep family groups together.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed reviews of school catchment areas would be undertaken using existing staffing resources.
- 4.2 If a decision is taken following statutory consultation to proceed with the realignment of catchment areas, so that pupils living in the affected areas of Aberdeenshire in future attend a school in Aberdeenshire and not Aberdeen City, then the per capita funding which the Council currently receives from Scottish Government to assist with the cost of the education of these pupils, will instead be paid to Aberdeenshire Council, and the overall per capita funding paid to Aberdeen City would be reduced. The total reduction in per capita funding, following full implementation of catchment area changes after six years (i.e. after all existing pupils who live in Aberdeenshire have left the school), is estimated at £20k per year.
- 4.3 If the proposed changes to catchment areas do not go ahead, it is likely that work would be required to extend Dyce Academy, to provide additional space and allow a rebalancing of pupil numbers between Bucksburn Academy and Dyce Academy. Such work would require a significant capital investment, for which no budget has been identified. The proposed catchment area changes which would reduce the numbers of pupils attending Dyce Academy, and allow the rebalancing of pupil numbers to go ahead, would remove the requirement for this significant expenditure.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 provides that it shall be the duty of every education authority to secure that there is made for their area adequate and efficient provision of school education.
- 5.2 Section 17 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 provides that it shall be the duty of an education authority in the performance of their functions under sections 1 to 6 of the Act, to provide for their area, sufficient accommodation in public schools and other educational establishments under their management to enable them to perform their said functions. In addition, an education authority shall maintain and keep efficient every public school, and other educational establishment under their management, and shall from time to time provide such additional accommodation as may be necessary to enable them to perform their functions under the Act and may, provide, alter, improve, enlarge, equip and maintain schools and other educational establishments within their area.
- 5.3 A proposal to make changes to a school, including changes to catchment areas or 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 changes to the catchment areas for Dyce Academy and Bucksburn Academy, and consideration of this has been given in the recommendations arising from this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant risks identified			
Compliance	Failure to plan effectively for education provision leading to the Council being unable to fulfil its duty to make adequate and efficient education provision	The recommended option as set out within the business case would help to ensure that adequate and efficient education provision for Dyce and Bucksburn will be in place for the foreseeable future	L	Yes
Operational	Proposed changes to catchment areas don't provide sufficient re-balancing of pupil numbers	Any changes to catchment areas would be designed to rebalance pupil numbers according to the latest available forecasts, however there would remain a risk that the desired changes are not realised immediately. Other short term mitigating actions may therefore be required to address any further lack of capacity at either school.	M	Yes
Financial	No significant risks identified			

Reputational	Failure to engage with stakeholders (including Aberdeenshire Council) on the planned changes to the school catchment areas could lead to reputational damage for the Council.	Ongoing dialogue and planning with Aberdeenshire colleagues and engagement with staff, parents and pupils at the appropriate stage of the project	L	Yes
Environmental/Climate	No significant risks identified			

8. OUTCOMES

<u>Council Delivery Plan 2024</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<p>The recommendations within this report support the delivery of the following policy statements:</p> <p>A City of Opportunity</p> <p>Policy Statement 2 - Review and invest in our school estate, ensuring all of Aberdeen's schools are fit for the educational needs and the challenges of the 21st century. The report presents options for balancing pupil numbers and ensuring schools in Bucksburn and Dyce can operate within their available capacity.</p>
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Prosperous People: The project will support Stretch Outcome 8 in the LOIP - 100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/disabilities will experience a positive destination." Ensuring sufficient capacity and resources across our school estate will support pupil needs and positive destinations.
Community Empowerment Stretch Outcomes	The report and proposed future consultation support the delivery of Stretch Outcome 16 in the LOIP – 50% of people report they feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026.
Regional and City Strategies	This project forms part of the School Estate Plan which will support the delivery of the Council's Property and Estates Strategy and the Net Zero Routemap for Aberdeen City.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Previous Integrated Impact Assessment relating to the Bucksburn and Dyce secondary education provision Outline Business Case has been reviewed and changes made
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	No other assessments required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Education and Children's Services Committee, 24 June 2025: Agenda Item 14: [Bucksburn and Dyce Long Term Secondary School Provision: Outline Business Case](#).

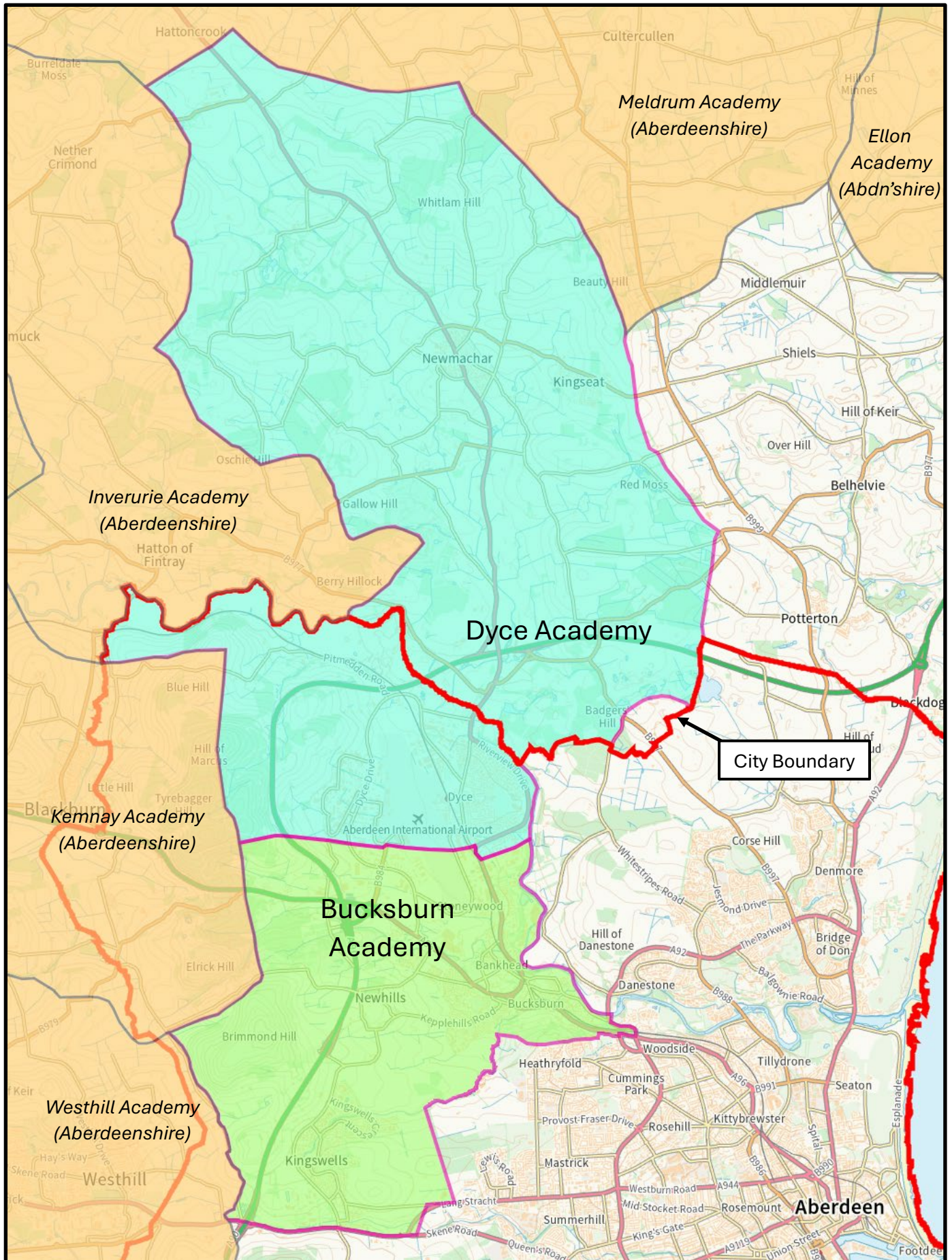
11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A: Secondary School Catchment Areas
- 11.2 Appendix B: Primary School Catchment Areas

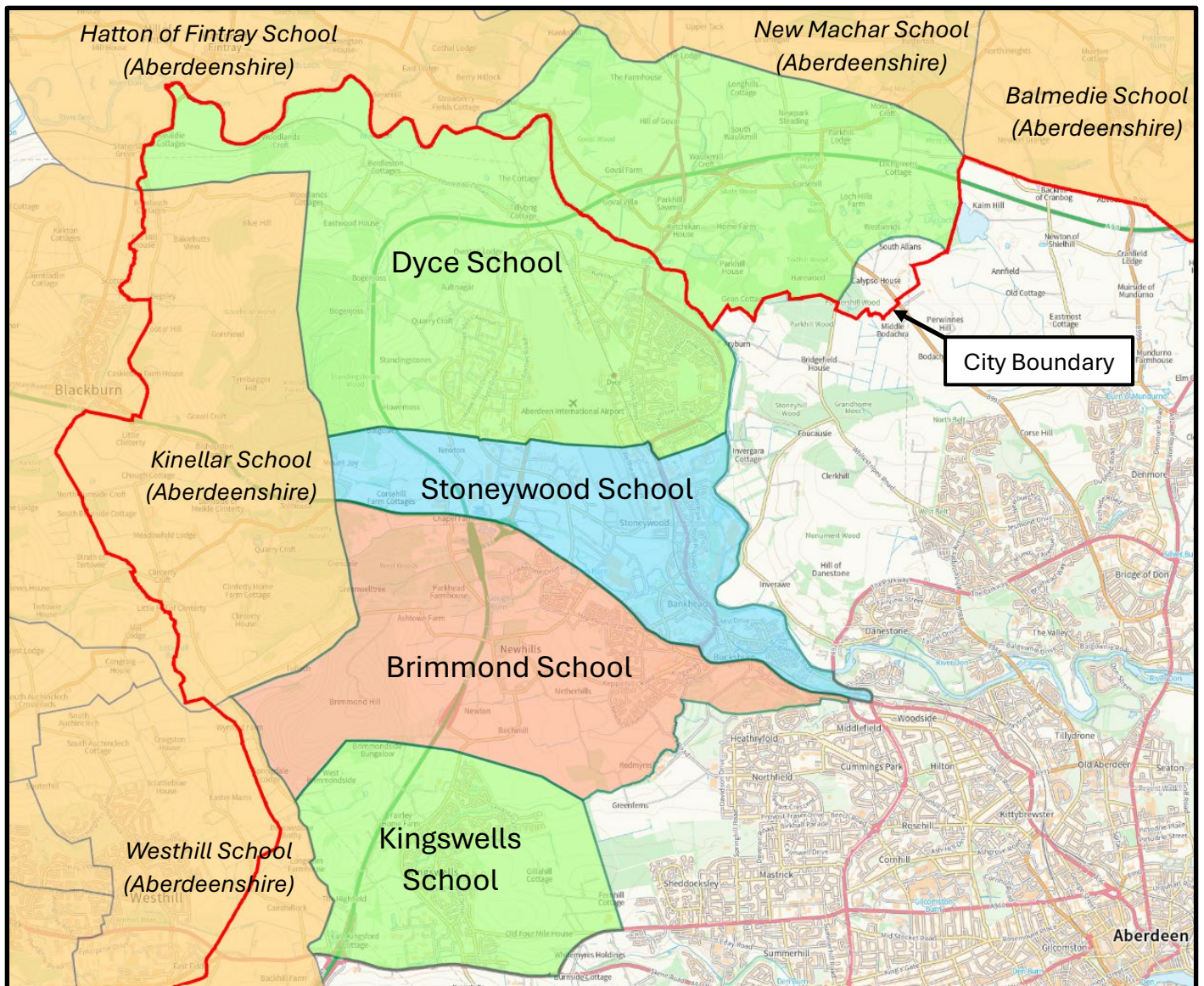
12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Title	Service Manager
Email Address	ajones@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Appendix A: Secondary School Catchment Areas



Appendix B: Primary School Catchment Areas



ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	25 November 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Report on Options to Rationalise Early Learning and Childcare Settings
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/223
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne
REPORT AUTHOR	Louise Beaton
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1 & 1.2

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present options to the Education and Children's Services Committee on rationalising Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision in order to meet demand, maximise resources and achieve best value.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Considers the options presented and approves the amended Early Learning and Childcare delivery models, set out in Appendix 3 of this Report, from August 2026, based on demand.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 As part of the Council's statutory duties under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, we are required to consult with parents and carers every two years on the provision of ELC. The Early Years team consulted with parents and carers in May 2025 and the results can be found at Appendix 1. Key headline data includes:

- 81% of respondents secured their first choice of funded ELC provision.
- 68% of respondents had been able to secure a funded ELC place in their local area / Associated School Group (ASG). 26% of respondents had not yet applied for a place or had not applied for an ELC place in their local area.
- 34% of respondents told us that a fully flexible Funded Provider was the best model of ELC to meet their family's needs. This was closely followed by 9am-3pm term-time model at a Local Authority School ELC / Nursery setting with 31% of respondents saying this best met their needs. 18% of respondents said that the 2.5 days model at 46 weeks provision best met the needs of their family.

- Of those who currently access 46 weeks provision (either mornings, afternoons or 2.5 days), 61% confirmed that they use their ELC place during holiday periods. 22% of respondents' children did not attend ELC provision during holiday periods. Around 17% of respondents said they accessed their ELC place during either Easter or Summer holiday periods.
- A significant majority of respondents (83%) said they are aware that they can use their 1140 hours funded ELC entitlement at a private, voluntary or independent (PVI) Funded Provider ELC setting.
- Furthermore, 81% of respondents are also aware that they can use their 1140 hours funded ELC entitlement with a childminder, either in full or as part of a blended placement.
- The vast majority of respondents (89%) confirmed that their child(ren) attend one ELC / Nursery setting. Only 11% of respondents use a blended placement for their child(ren).
- 84% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the current location of ELC services. 11% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- 68% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the times ELC services are currently available. 21% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- 68% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the snacks and / or meals their child is offered whilst attending ELC. 21% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- 87% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their child's experience of ELC to date. 10.4% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- 86% of respondents are aware that Aberdeen City Council offers Eligible 2's funded ELC places.
- 78% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the ELC application process. 16% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- 39% of respondents reported that they feel they are better off (e.g. more money / disposable income) as a result of receiving 1140 hours of funded ELC.
- 55% of respondents anticipated that they would require wraparound care once their child(ren) starts Primary School.

3.2 Responses to the Consultation did not indicate a need to amend our approach to the provision of a mixed model of ELC across the city. On that basis, the review of delivery models to rationalise our offer has sought to maintain a mixed model of ELC across Associated School Groups (ASGs) to ensure families continue to have choice.

Review of Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Models

3.3 One of the key actions in our ELC Delivery Plan 2024-26 is to continue to monitor demand across the city and in individual ASGs. This is in order to meet the needs of families and to achieve best value. Recent detailed work on capacities shows that, similar to previous years, we continue to have an oversupply of 'afternoon' places available and Officers have taken this learning into account in planning proposed delivery models for 2026/27. The team continue to receive applications for ELC placements on a daily basis as families move into the city and care has been taken to factor this into proposals.

- 3.4 We know from parent and carer feedback that a large majority of respondents to the recent Consultation (84%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the current location of ELC providers within their local area/Associated Schools Group (ASG). 81% of respondents were able to secure their first choice of funded ELC provision and 68% were able to secure a funded ELC place in their local area/ ASG (with 26% either not yet applied or had not applied for an ELC place in their local area). However some delivery models continue to be more popular than others, are dependent on family circumstances and there are slight changes in demand across each ASG.
- 3.5 We also know that the number of ELC age children (age two to five years) in Scotland was seven per cent lower in 2022 than was projected at the beginning of ELC expansion, and is expected to continue to fall over the next 10 years (*National Records of Scotland (NRS) population projections*). This will have an impact on the demand for ELC places in the longer term. We are now starting to notice a reduction in the number of ELC applications and the numbers of children attending ELC, which is the first indication of the falling birthrate.
- 3.6 At the time of the 2025 ELC Parent and Carer Consultation, fully flexible (34%), term-time (31%) and full day all year round placements (18%) were most popular in terms of best meeting the needs of families. For half day placements, morning places still continue to be more highly sought after than afternoon places (6%), with afternoon placements being the least popular out of all the delivery models offered (2%). This has been triangulated through recent work on ELC capacities (Appendix 2).
- 3.7 A number of our Local Authority settings continue to operate under capacity, particularly in the afternoon sessions of the 8am-6pm all year-round model and during holiday periods:
- Broomhill School ELC – currently operating at 50% capacity in afternoons. And between 18-52% in holiday periods.
 - Braehead School ELC – currently operating at 50% capacity in afternoons. And between 40-68% in holiday periods.
 - Cornhill School ELC – currently operating at 20% capacity in afternoons. And between 25-65% in holiday periods.
 - Culter School ELC – currently operating at between 30-50% capacity in afternoons. And between 19-63% during holiday periods.
 - Dyce School ELC – currently operating at 50% capacity in afternoons. And between 20-75% during holiday periods.
 - Forehill School ELC - currently operating at between 40-50% capacity in afternoons. And between 13-75% during holiday periods.
 - Heathryburn School ELC – currently operating at 33% capacity in afternoons. And between 12-63% during holiday periods.
 - Kittybrewster School ELC – currently operating at 40% capacity in afternoons. And between 0-66% during holiday periods.
 - Loirston School ELC – currently operating at 46% capacity in afternoons. And between 21-66% during holiday periods.
 - Tullos – currently operating at 64% capacity in mornings, 8.5% capacity in afternoons and 12.5% during holiday periods.

- 3.8 As a result of this analysis, we have identified one ELC setting which could change from a mixed model to a fully term-time model:
- Cornhill School ELC (St Machar ASG) – 60 places
- 3.9 As a result of this analysis we have also identified two ELC settings across two ASGs which have sufficient capacity to offer a mixed model which includes 8am-6pm x 46-week provision and 9am-3pm term-time provision. These are:
- Heathryburn School ELC (Northfield ASG); and
 - Tullos School ELC (Lochside ASG)
- 3.10 We propose to offer a mixed model at both ELC settings from August 2026 with 24 x 9-3 term-time places and 16 x 8-6 places. This will reduce the number of surplus afternoon places and better balance the demand for more term-time places whilst continuing to meet the needs of families who require full days and all year-round provision.
- 3.11 Within the other ELC settings, we do not propose to change the current delivery models, as we would not have enough places to move to a fully 9am-3pm term-time model. It would also remove some of the ELC options delivered across each of our ASGs which we have given a commitment to offering. We therefore propose to keep the numbers at each of these settings under review meantime and will realign the number of places offered in the mornings and afternoons, where possible, to balance attendance. Based on current uptake, this will have minimal impact on our service delivery. However, where demand exists and where spaces allow, we will also look at an option to sell afternoon places at these ELC settings. In order to maximise resources and achieve best value, Officers will also closely monitor staffing levels and recruitment requests for those ELC settings operating under capacity.
- 3.12 Furthermore, in order to meet the demand for morning places and to reduce the number of surplus afternoon places, we also propose a change to the 2.5 full days model. We propose that it is stipulated that the ½ day is taken as an afternoon session for new applications. This will ensure that more whole week morning places are available for those who wish to choose 5 x mornings, more afternoon places are filled and thus attendance is more evenly balanced out across the day.
- 3.13 Holiday uptake has increased again slightly in 2024-25, compared to between 2021-22 and 2023-24, however attendance remains significantly lower than during term time weeks. In order to accurately demonstrate and quantify this, Officers monitor attendance numbers on a daily basis during holiday periods. 27 ELC settings were open during the 2025 summer holiday period (-2 from 2024) and they were requested to submit their attendance figures on a daily basis. In the majority of cases, ELC settings operated at approximately 50% or less and the actual numbers were usually lower than the estimated numbers, which were based on ELC teams speaking to parents and carers in advance of holiday periods about their intentions.

- 3.14 In terms of uptake during holiday periods, we have undertaken more detailed analysis this year. We asked parents and carers during the recent ELC Consultation about their use of ELC during these times as we were keen to better understand the reasons for decrease in uptake:
- 30% of respondents stated that the primary reason for their children not attending ELC during holiday periods is due to having other children of school age at home;
 - 22% of respondents confirmed that their family did not require ELC during the holiday periods;
 - 15% of respondents advised that a term-time model was their first choice of ELC provision but was not available; and
 - Other reasons for not attending ELC during holiday periods included one or more parents working term-time (12%).
- 3.15 In putting forward these proposals, based on current supply and demand data, and the views of parents and carers, Officers have considered the full ELC offer across each ASG with all areas still having a good mix of 8am-6pm all year round ELC provision and 9am-3pm term time provision (Appendix 3). Our ELC Funded Providers also continue to offer fully flexible funded ELC across the city and can meet the needs of families who require wrap around care and additional hours.
- 3.16 It is proposed that the amended delivery models outlined are implemented from August 2026 and that applications for ELC placements be opened in February 2026, in keeping with established practice and enabling effective forward planning by families.
- 3.17 There will be no staffing changes in the remainder of the current 2025-26 session. Officers will work with People & Citizen Services and Trade Union colleagues to consider any impacts on ELC staff contracts, as a result of the proposed changes to some of the ELC models, in advance of the new ELC session commencing in August 2026. No immediate reductions in staffing are proposed, as some ELC settings require enhanced staffing allocations. Staff turnover and vacancies will be monitored closely with any required adjustments in future staffing allocation achieved via staff turnover.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Aberdeen City Council, as primary guarantor of quality and key enabler of flexibility and choice, is currently funded by the Scottish Government to deliver ELC, as part of Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE).
- 4.2 Officers continue to work with finance colleagues to ensure that our plans work towards realisation of a sustainable ELC provision. The options presented in this report will help to achieve best value by rationalising ELC provision to match the Scottish Government Grant, whilst continuing to deliver on our statutory duties, if approved.
- 4.3 Reciprocal arrangements are in place via a Cross Boundary Agreement with Aberdeenshire Council. This means that an equal number of ELC places will

be provided by each neighbouring Local Authority. For example, if Aberdeen City Council provide more funded ELC places than Aberdeenshire Council, the additional places will be recharged to Aberdeenshire Council in line with the Reconciliation and Payments part of the Cross Boundary Agreement on a termly basis. This ensures equity and best value for both Authorities, whilst offering flexibility and choice to families from both Authorities.

- 4.4 The selling of ELC places pilot at Culter School ELC is also generating additional income for the Council. In 2025/26, six new families are purchasing additional sessions. This is in addition to five continuing families from 2024/25. Officers are now exploring the potential for selling ELC places at other ELC settings.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The expansion of ELC has brought a number of duties on the Local Authority under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014:

- The provision of 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare for eligible two year olds and all three and four year olds.
- Aberdeen City Council will retain the statutory responsibility for ensuring that funded ELC entitlement is available to all eligible children in the city.
- Aberdeen City Council will continue to be the primary guarantor of quality and key enabler of flexibility and choice, ensuring that there is a range of options for all families in the city.
- Aberdeen City Council is responsible for engaging and consulting with parents and carers on a regular basis (minimum of every 2 years) on the provision of ELC delivered locally.
- Aberdeen City Council is responsible for preparing and publishing an Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan every 2 years.

- 5.2 The proposed amended Early Learning and Childcare delivery models, based on demand, will assist the Council to continue to develop and deliver high quality ELC in the city.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No risks identified	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	Risk of not meeting statutory obligations around 1140 hours.	Mitigated through delivery of the Expansion Programme and subsequent monitoring of supply and demand of ELC places.	L	Yes
Operational	Risk of not attracting enough new practitioners into the workforce.	Mitigated through the ongoing activities being undertaken to support workforce development, as outlined in ELC Delivery Plan 2024-26.	L	Yes
Financial	Risk of building a financially unsustainable model.	Care has been taken to redesign ELC around improving quality rather than simply doubling to reflect the additional hours and a more sustainable staffing model has been put in place. Officers are monitoring supply and demand on an annual basis in order to maximise resources and achieve best value.	M	Yes
Reputational	Risk of not delivering on legal obligations	Mitigated through delivery of the Expansion Programme and subsequent monitoring of supply	L	Yes

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

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the policy statement “<i>Aberdeen – A place where all people can prosper</i>”.</p> <p>The provision of funded Early Learning and Childcare has the potential to be transformational for many families, but especially for those with the lowest incomes in the city, and will contribute to our high level priority to reduce child poverty.</p>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p>74% employment rate for Aberdeen City by 2026 (Stretch Outcome 2)</p> <p>The Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2024-26 will continue to have a positive impact on this priority theme and will help to deliver the LOIP.</p> <p>The workforce has increased significantly in order to deliver the increase in ELC provision and will not be detrimentally impacted by the proposals contained within this report.</p> <p>63 Aberdeen City Council employees retrained as Early Years Practitioners over 3 cohorts of a Retraining Programme, gaining an SVQ Level 3 qualification. We also recruited 110 Early Learning and Childcare Support Workers.</p> <p>In addition, we introduced a Modern Apprenticeship position into our ELC staffing structure. This involves training young people to become Early Years Practitioners as part of our ‘Grow Our Own’ workforce strategy. This is a new role in our Local Authority ELC settings and provides a positive destination and career pathway for our young people as well as strengthening our workforce. We currently have 30 Modern Apprenticeships working across the city.</p>

	<p>There will continue to be ongoing opportunities to join the Early Learning and Childcare workforce in Aberdeen and to retrain, to upskill and for career progression.</p> <p>95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27-30 month review by 2026 (Stretch Outcome 3)</p> <p>Our work in partnership with families and communities including through a Peep offer in all settings as part of a partnership Family Support offer will support children to reach their expected milestones. It will also increase the number of parents and carers who have awareness of how to support their children's learning and development at home.</p> <p>Furthermore, every child who attends Early Learning and Childcare over a lunchtime period receives a minimum of one free meal per session attended as part of their statutory entitlement, as well as a portion of milk and fruit or vegetables daily via the Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme.</p> <p>Early Learning and Childcare can improve long term outcomes for children and families.</p> <p>95% of children, living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1&2), will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026 (Stretch Outcome 6)</p> <p>The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare has contributed positively to supporting positive destinations.</p> <p>We have introduced a Modern Apprenticeship (MA) position into our ELC staffing structure. This involves training young people to become Early Years Practitioners as part of our 'Grow Our Own' workforce strategy. This is a new role in our Local Authority ELC settings and provides a positive destination and career pathway for our young people as well as strengthening our workforce. We currently have 30 Modern Apprenticeships working across the city and are in the process of recruiting 2 new MA's.</p> <p>34 young people completed their training in 2023-2024 and 13 completed in 2024-2025.</p>
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Regional and City Strategies Strategic Development Plan Children's Services Plan National Improvement Framework Plan	The proposals within this report support the Strategic Development Plan by supporting the workforce. The provision of high quality Early Learning and Childcare will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support families to take up employment and training opportunities; 2. Develop the Young Workforce; and 3. Support business to recruit and retain staff. The Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2024-26 is aligned to the Children's Services Plan and the National Improvement Framework Plan and work to address poverty in the Child Poverty Action Plan.
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9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Previous Integrated Impact Assessment relating to the provision of Early Learning and Childcare has been reviewed and no changes are required: ED-07R~1.PDF
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required as no personal information will be shared.
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Best Start: Strategic Early Learning and School Age Childcare Plan for Scotland 2022-26 (Scottish Government: October 2022)
- 10.2 Aberdeen City Council Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2024-26

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – Early Learning and Childcare Consultation with Parents and Carers – Spring 2025
- 11.2 Appendix 2 – Analysis of uptake of ELC Placements – October 2025
- 11.3 Appendix 3 – Early Learning and Childcare Models Proposed from August 2026

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Early Learning and Childcare Consultation with Parents and Carers 2025

Report

Background

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

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

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

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

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

We asked a range of questions under the following headings: Demographics; Usage of ELC; Accessibility; Awareness; Satisfaction; and Wider impacts. The consultation was open from Thursday 1 May to Sunday 8 June 2025 inclusive and received a total of **365 responses** after 5 weeks (-299 (-45%) from 2023).

We are disappointed that our 2025 consultation had a lower return rate from previous consultations. However, we are assured that our promotion and engagement strategy to reach parents and carers, and future parents and carers, was successful as we had **2842 visitors** to the site. Unfortunately just under 13% of those visits translated into actual responses. It is possible that the reduction in responses this year could be attributed to the following reasons:

1. Using a new consultation platform rather than Google form used previously in 2021 and 2023. It is possible that potential respondents viewed this as being more complex, less straightforward and more time consuming to complete.
2. Fear of not being anonymous. The consultation was anonymous, but the platform asked respondents to enter their email address. Whilst this was not for Aberdeen City Council purposes and we emphasised, in the introduction and again at the beginning of the survey, that respondents would be anonymous, we feel that respondents may have been wary of completing it.
3. Possible consultation fatigue due to recent Community Planning consultation which was also widely publicised and promoted.
4. Overall satisfaction with our ELC offer in Aberdeen meaning that some parents and carers felt no need to respond.

Key headline data from the responses received include:

- 81% of respondents secured their first choice of ELC provision (+0.4% from 2023).
- 68% of respondents have been able to secure a funded ELC place in their local area/ASG (-8% from 2023). It should be noted that 26% of respondents had not yet applied for an ELC place or did not apply for an ELC place in their local area.
- 88.4% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the location of ELC provision (-4.8% from 2023). 11% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- 68.1% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the times ELC services are currently available (-8.7% from 2023), with 21% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- 34% of respondents told us that a fully flexible Funded Provider was the best model of ELC to meet their family's needs. This was closely followed by 9am-3pm term-time model at a Local Authority School ELC / Nursery setting with 31% of respondents saying this best met their needs. 18% of respondents said that the 2.5 days model at 46 weeks provision best met the needs of their family.
- Of those who currently access 46 weeks provision (either mornings, afternoons or 2.5 days), 61% confirmed that they use their ELC place during holiday periods. 22% of respondents children did not attend ELC provision during holiday periods. Around 17% of respondents said they accessed their ELC place during either Easter or Summer holiday periods.
- A significant majority of respondents (83%) said they are aware that they can use their 1140 hours funded ELC entitlement at a private, voluntary or independent (PVI) Funded Provider ELC setting (+2.5% from 2023).

- Furthermore, 81% of respondents are also aware that they can use their 1140 hours funded ELC entitlement with a childminder, either in full or as part of a blended placement (+8% from 2023).
- The vast majority of respondents (89%) confirmed that their child(ren) attend one ELC / Nursery setting. Only 11% of respondents use a blended placement for their child(ren).
- 87% of respondents stated that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their child's experience of ELC to date (no change from 2023).
- The majority of respondents, at over 93%, identified Early Learning and Childcare as having a positive impact on their child's development with:
 - ✓ 84% identifying improved listening skills;
 - ✓ 65% identifying improved social skills;
 - ✓ 65% identifying improved creativity;
 - ✓ 65% identifying improved attention span;
 - ✓ 61% identifying improved literacy development;
 - ✓ 61% identifying improved fine motor skills;
 - ✓ 61% identifying improved physical development;
 - ✓ 60% identifying improved numeracy development;
 - ✓ 58% seeing an improvement in their child's communication skills;
 - ✓ 53% identifying improved problem solving; and
 - ✓ 42% identifying improved emotional development.
- 68.1% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the snacks and meals their child is offered whilst attending ELC (-5.5% from 2023), with 21% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- 78% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the ELC application process.
- 41% of respondents stated that they had more time for other responsibilities as a result of the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (+1% from 2023).
- 39% of respondents indicated that they felt better off (e.g. more money/disposable income) as a result of receiving 1140 hours of funded ELC (+10% from 2023).
- 14% are now considering a return to work or study (-10% from 2023).
- 29% of respondents highlighted improved wellbeing/respite as a result of their child(ren) receiving funded ELC (+5% from 2023), whilst 24% of respondents found they now have more time to themselves (+5% from 2023).
- 86% of respondents stated that they are aware that Aberdeen City Council offers Eligible 2's funded ELC places (+12.7% from 2023).
- 55% of respondents anticipated that they would require wraparound care once their child(ren) starts Primary School (+10% from 2023).

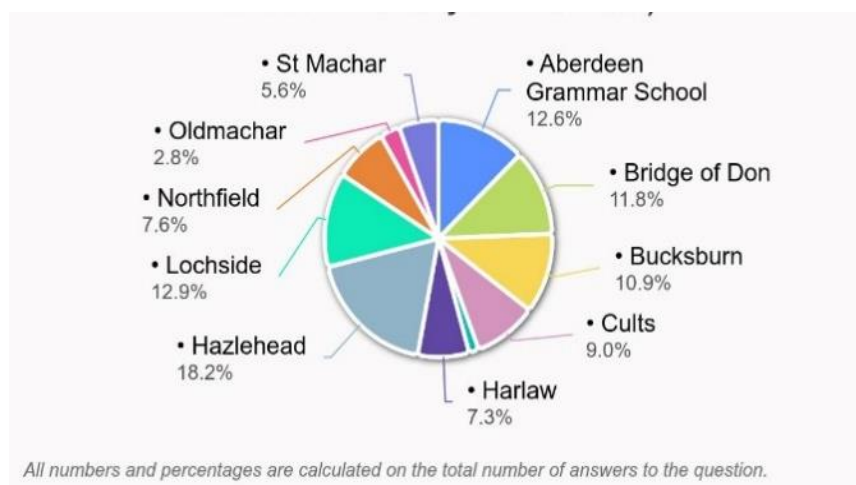
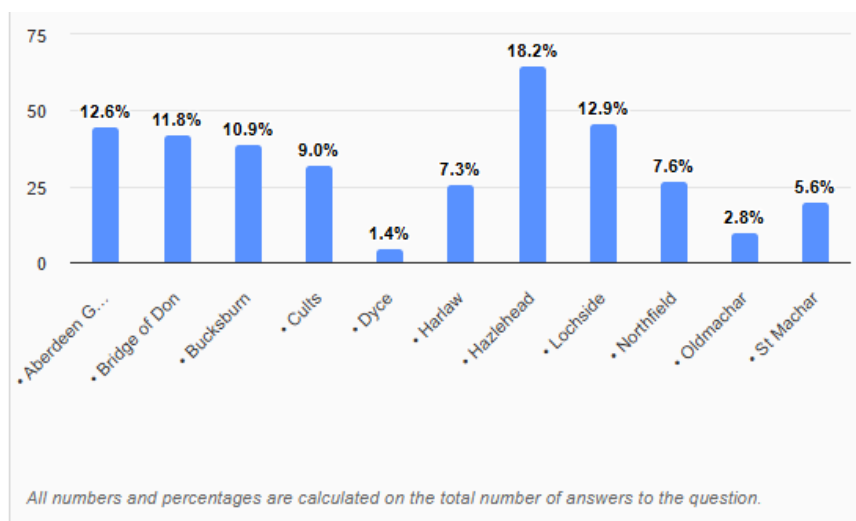
Responses to each question are detailed in the following pages.

Section 1: Demographics

Question 1: We asked parents and carers what area of Aberdeen they live in? (These are listed by Associated School Groups (ASGs) for Aberdeen City Council Secondary School zones).

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

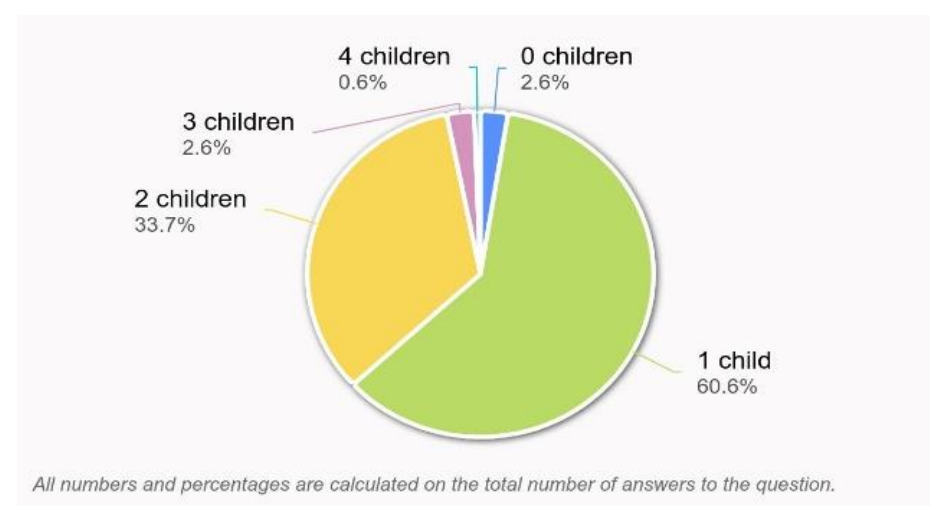
Associated School Group	Responses	Percentages
Aberdeen Grammar School	45	12.6%
Bridge of Don	42	11.8%
Bucksburn	39	10.9%
Cults	32	9%
Dyce	5	1.4%
Harlaw	26	7.3%
Hazlehead	65	18.2%
Lochside	46	12.9%
Northfield	27	7.6%
Oldmachar	10	2.8%
St Machar	20	5.6%



There was engagement from parents and carers, and future parents and carers, from across the city. The most respondents were from Hazlehead ASG 18% (65), followed by Lochside 13% (46) and Aberdeen Grammar School 13% (45) respectively. Bridge of Don 12% (42) and Bucksburn 11% (39) also have significant representation, whilst fewer responses were received from the other ASGs. We should take into consideration that Dyce ASG is a very small ASG compared to others and also that the consultation may have been better promoted and shared in some ASGs than others.

Question 2: We asked parents and carers how many children they have aged between 0-5 in their care?

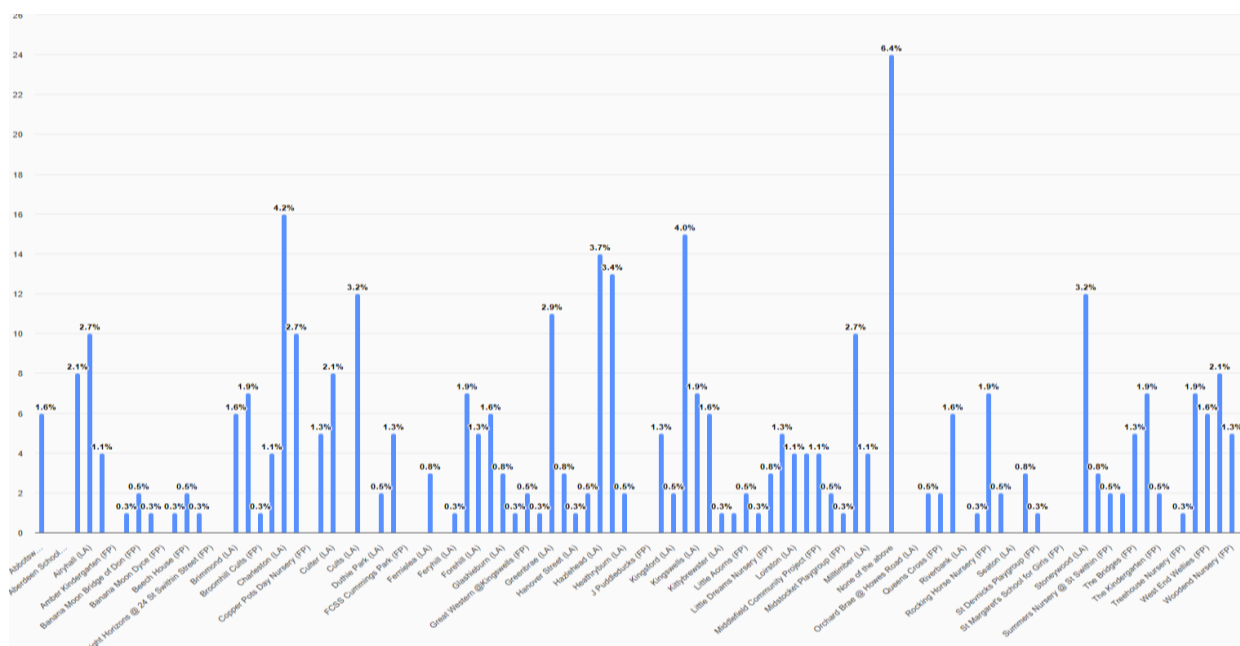
Number of Children	Respondents	Percentage
0	9	2.6%
1	212	60.6%
2	118	33.7%
3	9	2.5%
4	2	0.6%



We asked this question to determine a demographic regarding the household composition of each respondent. Responses to this question indicate that the majority of respondents have one child aged between 0-5 (60.6%), whilst a further 33.7% of respondents having two children and 2.5% have 3 children. 0.6% of respondents have 4 children aged between 0-5 in their care.

These figures are fairly similar to the responses to our previous consultation. In 2023, the majority of respondents (61.3%) had one child, whilst a further 33.4% of respondents had two children. Less than 4% of respondents said they had 3 or more children.

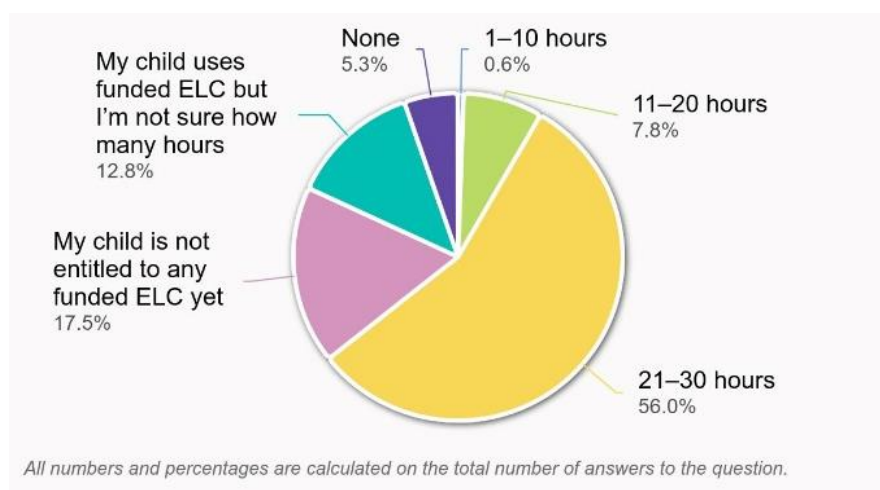
Question 3: We asked parents and carers which ELC setting their child currently attends?



Responses to this question indicated a good cross section of responses across a range of ELC settings, including Local Authority and Funded Providers, with 6.4% of respondents not yet having children in funded ELC.

Section 2: Usage of ELC

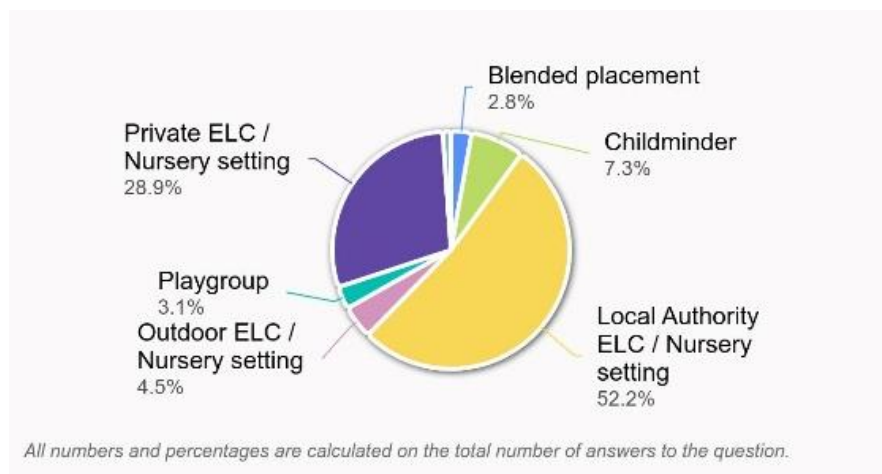
Question 1: We asked parents and carers how many hours of funded ELC entitlement (up to 1140 hours per year) they currently use per week per child?



The majority of respondents use between 21-30 hours of funded ELC per week (56%) with 7.8% of respondents using between 11-20 hours. 17.5% indicated that their child is

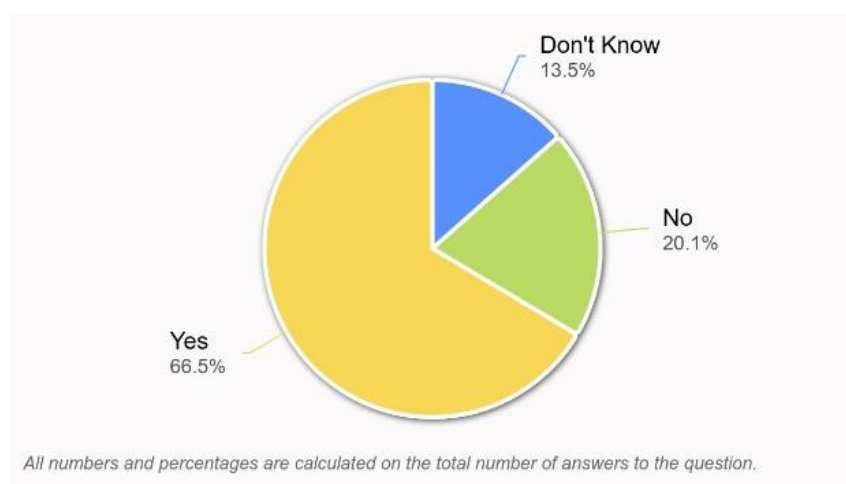
not entitled to any funded ELC yet, 5.3% said none and 12.8% were unsure how many hours their child accessed.

Question 2: We asked parents and carers if their child(ren) currently attends one or more of the following funded ELC provisions?



The majority of respondents, 186 (52%), have children attending Local Authority ELC / Nursery settings, followed by 103 (29%) in Private ELC / Nursery settings. 26 respondents (7.3%) chose a childminder for their children, 16 (4.5%) chose an Outdoor ELC / Nursery setting with 9 (3%) respondents choosing a Playgroup for their funded ELC place.

Question 3: We asked parents and carers if they use the full statutory ELC entitlement (1140 hours per year)?

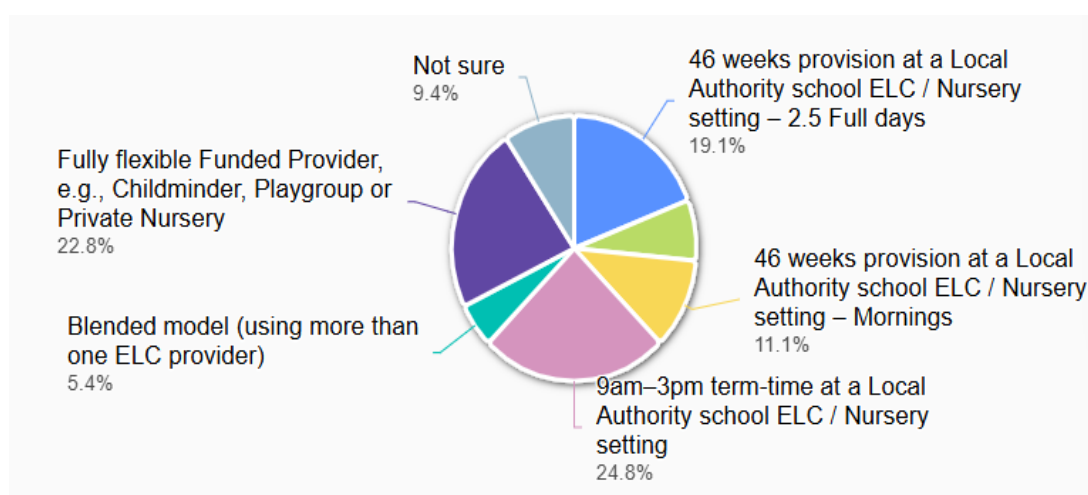
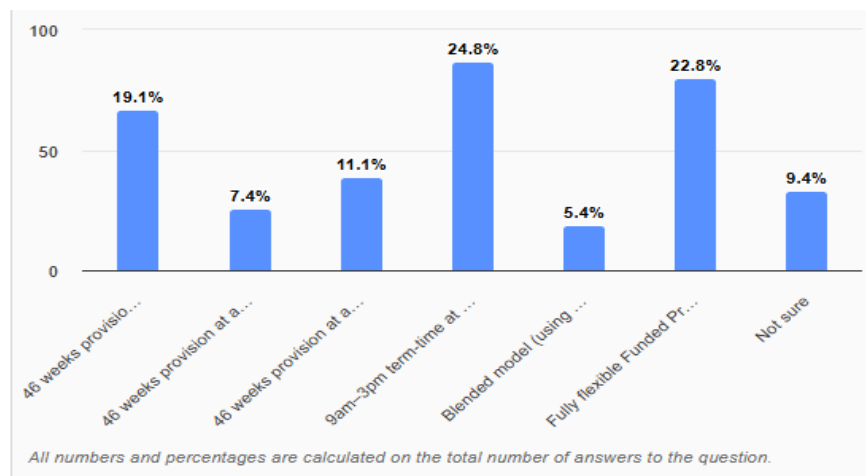


The majority of respondents, 222 (66.5%) use their full statutory entitlement, whilst 67 (20%) do not). 13.5% of respondents (45) were unsure.

We asked this question to check awareness of statutory ELC entitlement and uptake. Whilst we have a duty as a Local Authority to ensure that we have enough ELC provision

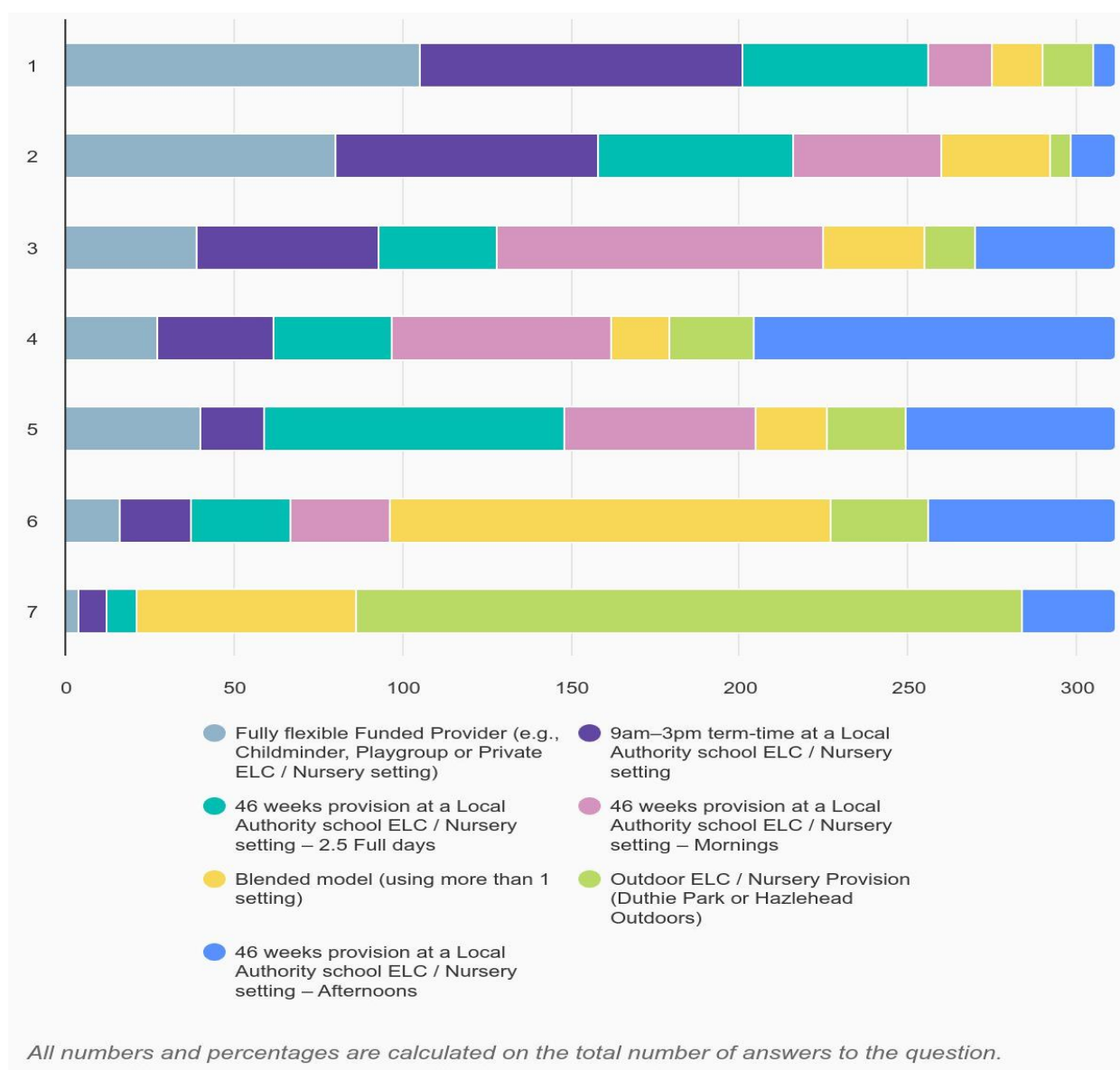
available for every child whose parent and carer wishes them to have a place, it is personal choice and children do not have to attend or take up their full ELC entitlement.

Question 4: We asked parents and carers to select the ELC models they currently use for their child(ren).



The most commonly used ELC model, from those responding to the consultation, is 9am–3pm term-time provision at a Local Authority school ELC / Nursery setting with 25% of respondents (87) currently using this model. This was followed by 23% of respondents (80) currently using a fully flexible Funded Provider and 19% of respondents (67) using 46 weeks provision at a Local Authority school ELC / Nursery setting for 2.5 days. Other models received fewer responses. For half day (morning or afternoon sessions) at Local Authority school ELC / Nursery settings, mornings are more popular than afternoons with 11% of respondents (39) using mornings compared to 8% (26) in afternoons.

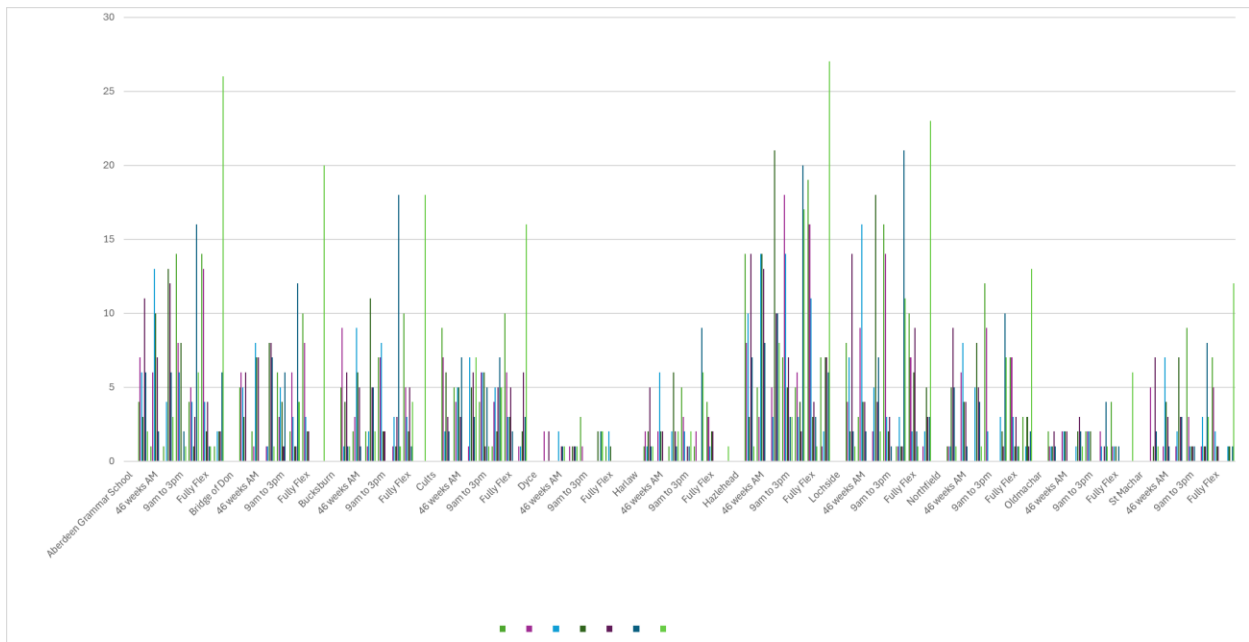
Question 5: We asked parents and carers which models of ELC best meet the needs of their family and to rank them in order from 1-7.



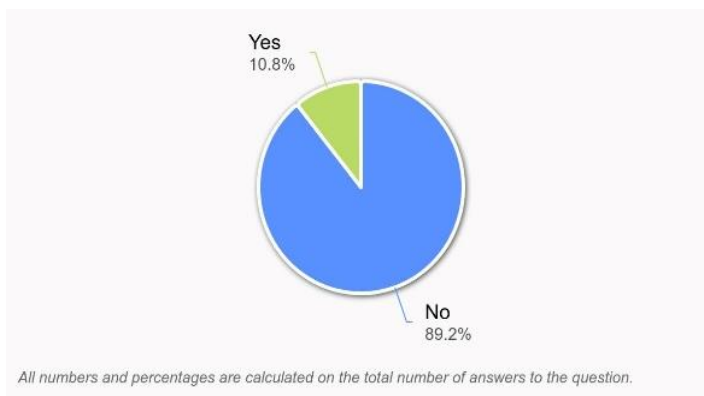
Responses to this question give us a clearer picture of which ELC models best meet the needs of families. Fully flexible (34%), term-time (31%) and full day all year round placements (18%) are the most popular in terms of best meeting the needs of families. For half day placements, morning places still continue to be more highly sought after than afternoon places (6%), with afternoon placements being the least popular out of all the delivery models offered (2%).

Blended model and outdoor provision were also less favoured options, though these models are popular with some families, with outdoor ELC highly sought after. This shows it is important to have a mix of options available, in each local area / ASG in order to meet all families' needs and circumstances across the city.

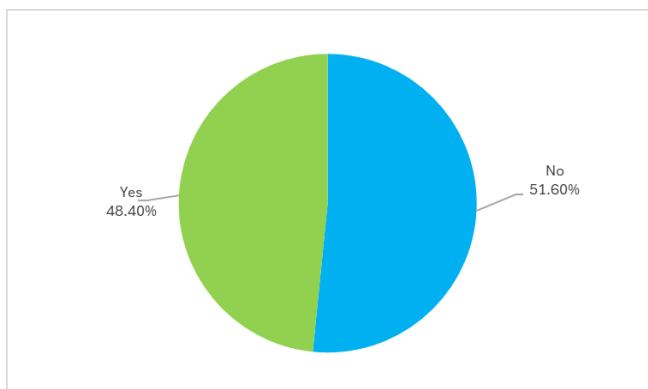
We have also analysed responses to this question by local area / ASG:



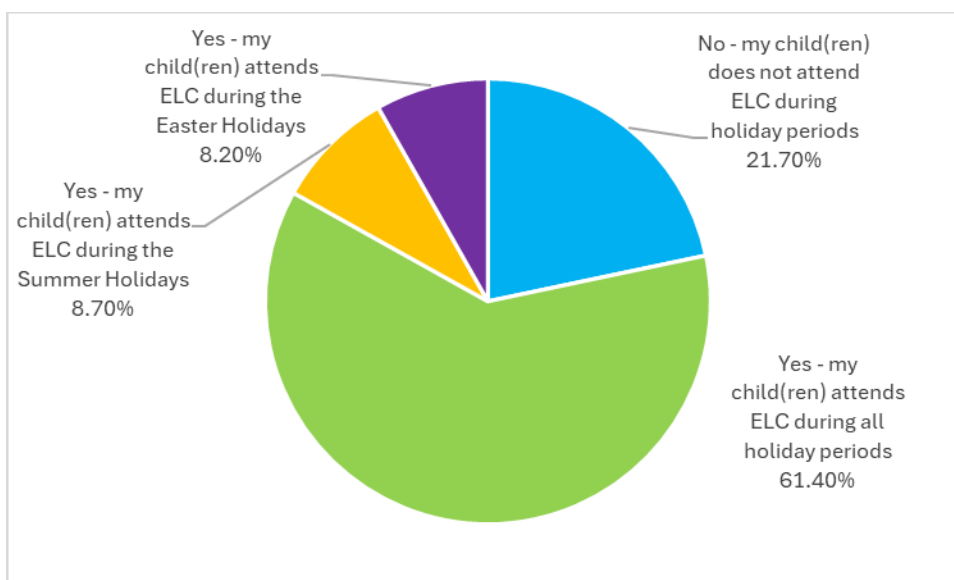
Question 6: We asked parents and carers if they use a blended placement? (child attends more than one ELC / Nursery setting (including childminders))



Question 7: We asked parents and carers if they currently access 46 weeks provision (either mornings, afternoons or 2.5 days)?

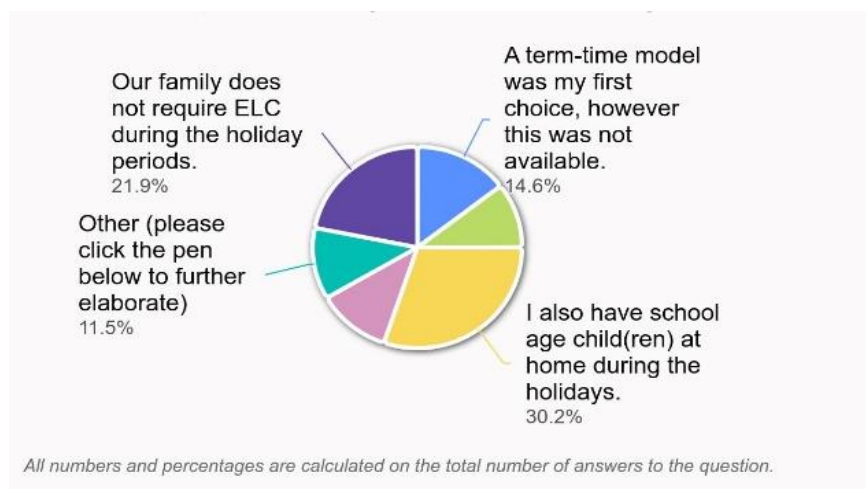


Just under half of respondents access 46 weeks provision. Of those, 61% confirmed that they use their ELC place during holiday periods. 22% of respondents said their children did not attend ELC provision during holiday periods. Around 17% of respondents said they accessed their ELC place during either Easter or Summer holiday periods.



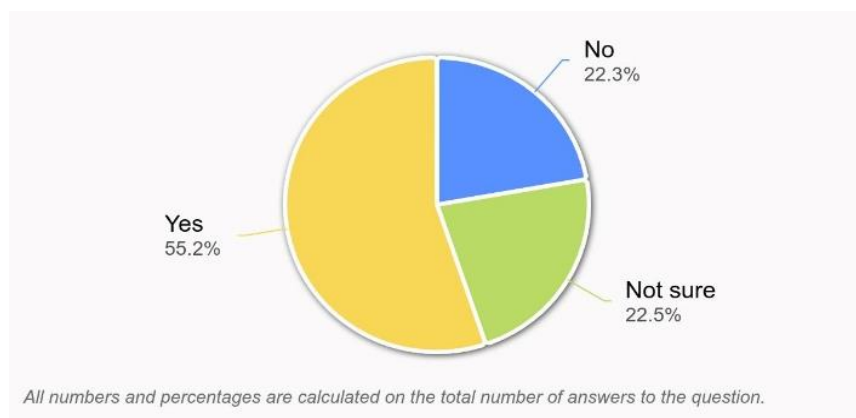
In terms of uptake during holiday periods, we have undertaken more detailed analysis in this year's ELC consultation. We asked parents and carers about their use of ELC during these times as we were keen to better understand the reasons for decrease in uptake.

Question 7b: We asked parents and carers if their child(ren) do not attend ELC during holiday periods could they please tell us why?



- 30% of respondents stated that the primary reason for their children not attending ELC during holiday periods is due to having other children of school age at home;
- 22% of respondents confirmed that their family did not require ELC during the holiday periods;
- 15% of respondents advised that a term-time model was their first choice of ELC provision but was not available; and
- Other reasons for not attending ELC during holiday periods included one or more parents working term-time (12%).

Question 8: We asked parents and carers, thinking ahead, if they think they will require wraparound care (School Age Childcare / Out of School Care) once their child(ren) starts to attend Primary School?



The majority respondents, 55% (191) indicated that they will require School Age Childcare when their child starts to attend Primary School. This is up by 10% from our ELC Consultation in 2023. Just under one quarter of respondents, 22% (77) said they would not require School Age Childcare. This is down by 10% from 2023. 22.5% (78) said they were unsure if they would require School Age Childcare. This figure remains unchanged from 2023.

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

Both my partner and I work full time and will require wraparound care.

I cannot continue my job without it. I work in healthcare

In 2025 when both parents are required to work full-time wrap around care is a necessity.

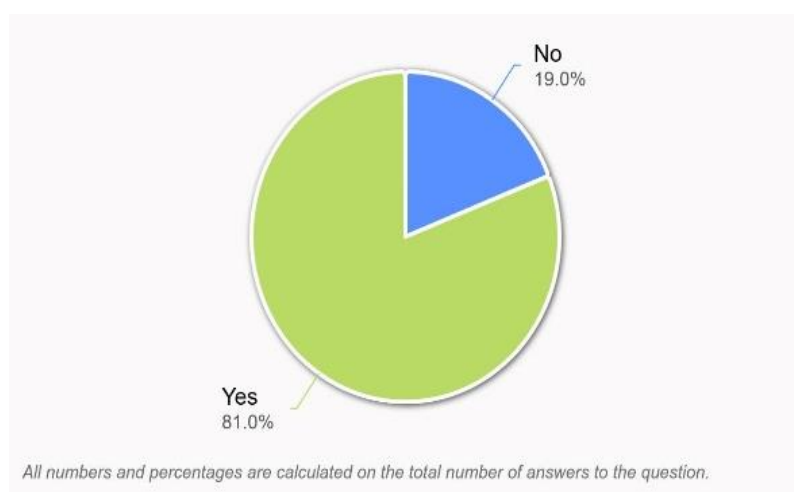
Wrap around care for primary school children is in short supply and a massive worry for working parents.

My eldest son is in p1 he attends out of school club due to my/my husband's working hours.

Yes mornings and potentially after school.

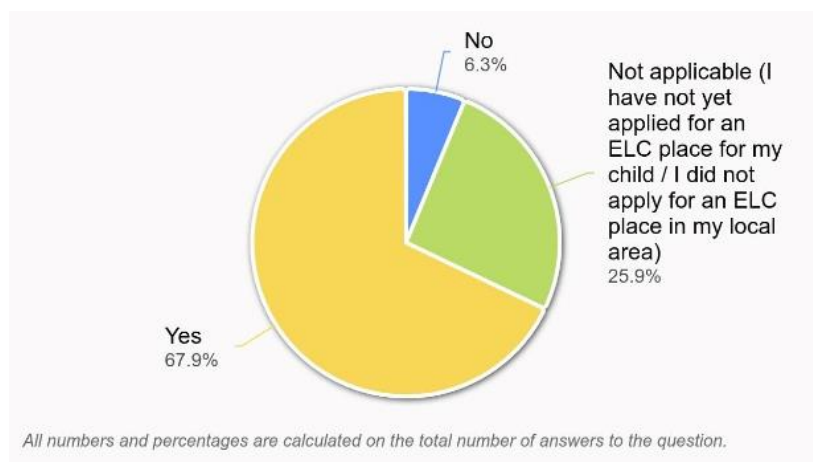
Section 3: Accessibility

Question 1: We asked parents and carers if they had managed to secure their first choice of funded ELC provision?



A significant majority of respondents, 277 (81%) managed to secure their first choice of funded ELC provision which is really positive. This is an increase of 0.4% from 2023. 19% of respondents were unable to secure their first choice of ELC provision.

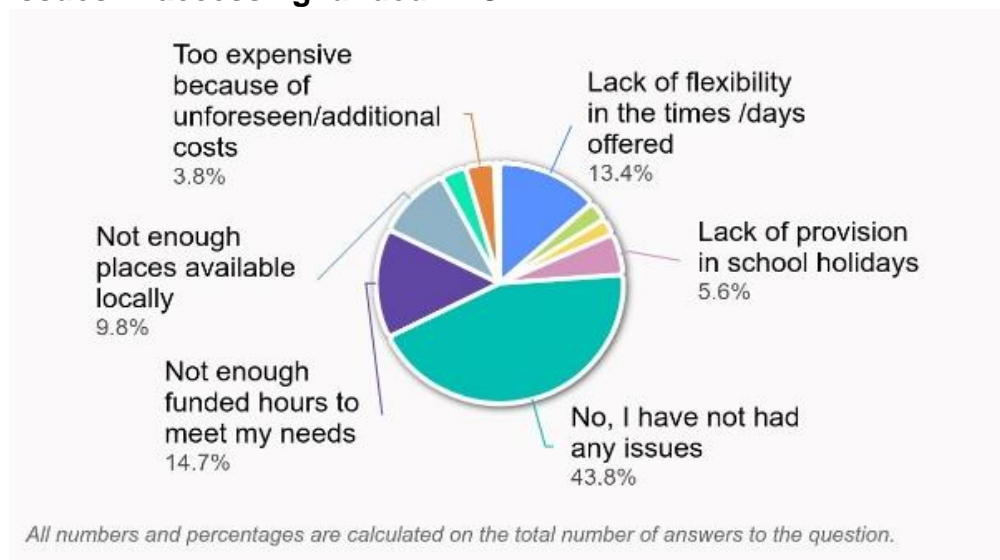
Question 2: We asked parents and carers if they had been able to secure a funded ELC place in their local area / Associated School Group (ASG)?



- 239 respondents (68%) confirmed that they had been able to secure a funded ELC place in their local area / ASG.
- 91 (26%) indicated that this question was not applicable to them as they had either not yet applied for an ELC place or they did not apply for an ELC place in their local area.
- 22 respondents (6%) were unable to secure a local ELC placement. (Same % as 2023).

The feedback suggests that the majority of respondents have been able to secure a funded ELC place locally and that there is a good mix of ELC provision in Aberdeen to suit the needs of families, with some families preferring to access ELC closer to their place of work or to family and friends.

Question 3: We asked parents and carers if they had encountered any specific issues in accessing funded ELC?



Whilst a notable 44% of respondents stated that they had not encountered any specific issues in accessing funded ELC, 56% of respondents to this question highlighted the following concerns:

- Not enough funded hours to meet needs (15%);
- Lack of flexibility in the times / days offered (13%);
- Not enough places available locally (10%);
- Lack of provision in school holidays (6%);
- Too expensive because of unforeseen / additional costs (4%);
- Lack of providers I could trust to provide a high quality service (2%);
- Lack of provision for preferred type of childcare provider (2%);
- Transport difficulties (1%); and
- Other issue (3%)

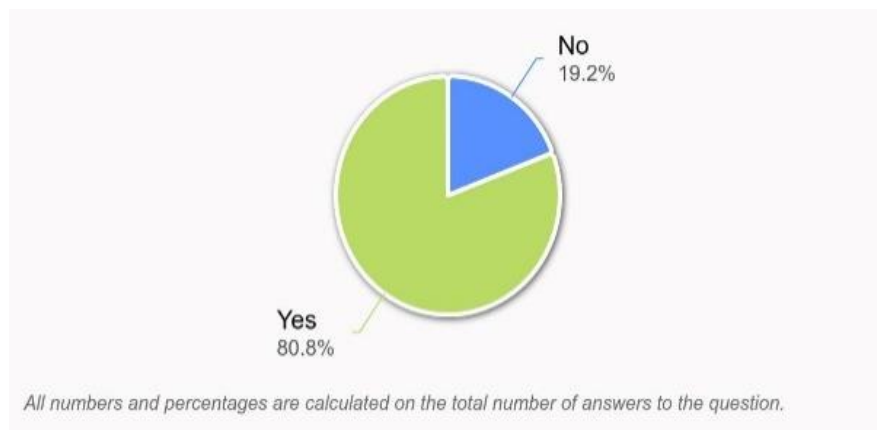
Section 4: Awareness

Question 1: Aberdeen City Council works in partnership with a number of private, voluntary and independent (PVI) ELC / nursery settings and playgroups across the city to deliver ELC. We asked parents and carers if they were aware that they can also use their 1140 hours funded entitlement at these ELC settings, either in full or as part of a blended placement?



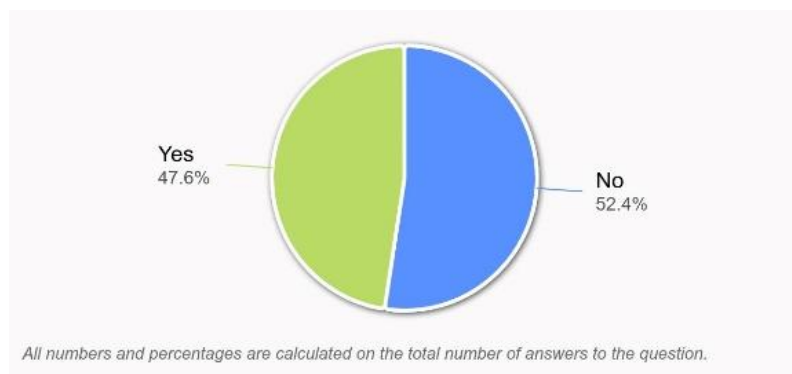
A significant majority of respondents, 83% (300), are aware that they can use their 1140 hours funded entitlement at PVI ELC settings. This is an increase of 2.5% since 2023. It is very positive and reassuring to see such a high awareness that the 1140 hours funded entitlement can be taken in full or in part at Funded Provider ELC settings.

Question 2: Aberdeen City Council works in partnership with a number of childminders across the city to deliver ELC. We asked parents and carers if they were aware that they can also use their 1140 funded entitlement at a childminder, either in full or as part of a blended placement?



Again, a significant majority of respondents, 81% (286), are aware that they can use their 1140 hours funded entitlement at a childminder. This is an increase of 8% since 2023 and highlights the ongoing work to promote childminders as a potential ELC option to families across the city. We also need to continue to ensure that we have sufficient childminders across the city to meet demand for this type of ELC provision and this work is ongoing in partnership with Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA).

Question 3: Aberdeen City Council works in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council to offer cross-boundary placements, (e.g., living in the City but requiring ELC in Aberdeenshire) We asked parents and carers if they were aware this is an option for families?



We are aware that many parents and carers regularly commute to work between the city and Aberdeenshire and were interested to see how many parents are aware of cross-boundary placements. Cross-boundary placements can be invaluable when supporting families to work full-time hours while incurring extended travel to and from work.

The majority of respondents, 52% (184) indicated that they are not aware of the option for cross-boundary placements offered by Aberdeen City Council in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council. 48% (167) of respondents said they are aware this is an option.

This figure has increased by 14% since 2023 which shows we have increased awareness levels somewhat, but more can be done.

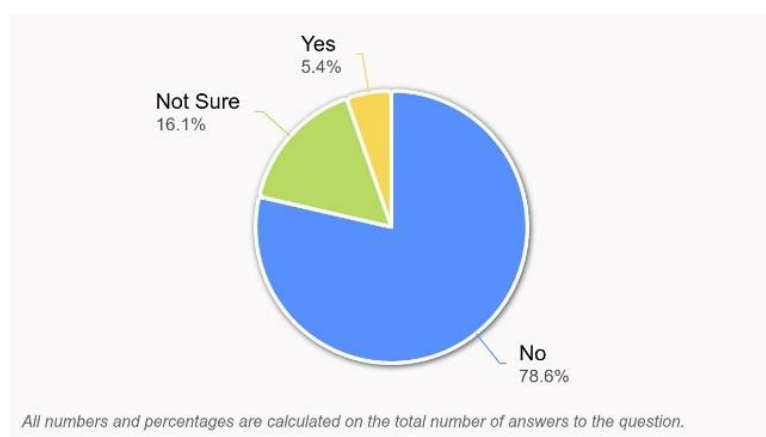
Question 4: We asked if parents and carers were aware that Gaelic Medium Education in ELC, Sgoil-Araich, is an option at Gilcomstoun School / Bun-sgoil Gilcomstoun. You do not have to be a Gaelic Speaker to send your child to Gaelic Medium Education. Gaelic Medium Education is free and a Council run bilingual education option.



- 149 respondents (42%) are aware that Gaelic Medium Education in ELC is an option at Gilcomstoun School.
- 205 respondents (58%) said they are unaware.

The responses to this question, which are the same as in 2023, tells us that slightly more than half of respondents are unaware that Gaelic Medium Education in ELC is an option. This indicates that we need to keep promoting it.

Question 5: We asked parents and carers if Gaelic Medium Education in ELC, Sgoil-Araich, is something they would be interested in for their child?



We have a duty to provide Gaelic Medium Education in ELC for families who would like this for their child. This is provided at Gilcomstoun School. Aberdeen is not a traditional Gaelic speaking city and this may be reflected in the overwhelming majority of responses

from parents and carers who said they would not be interested in Gaelic Medium Education in ELC for their child. The consultation highlighted:

- The vast majority, 79% of respondents (279), would not be interested in Gaelic Medium Education in ELC for their child (+14% from 2023);
- 5.4% of respondents (19) indicated their interest in Gaelic Medium Education in ELC for their child (-4.2% from 2023); and
- 16% of respondents (57) were unsure (-9% from 2023).

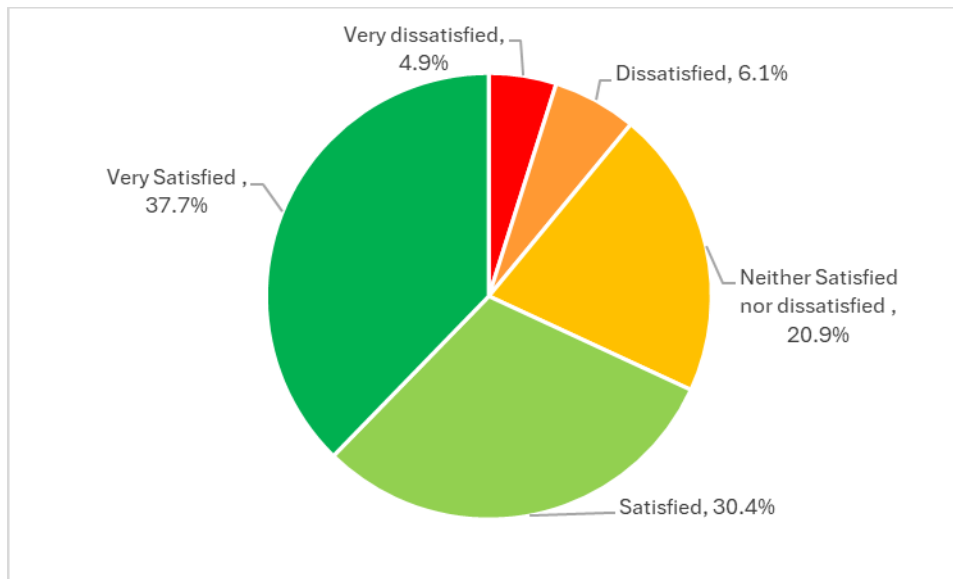
Question 6: Children aged 2 may be eligible for 1140 hours of funded ELC if their family is in receipt of certain benefits or they meet other qualifying criteria (e.g. universal credit). We asked parents and carers if they are aware that Aberdeen City Council offer Eligible 2's ELC placements?



Increasing the uptake of children attending Eligible 2's ELC placements in the city is a key priority for Aberdeen City Council. We are pleased to learn from the consultation that over 85% of respondents (302) are aware that Aberdeen City Council offers Eligible 2's ELC placements. This is an increase of 12% from 2023 which reflects the ongoing work to promote Eligible 2's provision, including via our Health Visitor partners and Data Pipeline project. Uptake in Eligible 2's provision has also increased significantly during this period.

Section 5: Satisfaction

Question 1: We asked parents and carers how satisfied they are with the times ELC services are currently available.



- The majority of respondents, 68% (235), said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the times.
- 21% of respondents (72) said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the times.
- 11% of respondents (38) indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the times ELC services are currently available.

The following feedback was received from parents and carers in relation to - What is working well?

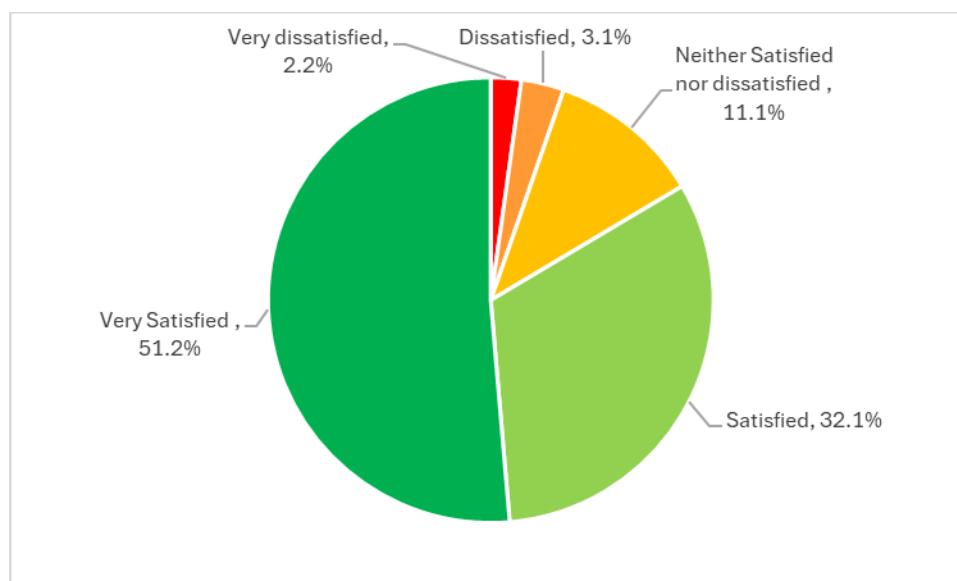
- *2.5 days over 46 weeks is invaluable to working families.*
- *8-6 model allows me to go back to work.*
- *9-3 model suits our family.*
- *9-3 suits our family & work needs. I think it creates a good home and nursery life balance.*
- *9-3 works well for us as I have an older child in school.*
- *Based on previous experience, the option for full days, across 46 weeks is really useful for supporting working parents.*
- *Being open over the school holidays. Offering long days. Both of these make it possible for me to work part time.*
- *Big number of hours compared to previous years.*
- *Both the nursery and hours work well for us.*
- *Child at Culter and I can pay to top up half a day each week as they are part of the pilot scheme.*
- *Childminder is so flexible.*
- *Compared to other cities, nursery places do seem to be available for all ages. When we lived in Edinburgh, places were nearly impossible to find.*

- *Current times work well with the hours of my job.*
- *Days, hours and location work well for us.*
- *Eases pressure on parents and allows parents to return to work.*
- *Easier than they do 9-3 for people who have to work and fits in perfect with my other child who's in school.*
- *I can fit it in with my current working hours.*
- *I can split my placement so that my child can access the nursery in our area where she will attend school but also continue with her private nursery where she was already settled.*
- *I can use the funding at my child's current private nursery, which her younger sibling will soon start, so don't have to have 2 drop offs/pick-ups.*
- *I like that I can send my son to school nursery for 2 full days while I'm at work without needing wrap around care.*
- *My children in nursery attend the same days and times as my child at school making drop off and pick up much easier.*

And the following feedback was received in relation to - What could be improved?

- *Able to pay to top up days.*
- *Affordability of private nurseries and/or childminder groups outside of the fully funded 1140 ELC hours*
- *Additional funded hours for during the summer for parents that work.*
- *Additional funding to help all young families and assist mothers back to work.*
- *Additional hours to be provided or an earlier start (2 year olds) for working parents not in receipt of benefits.*
- *Better availability of 9-3 options at all nurseries and more eligibility for 2 year olds.*
- *Full days would be better 9-3 to match school hours as we are back and forth to nursery & school.*
- *Funding to help under 3s parents return to work.*
- *In perfect world, nurseries available from 9 months old.*
- *More flexibility on how to use the hours. I require 3 full days term time which isn't an option. I know it has been trialled at Culter nursery to pay for additional sessions which would be amazing if it became a permanent option.*
- *Option of earlier drop-off for parents working standard 9am starts. Option of holiday cover/club in same setting*
- *Some flexibility in the times when things come up.*
- *Start earlier. Not term after (child turns 3).*
- *The costs out with the funded hours are still quite crippling to working families.*
- *We have no family in Aberdeen and spend almost £1500 a month on childcare at the moment. More support for working families would be so helpful*

Question 2: We asked parents and carers how satisfied they are with the current location of ELC services.



- 84% of respondents (271) were satisfied or very satisfied with the current location.
- 11% of respondents (36) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the current location.
- 5% of respondents (17) indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the current location of ELC services.

This demonstrates that ELC is well located for the vast majority of respondents.

The following feedback was received from parents and carers in relation to - What is working well?

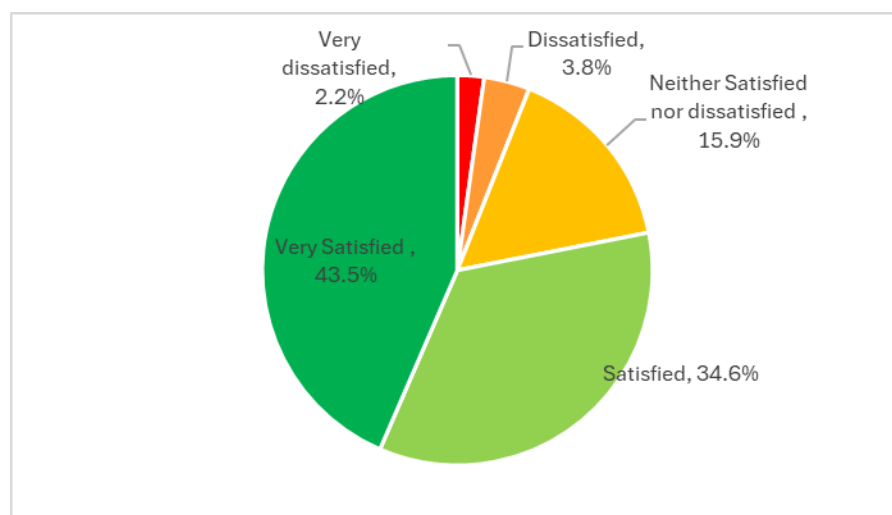
- *5 minutes from my home, not a far walk. Especially in bad weather.*
- *Attached to school where we already have children attend. Great for transitioning into P1.*
- *Big area and many staff.*
- *Brilliant location for outdoor learning.*
- *Close to home – walkable.*
- *Close to home and work.*
- *Close to main primary school so it is more convenient when dropping off older child.*
- *Closely located to where we live.*
- *Easily accessible, easy to park.*
- *Easy to access lots of choice in BOD.*
- *Easy to get to, located in excellent grounds.*
- *ELC close to home and within walking distance.*
- *Excellent that LA nursery is available at the school our child will attend. This will assist greatly with the transition to P1.*
- *Lots of ELC in this area and near buses for people who don't drive.*
- *We live not far from Duthie Park so it's nice being able to walk, we also have the option of Broomhill within walking distance so I think we're in a good area for this.*
- *We love that it is an outdoor nursery near the woods.*

- *We love that it's an outdoor nursery around the woods. We want our children to be outside as much as possible and play with whatever stuff they can find.*

And the following feedback was received in relation to - What could be improved?

- *Between Hazlehead school, the Outdoor Nursery and the recycling centre Hazlehead Avenue gets highly congested at pick up times. This might be improved by formalising the parking next to the running track so that there aren't long runs of cars to get past, or having a one-way system around Hazlehead Avenue and Groats Road.*
- *A number of roads around it (including to/from residential areas) are very busy and there is not enough speed/traffic/parking restrictions or enforcement.*
- *Parking can be difficult depending on timings.*
- *More transport options for those that live out of walking distance.*

Question 3: We asked parents and carers how satisfied they are with the ELC application process.



- The majority of respondents, 78% (246) were satisfied or very satisfied with the ELC application process.
- 16% (50) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- A very small number of respondents, 6% (19) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

The following feedback was received from parents and carers in relation to – What is working well?

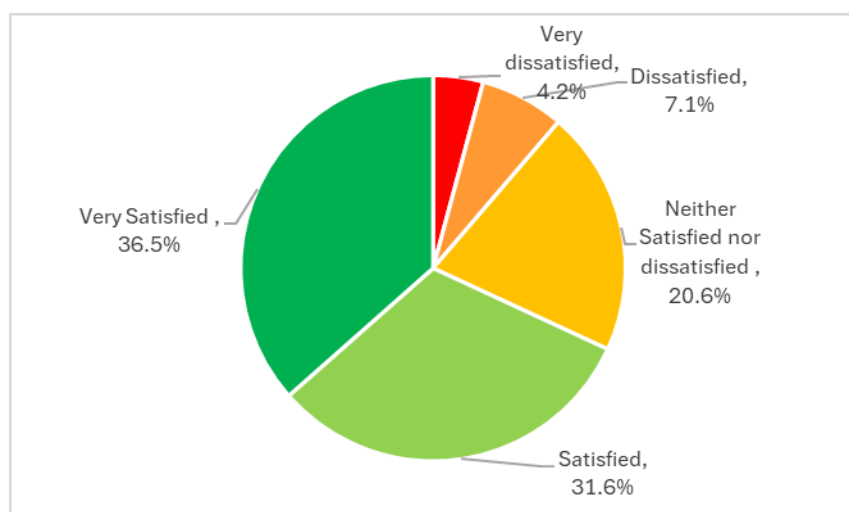
- *Application was easy, straight forward and easy to follow.*
- *Easy enough to understand and fill out*
- *Easy to apply, quick and fast response. From eligible 2â€™s to term time nursery, I didn't have to apply as nursery did this for me. It was a lot of stress off my shoulders.*
- *Easy to do and was given plenty of notice when to apply.*
- *Easy to sort, even with a move between nurseries*
- *I always get a response always without delay.*
- *Nice and easy, very user friendly application. Quick response, hassle free for parents*

- Nursery supported our daughter's application as our children go to nursery from 10/11 months old
- Second time around I'm much more proactive and aware of the deadlines and conditions for applying which makes the process a lot easier.
- Smooth transitions from year to year if remaining with the same provider, even for those opting to defer entering primary school.
- The form is easy to fill with clear instruction. When my child could not have the space for my first choice of nursery, I got a call from ELC (Team) informing this and they asked me to confirm whether I am happy enough if my child get into my second choice of nursery. I think getting a call (or direct email) to confirm about parent's decision is more assuring.
- We got our first choice which we were delighted about and the online application wasn't too long.

And the following feedback was received in relation to - What could be improved?

- A comment section would be helpful for parents to leave a note on their application. For example when selecting 2.5 days, it would be good to select your preferred days, but also leave a comment saying you would be open to discussing other combinations of days before moving on to your next option on the form.
- Dates for applications could be better advertised especially if children are not already in childcare.
- Maybe give a list of nurseries where are still spaces for parents to change for different options.
- More prompting / publicity re timing of applications.
- Parents on a waiting list for Jan/Feb children are notified to reapply.
- Very little opportunity to explain any circumstances on application form.

Question 4: We asked parents and carers how satisfied they are with the snacks and meals their child is offered whilst attending ELC.



- 68% of respondents (211) were satisfied or very satisfied with the snacks and meals their child is offered whilst attending ELC.

- 21% of respondents (64) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied whilst 11% (34) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

The following feedback was received from parents and carers in relation to – What is working well?

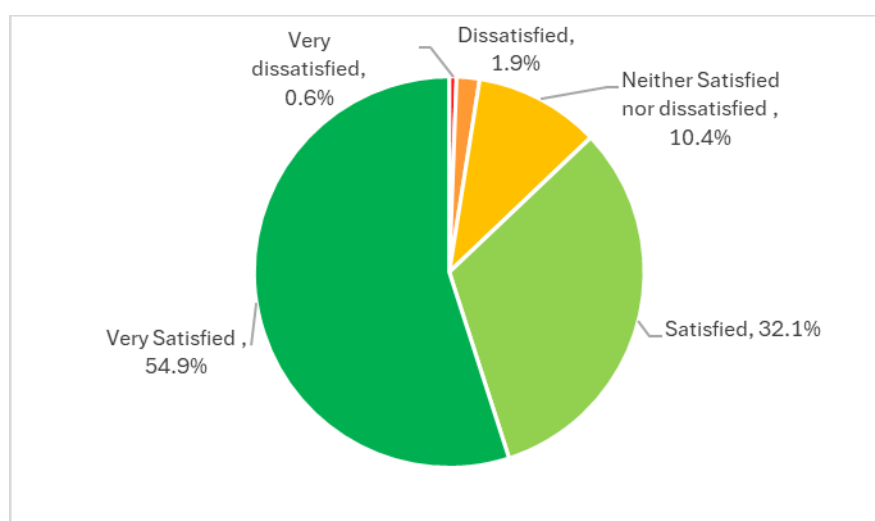
- *Access to fruit all day and home baking options. Chances for children to explore local area and gather fruit for making jams.*
- *At my child's private nursery the snacks and meals are of a high quality. However, there is an extra charge for this.*
- *At the private nursery my son got breakfast and great lunches that he likes. Always 2 options to select from.*
- *Availability of meals and snacks.*
- *Balance diet, always a choice to choose between two meals. Milk available all day. Our little one is very happy with nursery meals.*
- *Big improvement made in recent years.*
- *Children get the choice.*
- *Eating school meals together with friends.*
- *Everything generally.*
- *Fantastic that snacks are no longer ultra processed or full of sugar.*
- *Fruit snacks.*
- *Fussy eater so doesn't often like what's on offer but the nursery team always make sure she has something.*
- *Good choice - my son is straying to different food and I am very happy because he was eating only macaroni cheese.*
- *Good choice of food, kids like to choose their own meals.*
- *Good to have vegetables and fruit included daily.*
- *Good varied food.*
- *Great that Outdoor setting children get packed lunches in the warmer months so they can spend all day off site.*
- *Great that these meals are included.*
- *Lots of snacks provided. Kids use the dining room is great for transition to school.*
- *Lots of variety. Helpful that I can see the meals in advance in parent pay.*
- *My child's learning to eat more foods when seeing others do so.*
- *My daughter is always happy with her food and snacks and loves to try new things.*
- *My daughter's diet has improved massively while attending nursery, she eats a well-balanced diet and has access to fresh fruit all day.*

And the following feedback was received in relation to - What could be improved?

- *Afternoon sessions only offer tea time meals which is very limited, mostly to bread. Wish there were more varieties like lunch meals.*
- *Allowing children to take in a pack lunch if they are picky eaters. My son comes home many days and not ate anything.*
- *Bigger portions, meal sizes are far too small.*
- *Could be more varied.*
- *Ensuring children eat their lunch. Our daughter is a slow eater and often gets distracted meaning she has come home hungry. Frequently remind children to stop and have a drink of water.*
- *Having a daily sandwich option would be helpful for fussy eaters.*

- *More catering for allergies, child misses out at times even in instances of baking.*
- *More variety or better encouragement to try new food within that peer group scenario.*
- *Offer bigger portions/extra snacks for hungrier children.*
- *While I understand there are guidelines around nutrition I think the meals could be more representative of something that would be more recognisable to a 3-5 year old living in Scotland today. Where it is super to try new things, some days the menu seems inaccessible to my now 5 year old who is not a particularly fussy eater. More 'classic' options available. Also it should not be an issue to provide a pack lunch at a LA nursery if you provide a cool pack etc.*

Question 5: We asked parents and carers how satisfied they are with their child's experience of ELC to date.



- The vast majority of respondents, 87% (268), told us they were satisfied or very satisfied with their child's experience of ELC to date. This is the same high satisfaction rate as the 2023 Consultation.
- 10% (32) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- A very small number of respondents, 2.5% (8), said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

The following feedback was received from parents and carers in relation to – What is working well?

- *Amazing staff care. Both my sons have had a really positive experience.*
- *Staff are very caring and fun, loads of different activities, learning lots.*
- *Can't fault the setting, child loves it.*
- *Children are settled and staff are amazing. Seniors very approachable.*
- *Everything.*
- *Friendly and supportive staff.*
- *Good communication between the nursery team and us as parents.*
- *Good guidance. Good friendships. They are happy.*
- *Good play/toy options, great outdoor space. My daughter enjoys planting and learning about fruits and vegetables due to a volunteer teaching her. Free flow access to arts and crafts that my daughter enjoys. Staff friendly and communicate effectively.*

- *Very positive experience in terms of induction, the staff know my child well and he is very happy there! My daughter loved it too when she attended.*
- *Very stimulated and involved in my child's development.*
- *Watching her confidence grow has been wonderful.*
- *We get regular pictures through the day.*
- *We were lucky to get a place at what I think to be the best experience for my child in your best outdoors nursery at Duthie Park. We are exceptionally pleased with the staff and their approach to early learning.*
- *Good resources, nice outdoor area.*
- *Good selection of activities.*
- *Great environment, kids doing well.*
- *Great staff and lovely nursery.*
- *Great staff and well encouraged.*
- *Great staff who communicate so well with parents. I enjoy the daily updates on Seesaw and the opportunities we get to go and spend time at nursery. Great facilities and imagination from the staff.*
- *Great staff, homely setting.*
- *Great staff, well run.*
- *Great staff. Nice environment.*
- *Happy with progress and child happy to go to the setting.*
- *He likes to go and seems to enjoy a lot.*
- *He loves nursery and is always happy to go.*
- *I absolutely love my daughter's nursery it has been such a positive and nurturing environment for her. Hazlehead outdoor nursery and staff has done wonders for her confidence, independence, and overall happiness. Being able to explore nature, learn through play, and build friendships in such a beautiful setting has helped her grow in so many ways.*
- *The staff are incredible so gentle, patient, and genuinely caring. They take the time to really understand each child and support them with kindness and encouragement. It gives me so much peace of mind knowing she's in such safe and nurturing hands every day. I couldn't be happier with the care she's receiving.*
- *I see them developing as there is improvements in their learning.*
- *I've lucked out with the nursery they're in.*
- *Level of care is good and our setting organises plenty of activities for the children.*
- *Little one has improved significantly in this setting and now has more friends than he knows what to do with.*
- *Lots of toys . Approachable staff.*
- *Love the staff and the updates we get on their progress.*
- *Lovely staff and a beautiful setting for him to learn and grown in. He seems very happy when he is there and complains I pick him up too early!*
- *Lovely, caring teachers who have welcomed my daughter from day one.*
- *Makes him feel safe to explore and make friends. Helped with independence and learning.*
- *My child absolutely loves nursery. The provision is incredible and the amount of experiences and opportunities he gets through nursery is amazing. The team are caring, kind and patient. Their knowledge and experience shines through everything they do. We know our child is well cared for and is thriving in his ELC environment.*
- *My child has come on leaps and bounds thanks to nursery.*
- *My child is happy to go to Nursery and I have seen a huge increase in confidence. The staff are welcoming and I feel supported.*

- *My child is more independent and he enjoys playing at his nursery. He learns a lot and seems like teacher's approach make him more interested in science.*
- *My child is more independent, learn to navigate his emotion, talks more confidently, develops friendships, doing lots of imaginative play, knows more about plants and animals around.*
- *My child loves attending.*
- *My daughter has really enjoyed a blended experience - 3 days with a childminder and 1.5 days at a school nursery. It's worked so well for our family.*
- *My daughter loves nursery. The setting, staff and peers have made it a very enjoyable experience for us all.*
- *My son is happy at Kingswellies. They share a lot of his learning via ILD which is lovely to see.*
- *My son loves his nursery and staff. He's made friends with a few children and is thriving in the setting.*
- *Our childminder provides a real home away from home experience for our child.*
- *This year the nursery have worked really hard on improvements, which has been great.*
- *A place to take the child. Place for learning. Place to meet other children and build social life.*

And the following feedback was received in relation to - What could be improved?

- *Get some nursery trips out.*
- *Handover at the end of the day would be useful.*
- *Handover/ communication.*
- *More outdoor exploring with the children. More play on pedals.*
- *Schedule frequent open days to discuss one on one child progress with learning as well as encouraging children to show works done at home to teachers/ support staff.*
- *There is just such a lot of children in the setting I think it can be quite overwhelming and overstimulating.*
- *Variety of activities, etc cooking, trips out of the nursery to local parks, shops.*
- *Water break reminders.*
- *Offer more outings.*
- *More funding for nursery garden/crafts/activities etc. more staff.*

Section 6: Wider Impacts

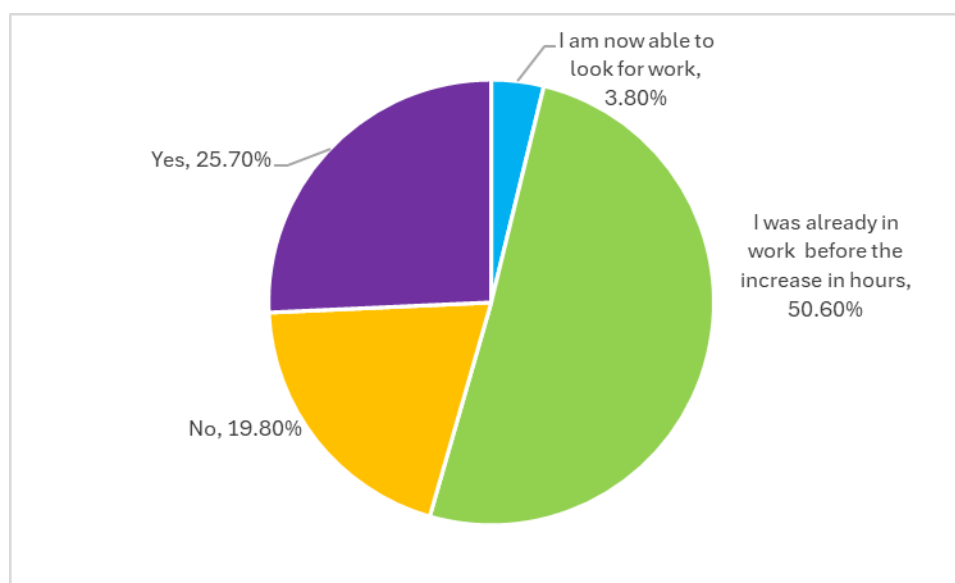
Question 1: We asked parents and carers what they currently use ELC for.

What do you use ELC for?	Total	Percentage
To Work	240	68.5%
To Study	16	4.6%
To support Child's learning and development	257	73.4%
Other caring responsibilities	45	12.8%
Time to self / respite	59	16.8%
Other	10	2.8%

**Please note that totals do not equal 100% as some respondents chose more than one option.*

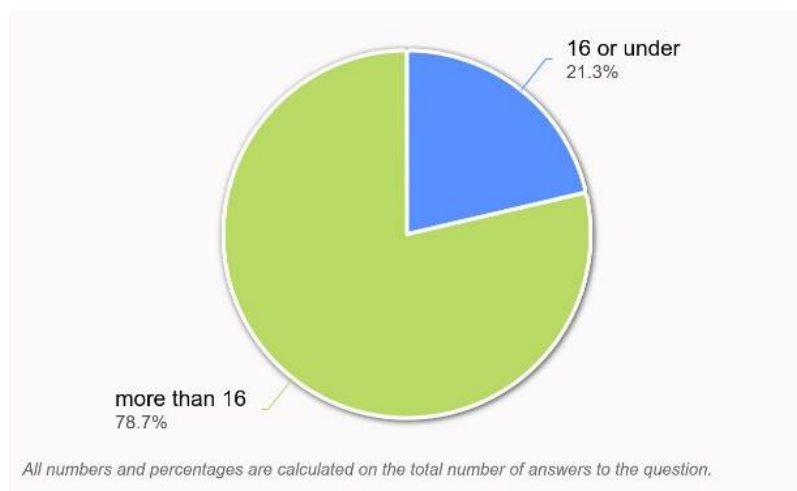
- A large proportion of respondents, 73.4% (-0.8% from 2023), highlighted that they use ELC to support their child's learning and development.
- Over two thirds of respondents, 68.5% (+1.6% from 2023) reported that they currently use ELC for work and 4.6% use it to study (-6.8% from 2023).
- Just under one fifth, 16.8% (-2.9% from 2023) indicated that they use ELC to have time to themselves or for respite.

Question 2: We asked parents and carers if they had been able to return to work as a result of their child receiving 1140 hours of funded ELC.



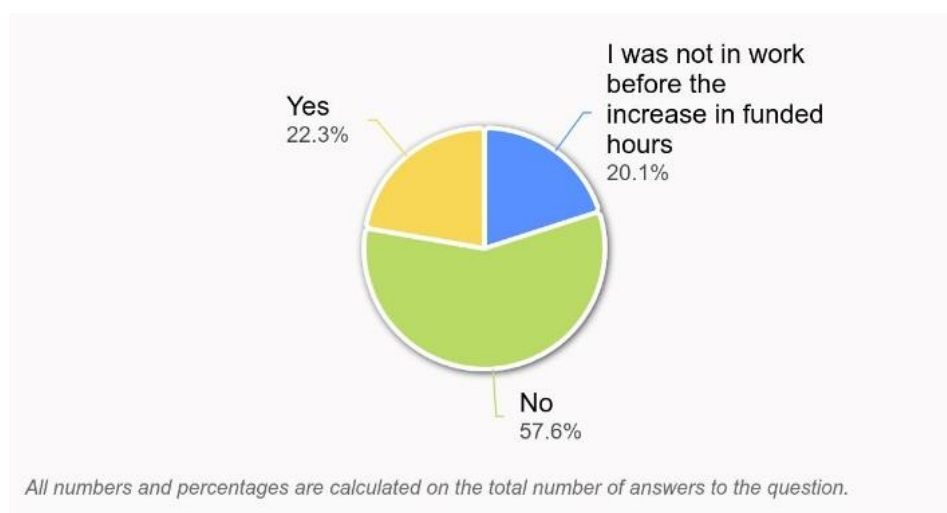
- A majority of respondents, 51% (171), said they were already in work before the increase in funded hours.
- 26% of respondents (87) said they had been able to return to work as a result of their child receiving 1140 hours of funded ELC.
- 4% of respondents (13) said they were now able to look for work.
- 20% of respondents (67) said no to this question.

Question 2(a): For those parents and carers that had been able to return to work as a result of their child receiving 1140 hours of funded ELC, we asked how many hours they worked.



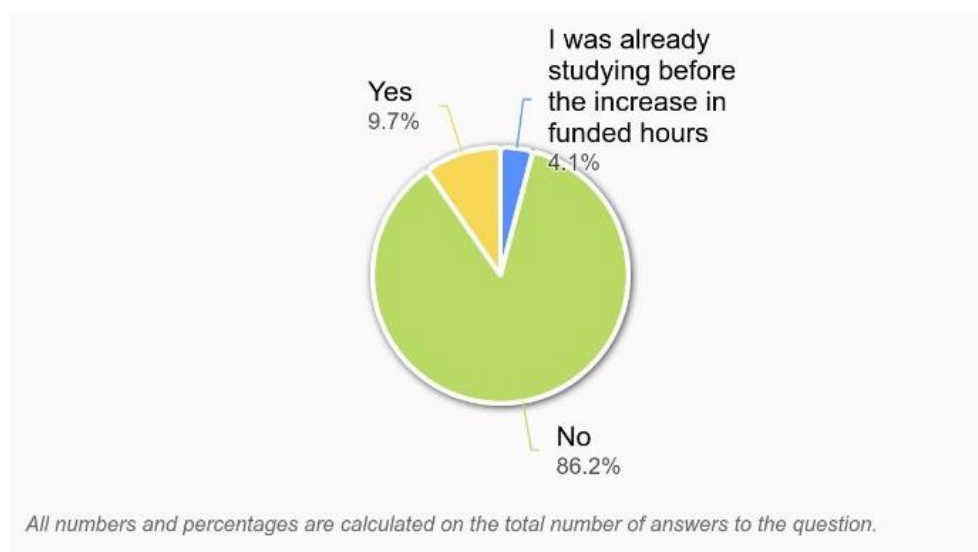
- A significant majority of respondents, nearly 79% (140), said they work more than 16 hours per week.
- 21% of respondents (38) work 16 hours or under.

Question 3: We asked parents and carers, if they were already in work, had they been able to increase their hours as a result of their child receiving 1140 hours of funded ELC.



- 22% of respondents (70) said they have been able to increase their hours of work as a result of their child receiving 1140 hours of funded ELC.
- The majority of respondents, 58% (181) had not.
- 20% of respondents (63) said they weren't in work before the increase in funded hours.

Question 4: We asked parents and carers if they had been able to return to study or training as a result of their child receiving 1140 hours of funded ELC.



- The majority of respondents, 86% (231) said they didn't return to study or training as a result of their child receiving 1140 hours of funded ELC.
- 10% of respondents (26) said they had been able to return to study and 4% (11) said they were already studying before the increase in funded hours.

Question 5: We asked parents and carers if they had noticed any of the following in their child(ren) as a result of them attending ELC and asked them to select all that apply.

The majority of respondents, at over 93%, identified Early Learning and Childcare as having a positive impact on their child's development with:

- 84% identifying improved listening skills;
- 65% identifying improved social skills;
- 65% identifying improved creativity;
- 65% identifying improved attention span;
- 61% identifying improved literacy development;
- 61% identifying improved fine motor skills;
- 61% identifying improved physical development;
- 60% identifying improved numeracy development;
- 58% seeing an improvement in their child's communication skills;
- 53% identifying improved problem solving; and
- 42% identifying improved emotional development.

From improved listening, social skills and creativity to improved literacy and numeracy development, fine motor skills and physical development. A small proportion of respondents (6.7%) reported that ELC had had no influence on their child's development.

Question 6: We asked parents and carers if their family circumstances had changed as a result of their child receiving funded ELC.

Changed circumstances	Total	Percentage
More money / disposable income	126	38.8%
Considering return to work	46	14.2%
More time for other responsibilities	133	40.1%
More time to myself	79	24.3%
Improved wellbeing/respite	93	28.6%
None of the above	54	16.6%
Other	14	4.3%

**Please note that totals do not equal 100% as some respondents chose more than one option*

As well as improving outcomes for children, the expansion of funded ELC aimed to support parents into work, study or training. We asked this question to determine what impact the provision of funded ELC had on families in the city.

Just over 40% of all respondents indicated that they had more time for other responsibilities as a result of receiving funded ELC (same figure as 2023). Over one third of respondents (38.8%) reported they had more money/disposable income as a positive impact on their family (+9.6% from 2023); and 14% of respondents are now considering a return to work or study (-9.9% from 2023). In addition, a further 28.6% of respondents stated improved wellbeing / respite as a result of receiving additional hours of funded ELC (+4.5% from 2023), suggesting that the expansion of ELC has had a positive impact on families in Aberdeen overall.

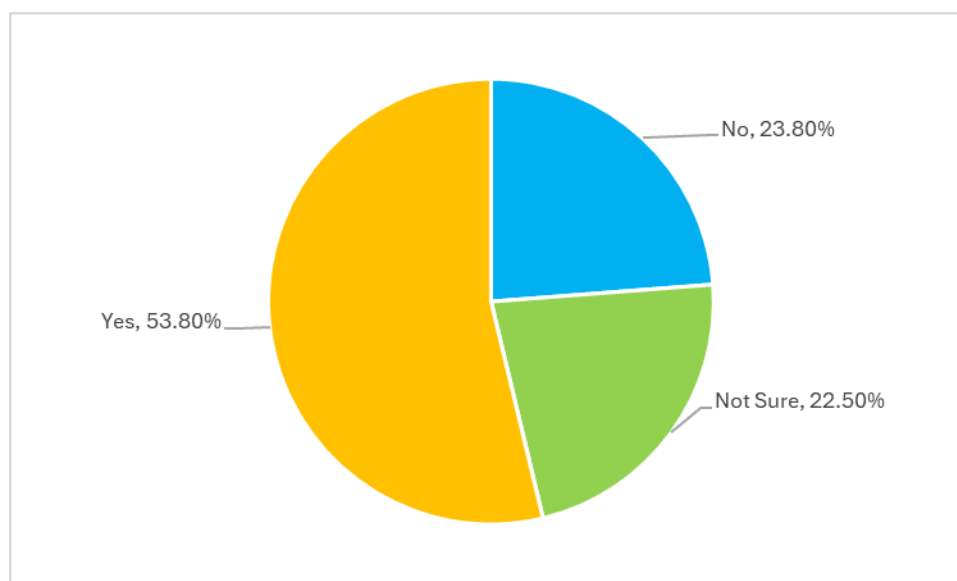
- 38.8% of respondents reported more money / disposable income.
- 14.2% of respondents indicated that they were considering a return to work or study.
- 28.6% of respondents highlighted improved wellbeing / respite.
- Just over 40% of respondents reported more time for other responsibilities, for example younger children, other caring responsibilities and household duties.
- 16.6% of respondents noted no change in their circumstances as a result of their child receiving funded ELC.

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

- *We do not have a funded placement yet but with my older children it was an absolutely game changer! Kids were getting stability with being at nursery 5 days a week 9-3. Easy settlement, continuity. I could work more. Financially it saved us! We were struggling with everything. Having funded ELC put food on our table...literally!*
- *Able to go back to work full-time and start paying off some debt accrued whilst paying for nursery and working part-time.*
- *Being able to work for actual money and not just to pay for childcare.*
- *Cost of living and paying private nursery fees on top of ELC funding means very little to no disposable income.*

- *Due to a lack of financial support, we do not have more money as it's had to go to other bills, but it's taken a pressure off of having another private childcare bill.*
- *I have been able to work full-time, but this is only due to having Grandparents who also provide child care alongside the 1140 hours and also paying for extra hours for my child at nursery.*
- *I would not use the term 'disposable income' quite yet but it has at least enabled us to avoid giving up a job to do the childcare ourselves and have a second child.*
- *My child was with grandparents before the increase (in funded hours).*
- *Our child is not old enough to receive funding yet and our nursery fees have got up by 20% since our child started. When we receive funding it will help our financial struggles.*
- *Son still too young to receive funded hours. We look forward to having less financial stress when we receive them.*
- *The funded hours have allowed us to have a second child, without this financial help we would have only been able to have 1 child.*
- *We were already working full-time with or without the funding*
- *We would really struggle to pay for childcare if it wasn't funded and would have to probably work 2 jobs or 60+ hours a week to pay childcare or other bills.*
- *Able to continue to develop career and increase working hours.*
- *Have been able to increase my working hours and decrease the amount we rely on family members for childcare.*
- *If funded ELC started as early as 9 months old then it would ease a lot of financial pressures.*
- *Without funding hours, we will not be able to afford to have a second child. Both myself and my husband earn more than 75k each a year and find it ridiculous that childcare will cost us £20,000 a year, which is £1700 a month - more than our mortgage. if (funded) hours was not offered, we would not be able to afford to have more than one child.*

Question 7: We asked parents and carers if they feel they are better off (e.g. more money / disposable income) as a result of receiving 1140 hours of funded ELC.



- A majority of respondents, 54% (172) stated that they felt they were better off as a result of receiving 1140 hours of funded ELC.

- 24% of respondents (76) do not consider themselves to be better off and 22% (72) of respondents are unsure if they are better off as a result of receiving 1140 hours of funded ELC.

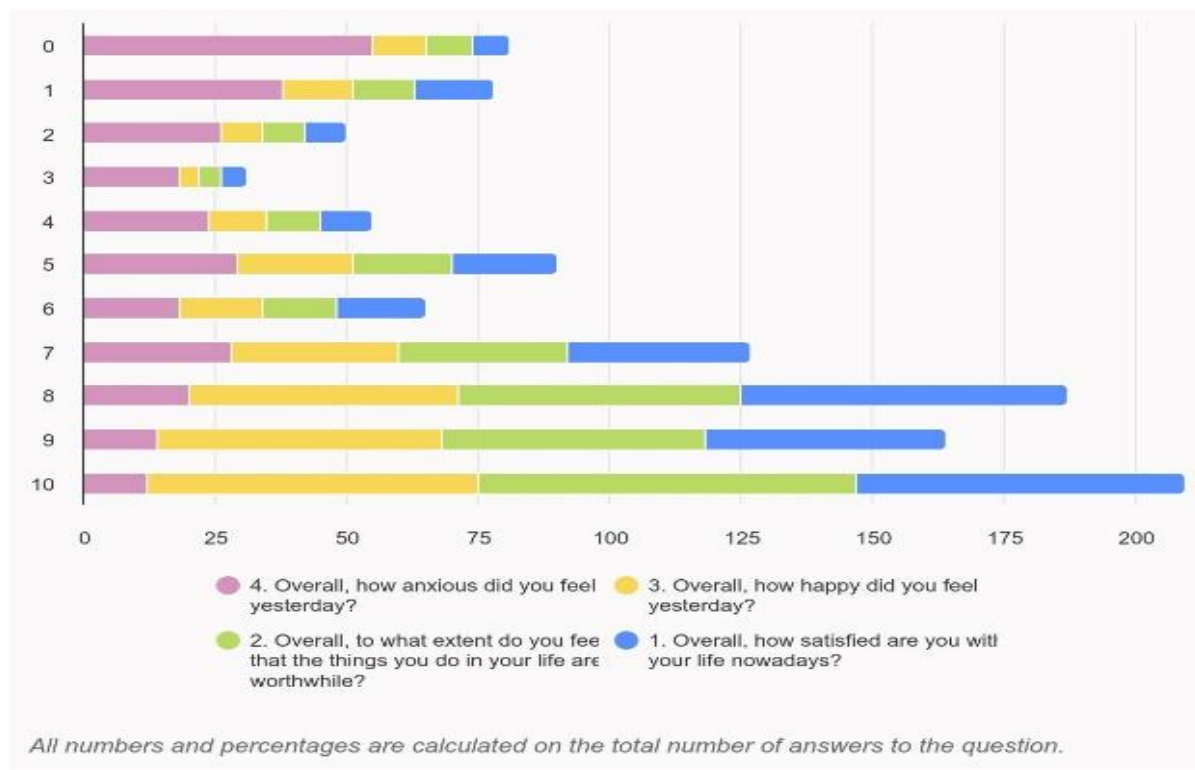
Question 7(b): We asked parents and carers, who stated that they felt they were better off, how much better off they are per week.

How much?	Total	Percentage
Under £100	22	10.8%
£100 - £150	28	13.7%
£151 - £200	25	12.3%
£201 - £250	20	9.8%
£251 - £300	12	5.9%
£301 - £350	4	2.0%
£351 - £400	10	4.9%
Over £400	18	8.8%
Rather not say	65	31.9%

**Please note that totals do not equal 100% as more than 172 respondents (from previous question) answered this question.*

- The largest group of respondents to this question (31.9%) preferred not to disclose their weekly financial situation.
- Among those who did respond, 13.7% feel £100-£150 per week better off, 12.3% feel £151-£200 per week better off and 9.8% feel £201-£250 per week better off.
- 10.8% of respondents feel they are better off by less than £100 per week.
- 4.9% of respondents feel they are better off by £351-£400 per week and 8.8% of respondents feel they are better off by over £400 per week.

Question 8: We asked parents and carers if they had experienced improved wellbeing as a result of their child(ren) receiving 1140 hours of funded ELC. We asked them to answer four questions on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is “not at all” and 10 is “completely”.



Responses to this question indicate that:

- A large proportion of respondents are satisfied with their life nowadays.
- A large proportion of respondents felt happy yesterday.
- A large proportion of respondents felt that the things they do in life are worthwhile.
- A large proportion of respondents did not feel anxious yesterday.

Analysis

365 parents and carers responded to the recent survey on the provision of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in the city. This was a decrease in 299 (45%) from the previous consultation undertaken in 2023. Responses were gleaned from all 11 of the Aberdeen City's ASGs with responses from those accessing provision through the Local Authority as well as from Funded Providers.

The consultation findings demonstrate that the vast majority of parents and carers who responded, 87%, are satisfied or very satisfied with their child's experience of ELC to date. This is the same level of high satisfaction as received in our 2023 Consultation.

Reassuringly, 81% of respondents were able to secure their first choice of ELC provision with the majority of parents and carers able to secure a funded ELC place in their local area/ASG (68%). Feedback from respondents suggests there is a good mix of ELC provision in Aberdeen to suit the needs of families, with some families preferring to access ELC closer to their place of work or to family and friends.

Importantly, the vast majority of respondents, at over 93%, identified Early Learning and Childcare as having a positive impact on their child's development.

There is clear evidence of a range of choices across all ASGs. Some parents are very satisfied with the longer hours available whilst many parents indicated they would prefer more 9am-3pm places. Indeed some parents indicated shorter sessions and smaller classes would be their preference. Understandably, the views and needs of parents and carers are very much dependent on their individual family circumstances. However, the feedback overall is very balanced with no feedback on gaps in provision.

A significant majority of respondents, 83%, are aware that they can use their 1140 hours funded entitlement at Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) ELC settings. This is an increase of 2.5% since 2023. It is very positive and reassuring to see such a high awareness that the 1140 hours funded entitlement can be taken in full or in part at Funded Provider ELC settings.

Similarly, a significant majority of respondents, 81%, are also aware that they can use their 1140 hours funded entitlement with a childminder. This is an increase of 8% since 2023 and highlights our ongoing work to promote childminders as a potential ELC option to families across the city. We also need to continue to ensure that we have sufficient childminders across the city to meet demand for this type of ELC provision and this work is continuing in partnership with Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA).

A large number of respondents indicated that they were not aware of the option to have a cross-boundary ELC placement (between City and Aberdeenshire). We have addressed this in ELC publicity and via Aberdeen City Council website and social media communications. Whilst we have increased awareness by 14% since the 2023 Consultation, there is clearly still a need to continue to promote this information to ensure that families have all the information available to them in order to make an informed choice on options.

A number of respondents indicated that they were not aware of Gaelic Medium Education in ELC, so this is an option we will continue to further promote.

A significant majority of respondents (85%) are aware that Aberdeen City Council offers Eligible 2's ELC placements. This is an increase of 12% from 2023 which reflects the ongoing work to promote Eligible 2's provision, including via our Health Visitor colleagues and the Data Pipeline project. Uptake in Eligible 2's provision has also increased significantly during this period.

The majority of parents and carers who responded are satisfied or very satisfied with the snacks and meals their child is offered whilst attending ELC. Feedback received will be taken on board and shared with our Facilities and Catering colleagues.

Feedback received from parents and carers was overall very positive in relation to the ELC application process. Comments received will be taken on board to ensure we make the process as clear and smooth as possible for everyone making applications, including reminders of when to apply for an ELC place.

In terms of transition from ELC into Primary School, we need to ensure we have sufficient School Age Childcare to meet demand when children transition from ELC into Primary School. Work is undertaken on a regular basis to monitor supply and demand and to support the development of new services where feasible and sustainable.

The ELC Consultation with Parents and Carers 2025 will contribute to a future evaluation of the impact of the implementation of the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to date and the next Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2026-28. Both reports will be presented to Aberdeen City Council Education and Children's Services Committee in June 2026.

Future Engagement and Consultation

- The 2025 consultation follows on from our 2023 consultation with parents and carers and continues to provide a positive platform from which to further engage as we continue to deliver statutory Early Learning and Childcare for all 3 and 4-year olds and eligible 2-year olds in the city.
- It is also essential that all Early Learning and Childcare providers continue to engage and consult with children, parents and carers on a regular basis as part of their ongoing self-evaluation and planning for service development and improvement. It is vital that we give children the opportunity to express their views and experiences in ELC.
- The report from the Early Learning and Childcare Parent and Carer Consultation 2025 will be shared in a future Education Parent and Carer Newsletter, published on Aberdeen City Council website and shared with our colleagues working across the ELC sector including our Local Authority ELC teams, Childminders and Funded Providers, and our Community Planning partners.

Next Steps

- Just over one quarter of respondents indicated that they were willing to participate in future research. We are now in contact with those respondents and their feedback will inform the development of a future longitudinal study.
- A new Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan 2026-28 will be developed and presented to Education and Children's Service Committee for approval in June 2026. This will be informed by our ELC Consultation with Parents and Carers 2025.
- Through our ongoing engagement and communication with parents and carers, we will continue to regularly promote all ELC options available in the city to help parents and carers make informed choices to best meet the needs of their child and family. In particular we will further promote:
 1. Gaelic Medium Education in Early Learning and Childcare; and
 2. Cross Boundary ELC placements.
- In order to meet our ongoing statutory obligations and our commitment to engaging with children, parents and carers, another city-wide Early Learning and Childcare consultation will be undertaken in Spring/Summer 2027. It would be our preference to use a different consultation platform in future to secure a higher number of responses. Meanwhile we will continue to monitor our current models of provision across the city in line with supply and demand on an annual basis.
- Any changes to our current models of provision will be communicated with parents, carers and ELC providers in advance of the ELC Admissions process for 2026-27. Online applications for ELC / School session 2026-27 will open in February 2026.

Thanks

We would like to extend our thanks to all the parents and carers, and future parents and carers, who participated in this consultation. We strive to deliver a range of high quality, flexible Early Learning and Childcare provision in Aberdeen which meets the needs of all children, families and local communities. Your input and views are invaluable in supporting us to achieve this.

Early Years Team
Education and Lifelong Learning Service
Aberdeen City Council

October 2025

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Appendix 2 - Analysis of uptake of ELC Placements October 2025

Associated Schools Group	High level analysis
Aberdeen Grammar	<p>There is an overprovision of afternoon ELC placements (600 hours model), otherwise provision matches demand.</p> <p>No changes are proposed.</p>
Bridge of Don	<p>Provision matches demand. There are currently 20 afternoon places still to be utilised (+5 from 2024) and this is thought to offer sufficient flexibility.</p> <p>No changes are proposed.</p>
Bucksburn	<p>There continues to be an overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 40 (+6 from 2024) afternoon places not being utilised on average per day.</p> <p>No changes are proposed. We will continue to monitor uptake across the ASG.</p>
Cults	<p>There continues to be an overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 45 (+5 from 2024) afternoon places not being utilised on average per day.</p> <p>We have addressed overprovision of afternoon spaces by reducing the numbers of places available at Cults and realigning the number of places offered in the mornings and afternoons to balance attendance.</p> <p>At Culter, we have continued the pilot initiative to sell surplus ELC places. 11 families are now purchasing additional sessions (approximately 13 sessions per week).</p> <p>No changes are proposed. We will continue to monitor uptake across the ASG.</p>
Dyce	<p>There is an overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 10 afternoon places not being utilised on average per day (no change from 2024).</p> <p>No changes are proposed. We will continue to monitor uptake in the ASG.</p>
Harlaw	<p>There continues to be an overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 35 (+5 from 2024) afternoon places not</p>

	<p>being utilised on average per day. This is thought to offer sufficient flexibility.</p> <p>No changes are proposed. We will continue to monitor uptake across the ASG.</p>
Hazlehead	<p>There continues to be an overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 21 (-7 from 2024) afternoon places not being utilised on average per day. This is thought to offer sufficient flexibility.</p> <p>Kingsford continue to offer a mixed model. In August 2025, the number of 9-3 term-time places were increased by 8 and the number of 8-6 places were decreased by 8 in order to reduce the number of surplus places and balance the demand for more term-time places whilst continuing to meet the needs of families who require full days and all year-round provision.</p> <p>No changes are proposed.</p>
Lochside	<p>There is an overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 100 (+20 from 2024) afternoon places not being utilised on average per day.</p> <p>We have addressed overprovision of afternoon spaces by reducing the number of places available at Loirston and Tullos and realigning the number of places offered in the mornings and afternoons to balance attendance. However, the numbers at Tullos remain a concern, with very low afternoon uptake.</p> <p>Therefore, we propose to offer a mixed model at Tullos from August 2026 with 24 x 9-3 term-time places and 16 x 8-6 places. This will reduce the number of surplus places and balance the demand for more term-time places whilst continuing to meet the needs of families who require full days and all year-round provision.</p> <p>Greyhope moved to delivering a fully 9-3 term-time offer from August 2025.</p> <p>We anticipate new housing developments in the Cove area is likely to increase future demand for places. So no further changes are proposed there at this time.</p>
Northfield	<p>There continues to be an overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 20 (-40 from 2024) afternoon places not being utilised on average per day. There is high demand for term-time (9-3pm) placements.</p>

	<p>Quarryhill moved to delivering a 9-3 term-time offer from August 2025.</p> <p>We have already reduced the numbers at Heathryburn and have realigned the number of places offered in the mornings and afternoons to balance attendance. However, uptake remains low in the afternoons.</p> <p>Therefore, we propose to offer a mixed model at Heathryburn from August 2026 with 24 x 9-3 term-time places and 16 x 8-6 places. This will reduce the number of surplus afternoon places and balance the demand for more term-time places in the ASG whilst continuing to meet the needs of families who require full days and all year-round provision.</p>
Oldmachar	<p>There continues to be an overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 35 (+5 from 2024) afternoon places not being fully utilised on average per day.</p> <p>We have already reduced the numbers at Forehill and Greenbrae and have realigned the number of places offered in the mornings and afternoons to balance attendance.</p> <p>No further changes are proposed. We will continue to monitor uptake across the ASG.</p>
St Machar	<p>There is an overprovision of afternoon ELC placements with around 40 (+20 from 2024) afternoon places not being utilised on average per day.</p> <p>We propose to change the model at Cornhill from a mixed model to a fully 9-3 term-time offer from August 2026.</p>

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Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Models from August 2026

ELC SETTING	ELC MODELS 2026/2027
Aberdeen Grammar ASG	
Ashley Road School	9am-3pm Term Time
Gilcomstoun Gaelic Unit	9am-3pm Term Time
Gilcomstoun School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Mile End School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Skene Square School	9am-3pm Term Time
St Joseph's RC School	600 hours Term Time (3 hour 10 minutes) AM or PM
Bridge of Don ASG	
Braehead School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Scotstown School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Bucksburn ASG	
Brimmond School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Kingswells School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Stoneywood School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Cults ASG	
Culter School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Cults School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Milltimber School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Dyce ASG	
Dyce School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
	9am-3pm x Term Time
Harlaw ASG	

Broomhill School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Ferryhill School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Hanover Street School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Kaimhill School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Hazlehead ASG	
Airyhall School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Countesswells School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Fernielea School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Hazlehead School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Kingsford School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
	9am-3pm x Term Time
Lochside ASG	
Abbotswell School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Charleston School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Greyhope School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Kirkhill School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
	9am-3pm x Term Time
Loirston School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Tullos School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
	9am-3pm x Term Time
Northfield ASG	
Heathryburn	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
	9am-3pm x Term Time
Holy Family School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Manor Park School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Muirfield School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Quarryhill School	9am-3pm x Term Time
West Park School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Old Machar ASG	
Danestone School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Forehill School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)

Glashieburn School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Greenbrae School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Middleton Park School	9am-3pm Term Time
St Machar ASG	
Cornhill	9am-3pm x Term Time
Kittybrewster School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
Riverbank School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Seaton School	9am-3pm x Term Time
Sunnybank School	9am-3pm x Term Time
	600 hours Term Time (3 hour 10 minutes) AM or PM
The Links Nursery, Regent Walk	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
	9am-3pm x Term Time
Woodside School	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM or 2 and half days)
	9am-3pm x Term Time
City Wide	
Duthie Park Outdoor Nursery	8am-6pm x 46 weeks (AM or PM only)
Hazlehead Outdoor Nursery	9am-3pm Term Time
Orchard Brae	9am-3pm Term Time

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	25 November 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Youth Participation in global decision making
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/263
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne
REPORT AUTHOR	Brian Webb
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 At Council on 28th April 2025, the spirit of the Pact for the Future was endorsed and the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning was instructed to bring a report to a future meeting of the Education and Children's Services Committee outlining what the Council could do to promote the involvement of our young people in expanding and strengthening youth participation in global decision-making. This report delivers against that instruction.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the content of this report; and
- 2.2 Endorse plans to have young people shape global initiatives, continue to secure global opportunities and make effective use of digital to amplify voice.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Youth participation across the Council

Aberdeen City Council already delivers a range of youth initiatives with global relevance and impact, empowering young people aged 12–25 to engage as active citizens in international contexts. These initiatives, some of which are outlined below, build on the strong foundations laid in the early years and primary education, where children are supported to inform decisions that affect them, fostering a culture of participation from the earliest stages.

- **Shadow Board:** On going work progresses to establish a Shadow Board for the Children Services Board (CSB). The Shadow Board aims to build a better future for all children and young people in Aberdeen City by ensuring their voices directly influence decisions made by adult leaders and services.

- **Climate Leadership:** Through the Youth Climate Change Group, young people have led education and advocacy efforts on climate action, biodiversity, and sustainability. Collaborations with national and global partners have positioned Aberdeen's youth as contributors to international environmental goals.
- **Child voice and representation:** All schools continue to have a range of pupil led groups who drive improvement and inform practice at school and community level. In the majority of cases, children and young people set agendas and record decisions and many are now organising and hosting community events.
- **Youth Voice & Representation:** The Aberdeen Youth Movement (AYM) enables young people to influence decision-making locally and globally. AYM members participate in civic forums, mentoring programmes, and national Youth Parliaments, amplifying Aberdeen's voice on the international stage. The Young Ambassadors group use creative approaches to champion change in Aberdeen, ensuring children and young people's ideas are heard and brought to those who influence decisions.
- **Youth-Led Funding & Innovation:** The Youth Activity Grants programme supports youth-led projects that promote creativity, inclusion, and leadership. With young people steering funding decisions, the programme fosters global citizenship and community impact.
- **Engagement with Council Leaders:** Aberdeen Youth Movement, and young people from further and higher education institutions across the city have scheduled opportunities to engage with Council leaders in order to make suggestions and raised concerns.

3.2 The opportunities afforded to young people in the city has resulted in the city's youth having a growing international presence which is exemplified through the two examples below:

- AYM member Mariah Ichakpa represented the city at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) Youth Forum in New York, highlighting Aberdeen's commitment to youth empowerment.
- Lily MacDonald (AYM member and Aberdeen graduate) has been awarded a prestigious Fulbright-American University Scholarship, making her the only Scot, and one of just 16 UK recipients, accepted into the programme. She will study at American University's School of Public Affairs, learning from leading experts including President Obama's former speechwriter. Lily shared: "*The idea of community is in my DNA... I want to see what community healing looks like in America and take that back to the projects I'm already involved with here.*" Her journey exemplifies the global reach and ambition of AYM members and how they are empowered to seek out such opportunities for themselves.

- 3.3 In September 2024 The Summit For The Future took place at the United Nations headquarters. This was a once in a generation opportunity to enhance international cooperation and tackle current and future challenges in relation to climate change, digital transformation and social inequalities.
- 3.4 **The United Nations Youth 2030 Strategy**
In response to the Summit for the Future, the United Nations released Phase 2 of the [Youth 2030 Strategy](#) in May 2025. The Strategy aims to increase youth-led organisations' access to opportunities, resources, and policymaking spaces globally, regionally, and nationally. The Strategy focussed on 6 key areas and is a helpful reference point to guide the work of our young people, given that there are opportunities for our young people to be involved in the opportunities outlined in the strategy. The six key areas of focus are:
- Empowering and engaging youth meaningfully.
 - Boosting Sustainable Development Goals implementation with and for youth.
 - Advancing knowledge and enhancing capacity for working with and for youth.
 - Unlocking resources for the youth agenda.
 - Transforming the UN workforce and organizational culture.
 - Strengthening accountability systems for working with and for youth.
- 3.5 It is important to recognise that the city has a strong foundation to build upon. In considering how the Council could further promote the involvement of our young people in expanding and strengthening youth participation in global decision-making, care has been taken to build upon the strength already evident locally.
- 3.6 The following initiatives have been identified as helpful next steps and are deliverable within existing budgets.
- 3.7 **Shaping global Initiatives**
As Aberdeen prepares for city-wide events of national and international significance, such as City Centre Heritage redevelopment, future Tall Ship races, and a prospective City of Culture bid, there is a vital opportunity to maximise youth exchange, voice, and decision-making.
- 3.6 By embedding young people in the planning and delivery of these landmark initiatives, we can foster civic pride, global awareness, and leadership. This includes ensuring youth representation in funding panels, co-designing cultural programming, and facilitating international exchange through partnerships and events.
- 3.7 Considering the inclusion of accessible global youth conferences, hybrid streaming in community venues, youth-led satellite events, and inclusive outreach through schools and media will empower young voices and strengthen community ties.
- 3.8 To support this ambition, it will be essential to prioritise releasing staff capacity to enable and sustain additional youth initiatives aligned with globally significant

city events. Post-event forums and digital archives can sustain engagement and ensure that youth contributions shape the legacy of Aberdeen's cultural ambitions.

- 3.9 Aberdeen Youth Movement will secure time with the Chief Officer City Development and Regeneration to determine how best to move this action forward.

3.10 **Securing Global Opportunities**

As outlined at paragraph 3.2, involvement in youth participation groups such as Aberdeen Youth Movement is creating inclusive self-directed routes for young people to engage with international opportunities. These pathways not only encourage young people to explore exchange programmes and study tours but also expose them to diverse perspectives and innovative global solutions.

- 3.11 Aberdeen City Council's commitment to youth voice and democracy creates an empowering environment that places youth participation at its core. By recognising and investing in grassroots leadership, the Council acknowledges that transformative change often begins with young people themselves.

- 3.12 Through initiatives such as the Aberdeen Youth Movement and international partnerships, young people are empowered to confidently engage in global pathways, fostering ambition, leadership, and a sense of global belonging. It also encourages participation in high-impact forums such as the United Nations Youth Assembly, strengthens collaborations with international organisations, and enables our city's young people to be part of youth-led projects addressing global challenges like climate change, inequality, and peacebuilding.

- 3.13 By enabling attendance at key international events and signposting to young people to funding opportunities, Aberdeen ensures its young people are represented and engaged on the world stage and helps young people to realise their ambitions. This work will be maintained.

3.14 **Leveraging Digital Platforms**

Digital platforms offer powerful ways to build on existing national and international connections, enabling global collaboration and openness to new opportunities.

- 3.13 AYM's emerging partnership with youth group "Yappers" in Southern Ireland, illustrates this, with early efforts focused on knowledge sharing around social media and podcasting.

- 3.14 Future plans include a joint project on young women, consent, and personal safety. Through youth-led forums and digital tools, young people can amplify their voices and co-create solutions across borders. This work will be prioritised over the coming months.

3.15 **Conclusion**

The work we are currently doing and plans for future are strongly underpinned by the six key areas in the Youth Strategy for 2030. Opportunities will continue to be sought for participation in international forums which will elevate

Aberdeen's profile as a progressive, youth-friendly city, while the fresh perspectives of young people can drive policy innovation, leading to more inclusive and effective governance.

- 3.16 By continuing to implement these initiatives, and through providing opportunities for all young people to become involved we will continue to amplify youth voices in local and global decision-making. This proactive engagement not only empowers the next generation of leaders but also fosters a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future, one where young people are not just heard, but are integral to shaping the city and world they will inherit.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications for this report

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Failure to comply with the duties outlined in the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 presents significant risk to the Council in meeting its statutory obligations as described in the Act and exposure to potential legal remedy.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No environmental impacts 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	Risks of the city not providing a supported platform for youth participation in global decision making	Delivery of the Children Services Plan, UNCRC Plan, Delivery of the city's commitment to youth participation and empowerment,	L	Yes
Compliance	Under UNCRC - Non-compliance would place us in breach of legislation and expose the local authority	Mitigated through implementation of UNCRC to ensure systems and processes are aligned to statutory guidance.	L	Yes

	to potential legal challenge.			
Operational	Staff feel unable to access the support required by some young people. participate on a global level	Mitigated by basing a dedicated team around the young people of the city who want to participate	L	Yes
Financial	Willingness to promote this cannot be achieved through lack of staff time to support	Mitigated by basing a dedicated team around the young people of the city who want to participate	L	Yes
Reputational	Risk of reputational damage through non engagement in global decision making	Mitigated through the ongoing UNCRC delivery plan and increasing awareness and opportunities across the city	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>Council Delivery Plan 2024</u>	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	Impact of Report This report highlights how the UNCRC is helping to shape the service delivery model for children and young people and supporting the commitment to a transparent, accessible and accountable Council.
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<i>The proposals within this report support the delivery of all Children & Young People Stretch Outcome 4 in the LOIP</i> 4. 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026.
Regional and City Strategies	<i>Example:</i> <i>The proposals within this report link in and support the councils LOIP Improvement project focused on the development and expansion of the ways in which we communicate with and involve children and young people in the planning and development of our work across the city (Page 11) CSP-Annual-Report-2024-25-Workforce-Summary-FINAL.pdf</i>

	Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan for 2022 – 26 and the Children’s Services Plan 2023-26 UNCRC Plan.pdf Aberdeen’s Community Learning and Development Plan 2025-2030
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9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Shona Milne Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning
Data Protection Impact Assessment	None Required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	25 November 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Update on the Learning outcomes from the Thematic Review of services for Children with Disabilities
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/271
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR	Carol Davie
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.6

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To update the Education and Children's Services Committee on progress in response to the Care Inspectorate Thematic Review of services for Children with Disabilities, presented in September 2024 and to inform on the updated Action Plan for 2025.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 2.1. Note the progress made against the Action Plan developed in response to the Care Inspectorate Thematic Review;
- 2.2 Note the development of Transition Planning Guidance and protocol including the establishment of Transitions Group Meetings; and
- 2.3 Note the intention to engage with children and young people to develop accessible material to ensure the Council is adopting a rights centric approach to transitions.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1.1 In early 2024, the Care Inspectorate undertook a rights based thematic review of disabled children and young people's experiences of social work services across all thirty-two local authorities in Scotland. Aberdeen City Council, Children's Services was one of four areas who were involved in a more in-depth scrutiny, as part of this Review. The Care Inspectorate published their overall findings in August 2024.
- 3.1.2 The salient local and national messages were presented to Committee in November 2024, alongside an Action Plan to drive key learning and enhance service delivery for children with disabilities.
- 3.1.3 Whilst the Care Inspectorate asserted that a number of their findings required a response at a national level, others required multi-agency partners to collaborate at a local level to deliver the identified improvement. Committee members

requested an update on progress on delivering the improvements be presented to Committee in 2025.

- 3.1.4 Advancements in medical care have enabled children with complex needs to live longer. Given their complexity of need they require increased support and resources. The 2024/25 cost-of-living crisis has heightened the link between poverty and social work demand, with families facing daily survival challenges and negative effects on wellbeing. These issues are especially significant for families with children who have complex disabilities and therefore require to be factored into our improvement planning.

3.2 Implementation of key learning

- 3.2.1 The learning from this thematic review was presented to both the Children's Services Board and the Child Protection Committee and utilised to inform programmes of work including the Children's Services statutory plan.
- 3.2.2 The updated Action Plan (Appendix A) reflects the progression of key learning at a national and local level.

3.3 Principal Implementation

- 3.3.1 The views of disabled children and their families have and continue to be considered as part of service mapping, understanding unmet need and service planning. Utilising parental questionnaires specific to our service was placed on hold due to families receiving the same request for feedback from commissioned service providers and the Care Inspectorate. Therefore, it was felt to have potential for duplication and overload for families. The outcomes of the surveys undertaken by our partner agencies have however, been utilised to inform our service review and delivery.
- 3.3.2 The voice of the child is imperative in all areas of service planning and delivery. Obtaining the views of children by social workers and our Children's Rights Service, is commonplace. Staff within the Children with Disabilities service have all been trained in the Makaton, to enhance their scope to interact and capture views of a wider group of children with communication challenges. Other communication aids have and will continue to be utilised in line with the child's needs. Consultations with Speech and Language Therapists to assist communication with children are embedded in practice.
- 3.3.3 Positive and constructive feedback has been received in terms of service delivery from parents and children. These have been utilised in service planning and work to ensure gaps in service provision are addressed.
- 3.3.4 Connecting with other local authorities has been central to considering and exploring change ideas. We now have representation within national networking opportunities and learning exchanges across Scotland. A visit has been undertaken to Edinburgh Disability and Neurodiversity Hub, <https://theyardscotland.org.uk/edan-hub/>, with their framework of intervention being recognised as making a significant difference to the lives of the children and

families who use the service. This model has been replicated in Dundee and most recently Glasgow.

- 3.3.5 Work is ongoing to explore with the Health and Social Care Partnership, support from the Occupational Therapy (OT) service to develop stronger and more meaningful links. Although not in place the intention is for an OT worker to be based within the Children with Disabilities Team one day per week. Communication will continue with our partners, to further explore a more integrated approach to supporting families who have a disabled child. This will seek to draw on learning from the Edinburgh model noted in 3.3.4.
- 3.3.6 Support to disabled children must be clearly defined and understood across agencies. With the assistance of children and their families a new information leaflet (Appendix B) has been developed for parents and professionals, Webpage designing has commenced and will be aligned to the Council website. The information will be user friendly and accessible to those with additional support needs. There will also be links to the Fit Like Hub site and the new Transition Protocol. The Intranet Site has been updated in relation to the latter.
- 3.3.7 Children with Disabilities workers routinely attend Parent Information evenings within Orchard Brae and Bucksburn ASN facilities.
- 3.3.8 A Framework for Intervention (Appendix C) has been developed to help families and referrers to the Children with Disabilities Team. This has been shared with and approved by a targeted number of parents we are supporting.
- 3.3.9 Collaboration with Sport Aberdeen to enhance opportunities for children in the community to integrate with peers, as well as alliance with third sector, and private sector colleagues regarding evening, afterschool, and school holiday provisions has been progressed. One off Scottish Government funding in 2025-26 provided opportunities for additional provision, including offering 16 more places for children to attend Playscheme experiences over the October and Easter holidays.
- 3.3.10 Participation in the Carers Strategy Implementation Group, (Appendix D) supported and informed the review of the Carers Strategy.

3.4 Transition Planning

- 3.4.1 One of the key findings from the thematic inspection was the need to improve the experience for young people and their families/carers moving from children to adult social work services. Nationally, the experience was too often described as being unpredictable and destabilising for children, young people, and their families. In Aberdeen, transition experiences were variable, however there was an acknowledgement that we had recognised this and that there was commitment to working together to develop a multi-agency approach to improving transitions and developing a protocol in line with the **National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy for Young Disabled People**.
- 3.4.2 In August 2024, an Improving Transitions workstream was established in order to improve the experience of young people with significant care needs as they

transition from school to adulthood. The group is formed of representatives from Adult Social Work, Children's Social Work and Education.

3.4.3 The vision statement of this working group is: '**young people in Aberdeen City will experience a well-planned, person-centred transition that enables them to reach their full potential as adults.**'

3.4.4 The project aligns with the Scottish Government's Principles of Good Transition 3 as well as the UNCRC. Locally, the approach emphasises:

- Early identification and planning
- Cross-service collaboration
- Person-centred support
- Clear, accessible information for young people and families
- Ongoing engagement and evaluation

3.4.5 Key achievements thus far include:

- Improved data sharing between Education, Social Work, and Health to identify young people needing support post-18yrs.
- Early planning mechanisms being developed to support transitions at an earlier juncture than the national 2-year benchmark.
- Collaboration strengthened through co-location of services.
- Use of the national Compass Toolkit to guide transition stages and responsibilities
- Process mapping completed to identify and address service disconnects.
- Standard Operating Procedures being developed to ensure consistency.

3.4.6 A phased approach has been adopted and this consists of:

Phase	Focus	Target Completion
Phase 1	Vision, internal processes, staff/family guidance	July 2025
Phase 2	Service redesign, health transitions integration	October 2025
Phase 3	Evaluation and continuous improvement	March 2027 onwards

3.4.7 This approach has supported the development of new transitions processes which meet our vision and align to work already taking place within the primary areas of Children's Education and Social Work and Adult Social Work. In time we will expand this to include Children's and Adult health services.

3.4.8 The introduction of a twice-yearly Transition Group Meeting is a primary component in terms of ensuring early awareness of the need for support into adulthood and beyond, and that improved outcomes for transitions are achieved. The group is comprised of representatives from Children's Social Work, Education and Adult Services, including the Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities and Mental Health services. We will integrate a data capture process to continually understand the needs of young people as they reach the age of 18, and beyond, as pertains to adult services. Embedding this process will assist in financial and service planned.

- 3.4.9 Referrals are considered for young people from aged 14, due to the correlation between early awareness and positive transition outcomes. The group, in considering the information presented to them, refers to eligibility criteria, and makes informed decisions about future support required within statutory adult services. Should young people be deemed as not meeting the Adult Services eligibility criteria, this information can be shared with young people and their families at the earliest opportunity to allow for planning and to signpost them to other external services, such as Skills Development Scotland, ABZ Works, or Aberdeen Carers Support Services.
- 3.4.10 Practice guidance (Appendix E) has been made available electronically to assist in the process. This will be regularly reviewed, ensuring learning from staff feedback is incorporated into the processes. The guidance will support the delivery of planned training/learning in a multi-disciplinary/multi-partnership way.
- 3.4.11 Guidance for young people, their families/carers is planned and will be available early in 2026. This will be available in various formats in recognition of levels of need. Links will be integrated within children's services, adult services, and education web pages. Young People from Bucksburn Academy, with the assistance of Education staff and the Participation and Engagement Officer, within Children's Services, will compile a short video to assist their peers to understand transitions at each stage of the process.
- 3.4.12 Evaluation at each stage of the evolving Transition Pathway, is crucial to delivery of our vision for the young people of our city.

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 this report.

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) <small>*Taking into account controls/control actions</small>	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Many of the key messages from the	The Local Outcomes and Improvement Plan and Children's Service	L	Yes

	thematic review are already in place in practice in the city. The remaining areas are already incorporated into strategic planning.	Plan are well governed by the Chief Officer Group. They will be ensuring that the terms of the thematic review continue to be incorporated into current and future strategic planning.		
Compliance	No significant risk identified	Services across all multi-agency partners will be aware of the key messages and requirements and ensure compliance.	L	Yes
Operational	Required improvements and developments in practice are not identified and actioned.	Leadership supports participation and planning across the multi-agency partnership in the delivery of changes required as a result of the findings.	L	Yes
Financial	No significant risk identified			Yes
Reputational	Organisational failings in relation to children with disabilities can bring significant media interest and scrutiny of services delivered to children and young people.	The public can be assured that: the Council ensures compliance with legal requirements, national standards, and guidance; partners respond to self and external scrutiny; and identified areas for improvement are addressed.	M	Yes
Environment / Climate	No significant risk identified			Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2024-2033</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	The contents of this report have no impact on the Council Delivery Plan.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/ Disabilities will experience a positive destination by 2026.	Children's Services partners deliver on the outcomes of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan Prosperous People (Children & Young People) Stretch Outcome 8 and to ensure our children with ASN/disabilities and their families receive the support they need in a timely manner.
Regional and City Strategies	The work is relevant to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, the Children's Services Plan. Local stakeholders progress the findings and expectations of the Thematic Review

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	<p>This report updates committee members in relation to the implantation of the key findings of a Thematic Review conducted by the Care Inspectorate and does not require a full Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment to be completed.</p> <p>No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Ali McAlpine, Lead Service Manager, Children's Social Work and Family Support</p>
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<p>No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Ali McAlpine, Lead Service Manager, Children's Social Work and Family Support</p>
Other	

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[ECS Nov 2024 report - F&C/24/330 - Learning outcomes from Care Inspectorate Thematic Review](#)

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Updated Action Plan

Appendix B - Information Leaflet

Appendix C - Framework for Intervention

Appendix D - Carers Strategy Implementation Group

Appendix E - Transition Pathway Guidance

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix A - Updated ACTION PLAN presented to E&CS Committee November 2024- Care Inspectorate thematic review of Children With Disabilities Services

Action Required as set by Care Inspectorate	Action Plan in Place	Stakeholder Involvement	Action Aligned to	Update on Actions
The views of disabled children and their families must be considered as part of service mapping, understanding unmet need and service planning.	Analysis of parental questionnaire to inform service planning. All staff working with Children and Young People, with disabilities across children's services, trained in Makaton.	Education, Children's Services, Adult Social Work, Community Partnerships, Health, Third sector providers	Local outcome improvement plan stretch outcome 8 – Key Driver - <i>Ensuring our children with ASN/disabilities and their families receive the support they need</i>	Mind of My Own communication platform in place for the children and their carers. All staff within the Children with Disabilities Team trained in the use of Makaton. Consultation with Speech and Language Therapy regarding communication tools embedded in practice. Parental surveys have been analysed in relation to external service provision, which have informed planning and commissioning of other services. Participation in Carers Strategy Implementation Group
We must take action in response to the views of disabled children and their families to ensure gaps in service provision are addressed.	ACHSP to identify a link Occupational Therapist to support families and offer strategies in caring for a child with disabilities. Explore options to enhance mental health and wellbeing support to parents and carers of children with a disability. Benchmarking with other local authorities.	Children's Services, Adult Social Work, Community Partnerships, Health, Third sector providers	Local outcome improvement plan stretch outcome 8, Key Driver - <i>Ensuring our children with ASN/disabilities and their families receive the support they need.</i>	Work is ongoing with the HSCP to identify an OT to enhance preventive and early intervention support for families with a child who is disabled. Communication with NHS in relation to the wellbeing, and financial benefits across services continues. Links with the Fit Like Hubs have been established to provide information and support sessions with parents of children with additional support needs. Benchmarking with local authorities and third sector provision has taken place regarding service provision and sharing good practice. Participation on national networking groups including learning exchanges across Scotland.

A robust approach to gathering and analysing data on disabled children and young people must be implemented, both in social work services and wider. This must be used effectively to inform service planning and improvement.	Continue to collaborate with partners at a local and national level, to identify a shared definition of disability. Further develop within Transitions workstream, an agreed approach to data gathering and information required for single and multi-agency purposes. Benchmarking with other local	Children's Social Work, Adult Services, Health, Education, Community Partnerships	Local Outcome Improvement Plan Stretch Outcome 8, Key Driver - <i>Ensuring our children with ASN/disabilities and their families receive the support they need.</i>	Transition Planning Workgroup established. Transition Protocol has progressed to near to completion. Transitions Panel established September 2025. Internal recording system utilised to develop digital solutions and analyse data
The role of social work services in providing care and support to disabled children must be clearly defined and understood across agencies. Clear and accessible information should be available and communicated to children and their families. This should include eligibility criteria.	Support the workforce to further consider how we ensure children and families and partners better understand the remit of Children's Social Work. This should take account of the individual communication needs of children and young people.	Children's Services, Adult Social Work, Community Partnerships, Health, Education, Third sector providers	CSW - Workforce Development Plan Local Outcome Improvement Plan Stretch Point 8 - Key Driver - Improving pathways to education, employment and training for our children with ASN/disabilities.	Information leaflets in conjunction with the assistance of children and their families has been developed. Webpage designing has commenced. Will be aligned to new Council website and Link to Transition Protocol Attendance at Parent and Carer (Foster and Kinship) Information evenings within Orchard Brae and Bucksburn ASN facility
Opportunities for effective early intervention should be strengthened.	Development of information sites to signpost parents/carers, young people, and other professionals to community supports which would not involve the need for intervention with, nor a referral from statutory body. Continue to develop our Family Support Model that provides early and preventative support for all families that mitigates against the need for statutory social work intervention.	Children's Services, Adult Services, Health, Community Partnerships, Third Sector	Local Outcome Improvement Plan. Stretch Outcome 8. <i>Key Driver – Development of a Family Support Model will be driven by the Children's Services Board.</i>	Framework for intervention and information sharing regarding service developed. Web page design commenced. Will include signposting to community based, preventative early intervention services, including Fit Like Hubs, Young People, Family and carer Guidance planned and aim to complete in early new year. Available in various formats. Young People from Bucksburn Academy, involved and will compile a short video to assist peers understand transitions process

<p>Opportunities for play and friendships, along with other areas that are important to children, should be maximised. This will need to be a collective and holistic response.</p>	<p>Opportunities to maximise children with a disability to build friendships will continue to be explored with community partners.</p>	<p>Children's Social Work, Education, Community Partnerships, Voluntary agencies</p>	<p>Local Outcome Improvement Plan. Stretch outcome 8. Key Driver - <i>Ensuring our children with ASN/disabilities and their families receive the support they need.</i></p>	<p>Partnership with Sport Aberdeen to enhance opportunities for children in the community throughout the year.</p> <p>Collaboration with Education Support Officers and third sector colleagues regarding afterschool and school holiday provisions. Scottish Government funding for 2025-2026 provided opportunities for additional provision.</p> <p>Links with Scout/Guiding regarding opportunities to maximise integration within communities for children with ASN.</p>
<p>Adequate resourcing must be made available to enable services to develop and improve.</p>	<p>Resources will continue to be allocated to children and their families with the greatest need and vulnerability. The development of early and preventative support that mitigates against escalation of risk and vulnerability will be a focus for our Family Support Model in the coming year.</p> <p>We will continue as a partnership to ensure our workforce are supported to develop the skills and knowledge to support children with complex and enduring needs.</p> <p>Opportunity for frontline workers to work alongside Specialist Occupational Therapist to enhance.</p>	<p>Education, Children's Services, Adult Social Work, Community Partnerships, Health, Third sector providers</p>	<p>Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Stretch Outcome 8. Key Drivers - <i>Improving pathways to education, employment and training for our children with ASN/disabilities. Ensuring our children with ASN/disabilities and their families receive the support they need.</i></p>	<p>Links to Fit Like Hubs established providing Whole Family Support Model. Prevents escalation to statutory services..</p> <p>All staff trained in the communication tool, Makaton.</p> <p>Embedded liaison with Specialist OT, Speech and Language Therapist re best means of communication with individual children.</p>

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HEAR OUR VOICE

It's crucial we hear and understand the child's or young person's views and wishes as part of our assessment process.

We do this by:

- Talking to your child directly or using communication devices to get their opinions
- Learning about your children by observing your child in their surroundings
- Speaking to those who know them best to understand how they present in various situations

We collaborate with other professionals involved in your child's care to consider their views and represent them in our assessment.

Your child/young person and their voice matters!

GETTING IN TOUCH

More information and links to community-based resources are available on our website.



www.aberdeencity.gov.uk



CWDSservice@aberdeencity.gov.uk



01224 069777



Children with Disabilities Service
Orchard Brae School
Howes Road
Aberdeen
AB15 7RW



CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES SERVICE



Supporting children with disabilities and their families in Aberdeen City

WHAT DOES THE SERVICE OFFER?

A referral to the Children with Disabilities Services should be considered only when it is identified that a child's disability impacts on their life, and/or that of their family, and is too great to be addressed by universal provision and there is a need for targeted support.

This Service works within a framework of support. Once a referral is accepted by the Children with Disabilities Service, an assessment is offered under Section 23 Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Parent/Carers may also be eligible for a Carer's Assessment under the Carer's Act (Scotland) 2016 and a referral will be made to the relevant commissioned organisation, which is Quarriers.

FRAMEWORK OF SUPPORT

The Children with Disabilities Service works with children aged from 0 to 18 years old.

This Service support children and young people who have:

- severe or profound physical disabilities
- Severe or profound learning disabilities
- Severe developmental delay in motor and/or cognitive functioning
- profound multiple disabilities
- complex/severe health needs that are life limiting, life threatening, degenerative and organic disorders impacting on day to day living
- autism, with an associated learning disability, where the condition severely affects the child's day to day living

REFERRAL PATHWAY

The referral pathway into Children with Disabilities Social Work Service is through the Intake Service.

Speak to your Child's Health Visitor or your Child's School. They can make a referral via the Request for Assistance Portal including a copy of your Child's Assessment and Plan.

The Intake Service will screen the information to determine if support from the Children with Disability Service is required.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Once a referral to the Disability Service is accepted, we will review the Child's Plan against the framework of support.

We may contact you and/or professionals for further information to determine suitability of referral and consider our role.

If the referral is accepted an assessment is undertaken with the child and their family, including an evaluation of any support that maybe in place.

The assessment determine levels of support offered. These may range from signposting, advice/guidance, to targeted support via Social Work interventions and/or a care package.

SELF DIRECTED SUPPORT

This is accessed only when an assessed need has been identified.

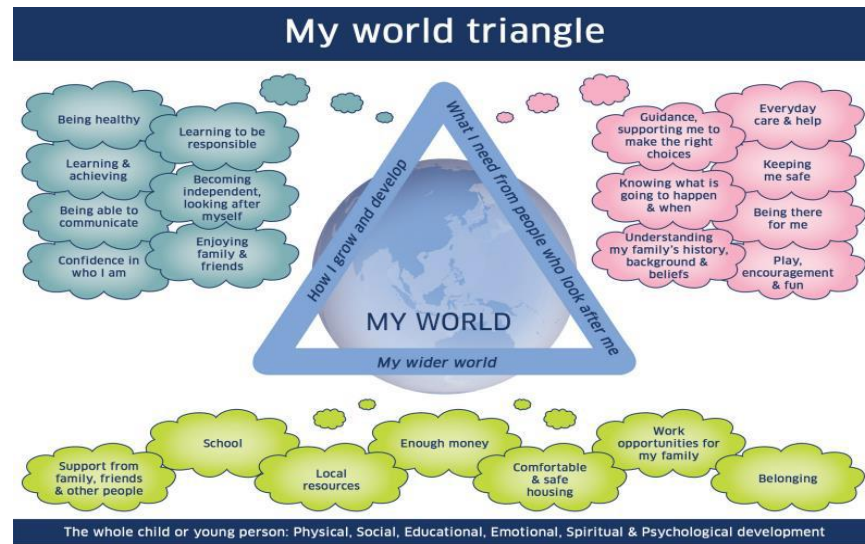
We have a legal duty to give children and their families, who are identified for SDS support as much control over how they receive/access services. Families can choose from four options - where they manage their services relatively independently, ask the Council to manage them, use a commissioned service or a combination of options. The Service will work alongside the family to identify what suits them best.



CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY SERVICE (CWDS)

Framework of Support

In Aberdeen City services for disabled children and young people are being developed within the context of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, Self-Directed Support (Scotland) Act 2011, Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2013 and the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, and are underpinned by the framework of Getting it Right for Every Child; My World Triangle and the SHANARRI indicators: Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Responsible, Respected and Included.



The purpose of this document is to offer support and clarity, to parents and professionals, about how decisions are made and to ensure that services are targeted at those with the highest levels of need consistently and fairly. This framework should not be applied rigidly but flexibly exercising professional judgement.

Appendix C

For most children in Aberdeen who require services, these can be accessed through universal provision within their local community. The same should be true of any child with a disability. Only where it has been identified, that the impact of the child's disability on their life and/or that of their family is too great to be addressed by universal provision, should a referral to the Children with Disabilities Service be considered. This framework exists to consider if a child or young person is eligible for a referral into the Children with Disabilities Service.

The Children with Disabilities Service works with children aged from 0 to 18.

The Children with Disabilities Service will offer an assessment (under Sect. 23 Children (Scotland) Act 1995) where the child has a condition diagnosed by a Doctor or Consultant which is substantial, long lasting or permanent, physical and/or an intellectual disability or a life limiting, life threatening condition.

These may include:

- Severe learning disabilities;
- Severe physical disabilities;
- Severe developmental delay in motor and or cognitive functioning;
- Profound multiple disabilities;
- Complex and severe health problems that arise from the disability, that are life threatening, degenerative illness or organic disorder resulting in severe disability;
- A diagnosis of Autism with an associated learning disability and where the condition severely affects day to day functioning;
- Children and Young people with a sole diagnosis of ADHD are not eligible for referral.

When a child or young person is allocated to the Children with Disabilities Service, the Team will screen the referral against the framework of support to assess suitability of referral. Following this a Section 23 assessment (Children (Scotland) 1995) will be undertaken to consider the needs of the child or young person with disability and how these are met within/by their family. Where deemed appropriate a referral is also considered to the commissioned service (if not already done) for an assessment of the Adult Carers Need. This assessment will consider the whole family's needs and what supports are around them. Provision of resources including the level and type will be determined by these assessments. It is not the level of the child's disability that determines the service but the assessed impact the disability has on their quality of life and that of their family.

The chart below illustrates categories of identified levels of need. The Children with Disabilities Service will support a child/young person, whose needs are deemed to be significant. However there will be occasions when children who meet the moderate level will also be considered for a service in order to prevent crisis.

•SIGNIFICANT -

- Children with complex health needs / disabilities, where parents / carers are unable to provide care.
- Children with disabilities for whom there are welfare or child protection concerns.
- Families who require intensive multi agency support in caring for children with disabilities and / or health needs, or life limiting conditions. e

MODERATE -

Children, likely to have a number of additional needs and, without the support of additional services, needs are likely to become significant.

These children are likely to require a Lead Professional and co-ordinated support services of more than one agency.

LOW -

Children whose needs can be met by universal services and targeted universal services such as specialist education provision and third sector organisations who offer support to children/young people with additional support needs.

SIGNIFICANT –

- No one is available or able to meet the child or young person’s basic needs.
- Families who require intensive multi agency support in caring for children with disabilities and/or health needs, or life limiting conditions.
- Children/young people with disabilities who require specialist input because of mental health needs additional to their diagnosis, e.g. CAMHS.
- Children with disabilities who have recently been subject to a child protection plan, and who remain in need of ongoing specialist services.
- Families who require intensive multi agency support in caring for children with disabilities and/or health needs, or life limiting conditions.

MODERATE –

- Children, including children with disabilities are likely to have a number of additional needs and, without the support of additional services will not meet their potential and GIRFEC, Child’s Planning meeting should be held by lead professional.
- Children/young people with disabilities who require specialist input because of mental health needs, e.g. CAMHS.
 - It is apparent that the families own resources and/ or Universal and Targeted services are unable to provide the required level of support.
- A referral for Outreach support, Aberlour, AN-D & Fit Like Hubs requires or could be considered.

LOW –

- All children, including children with disabilities, at this level may have one or two low level needs that can be met by one agency or referral to another other agency.
- Children, including children with disabilities are likely to have a number of additional needs and, without the support of additional services will not meet their potential and a Child’s Planning meeting should be held by the named professional.
- Needs can be met by universal services and targeted universal services such as specialist education and third sector organisations who offer support to children and young people with additional support needs.

This framework of support will be closely monitored and reviewed yearly, in order to ensure that the desired outcomes are being achieved for all children and young people with a disability who require additional services.

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CARERS STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

1.	Governance
<p>The Carers Strategy Implementation Group (CSIG) reports to the Strategic Planning Group and ultimately the Integration Joint Board for the delivery of the Carers Strategy for Aberdeen City.</p>	
2.	Role
<p>The Carers Strategy Implementation Group;-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and is implemented effectively in Aberdeen City • Drive the delivery of the Carers Strategy for Aberdeen City • Support and inform the review and refresh of the Carers Strategy • Ensure carer, service user, locality and partner views are reflected in the Carers Strategy • Ensure carer, service user, locality and partner views shape delivery in services delivered to carers and cared for people • Use local and national data to identify gaps and inform service improvements and future iterations of the Carers Strategy 	
3.	Responsibilities
<p>The Carers Strategy Implementation Group play a significant role in ensuring the delivery of national health and wellbeing outcome 6 “People who provide unpaid care are supported to look after their own health and wellbeing, including to reduce any negative impact of their caring role on their own health and well-being” and the specific commitment in the Strategic Plan. “Value and Support Unpaid Carers”.</p>	
4.	Delegated Authority
<p>The Carers Strategy Implementation Group has delegated authority to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the development and review of the Carers Strategy • Secure the involvement of, and consultation with, carers on significant decisions to be taken • Promote consultation, engagement, participation and collaborative working across Aberdeen City • Include, support and monitor the delivery of the Carers Strategy Action Plan • Approve spend from the Carers Strategy and Improvement Fund, anything under the IJB Threshold of £50,000. 	

5. Reporting

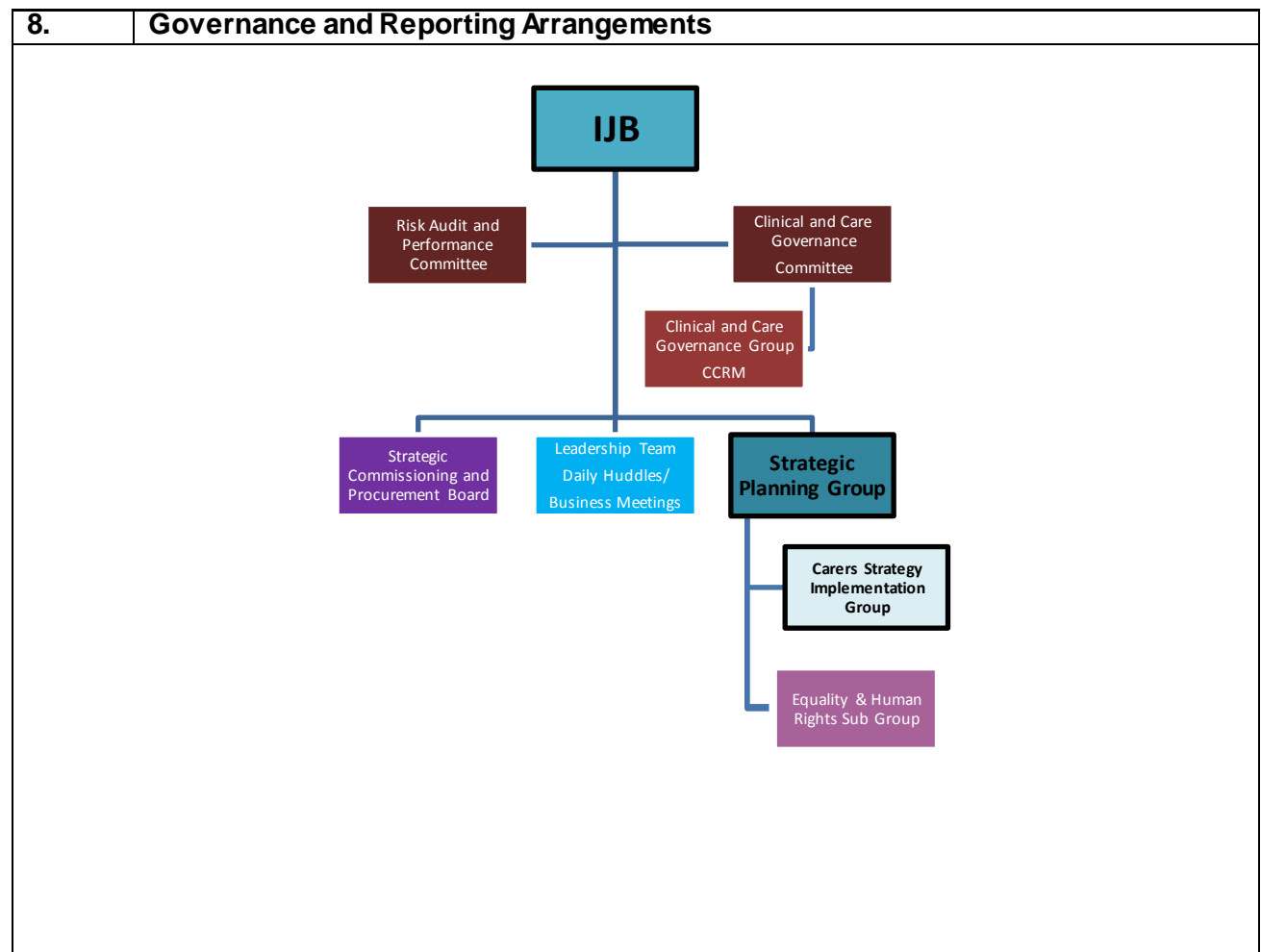
The Carer Strategy Implementation Group will report to the Strategic Planning Group on an “as required” basis. In addition CSIG will provide an Annual Report on the delivery of the Carers Strategy to the IJB.

6. Membership

- Transformation Programme Manager, Strategy & Infrastructure (Chair)*
- Senior Project Manager, Strategy
- Public Health
- Primary Care (GPs)
- Primary Care (Community Dental, Pharmacy and Ophthalmology)
- Nursing (Community Nurses, School Nurses, Health Visitors)
- Allied Health Professionals
- Social Work
- SDS Co-Ordinator
- Development Officer, Communities and Engagement
- NHSG
- ACC Children’s Services (Young Carers)
- ACC Education Teams
- ACVO
- Bon Accord Care
- IJB Carer Rep/ Carer Lived Experience Rep
- Adult Carer Support Service - Quarriers
- Young Carer Support Service – Barnardos
- Sport Aberdeen
- Third Sector – Alzheimer’s Scotland, CLAN, Sue Ryder, Charlie House
- Learning Disabilities/ Services Representatives

7. Frequency of Meetings

The CSIG will meet 6-8 weekly in line with the Strategic Planning Group meeting schedule.



9.	Resourcing
<p>Carers Strategy Implementation Group only have delegated authority for expenditure. CSIG is supported by the collaborative support network and membership of the group itself. The CSIG improvement fund is set at £150k and this is directly used to ensure to the delivery of the Carers Strategy. Approval of spend aligns with thresholds set by the IJB, CSIG will consider funds and allocations under the £50k threshold. Regular oversight is provided by the Strategic Planning Group who also have a delegated authority up to £50,000. CSIG will provide recommendations to IJB for any expenditure beyond £50,000 and will only proceed with approval by the IJB.</p>	

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TRANSITIONS PATHWAY

Supporting Young People with Additional Needs Through Their Transition to Adulthood

Abstract

This guide outlines the transition process for young people with additional support needs as they move from school into adulthood, including further education, employment, or specialist services. It aims to simplify and improve the experience for families and professionals by providing clear, locally informed guidance aligned with national best practices.

Carol Davie

What are Transitions?

Transitions are life events that happen at any time and for any one, however in the context of this guidance when we refer to Transitions we specifically mean the transition of young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN) into adulthood. ASN could include a learning disability (LD), neurodevelopmental e.g. autism, mental health (MH) support needs or physical disability (PD). Transitions of young people at this time are primarily from a school setting to a further destination post-school, such as further education, training or employment. For some young people with ASN they may require more specialist supports from Adult Social Work (ASW), social care and health services.

Families and young people tell us that nationally there is a lot more to be done to improve the transitions experience for young people; this is backed up by what we have heard locally through various engagement opportunities. Many families find the transitions process complicated and hard to navigate. Our aim is to improve this transitions experience by providing clarity on the processes undertaken in Aberdeen City, and to continue to make improvements to our processes where possible.

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Who is this guide for?

This guide is designed for staff within Children's and Adult Services, including education, social work, social care and health, and the purpose of this guide is to provide clear processes and information to improve the transitions experience for young people. The detail within the guidance has been developed alongside staff and teams working within transitions and aligns to nationally recognised good practice.

There will be a separate parents and young person's guidance produced.

ASN can be a number of ongoing support needs which may continue into adulthood.

Young people with LD are often the main group of people who require support with their transition, but they are not the only group. This guide can be used for different care groups as they transition, however in writing this guide the main priority has been on focusing on how the experience can be improved for young people with LD.

National Approach to Improving Transitions

There is an existing legal framework which establishes legal duties and responsibilities for transitions:

- [The Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#) incorporating the [Additional Support for Learning \(Changes in School Education\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2005](#).
- [Social Care \(Self-Directed Support\) \(Scotland\) Act 2013](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Adults with Incapacity \(Scotland\) Act 2000](#)
- [Mental Health \(Care and Treatment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#)
- Other key legislation can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

The Scottish Government is committed to delivering a [National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy](#) which aims to “*support disabled young people as they make the transition to adult life*”. An external strategic working group which includes representatives of parents/carers, education, social work, health, local authorities and third sector partners has been established. The strategy has been in development since 2021 and was reaffirmed in 2023. The strategy will likely align closely to the Principles of Good Transitions 3.

[The Principles of Good Transitions 3](#) is a set of good practice principles for transitions planning within Scotland. There are 7 principles which create a framework by which

services such as Education, Social Work and Health will work within to improve the transitions experience for young people with ASN.

1. Planning and decision making should be carried out in a person-centred way
2. Support should be co-ordinated across all services
3. Planning should start early and continue up to age 25
4. All young people should get the support they need
5. Young people, parents and carers must have access to the information they need
6. Families and carers need support
7. A continued focus on transitions across Scotland

The principles are accompanied by a toolkit known as '[Compass](#)' which can be used by young people, parents and professionals to explore how the principles apply in practice to transitions. Compass provides a framework of transitions stages, from pre-transitions to young adult life, helping to understand what can be expected at each stage and who holds responsibility for actions.

The Compass stages are:

- Pre-Transition
- Gathering Information (2 years before)
- Your Transitions Year (1 year before)
- Getting ready to Move on (6 months before)
- Leaving School and Moving on (Leaving)
- Young Adult Life (6 months after)

Transition Stage	Brief Explanation
Pre Transitions	Staff should clarify their roles in the transition process, inform parents / carers on when the formal process starts, and advise parents on local support groups.
Gathering Information (2 years before)	Staff should engage with the young person to understand their needs, provide information on available options, facilitate, where appropriate, visits to services, and ensure the young person's needs are assessed.
Your Transitions Year (1 year before)	Staff should provide information on financial support and legal matters like guardianship, ensure the young person is included in the process, and support parents in attending meetings.
Getting ready to Move on (6 months before)	Staff should help parents prepare for changes, identify support networks, and develop a backup plan in case of delays or changes.
Leaving School and Moving on (Leaving)	Staff should support the young person in building their skills, plan for the next steps, and assist with applications to transition funds.
Young Adult Life (6 months after)	Staff should ensure that services / teams that the young person is moving on to, have all necessary information about the young person, and understand the legal duties of guardians.

Within Aberdeen City we have adopted the Principles of Good Transition 3 as our local policy and Compass as the framework by which our local practices are based.

Aberdeen City Approach

There are a number of services and teams who might be involved in a young person's transition, the specific teams and professionals will be determined based on the needs of the young person:

- **Education Services:** Education services support young people through various school settings based on their needs, including mainstream or specialist, residential. Education are responsible for coordinated support planning, arranging transition meetings, and providing skills development and enablement activities to prepare young people for adult life. This work is supported through the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. This act ensures that children and young people with ASN receive the necessary support to benefit from education.
- **Children's Social Work (CSW):** CSW offers support to children and families, including those with disabilities. They assist with child protection, foster care, and support for looked-after children. While some families with a child who has ASN may require support from CSW and Social Care (respite care, coordinating practical help, crisis support), not all families do. Support provided can include advocacy, assessments, and referrals. The responsibilities of CSW are defined in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, which outlines the duties of local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need.

- **Adult Social Work:** ASW support adults with LD, MH and PD needs. ASW and Social Care provide information to parents/carers, carry out care assessments, and where eligibility has been met, develop support plans, and coordinate with other services to ensure a smooth transition to adult care. The responsibilities of ASW are defined in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. This act provides the framework for social work services in Scotland, including the provision of care and support for adults.

- **Wider services such as Skills Development, Training and Employment:** There are several services providing key skills development, training and support to young people with ASN who are preparing to move into adult life and / or post-education opportunities. There is also support for their carers too. Currently these are:
 - Skills Development Scotland
 - ABZ Works
 - North East Scotland College (NESCOL)
 - Aberdeen Carers Support Services

The support offered from these services is supported by the Skills Development (Scotland) Act 2008; this act establishes the framework for skills development and training services in Scotland and the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 which provided new rights and support for unpaid carers.

Transitions Pathway

The Transitions pathway is designed to support young people with ASN move from school to adult life, and where eligible, have access to services which support this journey.

Every young persons' transition journey will be person centred and outcomes focused. However, maintaining a consistent approach to transitions pathways is key to improving experiences of transitions for young people and their families.

Below is the general transitions pathway adopted within Aberdeen City for young people who have ASN. The criteria to access ASW services is clear and will differ depending on the service e.g., LD, MH, PD, Youth Team (YT).

Appropriate assessments of a child must be undertaken at the earliest opportunity, as this will impact eligibility assessments, which may provide access to necessary adult social work and social care services e.g., part of the eligible criteria for the LD service is a diagnosed learning disability. This pathway will assume that any necessary assessments will have been undertaken.

Key Steps

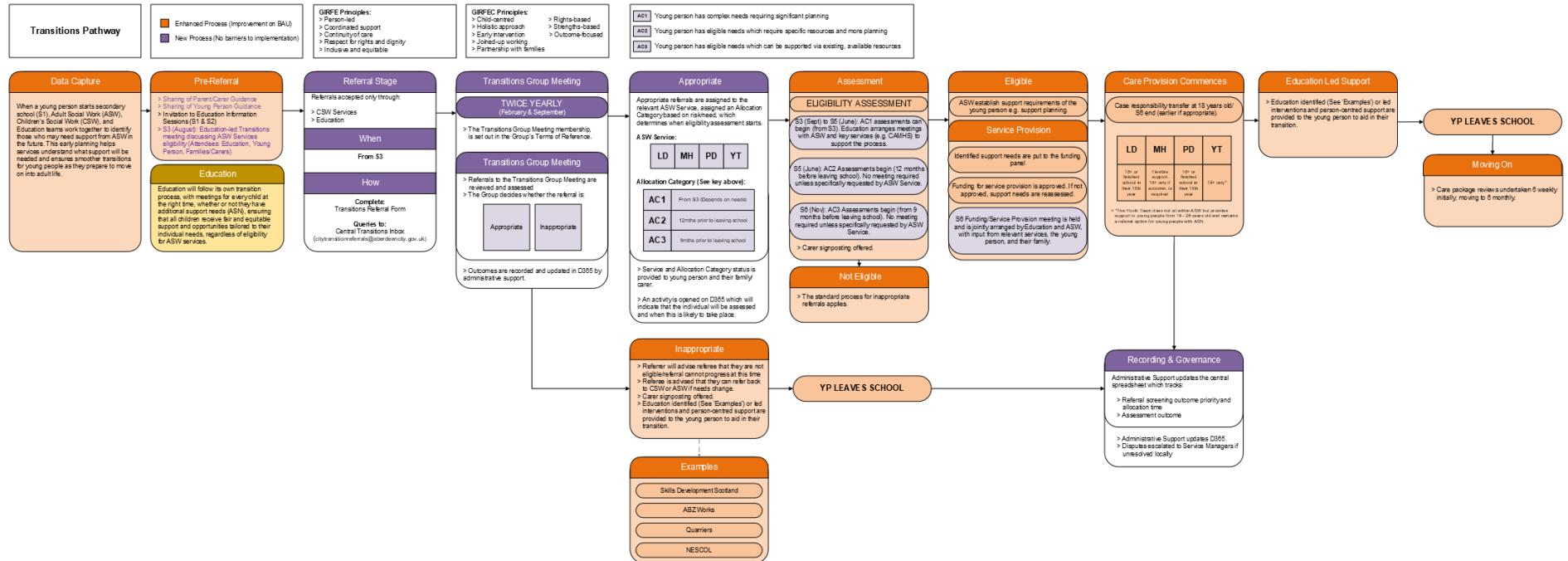
Below you will read about the comprehensive process that begins at S3 (Year 3 of Secondary School / Academy) guiding young people through their transition to adult life. This journey involves various stages, including engagement sessions, assessments,

available support. Each step is designed to ensure that young people receive the necessary support and resources as they move towards adulthood.

- Data Capture
- Education
- Pre Referral Stage
- Referral Stage
- Transitions Group Meeting
- Appropriate & Inappropriate Referrals
- External Support Services
- Assessment of Appropriate Referrals
- Eligible / Ineligible
- Service Provision
- Care Provision Commences
- Education-Led Support
- Recording & Governance

You can view the pathway flowchart below followed by a detailed overview of each stage of the pathway.

Transitions Flowchart



Data Capture

The transitions journey starts as early as S1, when a young person begins secondary school. At this stage, staff in Education, CSW, and ASW begin working together to identify any young people who may need support from adult services in the future.

This doesn't mean a referral is made straight away; it's about starting to build a picture. Staff look at what is already known about the young person, including any support they've received in primary school or from other services. The aim is to identify at an early stage who might need extra help as they grow older, so that planning can begin well in advance.

By capturing this information early, we can avoid delays later on and make sure the right people are involved at the right time. It helps families feel more prepared and supported as their child moves through school and towards adulthood; and it allows likes of ASW and Social Care Services to forecast the types of services that will be needed and to begin commissioning those services at the most appropriate time.

The data capture is undertaken twice annually and is aligned to the Transitions Referral process. The data being captured during this time includes:

- Young Person's Name
- Young Person's Date of Birth
- Diagnoses
- Children's Worker
- Educational Placement

- Address / Postcode
- Guardianship
- Support in School
- Support other than Education
- Other Information
- Signposting Provided
- Post School Destination

Additional Planning Tools: The Dynamic Support Register (DSR)

Aberdeen City Council also uses the Dynamic Support Register (DSR) to help plan support for adults with learning disabilities who have complex needs. It's especially useful for identifying young people approaching adulthood who may need more intensive support.

The DSR helps prevent hospital admissions or out-of-area placements by identifying individuals whose support may be at risk. It's reviewed monthly by Adult Learning Disability Services and supports local decision making, while also contributing to a national picture through consistent data sharing.

Education

From the moment a young person starts secondary school, education staff play a key role in supporting their journey into adulthood. Schools begin to gather information, observe the young person's needs, and work closely with families and other services to understand what support might be needed in the future.

Education doesn't just focus on learning, it also helps young people build life skills, confidence, and independence. Staff may arrange meetings, share information about future options, and help families understand what to expect. Even if a young person doesn't need ASW support, education will still ensure that learners are supported through their transition to further destinations. This can be delivered at a universal or targeted level, dependent on the particular needs of the learner.

Pre Referral Stage

This stage is all about getting schools, children's services, and families or carers together to think ahead and consider what support or services a young person might need in the future. It's crucial that these discussions start early, as it allows the team around the young person to gather the right information and ensure understanding of their needs and strengths. These following activities begin well in advance of the statutory timelines set out in the Additional Support for Learning (Changes in School Education) (Scotland) Regulations 2005.

Families are invited to information sessions, usually in S1 and S2, to learn about the transitions process. These information sessions will be attended twice annually by ASW & CSW alongside any partners invited by education.

By S3, schools will hold a meeting with the young person, their family / carers, and key professionals to talk about what support might be needed. This may involve making a

transitions referral to ASW if education or CSW believe the young person would meet the eligible criteria for support.

This is also a good time to start thinking about things like guardianship and it's good practice for schools to highlight guardianship to parents and carers. Financial planning is also important and guidance can be given to parents and carers by Aberdeen City Council's Financial Inclusion Team.

Referral Stage

If it looks like a young person may need support from ASW, a formal referral can be made from S3 onwards. This is done using a Transitions Referral Form. This is a digital form that allows supporting documents to be uploaded, however, some larger supporting documents can be sent to the Central Transitions Inbox (email). Only referrals from CSW or Education are accepted.

The referral includes key information about the young person's needs and current support. Once submitted, it's logged and tracked so that staff know when the young person will be assessed and what happens next.

Transitions Group Meeting

This is a multi-agency meeting that takes place twice a year in February and September. A group of professionals (Social Work Transitions Group) from different services come together to review each referral and decide what should happen next.

They look at whether the young person meets the criteria for adult services and whether more information is needed. The outcomes of the meeting are recorded and shared, so everyone involved knows what the next steps are. The next steps will be different for those whose referral is considered appropriate and for those whose referral is considered inappropriate and/or does not meet the eligibility criteria.

Appropriate & Inappropriate Referrals

Once a referral is reviewed by the Social Work Transitions Group, it will be considered either appropriate or inappropriate for ASW services.

- An appropriate referral means the young person can be assessed against the eligible criteria for ASW services. These referrals are passed to the relevant ASW service (LD, MH, PD, YT) and assigned an Allocation Category based on the young person's needs. This helps determine when their assessment will begin.

The Allocation Categories are:

- Allocation Category 1 (AC1): Young person has complex needs which require significant planning.
- Allocation Category 2 (AC2): Young person has eligible needs which require specific resources and more planning.
- Allocation Category 1 (AC3): Young person has eligible needs which can be supported within existing, available resources.

- An inappropriate referral means the young person is unlikely to meet the eligible criteria for ASW services at this time. This doesn't mean they won't get support. The Social Work Transitions Group may signpost to other services like Skills Development Scotland, ABZ Works, or Aberdeen Carers Support Services. Families / carers are given guidance and can refer again in the future if the young person's needs change.

External Support Services

Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

SDS supports young people to explore their future options whether that's further education, training, or employment. For young people with ASN, SDS can offer tailored advice, help with career planning, and support with applications or work placements. They work closely with schools and families to make sure young people feel confident and prepared for life after school.

ABZ Works

ABZ Works is a local employability service that helps young people build skills and find opportunities in the world of work. For those with ASN, ABZ Works can offer one-to-one support, training programmes, and help connecting with employers. They focus on building confidence, independence, and real-world experience, even if a young person isn't ready for work right away.

North East Scotland College (NESCOL)

NESCOL offers a wide range of courses and learning opportunities for school leavers, including those with ASN. The college provides supported learning programmes, tailored support, and inclusive environments to help young people succeed. Staff at NESCOL work closely with schools and families to make sure transitions into college are well-planned and positive.

Aberdeen Carers Support Service

Aberdeen Carers Support Service supports unpaid carers including parents and family members of young people with ASN. They offer advice, emotional support, and help accessing practical resources. During transitions, they can be a vital source of guidance for families navigating changes in services, eligibility, and responsibilities.

Assessment of Appropriate Referrals

Once a referral has been accepted as appropriate, the young person is assigned to the relevant ASW team (LD, MH, PD or YT). They are also given an Allocation Category based on the level of need and complexity. This helps determine when their assessment will begin:

- AC1: Complex needs requiring significant planning (can begin from S3)
- AC2: Eligible needs requiring specific resources (starts 12 months before leaving school)

- AC3: Eligible needs that can be supported through existing services (starts 9 months before leaving school)

The eligibility assessment is a structured process where ASW works with the young person and their family to understand what support is needed. This includes looking at their daily living needs, health, independence, and any risks or challenges. The outcome of the assessment is used to decide whether the young person qualifies for adult services.

Adult Social Work: Eligibility Criteria
<p>Emergency or Urgent (Requires an immediate or rapid service response):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate threat to person's safety or survival • Immediate threat of harm to others • Serious abuse or neglect has occurred • Terminal care needs • Inability to meet essential personal care needs • Homelessness of a vulnerable person • Existing care arrangements break down placing person at high risk or immediate loss of independence • Main carer admitted to hospital or ceases caring without notice
<p>High (Service to meet priority needs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse or neglect has occurred or will occur • Significant health problems or disability with risk to safety or independence • Palliative care needs

- Inability to carry out most personal care tasks
- Risk of loss of independence, including admission to hospital / care home
- Risk of loss of liberty or compulsory measures of care (other than by criminal proceedings)
- Risk of homelessness of a vulnerable person
- Involvement in work, training or education cannot be maintained
- Critical risk in carer's ability to sustain any essential aspects of the caring role, including ill health of carer
- Existing care arrangements breakdown or are at risk of breaking down placing person at risk
- High risk of family breakdown

Eligible / Not Eligible

If eligible criteria is met following completion of an assessment of need, the young person's support needs are identified and a support plan is completed. If funding is required, a request is submitted to a funding panel for approval. If funding is not approved, the plan will be reviewed and adjusted. If the young person is not eligible, they are signposted to other services, and support continues through education and community-based options.

Where a young person is considered ineligible for services, ASW will signpost to other services like Skills Development Scotland, ABZ Works, or Aberdeen Carers Support

Services as well as any services that families / carers could self-fund. Families / carers are given guidance and can refer again in the future if the young person's needs change.

Service Provision

Once a young person is confirmed as eligible for ASW services, the next step is to plan what support they will require and what service options are available. This involves identifying the type of support the young person needs e.g.; help with daily living, personal care, or accessing the community, and deciding how that support will be delivered.

A support plan is created with involvement input from the young person, their family, and professionals. This plan outlines what services are needed, how often, and who will provide them. The plan is then submitted to a funding panel for approval. If funding is agreed, the services can be arranged. If not, the plan will be reviewed and adjusted.

Care Provision Commences

Once funding is approved and the support plan is in place, care provision begins. This means the young person starts receiving the services outlined in their plan. This could happen while they are still in school or once they leave, depending on their needs and the timing of the transition.

At this stage, regular reviews are scheduled to make sure the support is working well and continues to meet the young person's needs. The transition into adult services is now fully underway, with a focus on stability, independence, and continuity of care.

Education-Led Support

Education plays a central role in supporting young people throughout the entire transitions process, not just at the beginning, and not only for those referred to ASW.

Every young person, whether or not they are eligible for adult services, will receive education-led transitions support. There may be more targeted support for those who need it. Schools continue to hold planning meetings, provide guidance, and help young people build the skills they need for adult life.

Education staff will also work closely with families, helping them understand what options are available after school such as further education, training, employment, or community-based support; helping to prepare the young person for their next steps and connect them with the right opportunities.

This ongoing support reflects the principle that every young person deserves a positive and well-planned transition, no matter their level of need or the services they access.

Recording & Governance

Throughout the transitions process, all actions and decisions are recorded on D365 to ensure transparency and accountability. This includes referral outcomes, assessment results and care plans.

Appendix 1

1. Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 incorporating the Additional Support for Learning (Changes in School Education) (Scotland) Regulations 2005: This Act outlines the responsibilities of education authorities to identify, assess, and provide necessary support to children and young people who face barriers to learning.
2. Social Care (Self-Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013: This Act provides the framework for individuals to have greater choice and control over how their social care support is provided, including options like direct payments and managed services.
3. Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968: This Act outlines the duties of local authorities to assess and provide social care services and promote social welfare.
4. Children (Scotland) Act 1995: This Act outlines the responsibilities of local authorities and other agencies in relation to the welfare of children, including those with disabilities.
5. Equality Act 2010: This Act requires public bodies, including schools and social services, to prevent discrimination and promote equality for individuals with disabilities.
6. Carers (Scotland) Act 2016: This Act provides for the rights of carers, including young carers, to support and services, which can be crucial for families of young people with LD.

7. Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002: This Act addresses the provision of community care services and the rights of individuals to receive assessments and services.
8. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC): While not a domestic law, the principles of the UNCRC are embedded in Scottish legislation and policy, ensuring that the rights of children, including those with disabilities, are upheld.
9. The Promise Scotland: A commitment made by Scotland following the Independent Care Review in 2020 to ensure that care-experienced children and young people grow up loved, safe, and respected; and that they receive the support they need as they move into adulthood.
10. Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC): This is Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people by ensuring they get the right help at the right time from the right people.
11. Getting it Right for Everyone: Building on GIRFEC principles, this proposed approach aims to provide personalised, person-centred health and social care from young adulthood to end-of-life.
12. The Scottish Transitions Forum: This forum works to improve the experiences of young people with ASN as they make the transition to young adult life. It provides guidance and resources to professionals and families to support effective transitions.
13. Towards Transformation Plan: This plan aims to improve the lives of autistic people and those with LD by promoting independence and social inclusion.

14. The National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education: This framework aims to deliver excellence and equity in education, ensuring that all children and young people, including those with ASN, achieve their full potential.
15. LD, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill: This proposed bill aims to protect, respect, and champion the rights of people with LD and neurodivergent individuals. It seeks to ensure inclusive communication, advocacy support, and accountability for services
16. Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000: This Act provides a framework for protecting and empowering adults who lack capacity to make their own decisions. It is relevant to transitions where parents of young people require guardianships.
17. Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003: This Act outlines the rights and protections for individuals with MH issues, including provisions for compulsory treatment, advocacy, and the roles of MH officers and tribunals, emphasising the importance of patient participation and respect for their wishes.
18. Care Reform (Scotland) Bill (formerly National care service): The bill, through collective legislation, aims to improve the support and rights of individuals with LD, MH issues, and those requiring social care.

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education & Children's Services Committee
DATE	25 November 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2024/25
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/264
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Shepherd
CHIEF OFFICER	Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR	Graeme Simpson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Elected Members with the Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report for year 2024/25 (up to 31/3/25). The report is to inform Members of the role and responsibilities exercised by the Chief Social Work Officer; to provide information on the delivery of statutory social work services and decision making in the period; and to give a progress report on key areas of social work activity within Aberdeen City.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the content of the Annual Report, as attached at Appendix 1.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) is a statutory post in accordance with the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, as amended by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994. This requires Local Authorities to appoint a CSWO for the purposes of listed social work functions.
- 3.2 The required qualifications of the CSWO are set out in regulations and the post holder must be able to demonstrate senior strategic and operational experience. National Guidance on the role was published by the Scottish Government in 2009, revised in May 2017. It provides an overview of position, outlining the responsibility for values and standards, complex decision making, particularly in relation to deprivation of liberty decisions and professional leadership. The guidance also covers accountability and reporting arrangements.
- 3.3 The CSWO provides advice to the Council on social work matters; undertakes decision making in respect of statutory functions and provides professional governance, leadership and accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services, whether they are provided by the Council or on behalf of the Council by another agency.

3.4 In its 2016 report on Social Work in Scotland, Audit Scotland outlined the increased complexity of the role: *“With integration and other changes over recent years, the key role of the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) has become more complex and challenging. Councils need to ensure that CSWOs have the status and capacity to enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively”*.

3.5 This report has been requested by the Scottish Government’s Chief Social Work Advisor to assist with ensuring that, on a national basis key issues are highlighted, and information and learning is shared. This report is consistent with the content and formal guidance laid down by the Chief Social Work Advisor. The annual report cannot provide a complete account of social work activity over the year. It provides an overview of the range of services and initiatives in social work and social care and to highlight key achievements and challenges. On receipt of reports from all 32 CSWO’s, the Chief Social Work Advisor prepares a national overview.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

7. RISK

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	No significant risks identified			
Operational	Required improvements and developments in practice are not identified and actioned.	This report provides assurance on the quality of social work services delivered to those who meet the threshold for social work support and intervention.	L	Yes

		<p>Service users have the opportunity to complain about the quality of social work services directly or via the SPSO. A learning approach is actively taken to all complaints.</p> <p>Service users also contribute to inspections via various feedback opportunities enabling them to know that their views are listened to and considered.</p>		
Financial	No risks identified			
Reputational	Organisational failings in relation to the provision of social work services can bring significant media interest and scrutiny.	The delivery of effective social work and social care services is critical to the protection and care of vulnerable children and adults. Failure to discharge our statutory duties effectively can bring significant media interest and scrutiny.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No risks identified			

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	The delivery of social work and social care services is aligned to the Integrated Joint Board's strategic plan and the Partnership's Children's Services Plan/ Child Protection Improvement Plan. There is clear and direct alignment with the Council Delivery Plan and the Working in Partnership for Aberdeen Policy Statement.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Aberdeen City Council's social work and social care services are central to supporting and assuring that the multi-agency Children's and Adult Services partnerships deliver on the LOIP – Prosperous People (Children and Young People) Stretch Outcomes 3 to 8 and to Prosperous People (Adults) Stretch Outcomes 9 – 12.

	In addition, the work of the Adult & Child Protection Committees is highly relevant to ensure our children and vulnerable adults are safe from harm. Children, young people and adults' families who are adequately protected from threats to their health, safety and economic wellbeing are more likely to prosper than those who are not.
Regional and City Strategies	The work of Aberdeen City Council's regulatory care services is relevant to Aberdeen City Council Delivery Plan, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, the Children's Services Plan and the IJB Strategic Plan.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Care Service Bill • Delivery of The Promise/Plan 21 -24/Plan 24 - 30 • Whole Family Wellbeing Support

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	As Chief Officer, I confirm that an impact assessment is not required for this report.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required for this report.
Other	Not required for this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report - [2024 2025 CSWO Annual Report.docx](#)

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Graeme Simpson
Title	CO – Children & Family Services/CSWO
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**Aberdeen City Council's
Chief Social Work Officer's
2024/25 Annual Report**

1. Foreword

I am pleased to present the 2024/25 Annual Chief Social Work Officer report for Aberdeen City. The Scottish Government's Chief Social Work Advisor requested this report to highlight key issues nationally from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. All CSWO reports contribute to a national overview prepared by the Chief Social Work Advisor.

Challenges like world conflicts, austerity, and the cost-of-living crisis have continued to increase demands on our disadvantaged citizens. The complex needs of children, vulnerable adults, and families require more resources, but ongoing financial constraints mean we must achieve this with less. Social work thrives in uncertainty, yet now more than ever, communities need social workers' expertise. Social workers face high workloads, with the needs of many increasingly complex.

This backdrop coincides with shifts in legislation and policy, which may bring structural changes and added uncertainty but also will bring opportunities. These changes come at a time when budget pressures require an ever skilled and agile workforce to adapt to changes in need and embrace the benefits technology can offer both other service users and our staff.

Key challenges:

- Recruiting and retaining experienced social workers and also in succession planning
- Key services such as Mental Health, Learning Disability within Adult Social Work, and in residential childcare as well as in some areas of Children's Social Work frontline services, often have prolonged/recurring vacancies.
- Increased workload on current staff due to vacancies alongside legislative changes and increasing demand.
- An ageing population with increasing complexity of need.

While recognising these challenges, social work colleagues show impressive skills and dedication. Compassion, empathy, and resilience are demonstrated while supporting children, young people, and adults. I continue to be hugely proud and inspired by their efforts. This report therefore records and celebrates the efforts of the entire social work workforce over the past year.

2. Governance, Accountability and Statutory Functions

The Role of the Chief Social Work Officer

There is a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities to appoint a professionally qualified Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO)

The CSWO's role includes providing professional advice and guidance to Local Authorities, Elected Members, and Officers in the provision of Social Work Services, managing overall performance and improvement, and identifying and managing corporate risks related to Social Work Services.

The CSWO promotes professional practice values and standards, ensuring that only registered Social Workers undertake functions set out in legislation. The role helps ensure the local authority and its partners understand the complexities of social work service, including corporate parenting, child protection, adult protection, mental health and managing high-risk offenders

Social work services in Aberdeen City are governed across two structures: Children's Social Work within Aberdeen City Council's Children's Social Work & Family Support Cluster, and Adult Social

Work, including Justice Social Work, within Aberdeen City's Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP), overseen by the Integration Joint Board (IJB).

Audit Scotland have noted the complexity of the Chief Social Work Officer's (CSWO) role following the establishment of Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs), identifying challenges in providing independent, professional oversight across two complex structures. These challenges are highlighted in Inspection Reports by the Care Inspectorate, and the results of the Scottish Government's Thematic Inspection of Social Work Governance that was conducted last year. Aberdeen City was in line with national results, see section below. The CSWO maintains close working relationships with the HSCP Chief Officer, Chief Officer for Adult Social Work, and other managers across Adult Services.

Scottish Government's Thematic Inspection of Social Work Governance

The Thematic Inspection findings for Aberdeen were similar to, if not higher than elsewhere across the country in most areas. Positive highlights included

- Aberdeen had higher proportions in several areas, including our systems, processes,
- 46% of Aberdeen respondents felt that service users were informed about wait times for assessments, versus 39% nationally¹.
- Professional supervision was received by 81% of staff within Aberdeen, compared to 69% nationally. Annual appraisals were noted by 69% in Aberdeen, while only 36% reported this nationally.

When asked if senior leaders and managers promote social work values, 74% of Aberdeen respondents said they did with 66% nationally. Ten percent more Aberdeen respondents, than nationally, said that they received performance and quality improvement information enabling them to carry out duties safely. Finally, 52% of Aberdeen respondents said that their team had a full staffing complement whereas this was 38% nationally. While encouraging, given 48% of our respondents are working in teams without full staffing complement this remains a focus of attention.

1 Aberdeen

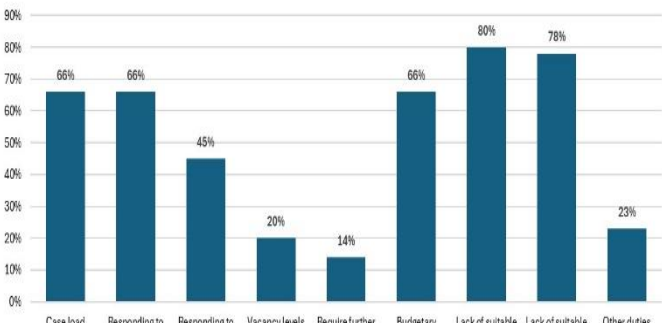
In subsets of questions around '*not always having the capacity to provide responsive interventions and support to the people they were working with*', more respondents from Aberdeen responded that

case load numbers, responding to emergencies, budgets, lack of placements and lack of suitable accommodation were the reasons for this, compared with National responses.

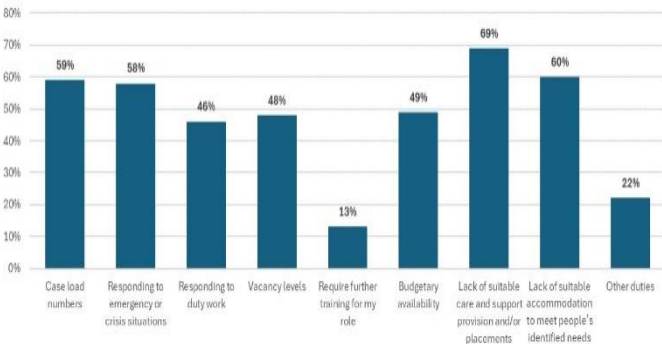
Budgetary restrictions were also noted as a reason Aberdeen struggled to recruit 88% v 48% nationally. However 64% of respondents said that as a line manager they could recruit to fill social work posts compared with only 45% of respondents nationally. The CSWO & the CO – Adult SW continue to strongly advocate priority is given to filling social worker posts given the statutory nature of the work and need to protect vulnerable groups. The survey responses reflect the impact on the wider workforce of the carrying vacancies but also impending changes to terms and conditions for the workforce.

The reflections of staff in respect of "budgets"/"lack of placements" reflects the real challenge

Q31b Where you have answered some of the time or none of the time, please indicate the reason(s) for this



Q31b Where you have answered some of the time or none of the time, please indicate the reason(s) for this



¹ Percentages used were the responses agree and strongly agree combined.

in providing for a rising demand of complex need and the availability of local resource to meet for young people/individuals with uniquely complex needs.

Training, development, and supervision, Aberdeen exceeded national averages except in community care (48% vs 52%). 83% reported that they had received up-to-date training in trauma-informed practice, compared to 75% nationally. Responses to, 'have I had up to date training?', show more positive comparisons. In Adult Protection, Aberdeen performs slightly better with 89% vs. 84% nationally, in adults with incapacity training 72% vs. 67% nationally. Training in Mental Health: Aberdeen is slightly better with 66% vs. 62% nationally and training in Child Protection, Aberdeen is slightly better with 85% vs. 80% nationally. Finally, Aberdeen self-directed support training was received by 64% where nationally only 59% received the training.

An action plan related to Children's Social Work [Workforce Development Plan](#), has been developed to address some of these weaknesses, and to set out how improvements will be made. An overall Workforce Plan for the HSCP is in place and will incorporate any areas that are not already highlighted.

Adult & Child Protection

Aberdeen City continues to engage a single Independent Chair for its Adult and Child Protection Committees. Through this, we have deliberately sought to better align governance, structures and system oversight as well as our approaches to risk assurance. We have well established governance arrangements overall for public protection as overseen by the chief officer group (COG) which gives a robust structure for the oversight of child protection, adult protection, multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) and gender-based violence. The COG has also expanded its remit to oversee the alcohol and drugs partnership, counterterrorism and suicide prevention. This was an area highlighted as a strength in the Social Work Governance inspection.

The activity of the Chief Officer Group is data and risk led, with Risk Registers and data reports being presented to and considered by them consistently. We intend to review our approach to articulating risk within our Risk Registers during 2024/25 drawing on learning from the WHO Violence Prevention approach. This activity will continue to build on the strength on our collective leadership in relation to public protection as evaluated in our most recent strategic inspection in 2022.

Quality Assurance

We have a well embedded continuous learning approach across all social work domains. Learning from complaints, predominantly relate to service quality and staff communication. While this reflects an inexperience of the workforce, we have continued to focus on developing relational practice but also the challenge we have in engaging with a small number of our most vulnerable citizens, rather than labelling them as "non-engaging". Recent child protection statistics show, on average over 2024/2025, 12% of children registered on our Child Protection Register are registered under the concern of 'services finding it hard to engage'.

Notable progress has been achieved in monitoring service quality and performance. The increased use of data, risk registers, service standards, and a quality assurance framework have highlighted strengths and areas for improvement. Our social work teams benefit from established quality assurance practices, supported by comprehensive data reporting and analysis.

Key activity of Children's Social Work is reported to every Council's Education & Children's Services Committee. This ensures robust and open scrutiny by elected members on a range of performance measures. In addition the annual Social Work Statistics report and the Quality Assurance reporting from the Child Protection Committee is reported to Council Committee allowing appropriate scrutiny and benchmarking analysis. Additionally the outcomes from the inspection of Registered Care services is reported to Committee along with national thematic scrutiny.

The multi-agency Quality Assurance Framework, overseen by Children's Social Work, continues to ensure a coordinated approach to quality assurance across services. This framework aims to embed a culture of consistent and robust service improvement and learning among partner agencies. Audits are commissioned by the **Child Protection Committee** (CPC) and **Children's Services Board** (CSB).



This year a multi-agency audit focused on evaluating the effectiveness of child protection services through a multi-agency approach. The audit aimed to assess various quality indicators related to the impact on children, recognition and response to concerns, risk assessment, care planning, and legal measures. There were positive findings as seen below, and an action plan to address some of the weaknesses is in place.

Audit Highlights

The recent audit has underscored several key aspects of our child protection efforts, showcasing the strength and effectiveness of our multi-agency approach:

Multi-Agency Collaboration: The audit emphasised the critical role of a multi-agency approach in ensuring effective child protection. This collaborative effort is essential for addressing complex cases and providing comprehensive support to children in need.

Timely Intervention: Impressively, the audit revealed that 100% of concerns were promptly shared with police and/or social work without any delay. This statistic highlights our unwavering commitment to timely intervention and the robust communication channels within our partnership.

Positive Outcomes: The audit also identified numerous positive outcomes, particularly in terms of interagency cooperation. Several cases were highlighted for their exemplary collaboration between different agencies, demonstrating the effectiveness of our coordinated efforts.

Adult Social Work QA

Justice Social Work has in place a robust Performance and Quality Assurance Framework which is overseen by the Service's Performance Management Board. This sets out how the service will measure performance against our local Objectives, which align with national outcomes and standards. The Framework includes the Service's Quality Assurance Plan, which sets out targets for regular and ongoing quality assurance. Relevant data and QA findings are reported to the Performance Management Board on a quarterly basis, alongside feedback from exit questionnaires, to enable oversight and inform plans for improvement. The Framework was reviewed recently in light of the self-evaluation work undertaken as part of the Care Inspectorate's National Thematic Review of JSWS Performance and Quality Assurance (Phase 1), which focused on the current capacity of services to evidence performance, quality and outcomes in relation to community-based sentences.

In terms of MAPPA, Justice Social Work, alongside Police Scotland's local Sex Offender Policing Unit, contributes to regular quarterly case file audits which are coordinated by the Grampian MAPPA Coordination Unit. This involves in depth quality assurance of randomly selected case files in terms of processes and risk management planning. Findings are reported to the Grampian MAPPA Strategic Outcomes Group.

Within our adult social work teams we have quality assurance processes in place to ensure consistency of social work practice and decision making. Similarly to colleagues within justice we have established an Adult Social Care Performance Management Board to monitor key performance metrics in our delivery of social care.

We have further developed our quality processes and data gathering in Adult Support and Protection through the development of Quality Assurance and Improvement framework and tool in line with the [Quality framework for ASP September 2024.pdf](#).

Risk Oversight

Risk management is crucial to the delivery and oversight of all social work activity in Aberdeen City.

- Both adult and children's social work use Risk Registers, presented to the Council Committee or the IJB's Clinical and Care Governance Committee.
- Quarterly reviews cover Children's Social Work risks and those of the Health and Social Care Partnership.

Chief Officers maintain cluster risk registers, detailing potential impediments to service delivery and strategic objectives. Operational risk registers, managed by Service Managers, track risks specific to teams and can escalate severe risks to the cluster register.

The IJB's Board Assurance and Escalation Framework sets risk appetite, identifies significant events, assesses and mitigates risks, and establishes controls and assurances.

The Chief Officer owns the Strategic Risk register, assigning risks to Leadership Team members. The register is reviewed quarterly by the Risk, Audit and Performance Committee and updated for the next IJB meeting. Financial pressures have necessitated and strengthened this review process.

Robust public protection arrangements are positively evaluated by external bodies, overseen by the Chief Officers Group with an evidence-based approach. They receive data, risk registers, and reports from various committees and partnerships.

Under the guidance of the Independent Chair and CSWO, Lead Officers from public protection forums enhance connectivity and consistency in activities, addressing the diverse needs of vulnerable individuals. This collaborative approach will continue to be developed throughout the year.

3. Service Quality and Performance

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK

A restructure of the Council structure early in 2024/25 saw the repositioning of Children's Social Work under a 'Families and Communities' Function. This includes Education & Lifelong Learning, Housing and Corporate Landlord clusters.

This arrangement enables opportunities to integrate to be maximised particularly in relation to supporting our most vulnerable children and families with a variety of complex needs, but also how we provide early and preventative support to families that mitigates the need for children to be referred to social work. This is also in recognition that despite best endeavours, statutory involvement of services can also have negative consequences and that intended improved outcomes may not always be achieved, as highlighted by feedback from our children and families.

Children's Social work provides support from pre-birth through to adulthood and up to 26 years for our care experienced young people. Data continues to confirm that demand for social work exceeds resources therefore focus is on ensuring attention is afforded to those with the greatest level of need. Our Intake Service, comprising our Joint Child Protection Team, Children's Reception Team and our Aberdeen Maternity Hospital team, responds to all new referrals, the largest number received from Police Scotland followed by Education. Our revised commissioning arrangements ensure provision from third sector colleagues and allows families to exit statutory social work support at the earliest juncture. Further, our now well-established Fit-Like Family Wellbeing Hubs allow families to opt into connection with a variety of whole family support services.

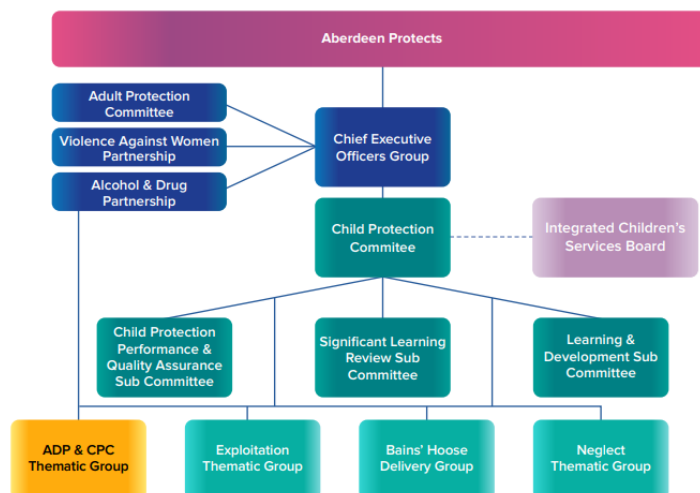
This year has continued to see an increase in newer areas of work including –

- migrant families/UASC who arrive spontaneously or through the national transfer scheme with minimal time for planning. Particularly challenging is the sourcing of local residential care options for these vulnerable under 18yr old teenagers who require to be looked after, an age group that historically already prove more challenging to source appropriate education, health, wellbeing and accommodation for,
- increasing numbers of young people within the city who are involved in criminal exploitation,
- high levels of substance misuse amongst young people and their parents,
- increased numbers of children with additional support needs (ASN), significantly those who are neurodiverse and are often referred at a point of crisis.
- Increased numbers of children and their families whose wellbeing is significantly compromised by poor mental health

Child Protection

Child protection processes and administration are well embedded, understood and utilised across all partners in Aberdeen City. Our last Joint Inspection in 2019 noted “Recognition of, and responses to, children and young people at immediate risk of harm were very effective and staff were confident in their role, leading to a positive impact on children’s and young people’s safety”. We continue to strive for the very highest standards of service delivery in this area, despite challenges particularly at a time of economic crisis and many associated issues, not least child poverty and displaced persons, which have continued to be evident throughout 2024/2025.

Aberdeen City’s Child Protection Committee’s (CPC) primary function is to drive improvement activity in child protection strategy across and between agencies. The CPC has a crucial role in identifying and managing risk to children and young people. The CPC fulfils its core functions through its structure and [Child Protection Improvement Programme](#).



The [Child Protection Committee’s annual report](#) illustrates some of the improvement activities that have been undertaken in 2023/2024.

Key Priorities for the Child Protection Committee in 2024/2025

In July 2024, the CPC concluded their Child Protection Improvement Programme for 2021-2024 and introduced the programme for 2024-2026. The [Child Protection Improvement Programme 2024-26](#) has a number of priorities including:

- Neglect
- Child Protection & Parental Substance Use
- Exploitation
- Child Protection & Domestic Abuse
- Interdisciplinary multi agency working
- Learning & Development

The intention of the Programme is to collaborate with Aberdeen City's Alcohol & Drug Partnership for year 1 in relation to Child Protection & Parental Substance Use, followed by a collaboration with Aberdeen City's Violence Against Women & Girls Partnership in year 2 for Child Protection & Domestic Abuse. The intention from this activity is to strengthen partnership working but also to explore how our public protection activity can be better aligned with a stronger emphasis on preventative activity.

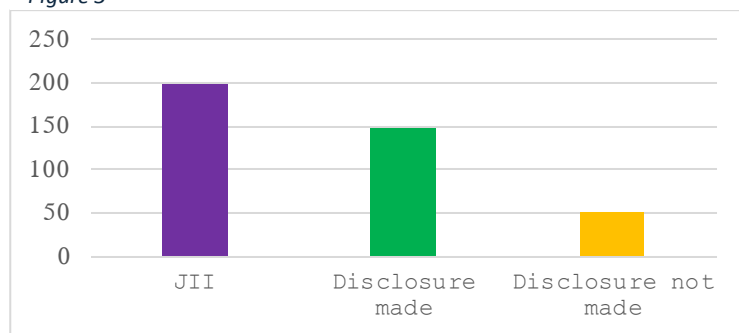
Alongside these 2 themes, the Partnership continue to undertake activity to deliver on the other identified priorities.

Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM)

In November 2022, Aberdeen City adopted the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM), for children who are victims of, or witness to abuse or neglect. Vital collaboration with colleagues from Aberdeenshire, Moray, Police Scotland 'A Division' and NHS-G led to widescale improvements to key child protection processes. Notably, agreement for 'soft boundaries' across all three neighbouring authorities allows that when such an interview is required, lack of availability of interviewer is unlikely to be a factor.

In 2024/2025, the total number of interviews undertaken has been substantial with 90% of the 199 JIs undertaken being undertaken by SCIM trained interviewers. This exceeds our initial commitment to undertake 60% via this new improved model. A small but significant number of interviews have been planned for, but for whatever reason has not proceeded hence this area continues to be scrutinised within our Bairns Hoose Pathfinder work (see below) alongside work to further increase the number of interviews taking place that led to disclosure (74%).

Figure 3



Our first SCIM annual report (2023/24) helpfully highlight improvements to further enhance our practice. These recommendations have been collated by the SCIM oversight group to form a SCIM Action Plan, overseen by managers across the partnership and within QA assurance groups and are monitored and reviewed by the SCIM oversight group and reported to Child Protection Committee.



SCIM ACTION
PLAN.docx



Year 1 Review - NE
SCIM Team.pdf

Bairns Hoose

Work undertaken to implement SCIM was recognised to form the backbone to our progression towards a Bairns Hoose in Aberdeen City. In November 2023, the Aberdeen City Partnership was delighted to be awarded Pathfinder status as one of six sites in Scotland for a Bairns' Hoose (BH [webpage](#)). The objective of a Bairns' Hoose is to provide integrated support tailored to the needs of children and young people who have been abused or have witnessed violence, as well as children under the age of criminal responsibility (currently 12 years old) whose actions have significantly harmed others. A central goal of this model is to improve and align the journey of recovery from disclosure to recovering minimising the number of times children must recount their experiences.

To oversee the multi-agency transformational change required to deliver a Bairns' Hoose, a delivery group was established with a number of workstreams.

Voice	Ensure our service design is informed by and takes full account of the voice and views of children, young people and families.
Systems & Processes	Adapting and transforming existing systems and processes to enable alignment to the Bairns Hoose Standards
Capital & Resources	Oversee the building development & resource to deliver a Bairns Hoose on a sustainable basis
Governance	Oversight of reporting duties to Scottish Government & internal governance
Evaluation	Lead learning & begin to understand the impact of our Bairns Hoose service.

Some key achievements by the group in 2024/2025 include:

Voice, Participation, and Recovery Support: Prioritising the embedding of systemic listening and learning practices, ensuring the voices of children, young people, and their families are central to Bairns Hoose planning. Our children and young people designed a dedicated Bairns Hoose logo, illustrating our commitment to our Bairns Hoose being greater than the sum of all our respective parts.

Integration and Collaboration: The integration of various services and the collaborative approach between agencies have been key features of Aberdeen's pathway planning for Bairns Hoose. This includes the embedding of a health coordinator and specialist Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) within Bairns Hoose.

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement: The University of Edinburgh is evaluating Aberdeen City's Bairns Hoose progress, focusing on recovery, safety, justice, rights, and reduction of systems harm. The evaluation aims to test whether the model improves outcomes for children across five areas: recovery, safety, justice, rights, and reduction of systems harm.



Aberdeen City Initial
Programme Theory D

Funding and Financial Management: Aberdeen City successfully secured significant funding for the Bairns Hoose project for 2025/26 and an additional amount for fixtures, fittings, and equipment. This funding supports the development and operational delivery of the Bairns Hoose.

Design of our Bairns Hoose: Under the coordination of the Delivery Group, multi-agency partners have worked jointly over 2024/25 to ensure the building's design and layout met the practical, aesthetic and therapeutic needs of those it is intended to support and protect. During this time, children, young people, and their families have actively contributed their views, all of which have been incorporated, directly shaping planning and decision-making.

Our Bairns' Hoose will become incrementally operational from July 2025. Whilst the policy landscape and expectations are changing at pace, we continue to enhance our planning to ensure our Bairns Hoose is 'future proofed' - i.e. potential increase of age of criminal responsibility; changes to the rules of evidence for children; Trauma Informed Domestic Abuse Management (TIDAM) and the implementation of the Children's (Care & Justice) Act.

Multi-Agency Self Evaluation Activity

In March 2024, the CPC initiated a comprehensive multi-agency self-evaluation to assess how well we are delivering services for children and young people in need of care and protection. This activity aligned with national guidance implementation and learning from recent inspections across Aberdeenshire and Moray, as well as preparations for the evolving focus of joint inspections. Our aim was to understand what we do well, identify where we need to improve, and ensure that children's voices are heard and central to our approach.

Some of our key findings from this activity included:

- Strong early-stage child protection practices including Inter-agency Referral Discussions (IRDs) and Child Protection Planning Meetings.
- Improvement needed in use of re-convened IRDs and clarification of Care and Risk Management (CARM) processes
- Staff confidence in national guidance and visibility of leadership is high.
- More support needed for mental health access, consistency in collaboration, and addressing staffing pressures.
- Clear commitment to listening to children, including non-verbal and neurodiverse voices
- Improved systems like D365 and PowerBI are support better planning
- Strengths in timely, multi-agency responses

The CPC determined the following areas require more focus:

- Improve communication with the workforce about child protection improvement activity and progress.
- Build staff confidence in the collaborative interventions they are delivering.
- Strengthen the links between strategy and everyday practice.
- Enhance the quality of record-keeping, particularly around risks, outcomes, and capturing family voices.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities across multiagency practitioners.

The CPC identified a number of actions required to address the areas requiring more focus, such as themed Q&A Panels to support practitioners learning and understanding of roles and responsibilities across the Partnership. The first Q&A Panel, [Child Protection & Physical Abuse](#) took place in March 2025 and was attended by over 150 practitioners from across the Partnership.

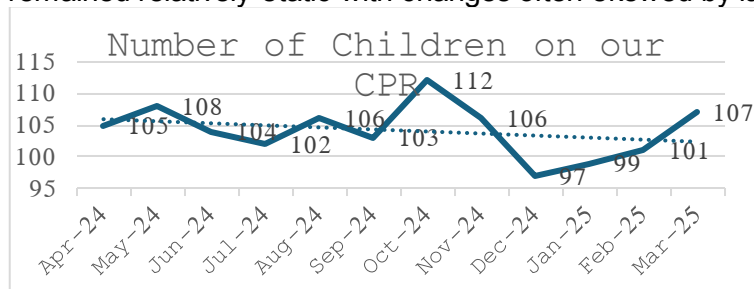
“Although the duration of the session was probably only an hour for a reason, maybe as this was a practical length of time to fit in with everyone’s schedules, it could easily have been longer and covered more info. I think it is a great idea as a way to learn more and for information sharing across different agencies.” Social Worker

Based on our recent self-evaluation and our continuous improvement activity, we are confident that we could be rated **Very Good**. We are aware that Scottish Government have directed a change in emphasis to strategic inspection activity. This change will be accounted for in our self-evaluation activity in the year ahead.

Child Protection Registration Data

We continue to enhance the way we identify, collate, report and analyse child protection data both on a single and multi-agency basis. We adhere to, and go beyond, the requirements of the national minimum data set v2 for CPC. Detailed consideration of our data takes place at service level and in the multi-agency CPC environment where data reports are scrutinised quarterly.

Numbers of children whose names feature on the child protection register in Aberdeen City has remained relatively static with changes often skewed by large sibling groups.



The published Children's Social Work statistics contains extensive local and national data up to July 2024. Some key comparisons between the national and local data are:

- On 31 July 2024, Scotland's rate per 1000 children on the child protection register was 2.1 per 1000. In Aberdeen City, the rate per 1000 on the same date was 2.4 per 1000, a decrease from 2.7 on 31 July 2023.
- In Aberdeen City, 30% of children added to the child protection register in 2023-2024 lived in one of the 20% most deprived areas, compared with the national figure of 48%.
- Nationally, the most common concerns identified at child protection planning meetings for children registered during the year were domestic abuse, neglect, parental substance use, parental mental health, and emotional abuse. This trend was also seen in Aberdeen City.

Placing a child's name on the Child Protection Register (CPR) is a significant decision in a child's life. Such a decision is always based on individual circumstances and the professional judgement of the multi-agency team around the family. Local data tells us that in 2023 – 2024, 85% of children subject to an initial Child Protection Planning Meeting (CPPM) were placed on the CPR. The high conversion rate demonstrates our threshold for deciding to convene an initial CPPM is aligned to our thinking within that subsequent meeting. Children in Aberdeen City tend to remain on the CPR 4-12 months, with around 40% of children being removed from the register because there is an improved home situation.

The concept of significant harm is one which is framed by professional experience and judgement. We recognise that within discussions focussed on risk, professionals seek to do all they can to mitigate against future harm. Whilst registration is a recognition of the need for multi-agency child protection planning it is not the process in itself that reduces risk. We also know that parents can feel shame and feel judged by the decision to place their child's name on the CPR. In recognition of this and Aberdeen City's higher rate per 1000 children on the CPR (see table above), we continue to challenge all professionals across the wider partnership to be clear that registration is necessary, i.e. that we are only utilising CPR for children where there is a clear risk of 'significant harm' and a multi-agency child protection plan is required. Understanding this variation continues to be a focus.

Trauma informed practice

The service has built on the work from last year and continues to consider the psychological trauma in the lives of children who use its services. Children's Social Work always aims to support children and their families but are aware that there is a risk of retraumatising them through certain interventions and approaches used.

The main purpose of this model is to help staff distinguish between risk and actual harm, and to recognise that risk is dynamic and can be mitigated through interventions by skilled practitioners. Feedback from families and professionals indicates that this approach has fostered a more collaborative relationship between service users and professionals.

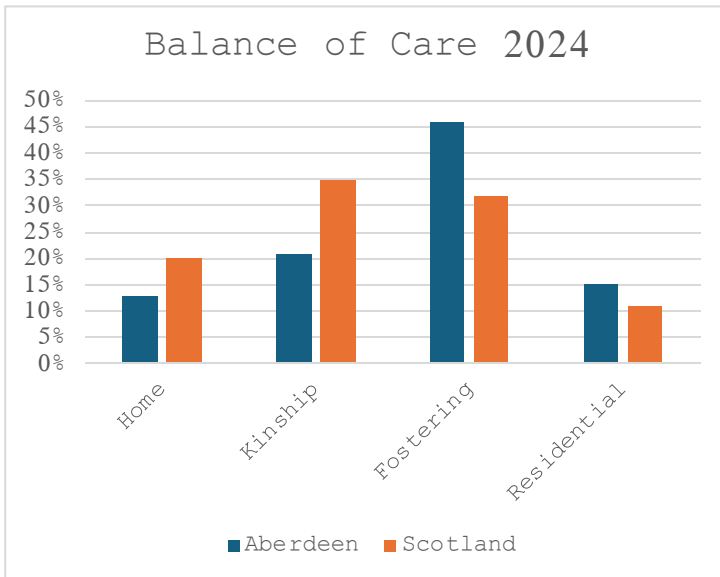
The workforce was supported to undertake the **Trauma Skilled and Informed** level training as a core requirement. NQSWs are continuing to be encouraged to complete this training as part of their induction. In 2024/25, work began on exploring the emotional impacts of practice from the perspective of managers. This ongoing initiative is intended to inform responses to support practitioner wellbeing across the service.

Corporate Parenting

In Aberdeen City, corporate parenting is seen as an opportunity to improve the futures of our children and young people by providing them with love, security, and opportunities. Aberdeen City's [Corporate Parenting Group](#) is responsible for:

- Delivering the Corporate Parenting Improvement Plan
- Collecting and monitoring data related to care experienced children and young people
- Achieving aims set out in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP)

- Implementing The Promise across the Partnership.



The Corporate Parenting Group engages with our children, young people and young adults with care experience and seeks to ensure all improvement activity takes full account of their voice, views and lived experiences. Our Corporate Parenting responsibilities are reflected in our **Local Outcome Improvement Plan (2019-2026), Stretch Outcome 5** “By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026”.

The current Children’s Services Plan runs to 2026, and work will soon commence on

the next iteration of that statutory Plan. Given that the needs of children are inextricably linked to the needs of their parents and carers, the development of the next Children’s Services Plan will be fully aligned to the development of the next Local Outcome Improvement Plan. This alignment will help us take the preventative whole family approach described in Plan 24-30.

In 2024/25, Aberdeen City had an average of 451 infants, children and young people who were ‘looked-after’ in various care settings across the year. This is down around 9.8% from the previous year’s average of 500. We are committed to reducing the number of children and young people coming into the ‘care system’ and are working to support more children and their families to remain together within their own community.

The best practice group formed last year, to address the cultural, language, and trauma needs of our New Scots has oversight of the young people who came from either the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) or were ‘Spontaneous Arrivals’. To maintain inclusive support, we are now in the second year of the New Scots/Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers Project Team, which is building an infrastructure and who undertake age assessments. This past year, 52 age assessments have been undertaken, with 25 determined as children (data up to July 2024). 27 UASYP held looked after status in ACC at July 2024, which is up from 23 at the same time in 2023. This group supports young people and continues to be engaged with young people in improving their access to supports, which will enable their wider connections to Aberdeen through education and socially inclusive opportunities. Access to housing and preventing the risk of future homeless is a priority activity with a successful partnership with two local RSL resulting in an additional 24 accommodation options now available.



We have supported a total of 67 young people who have arrived in Aberdeen through a number of pathways including the National Transfer Scheme; Adult Dispersal and Spontaneous Arrivals. We look after 6 UASYP across our local children’s homes. The largest group have arrived from the Adult Dispersal Hotels, where there continues to be a high level of demand from those classified at an early stage as adults who present to the Guardianship service as children. In 2024/25, there were 16 new arrivals and 22 brief inquiries. Out of these, 12 resulted in benefit of the doubt, leading to their status as looked-after children being confirmed.

Multi-Agency Commitment and Structural Alignment

The city has aligned its Corporate Parenting Plan with the Children's Services Plan and Plan 24–30, ensuring a whole-family, preventative approach. A new Internal Promise Board will monitor progress within the Local Authority, ensuring accountability and cross-cluster collaboration.

In June this past year, the Promise Scotland team commenced the publication of [Plan 24 – 30](#). The website has been updated with comprehensive details outlining the proposed route map for Scotland to fulfil its commitment to deliver the Promise by 2030. Plan 24 – 30 builds upon the achievements of Plan 21 – 24. The notable progress made by Aberdeen City in delivering Plan 21 – 24 was last reported to the Committee in November 2024 ([Report](#)).

Plan 24 – 30 continues to emphasise the five Foundational pillars: Voice, Family, Care, People, and Scaffolding. It underscores that change must be rights-led, trauma-informed, and guided by the Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) policy.



For each Foundation, Plan 24 – 30 outlines a series of high-level changes to be accomplished by 2030. Cultural shifts may need to happen across multiple Corporate Parents or just one entity, and legislative changes might be required. Plan 24 – 30 recognises these complexities and will be updated regularly.

Adoption of the Promise Progress Framework

Aberdeen City's Children's Services Board adopted the Promise Progress Framework as its national reporting tool. This enables benchmarking with national progress and supports data-driven improvements. It reflects a commitment to transparency and continuous improvement in delivering The Promise.

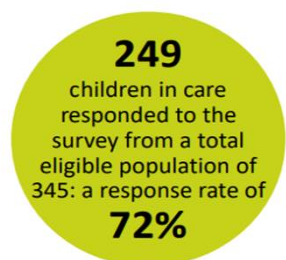
Transitional Care

In November 2024, the Care Inspectorate published a report on the [transition of care](#)-experienced young people. The findings mirror those from The Promise Scotland's [100 days of Listening Report](#). The report outlined 8 areas for future practice, which align with feedback from Aberdeen City's Bright Spots activity (see below) and their participation in the Royal Foundation Homewards programme to eliminate homelessness.

Exceptional Engagement in the Bright Spots Programme

We invited 'looked after children' aged 4–17 and care leavers aged 16–26 to join the Bright Spots online survey. CELCIS analysed the responses, presenting findings to Aberdeen City's Corporate Parents in November 2024. Aberdeen City's responses were compared with other UK areas in the Bright Spots programme, highlighting both effective support and potential improvements.

- Aberdeen City achieved a **72% response rate** from care experienced children and young people—the **highest in Scotland**.
- 57% of respondents were male and 39% were female.
- Significant headlines from the research indicates the pervasive impact of early disadvantage and its impact throughout the lifecycle, with 54 (35%) of care leavers reported having a disability/long term illness; a significantly higher proportion than care leavers (24%) in 21 local authorities in England and more than double the rate in the general UK population (16%).
- The findings are now shaping future Corporate Parenting improvement activity and have been integrated into the High-Level Promise Plan.



Key findings from the ***Your Life Our Care*** survey for looked after children aged 4–17 were:

What is working well for children in care aged 4 – 17 in Aberdeen City?

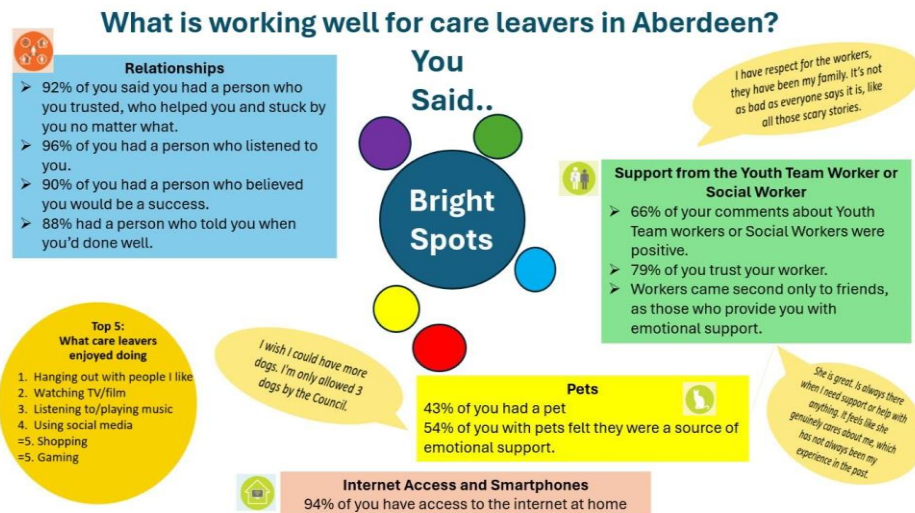


What could be better for children 4 – 17 years in care in Aberdeen City?



156
young people
responded to the
survey from a care
leaver population of
227: a remarkable
response rate of
69%

And the key findings from the **Your Life beyond Care** survey for 4 – 17-year-olds who are looked after were



Brights Spots: What Next for Care Leavers?

The research findings are being further developed with and for care leavers in the next iteration of participation and engagement activities and as part of the strategic and planning priorities of our Corporate Parenting Improvement Group.

An Engagement and Participation Officer (care experienced young people) position was established within our Young People's Rights Service in March 2024. This role, along with other colleagues at the Westburn Centre, has yielded positive results in effectively addressing these findings. This success is exemplified by the first edition of 'The Loop', which recounts our participation story from Care Day 2024 to Care Day 2025.

"The Loop" was created to communicate Corporate Parenting activity directly to care experienced young people. It received exceptionally positive feedback from young people. Plans are in place to co-design future editions with young people, enhancing participation and ownership. Development of a meaningful 'You Said, We Did' improvement cycle of action, communication and feedback is also planned.



Secure Care

Over the year, we have seen a notable increase to six children and young people whose circumstances have met the stringent criteria for secure care. Half of this group were open to CAMHS &/or specialist health services, being neurodiverse or autistic or with significant substance use dependency. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) was a significant feature for the other three young people, a complex form of abuse that has continued to increase in volume across the city over this past year. Given this, CCE continues to be an area of focus within our child protection planning. All six young people have shown clear signs of having experienced developmental trauma.

Due to their complex needs and associated risk, in the period preceding their move to secure care, none of this group had been able to access mainstream/specialist education provision. The majority of intervention was by way of intensive wrap around social work support. For all six individuals, the lack of sufficiently safe therapeutic environments was identified, which might have avoided the need for secure care.

This context strongly aligns with the findings of the Thematic Inspection – Secure Care Pathway Review, autumn 2023. We are challenging ourselves to consider the supports that might be needed to minimise the need for restriction of liberty measures for any of our young people as we continue to develop practice in light of the Thematic Inspection.

Family Support

The principal of the Promise is to ensure that support is available to families in a timely manner to ensure children can stay in their families where it is safe to do so. **Includem** provide an intensive support service targeting our families in the 12–18-year-old age range and are integrated with our Craigielea Intensive Support Service who support a similar age range as well as some children from the age of 8 years depending on level of need. Both services provide targeted in-house resources aimed at supporting children and young people in their communities, ultimately focussing on reducing the escalation of need, which can result in out-of-city placements being required. The service also has a focus on supporting the reintegration of young people returning from residential placements

Over the past two years, we have further developed Pilot Projects within designated secondary schools where there was an identified need for targeted whole-family interventions. A third pilot project is planned for during 2024/25. Multi-agency teams comprising Family Learning, Social Work, Youth Work, and Education professionals deliver targeted interventions to address specific needs and improve overall outcomes in engagement and achievement. These projects, funded by the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund are currently in their second year of evaluation.

Peep, an adult learning programme, has marked over 20 years of service in Aberdeen. Each quarter Peep reaches approximately 349 families providing preventative support. Peep in Aberdeen was selected into the 3rd Cohort of the Families Learning Together Programme, funded by the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund through the charity Peeple.

The peer support groups including offerings of antenatal support, and aid to families where English is an additional language, New Scots, mothers experiencing low mood or anxiety, and to families with children who need additional support. The Peep programme includes assisting families with care-experienced children with groups for adopters, kinship carers, and foster carers. This has been extended to include individual sessions during family time contact to support a rehabilitation plan for returning to parental care. Peep has innovatively broadened its offerings to families in Aberdeen by collaborating with multi-agency partners to develop and deliver other targeted supports such as a group for families who have experienced domestic abuse, intergenerational work, and bespoke programmes that address child healthy weight.

Family Time

Our Family Time Hub offers a supportive and trauma-informed environment where supervised or supported family time (contact) sessions are assessed, to contribute to wider decision making for

children, young people and their families. The service provides tailored assistance and support to individual children and their families. The demand continues to be high with an increase in legal decision making for family time which impacts on capacity.

Resources have been developed for families, children and young people to prepare them for initial sessions this is in line with a trauma informed approach recognising the anxiety that can be caused in the first instance. This has been well received by both families and professionals.

Kinship, Fostering and Adoption

The Kinship, Fostering and Adoption Service has continued to ensure that carers report on feeling supported and skilled in their role to provide the loving and nurturing care for children and young people, creating a mutually supportive community which ultimately contributes to stability of care for our children and young people.

At present the Service currently support:

- 291 children and young people living with 234 kinship families. Of these, 77 families are caring for 99 looked after children. There are 157 families caring for 192 children, of whom 121 have secured Kinship Care orders and no longer have active social work involvement. This is a slight increase in the previous year's numbers with data evidencing that when children leave kinship placements, they are most likely to return to live with their parents.
- 87 children and young people are currently living in 69 registered ACC fostering households. There are a further 144 children accommodated with Independent Fostering Agencies. We recognise this imbalance and continue to make every effort to grow our fostering capacity.

As per both national and local drivers, all potential kinship care families must be explored before any other alternative care. Support for complex family dynamics will ensure long-term positive outcomes for families and children and is therefore a priority. As we continue to utilise the Whole family Wellbeing Fund, we issued a further survey to our kinship families to ensure that the support in place was meeting the needs of our families. They identified as their main needs

- Activities and events
- Support groups
- Training specifically identified were neurodiversity and teenagers
- Practical support

In reflecting on the strong collaboration with Family Learning, Aberdeen Football Community Trust, Adventure Aberdeen and Grounded Learning (Counselling) we are confident that we are in a strong position to meet the identified needs of our families leading to a stronger support and care for our children and young people.

Despite national challenges in recruiting new foster carers, our Fostering Team have approved 6 fostering households, and have 4 assessments currently being undertaken, with 3 new assessments expected from our 'Skills to Foster' training which forms part of the pre-assessment stage of the recruitment process. The 'Virtual Supervising Social' post within the Fostering Team is now well established. This post has allowed closer working relationships with external agencies to improve outcomes for children and young people. This includes early intervention for fragile placements to reduce placement breakdowns, allow for more scrutiny of agencies contractual obligations and reviewing of financial contracts.

Over the past year 16 children have had their adoption plans legally secured including a sibling group of 3. Of these children, 5 were also adopted by their foster carers.

The trend locally in terms of lower numbers of prospective adopter enquiries and approvals mirrors the national trend. Whilst the number of prospective adopters has reduced, the Service is seeing a

significant increase in post adoption support, specifically around accessing records, tracings and facilitating connections between birth family and adoptees.

Children’s Residential Care

Our children's residential service has witnessed a high demand for care, although this demand has been lower than the previous three years.

Residential Care and Matching Overview

Key Insights from 2024/25

Summary of Matching Considerations

The recent decline in referrals for children who can be successfully matched to local care provisions in the last quarter of 2024/25 reflects the increased demand for services tailored to children with higher complexity needs. These needs have generally been met in facilities offering a high staff-to-child ratio, on-site education, and therapeutic care.

Year	Matching Considerations
2022	43
2023	27
2024	24

Placements and Residential Care

- 6 children successfully progressed to placement this past year.
- 28 young people have been cared for in local residential settings during 2024/25.

Focus Areas

- Continued efforts to optimise placement stability and enhance local care provisions.
- Addressing the evolving needs of young people in residential settings.

We are dedicated to fostering psychological recovery by developing a workforce that supports professional growth, enabling staff to become trauma experts with extensive knowledge in child development. Five team members have completed DDP level 2 training, while some are pursuing MSc degrees in Residential Childcare, with three progressing this academic period. Most of our residential staff are qualified social workers.

The primary challenge for 2024/25 has been recruiting for vacant positions within our residential service, with an average vacancy rate of approximately 6% consistently observed throughout this period. Despite numerous recruitment campaigns that attract a substantial number of applicants, the conversion rate to interviews is low, and even fewer candidates proceed to be successfully matched to vacant positions. This trend underscores the service's commitment to attracting and retaining a highly skilled workforce capable of providing care that aligns with the developmental needs of children in our setting.

Youth Justice

Our Local Outcome Improvement aim and associated stretch outcome for youth justice had the following focus: “**83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026**”. The Improvement Charters which have rolled into this period have been effectively concluded; including

- Successfully reducing by 15% the number of CEYP reported missing from Children’s homes to Police Scotland by 2024.
- We have exceeded the target of a 5% increase in the number of 16/17 year olds who are diverted from prosecution by 2025, with almost 30% diverted this period.
- By 2025 reduce by 15% the number of in youth anti-social behaviour calls to Police Scotland continues to be progressed

Current workforce development focuses on preparing for the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024, with brief guides circulated amid uncertain service demand forecasts.

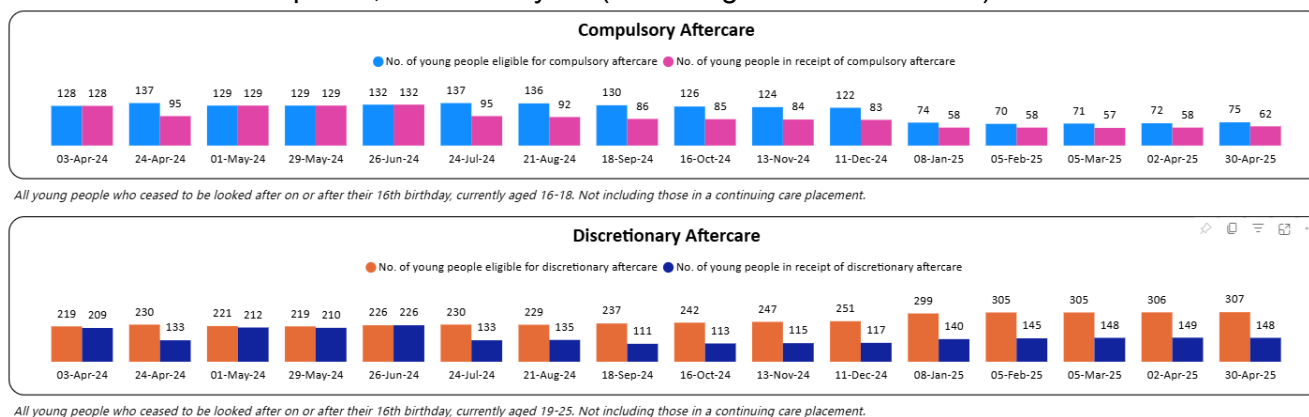
Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) in Aberdeen City is a growing concern. Partnering with CYCJ and Action for Children, we are piloting a project for workforce development, multiagency strategy, and concern mapping. These efforts aim to shape local contextual safeguarding approaches.

Throughcare & Aftercare

Around 226 care leavers qualified for statutory aftercare support. Of this number 202 have been supported by our care leavers team, the Youth Team.

Our local commitment to '[Staying Put](#)' is reflected in the age profile of those children we look after, with 50% being 17 years, and older. Our residential aftercare support offer continues, with circa 21 young people supported on an outreach basis. Outcomes from this service show its effectiveness in supporting tenancy and accommodation sustainment, and the reassurance afforded by access to consistency of support from res practitioners who previously provided support in local homes.

In 2024-2025, an average of 61% young people open to our Youth Team, were in receipt of discretionary aftercare, (an average of 191 out of 314), and 80% of those eligible for compulsory aftercare were in receipt of it, across the year (an average of 114 out of 143). See bar charts below.



Children with Disabilities

Our Children with Disabilities Team holds case responsibility for around 130 children where complex and enduring health and disabilities are the primary reason for referral. Intervention for this group is multi-faceted, including assessing need in relation to Self-Directed Support being provided to these children or for their unpaid carers (family members) and/or for care and protection concerns.

Autism and neurodiversity are incorporated within the spectrum of disability, with increasing numbers seeking social work intervention. To support these children and their families, many of whom experience extended periods on a CAMHS waiting list, we continue our partnership with health, education, and adult social work services in relation to the implementation of the National Neurodevelopmental Specification. Standards and Principles of Care and have continued to focus on engaging with children and families alongside key stakeholders who have a role to play in referral, assessment, diagnosis, and support. This has seen families signposted to appropriate community supports at the earliest juncture, including to our Fit Like Hubs.

Benchmarking has taken place with six other local authorities in relation to service delivery and national drivers. This has also helped inform the revising of our referral criteria, and assessment process. Further relational learning and practise enhancing opportunities have derived from this.

Relationships and participation have been a key feature this year, with the voice of the child being continuously recognised as imperative in the planning for, and delivery of a high standard of service to children and young people. All team members have been trained in the use of Makaton, in order to enhance their communication skills with children who are non-verbal.

The development of a Transition Protocol, in line with Scottish Government's [Transition to Adulthood Strategy, September 2023](#), has been a primary focus. A Transitions Working Group, with participation from children's services, adult services, and education is due to conclude in the coming months. The protocol will see the formation of a Transition Planning Group, which inform the direction of children and young people transitioning to adult services to the appropriate service to meet their needs.

In line with the Education Service Improvement Plan and the Transition to Adulthood Strategy principles, parent information events have continued to take place at our key education settings. These offer parents insight into the transition phase, services available during this process and beyond. Feedback from families highlighted the success of the event. The Children with Disabilities Team support these events in line with our drive for a collaborative approach to the supporting the young people of Aberdeen transition to adulthood.

Rights, Voice & Participation

The concepts of 'voice' and lived experience are central to a human rights approach. This approach is crucial in enhancing the agency and capacity of children, young people, and care leavers as right holders to claim their rights, and it supports the workforce in understanding and fulfilling their obligations in daily work. Children's social work maintains its Young Person's Rights Service for those with care experience or those involved in child protection processes. It also provides individualised advocacy, workforce development opportunities, and participation in strategic improvement activities.

At the start of 2024, following a successful application requiring the demonstration of strategic buy-in and commitment to embedding the voice of children, young people and care leavers in local decision-making processes, children's social work, on behalf of the Children's Services Board, commenced a research partnership with CELCIS and Coram Voice as part of their [Bright Spots](#) research and service improvement programme. Measuring subjective wellbeing through the completion of online surveys - 'Your Life, Your Care' for children in care and 'Your Life Beyond Care' for care leavers - Bright Spots looks to support systematic understanding of what matters to children in care and care leavers and share learning about what makes life good for them.

We launched the project at our National Care Day Celebration event in February 2024 themed around '*sharing your views*'. Thereafter, with collaborative engagement with and support from the workforce, we achieved positive response rates, the highest % of all local authority areas in Scotland, and analysis and interrogation of what our children and care leavers told us, produced key findings, visually summarised in the Corporate Parenting section above.

At the beginning of March 2025, a member of staff was recruited into the role of lead Officer for Corporate Parenting. They will play a key role in ensuring that Aberdeen City Council and its partners uphold their statutory corporate parenting duties and seek to ensure that the wellbeing and rights of our care experienced community are promoted. Alongside the Principal Planning and Development Officer they will also collect and analyse data to assess outcomes for our care experienced children and young people and monitor and evaluate the impact of improvement activity as identified within the Corporate Parenting and Children Services Plans and Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. Underpinning this work will be the voice of our care experienced children and young people to ensure they are meaningfully involved in shaping services and key policies.

ADULT SOCIAL WORK

2024/25 has been a challenging and busy year for our adult and justice social work services. These services support adults from age 18 to end of life. We work to ensure that everyone we support is treated as an individual with their own experiences and personal challenges. Adult services is a complex landscape, but staff strive to work to our overall vision for adult social work - ***"The vision for adult social work in Aberdeen is based on a prevention and early intervention model, working in collaboration across sectors and services to prevent, intervene and deliver services to those who require it."***

This is in line with the challenge set by Derek Feeley to shift the paradigm of care. As we continue to fulfil our statutory responsibility to address the needs of people in crisis, we continue to encounter increasingly complex needs that necessitate statutory interventions, care, and support.

Our justice and adult social work teams continue to demonstrate resilience and dedication to supporting the people of Aberdeen despite many challenges. This has a significant impact on achieving the overall aims of the ACHSCP and my expectations for the delivery of high-quality social work and social care in Aberdeen.

The financial challenges faced by integration joint boards in Scotland are well known with Audit Scotland projecting a national funding gap of £457m in 2024/25.² The Aberdeen City HSCP is not immune to this pressure, and the provision of social work and social care represents approximately 50% of the total IJB spend. 2024/25 has been a turning point for the Adult Social Work service with less access to additional sources of funding and a much stronger focus being put towards achieving budget savings through transformation and redesign of services. We are committed to an evidence-based approach to our strategic and financial decision making to ensure that services are still able to meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens within our financial envelope. We have created additional capacity at a service manager level to focus on planning and development including a new Strategic Service Manager role within our Justice service. Considerable effort has been put into refining our internal performance management processes to provide a real time understanding of both our financial and practice performance. We expect to see this having a significant impact on the decisions we continue to make in 2025/26.

[The Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership's \(ACHSCP\) Strategic Plan](#) outlines the actions being taken as a partnership to tackle these challenges and continues to be committed to working upstream from the delivery of social care to intervene early and prevent deterioration of health where possible. The future of sustainable social work and social care services is dependent upon us working collaboratively with partners in health, social care, the wider council and NHS, the community, independent and third sector to make this strategic shift.

'Stay Well, Stay Connected' is a key ACHSCP programme. The aim is to keep older people healthy, to experience good wellbeing for as long as possible, and avoid the risk of social isolation, poor health, illness, injury, and early death. More than 1,700 people have taken part in the programme activities this financial year. Projects include;

- Boogie in the Bar - an older adult day time disco including a light lunch, helping those at risk of social isolation and loneliness.
- The compassionate building and spaces project
- Men's shed health and wellbeing workshops
- Annual Women's health and wellbeing fair
- Menopause goals – A collaborative project between ACHSCP and the Scottish Football Association
- Soup and Sannies – provided in 3 areas of Aberdeen this enables social connectedness for isolated older people and access to a nutritious meal.
- Walking football - Along with the regular Walking Football there is a Parkinson's Walking Football group, Walking Padel sessions, Pilates and muscle strengthening and balance sessions, spring and autumn golf trips, annual functional fitness MOTs, talks on Men's health and wellbeing topics and regular social events.

Adult Social Work is also represented across improvement projects within the Aberdeen City Council Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). One key project brings together partners from the council,

² <https://audit.scot/publications/integration-joint-boards-finances-continue-to-be-precarious>

NHS, SAMH, public health and the police with the aim of reducing the number of suicides in Aberdeen through a range of projects including suicide prevention awareness and suicide prevention training.



Attendees at ASIST training

For World suicide prevention week 2024 Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) was delivered to staff from a range of organisations including ACHSC, Aberdeenshire Council, VSA, NHSG, Pillar Kincardine, Children 1st, SAMH, Crown Office & PF Service, The Diversity Trust and students from RGU.

Since July 2020, the suicide prevention training team have delivered training to over 7000 people and that training has moved away from frontline services to wider parts of communities, i.e. farming, taxi drivers, bar staff, hairdressers etc with the focus on equipping communities to be as comfortable as they can be to have conversations about suicide, support those in distress and know where to signpost people to for support.

Within Aberdeen City we continue to consider ourselves to be at the forefront of developing our digital ambitions and technology enabled care (TEC). This supports us with developing and delivering high quality, reliable and efficient services into the future. ACHSCP are committed to promoting the use of digital technology to explore alternative methods of care provision within the city. Using a “TEC First” approach during the assessment process, consideration is given to the use of technology to either replace or compliment in person care.

Key Successes for adult social work in 24/25

- TEC Awareness week
- Learning Disability Awareness week
- Ongoing delivery against the ACHSCP Strategic Plan
- Independent Living and Specialist Housing Provision – Market Position 2024-2034
- New collaborative contracts – Carers Support, Granite Care Consortium.
- Two adult social work staff were awarded Star Awards. One for ‘Innovation & Bright Sparks’ and one for ‘trainee, apprentice or student of the year’.

We continued to experience increasing demand and high levels of need across all adult social work services in 2024/25. 2043 new assessments of need were completed across all client groups. This need varies and requires different support for each client group.

Within Aberdeen city, as is seen across the country, people are living longer. However, evidence shows that there is a significant gap between healthy life expectancy, the period of life where we live in good health, and actual life expectancy. There is also variation in life expectancy for those living in more deprived areas whose health outcomes are poorer. In 2023 Dementia was the leading cause of death for women in Aberdeen and the second most common for men. These factors have implications for the delivery of social work and social care services for older adults in Aberdeen.

Self-directed Support (SDS) underpins social work activity across a significant proportion of our children’s and adult services. We are cognisant of the fundamental aim of giving individuals greater

choice and control over their social care support. We strongly believe that a pragmatic, person-centred approach is key to fulfilling this outcome. We aim to proactively develop adult social work, social care, and justice services to reduce risk and need, prevent harm, and help people live healthier for longer. I am pleased to outline a number of areas of work where we have been able to progress this during 2024/25.

The Grampian Gathering – We collaborated with partners across Aberdeen to deliver the second ‘Granite City Gathering’, 369 people attended including 193 community delegates, a 16% increase on the 2023 Gathering. The event promoted active ageing and aimed to improve population health and wellbeing, with a view to reduce demand and pressures on the wider health and social care system through preventative approaches, whilst encouraging community empowerment and greater self-management of health and wellbeing.

The Grampian Wellbeing festival - The Grampian Wellbeing Festival was held during May 2024 and was the first time that ACHSCP took part in the festival having previously run in Aberdeenshire. The aims were to create opportunities for people to access activities which would improve their mental health and wellbeing whilst ensuring services were not stigmatising people. The ACHSCP identified and supported 37 hosts from across the public, third, and community sectors to deliver activities and events during the festival.

Power of Attorney (POA)- We recognise the importance of having POA in place and have increased promotion via online platforms and across council and NHS premises. We have promoted POA at the Aberdeen City Vaccination Centre (ACVC), Aberdeen GP practices, hospital sites, and within wards. Our service manager POA lead is active in the national strategy group, with a local action plan to increase awareness. National POA Day on 21st November 2024 was promoted at the ACVC and across community groups, as well as at ‘The Gathering’ and the local carer’s group.

Community appointment days (CADs)- These were developed by NHS Grampian to support people living with chronic pain. The first Aberdeen events, held in November 2024 and February 2025, brought together health and community partners to deliver information sessions, peer support, and access to specialist advice. CADs aim to reduce barriers to care, address health inequalities, and help individuals manage chronic pain more effectively. Feedback highlighted the welcoming environment, practical advice, and enhanced collaboration among partners. These are being expanded to other conditions in 24/25, and Social Work staff will have an important role including through promotion of power of attorney and technology enabled care (TEC).

Carers Support

The ACHSCP Carers Strategy 2023-26, developed with unpaid carers, aims to ensure that they receive the right advice and support when needed. The Carers Strategy Implementation Group (CSIG) supports the implementation of the strategy and includes health and social care staff (including Adult and Children’s Social Work), independent, third sector and those with lived experience of caring. They produce an [annual report](#).

The number 1 Carers Strategy Priority is ‘identifying as a Carer and the first steps to support’. Both the Adult Carer and Young Carer support services have seen a more than 40% increase in registrations, which is a huge step for Carer identification and accessing appropriate support.

The Strategy facilitated grants to eight improvement projects aimed at improving the experiences of Carers in Aberdeen. This included expanding the ‘Wee Blether’ to all adult carers. This is facilitated by the Quarriers Carer Support Service and expanded to 15 peer support groups that have helped support Carers where they need them in their own communities.

A collaborative commissioning approach was taken to tendering new contracts for both the adult and young carer support services. This resulted in the continuation of the adult carer contract with

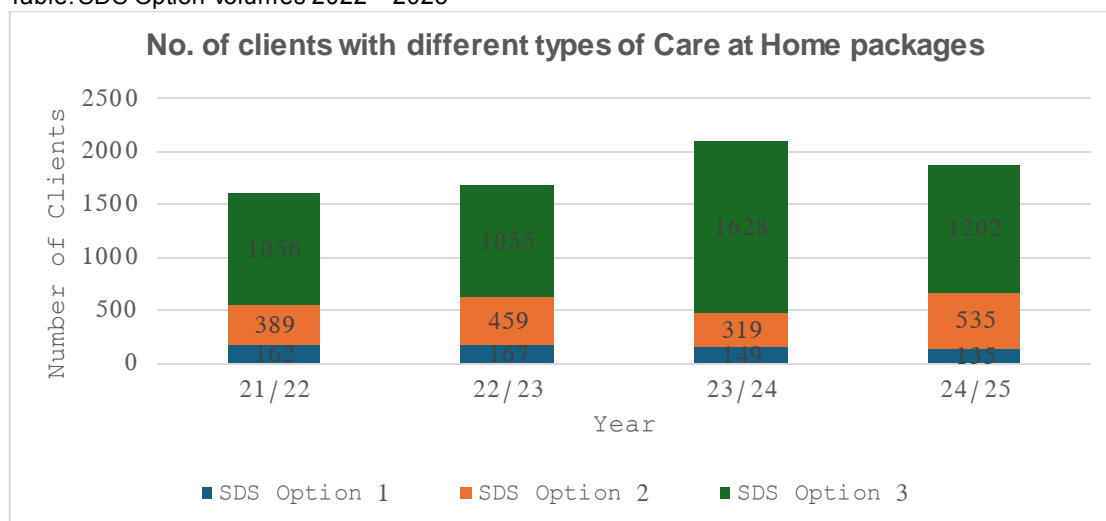
Quarriers and the young carers contract with Barnardo's ensuring continuity and consistency of support.

Provision of Social Care for all adult groups

As an Adult Social Work service, we are strongly focused on ensuring that we enable clients to achieve personal outcomes and meet the needs of those who need us most. Self-directed support (SDS) is the mechanism for delivery of social care to both adults and children. The inhouse SDS team continue to provide support to all social work teams in their day-to-day practice as well as contributing to national development workstreams alongside other HSCPs, Social Work Scotland and other key partners. This year our SDS Coordinator participated in the national working group to develop SDS Standard 13. This is a new standard focused on ensuring a consistent approach to direct payments for employing personal assistants across Scotland.

We continue to meet our statutory responsibility to offer the four SDS options³. The majority of our delivery continues to be through Option 3 commissioned services. Considerable work has taken place this year to develop our approach to commissioning including embedding both the ethical commissioning standards and Getting it right for everyone (GIRFE) principles within new contracts including the contract with our arms-length organisation Bon Accord Care (BAC) and the retender of our outcome-focused care at home service which continues to be delivered by the Granite Care Consortium (GCC).

Table: SDS Option Volumes 2022 – 2025 ⁴



The table above shows the overall number of adults from all client groups with a care at home package over the past four reporting years. This indicates that the number of people choosing Option 1 packages has remained relatively consistent with a small reduction this year. There has been a notable reduction in Option 3 packages between 23/24 and 24/25. In 23/24 we reported on the additional social care capacity that had been added to reduce unmet need through a separate contract to our GCC contract under Option 3. We were unable to continue to sustain this additional capacity due to financial pressures. This is likely to have contributed to the reduction in clients with an Option 3 package and an increase in those choosing Option 2 packages where this allowed them to retain the original care provider. The number of people with an Option 3 package consistently remained at approximately 1200 following this change which is higher than 21/22 and 22/23. Overall there are 224 less clients in

³ SDS Option 4 is a combination of other options and therefore not reflected as an option its self within our published data.

⁴ Information based on adult social work packages only based on the total of each at the end of March of each reporting year. Option 3 packages only include those delivered by Granite Care Consortium for Care at Home and inclusive of additional provider contract to address unmet in 2024 only. This includes double-up care packages which are on average 95 packages per year up to 23/24 and have increased to 100+ in 24/25.

receipt of a care at home package as of March 2025. We cannot fully determine the reason for this; however it is likely to be linked to a combination of an increased focus on enablement and self-management within both in house and contracted services and a stronger focus on eligibility criteria within all adult social work teams. It is important to recognise that the number of clients does not reflect the complexity of need for those clients and packages of care will vary significantly in size and cost for this reason. We continue to coordinate support for people within the community who have very high health and social care support needs often in collaboration with health colleagues including Nursing. This is most notable within Learning Disability services.

This year the ACHSCP launched the [Independent Living and Specialist Housing Provision Market Position Statement 2024 – 2034](#). This provides a strategic overview of the needs and potential future specialist housing requirements of our population including our older people. It provides a detailed overview of the housing and social care landscape and will form the basis of strategic decision making on the provision of both over the next ten years.

From an Oversight and Review perspective, we deliver better outcomes by gaining insights into provider strengths, weaknesses, and service delivery risks. Facilitating provider forums for care home and care at home services has improved relationships and collaborations, leading to quicker issue resolution. These forums also enhance provider and market intelligence sharing, enabling more effective contingency planning.

Supporting our older people and those with physical disabilities

Older people represent the largest population of those we support within Aberdeen City. As of March 2025, there were 1649 adults over the age of 65 with care at home support in Aberdeen.⁵ In addition to this 1115 older adults were residents in one of the 30 Care Homes across the City. Care Home provision for older adults is provided by a range of independent and third sector providers. Older adults are also supported in Sheltered and Very Sheltered housing services across the city.

There has continued to be a strong and sustained emphasis on addressing the waiting times for an assessment and the subsequent levels of unmet need within our older people and physical disability teams. Practitioners are utilising an enablement approach and encouraging TEC first. Through targeted screening and intervention our goal is to complete assessments within 6 weeks of referral. System pressures can make this challenging to achieve however we consistently meet the 6-week national standard for those deemed high.

The Hospital Social Work Team has continued to work with reduced interim bed capacity to prioritise discharge and reduce delays. They have kept the number of delayed discharges below the national average and continue to work with NHS colleagues to ensure streamlined discharge planning, including being involved in the national 'Discharge without Delay' programme.

The Discharge without Delay Programme is a comprehensive initiative aimed at improving the discharge process for frail older people in Scottish hospitals. It integrates best practices, individual services, and pathways into a cohesive model to deliver Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment (CGA) promptly, while minimizing hospital-induced harm or dependency. The programme includes four co-dependent workstreams:

1. **Frailty at Front Door:** This involves early frailty multi-disciplinary team (MDT) assessment in an older person-centred environment, linking with pathways like Home First and using planned date of discharge processes to ensure timely discharge.
2. **Planned Date of Discharge (PDD) process and Integrated Discharge Teams:** This workstream aims to deliver co-produced and pre-planned discharges supported by discharge teams representing all respective health and social care partnerships.

⁵ Based on data submitted to the Scottish Government to monitor implementation of Free Personal Care.

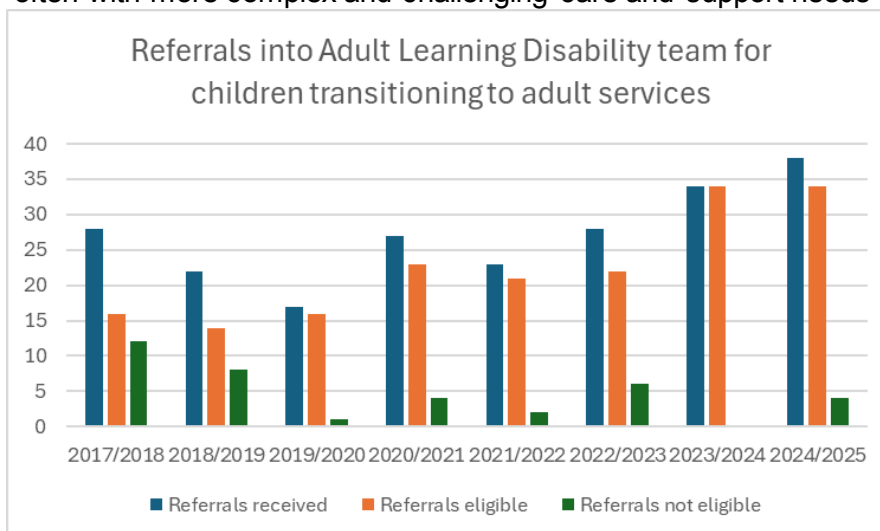
3. Community Hospital and Step-Down Inpatient Rehabilitation Workstream: This focuses on empowering non-acute hospitals to deliver in-patient assessment and rehabilitation of frail individuals in their localities.

We maintain a collaborative approach with care homes by setting broad terms of reference and high-level priorities, enabling our Collaborative Care Home team to support providers when needed. Regular conversations help us understand capacity and ensure beds are fully utilised. If beds are not utilised, we identify the reasons and necessary support. We work through care home waiting lists to ensure accuracy and quick admissions. Care home occupancy levels have remained high (>90%) over the past year, with swift placement into vacancies and very few enforcement actions.

One of our residential care homes had to close this year after significant concerns were raised to the Care Inspectorate about the quality of the care that was being provided by the home. The collaborative care home team, care management and contract team worked together with the provider, residents and their families to ensure that all residents were moved to other homes within 10 weeks of the closure being announced.

Supporting adults with learning disabilities

Priorities and pressures have continued to challenge the Adult Learning Disability social work team this past year. We experience a steady increase of individuals transitioning into Adult Services very often with more complex and challenging care and support needs than previous and this is resulting



in an increase in the supervision requirements of Local Authority and Private Guardianships.

As indicated in last year report, one of the challenges we continue to face is the increasing supervision required in relation to Local Authority and Private Guardianships. This year has seen further increase in this area;

- There are 182 Local Authority Guardianships and 72 of those have been aligned to the Learning Disability Team – an increase of 10 since last year.
- There are 520 Private Guardianships with 357 aligned to the Learning Disability Team – an increase of 122 since last year.

The expectation is that this is an area we will continue to see growth in over the next year therefore we need to consider how we will meet our statutory duties in relation to the reviewing and overseeing of all these Guardianships because currently, allocating them all to the Learning Disability Care Management team is not sustainable given its current resource.

As mentioned last year, we were one of the HSCPs who piloted the implementation of the Dynamic Support Register and this year, our commitment has been to embed this register and the principles of the Coming Home report into our practice.

Our exciting forward thinking new development at Stoneywood is our commitment to bringing people home so they can be nearer their loved ones, families and friends. The Community Living Fund has been aligned to support this development along with other funding from NHS Grampian facilities and infrastructure and affordable housing supply grant fund.

The ground was officially cut on the 18th of September 2024, and a Project Board team have been monitoring and overseeing the build development of this service to ensure it stays on target for opening as of May 2025.

We refreshed the Adult Complex Care Services Framework to ensure a skilled, knowledgeable and experienced provider was appointed and 9 providers successfully met the ranking criteria. As part of our ongoing review of the Learning disability portfolio it became apparent that one building was no longer fit for purpose. In the past year we have worked collaboratively with the Provider and a new Housing Association to move the supported individuals to more appropriate and modern accommodation. The move went extremely well. Below are some quotes from those being supported.

Quote 1

"I am 61 years old, and I live in Aberdeen. But more than that I am a survivor, a fighter, and a man who has reclaimed his life. For nearly four decades, I lived within the care system. I passed through institutions. These places were meant to offer safety, but instead, I endured unimaginable pain—abuse at the hands of those entrusted with my care. I was silenced. I was broken. But I was never defeated.

Fifteen years ago, I moved into my own home. It was the first step toward freedom. Yet even then, the hospital held the power to recall me at any moment. That lingering control was a constant reminder of the past—until December last year. That's when everything changed.

I came off my Community Treatment Order (CTO), and for the first time in my adult life, I tasted true freedom. I now walk to the shop on my own. I have one-to-one support in my home. I make my own choices. I live my own life with support from my care provider.

These may seem like small things but to me, they are monumental. They are symbols of resilience, of healing, of hope. I am not just surviving, I am thriving. My story is proof that even after the darkest storms, light can break through. That no matter how long the road, it is never too late to rise."

Quote 2

"My adult son who has an ASD and learning difficulties moved into a supported living facility in February this year. The preparation leading up to the move was busy and stressful at times but excellently coordinated by the Learning disability [Social Work] Team which made a huge difference as we transitioned my son.

The support he received was considered and compassionate to his needs. This has continued in the facility and from the LD Team over the last 7 months with mindful, patient and care driven support."

Attendees at Learning Disability Week 2024

In May 2024 we encouraged and supported Providers and those they support to participate in a weeklong celebration for Learning Disability Week. We had



presentations for those we support about how they are supported to be digitally connected in their lives and the positive impact this has had on them.

The event was well received, with many new organisations requesting to attend more regularly to promote their services and support. This also gave the service the opportunity to engage with service users and services about further developing an “inclusive hub” and provided staff with opportunities to positively engage with other services to knowledge and signposting opportunities.

Attendees shared what they had learned during the week;

- “I have never thought of using an Alexa to help my dad control his heating!”
- “I love how easy the Komp is to use, and the picture/sound quality is great”
- “I own an Alexa Echo dot and didn’t know I could use the ‘drop in feature’ to chat with my Gran when I’m unable to visit her”

Learning Disability In house services

Our in-house services continue to deliver care and support services to 110 +/- supported individuals from a staff team of approximately 180 +/- staff and our Care Inspection grades in May 2025 were Two 3’s and Two 4’s.

Recruitment of skilled and knowledgeable staff continues to be a challenge locally and nationally and we continue to look for innovative ways in which to recruit the right staff member to join our team to ensure we are complying with the Safer Staffing Act 2019.

We have introduced the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) award into the support being provided at the Len Ironside Centre (LIC). Clients who attend the LIC choose their learning modules to work through with staff support and they undergo a rigorous moderation process as they work through their award. This developmental tool supports individuals to achieve positive outcomes which promote their confidence and independence. This has been such a success at LIC that we plan to roll this out across all in house services during the next year.

Mental Health

The Social Work/Mental Health Officer teams are embedded within the mental health locality model based at Royal Cornhill Hospital. The service continues to deliver on its statutory responsibilities under a variety of legislations including the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000.

There has been a marked increase in the workload of the MHO service due to the prevalence of mental health conditions and symptoms in Scotland increasing particularly among certain age groups. The level of mental health high acuity cases remain high resulting in a marked increase of detentions under the Mental Health Act.

Due to the sustained investing in our MHO service, we continue to fulfil our statutory obligations to the required standards and within the required timescales.

Detention in hospital intervention	2019/ 20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023 /24	2024/25
Community Treatment Order (CTO)	57	106	113	119	112	110

Emergency Detention in Hospital	42	34	31	28	56	62
Short-Term	245	222	228	218	222	212

Table: MH Hospital Detentions 2019-2025

We continue to have two part-time MHO's within the hospital social work team who oversee Guardianship applications affecting discharge. Involving Social Work from admission allows for early collaborative discharge planning for those lacking capacity. The aligned MHO streamlines this process. Aberdeen City continues to be recognised by the Scottish Government for excellent AWI practice. This model of practice continues to support our low AWI delayed discharge numbers in comparison to other areas in Scotland.

Over the past couple of years, MHOs in the city have always been aligned to the adult mental health teams. Over the past two years we have changed this model. We now have MHO's in our Learning Disability Team, Care Management Team, Adult Support & Protection Social Work Team and Substance Misuse Team. Over the next 12 months, we aim to have MHO's in our justice and hospital-based teams as well.

In Aberdeen, we have a full complement of designated Mental Health Officers. However we continue to support further trainees to complete the PG Cert MHO course at Robert Gordon University every year. Three trainees graduated in September 2024. One trainee has been identified to start the course for 2025/26. This additional capacity will mitigate the widening MHO shortage that we foresee over the coming years.

Mental Welfare Commission (MWC) End of Year Score Card Audit

In 2024, the MWC highlighted some areas for improvement for the MHO service. One of these areas were to reduce the number of Emergency Detention Certificates without the consent of a Mental Health Officer. A Pan Grampian Short Life working group was created and chaired by an Aberdeen City senior social worker. Representatives in this group included reps from RCH, ARI, Unscheduled Care, Liaison Psychiatry, Out of Hours SW, Nursing etc. The group concluded earlier this year with recommendations and a detailed action plan. This is being presented to the MWC later this year.

Substance Misuse Services

Social work staff continue to support the Substance Use Service's (SMS) implementation of the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) standards across various sites in Aberdeen. In line with the standards, social workers have adapted elements of their practice to support and enhance the service managing to deliver these standards daily.

Social Work staff continue to be instrumental in the implementation of various SMS training events including Naloxone training for various professions across the health and social care partnership. SMS social work staff are also the Trauma Informed Champions and Motivational Interviewing leads in the northeast.

The SMS Social Work service are working in collaboration with stakeholders to decommission the current Wernham House site and developing a new model of care to support individuals in the community with their substance use. A new site has been identified in the south area of Aberdeen which could be developed into a new substance misuse community model of care. SMS social workers continue to play a key role in shaping the development of this new community-based model.

Adult Support and Protection

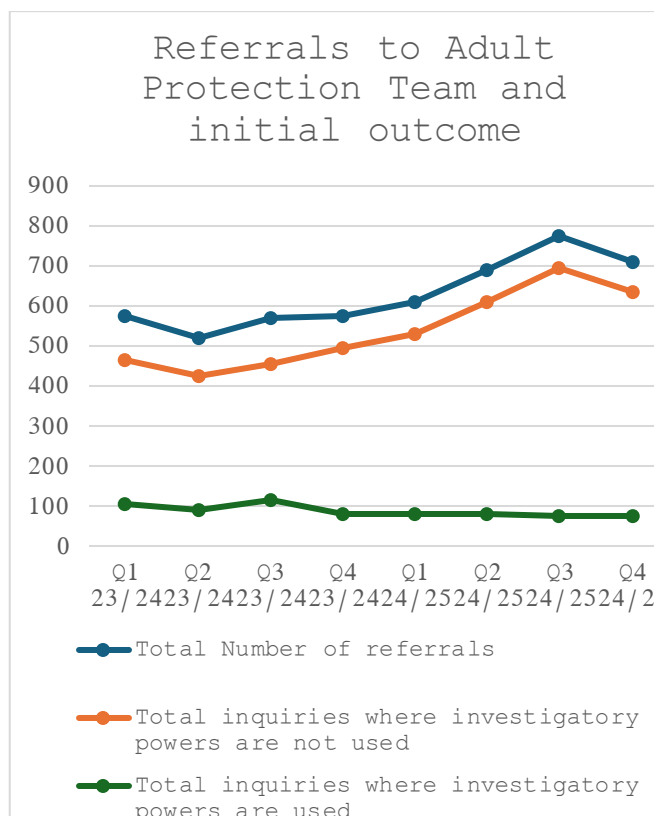
In April 2024 The Adult Protection Committee (APC) launched a new strategy encapsulating the Vision and Priorities for the APC for the period from April 2024 to March 2026. Our vision for Aberdeen City is, "Partners in Aberdeen are committed to an inclusive approach to preventing and responding to harm and protecting adults at risk." The strategy has four priorities with progress actively monitored against these.

- A) **Performance / Quality Assurance Framework** - We will develop a robust Data Performance and Quality Assurance Framework.
- B) **Stakeholder Engagement** - We commit to continue to develop appropriate mechanisms for effective communication.
- C) **Learning and Development** - We will continuously improve ASP practice, learning and development by reaching all our people, ensuring effective support, preventative measures and protection of adults at risk of harm.
- D) **Learning reviews** - We commit to learning from situations where there is potential for improvement in practice, and to ensuring related learning is embedded into practice.

The Pathway for Capacity Assessments for Protection Based Decisions has been created by a multiagency group of Grampian based health and social care professionals who have expertise in the fields of Adults with Incapacity; Adult Support and Protection; Social Work; Primary Care Medicine; Psychiatry and Psychology. It is designed to clarify the process for seeking a capacity assessment where there are protection-based decisions linked to concerns about mental incapacity.

Adult Protection Social Work Team (APSW)

The APSW team is the first point of contact for adult protection referrals and police welfare concerns. They handle crisis intervention, the rights and welfare of vulnerable adults in police custody, those with no recourse to public funds, and immediate safeguarding needs. The team collaborates with other services to ensure the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable adults.



There was an increase of more than 500 referrals in 2024/25 than in 2023/24. This is likely due to greater awareness, the cost-of-living crisis, rising poverty levels, and reduced availability of other services due to over-arching increases in demand on services across the board.

This graph shows that while overall referrals have increased those requiring investigatory powers to be used have remained steady with a very gradual decline.

Harm generally occurs within the persons own home. In 2024/25 the most prominent harm type where inquiries with the use of investigatory powers took place was financial harm (90 cases) followed by self-neglect (89), physical harm (39) and psychological/emotional harm (33).

Local Learning

Getting it right for everyone (GIRFE) - Aberdeen City HSCP have worked collaboratively with other HSCPs and the Scottish Government throughout this year to develop the national GIRFE approach and toolkit. We focused specifically on embedding the GIRFE principles into our commissioning approach for new contracts. This has been used as an example of good practice nationally.

Dynamic Support Register - During the past year our Learning Disability Social Work team have embedded the Dynamic Support register into our practice and have fortnightly and monthly meetings to discuss, review and monitor all who are on this register.

Why do we need a Dynamic Support Register?

- ▶ Provide greater visibility in terms of strategic planning
- ▶ Monitor hospital / inappropriate hospital admissions
- ▶ Ensure greater anticipation of the need for children transitions to adult provision
- ▶ Encourage decision makers to address these problems and to show examples of solutions

As part of the Coming Home Implementation work, the Scottish Government is working to improve monitoring of the experiences of people with learning disabilities and complex care needs who are in hospital, who are in out-of-area placements and/or whose current support arrangements are at risk of breaking down. This is to avoid people living in hospitals or in inappropriate out-of-area placements that they and their family have not chosen. This work meets the Scottish Government's wider ambitions around the Health and Social Care Standards – to deliver health and social care where services work collaboratively to support the wishes and needs of the individual. It will incorporate the various standards from a range of already existing legislation, guidance documents and good practice reports, including from NICE, the Care Inspectorate, SSSC, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and the Mental Welfare Commission, into one pathway.

At present the register is focused on those individuals who have a Learning Disability and meet the criteria however our local aim is to also include young people who are out of area as well as other client groups in future years to provide a whole-system holistic view of need and demand.

Suicide Surveillance System Test of change

Adult Mental Health social work is also leading on the QES Suicide Surveillance system test of change. This system enables multi-agency collaboration to understand, derive lessons from, and take action to reduce suicides. The range of information inputted into the system by multi-agency partners at a local level (i.e. police, ambulance, mental health services) facilitates the tying together of a series of small details to provide one comprehensive view of circumstances surrounding a suspected or attempted suicide.

This collection of real-time information from partners is essential in the ability to learn from, and react to, emerging patterns and trends in suicide. This ultimately delivers the integral and unique opportunity to identify risk factors and prevent further tragedies on a local, regional and national level.

New ways of working

Adult social work is an essential part of the wider health and social care system. Many of our developments in new ways of working have involved us taking a proactive stance in building relationships across the sector for the benefit of the community we serve.

Electronic medication Administration Recording (eMAR)

In January 2025, we launched a pilot in 1 of the in-house learning disability services of eMAR. This decision was reached after reviewing medication errors and considering what options could potentially minimise/mitigate the risk of future medication errors. The pilot focused on;

- Assessing the systems impact on the safe administration of medication thus reducing errors
- Staff confidence and efficiency
- Service safety and quality



The pilot involved 13 supported individuals and the evaluation after 3 months evidenced;

- Reduction in medication errors
- Increased staff confidence while supporting medication administration
- 22 hours of saved staff time because the system had more advanced “checking” functions which meant a reduction in staff manually checking

The aim is to seek agreement from the IJB to roll out eMAR across all in house services.

Discharge to Assess

This year we ran a small test of change with Bon Accord Care’s Interim Care at Home Service (ICAH) with the aim of patients in hospital being fast-tracked home to be assessed with wrap around care and support as opposed to waiting in hospital. We recognise the impact unnecessary delays in hospital can have on patients, especially older people. The test of change focussed on patients with low levels of need who were likely to fully recover. This test identified that focusing on those with low levels of ongoing need had a limited impact and highlighted to us a need to focus on those with higher and more complex need to intervene at the right time and address the high level of care home admissions made directly from hospital. This has informed a new project for 2025/26 targeting those with higher-level care needs aimed at discharging those who are medically fit back to their own homes with enablement-focused care and support, allowing for a holistic assessment in their own environment.

Scottish Ambulance Service pathway

Working alongside colleagues in the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS), Pathways Hub and the Flow Navigation Centre (FNC), a new 'Social Needs Pathway' has been developed. The focus of the Pathway is to provide earlier intervention from social work whilst diverting people without any clinical need, away from transportation by ambulance to ARI. Launching in August 2024 FNC, Pathways Hub and SAS crews have updated their SAS App to include this Pathway, and they will now refer directly to social work instead of ambulance transfer to hospital if there is no clinical need. Individuals with only social needs will benefit from being seen by the right service at the right time, offering the right kind of support. This avoids a potentially distressing journey to hospital plus a wait to be seen and discharged by hospital clinicians. This Pathway reflects good clinical governance and should benefit the individuals involved concurrently saving the time of SAS and hospital staff who can concentrate their efforts on those who have a clinical need requiring treatment.

Rae House – New Residential Rehabilitation Service/Community Services

Substance Misuse Social Workers continue to work closely with Phoenix Futures on developing their new Residential Rehabilitation service called Rae House which opened in January 2025. This new service offers a drug and alcohol-free environment and structured support for men and women looking to address their problematic drug and alcohol use in the Grampian area.

The service offers 27 large modern en-suite single rooms and is accessible for people with additional mobility needs. The onsite multi-disciplinary team provide personalised support through one-to-one, group and complementary therapies within a Therapeutic community approach. Since opening, Aberdeen has supported and funded 18 placements at the service. Senior Social Workers within SMS continue to lead on the Residential rehabilitation panel.

The SMS social work service has also worked closely with Phoenix Futures on developing and securing 20 post residential recovery flats in Aberdeen City. The first couple of flats were utilised in April 2025. Phoenix Futures will support individuals living at the flats for up to 1 year supported by their key worker at SMS which is usually their social worker.

In March 2025, Phoenix Futures also opened their new DayHab service at Regent Quay House in Aberdeen. The dayhab service provides structured recovery support, which allows people to access comprehensive rehabilitation while maintaining the choice to stay in their own home or benefit from housing services depending on their personal needs.

The Scottish Government fully funds all placements through the Residential Rehabilitation Rapid Capacity Fund until March 2026. Since opening Aberdeen has referred 12 placements.

SMS social work seniors continue to develop The Prison to Residential Rehabilitation and Justice to Community Residential Rehabilitation pathways. They are in their infancy and will be developed further throughout 2025.

Grampian Local Resilience Partnership (LRP) People at risk database (PARD)

The LRP worked together to develop an approach to recording those at highest risk during emergencies. The Grampian PARD database will provide Incident Managers with immediate access to information on those who are vulnerable (adults and children) in the immediate aftermath of any emergency to targeted help, for example in an evacuation.

No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

Last year we reported on the increase in those presenting with NRPF. Single adults and families require support in circumstances where they are not able to access public funds, and they often present to social work to avoid destitution. This year we have signed up to NRPF Connect, a case management tool which is used by councils across the UK to record details of households with no recourse to public

funds (NRPF) that are being provided with accommodation and/or financial support by councils when social care duties are engaged. NRPF Connect is a secure online database that enables a council to obtain immigration status information from the Home Office to help identify a person’s support options (e.g. whether they can access benefits and homelessness assistance, or whether the provision of social services ‘safety net’ support must be considered). Within Aberdeen City Council, the system is used by Social Work and Housing services which means that all services involved can access and contribute to the same information / record relating to an individual.

JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK

The table below provides an overview of some of our key Justice Social Work data for 2024-25 and the years preceding.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Justice Social Work Reports	1,126	715	935	1271	1286	1348
Community Payback Orders imposed	1,055	506	667	909	851	1059
Diversion commenced	114	150	168	149	287	248
Bail Supervision commenced	45	4	26	117	126	90

As can be seen, numbers of **Justice Social Work Reports** and **Community Payback Orders imposed** have increased significantly from 2023-24 to 2024-25, up by 5% and 24% respectively, with both figures surpassing pre-pandemic levels. 80% of those who completed Supervision Exit Questionnaires (the majority of these being individuals who have successfully completed Community Payback Orders with Supervision), felt that their Supervision had helped them stop or reduce their offending.

My CJW was extremely easy to get on with and I felt able to discuss anything with them. I trust them which was very important to make progress

I started to believe in myself and that there was a path forward

Definitely won't be back!

Published successful CPO completion rates are not yet available for 2024-25, but in 2023-24 83% of CPOs were successfully completed in Aberdeen, the third highest rate across the country.

Although numbers of **Diversion from Prosecution** cases have reduced overall in 2024-25, the numbers of young people aged between 16 and 25 who were diverted has increased by 41%, with the increase particularly relating to young people under 21. This reflects local multi agency efforts to ensure that young people are kept out of the adult justice system where possible and diverted to interventions which will support them to move away from offending behaviour.

80% of those who completed Exit Questionnaires at the end of their Diversion intervention felt that they were less likely to get into trouble again, and better able to cope with issues that led to them being charged.

It gave me the kick I needed to get the support I needed

As the table above shows, the numbers on **Bail Supervision** have reduced over 2024-25 by 29% compared to the previous year. This is due to a number of factors, including changes in legislation (e.g.

the Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Act 2023 and the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024) which mean that sheriffs are more reluctant to remand and will offer standard bail rather than requesting assessment for Supervised Bail or an Electronic Monitoring Order. A decline has also been seen in bail being opposed by COPFS, for the same reasons. A new process was implemented, in conjunction with the Court, in light of the legislative changes, which has led to a reduction in the number of individuals assessed for Bail Supervision. The service now awaits requests for bail supervision assessment from the court or sheriffs except where an individual is specifically identified who would benefit from Supervised bail.

We continue to deliver our services to a high standard, despite increasing workloads (as reflected in the figures provided above). The service is also impacted by wider system pressures, including resourcing constraints which are affecting services across the piece. And those we work with present with increasing complex and challenging risk and need. Notwithstanding this, our dedicated workforce continues to aspire to our service Vision, that *“Every person that we work with achieves the best possible individual and statutory outcomes, whilst acknowledging that public protection is paramount”*. Staff engaged in a refresh of our Vision and Values in February 2025, (as part of the refresh of our service Delivery Plan), which served to reinforce our core values of being person-centred, demonstrating ‘stickability’, flexibility and responsiveness, and working in a way that is informed by an understanding of the impact of trauma.

During the year we undertook re-commissioning of two services; one for the provision of an Employability service for adults (16+) who are subject to a Community Payback Order with an unpaid work and other activity requirement’ and other individuals receiving a service from justice social work, which is provided by Aberdeen Foyer; and secondly the provision of an Outreach Support Service provided by Turning Point Scotland. This service is for adults (16+) who have served a custodial sentence and are subject to Release Licence or Court mandated supervision or are eligible for voluntary aftercare following release from prison within the last 12 months.

The Aberdeen Foyer contract was continued from the previous year, and individuals engaging with the service gained 45 qualifications during 2024-25, with 12 clients moving into employment.

Case Study: X, 26, was referred to Foyer in September 2023. He began his journey with a strong start, making progress towards his CSCS card and engaging positively with his Development Coach. After a setback linked to alcohol dependency, X temporarily disengaged. However, he returned with renewed motivation, having started attending support groups for recovery. X reconnected with Foyer and began attending weekly appointments again. He showed real commitment – completing mock tests and eventually passing his CSCS exam with full marks. X now has his green card and continues to work with Foyer to find employment in the construction sector. His journey highlights the importance of second chances and the power of perseverance.

In August 2024 the appointment was made to a new role within the Justice Social Work Service – Strategic Service Manager – to work alongside the Service Manager for Operations. This role was created in recognition of the extensive strategic, performance / reporting-related, governance and other ‘administrative’ demands that such a service is beholden to in relation to its ‘operational’ activities, as well as to provide increased capacity for ongoing focus on service improvement.

Key activities undertaken so far have included leading on the self-evaluation response to Phase 1 of the Care Inspectorate’s Autumn 2024 national ‘Thematic Review of Performance and Quality Assurance’ across JSW services, the refresh of the service Delivery Plan for 2025-29 and related Performance and Quality Assurance Framework, reviewing service governance arrangements, engaging with staff across the service (via survey and engagement events) to inform service improvement, and establishing a regular monthly staff forum on the back of this.

Challenges

Release from custody via virtual Courts, and ‘unplanned’ liberations from other Courts, continue to present challenges in respect of providing multi agency ‘throughcare’ support (for housing, medication, benefits, etc) and engaging and inducting individuals being released from establishments across the country who have CPOs to progress in the community. Justice Social Work is represented on a multi-agency short life working group which is looking at ways services and agencies can work together to improve our collective response and pathways, particularly in light of increasing drug related deaths.

Numbers of Unpaid Work Requirements have now surpassed pre-pandemic levels. The ‘workshop’ element of the service, which provides lighter, seated unpaid work placement opportunities, remains in a temporary location, albeit previous challenges in relation to the service’s vehicle fleet have now been resolved. Further focus is to be given to increasing availability of individual placements, and to providing further appropriate and meaningful placements for the increasing number of clients (around 50%) who can only undertake indoor or seated tasks.

Although numbers of 16- and 17-year-olds in contact with the service are low (seven Justice Social Work Reports and three CPOs in 2024-25), the service provided JSWRs for 89 young people aged 18 – 20 years, and oversaw the same number of CPOs, in the same period. Getting it right for these young people is critical, and with a lack of dedicated resourcing, there is scope for improvement in terms of pathways and collaborative working between Justice and Children’s Social Work Services, particularly in light of current and future changes relating to the Children’s Care & Justice (Scotland) Act 2024.

Access to mental health services, especially for those with chaotic alcohol and drug use, remains a challenge.

In light of continuing pressures on prisons, further tranches of early release of prisoners were initiated by Scottish Government the STP40 early release programme took place between 18th February, and 20th March 2025. A total of 312 individuals were released nationally, with 20 returning to Aberdeen City. Feedback from involved partners was mostly positive. Coordination between services, particularly ADA, IDS, and AO was effective, enabling advance planning and support for individuals. However, gaps were identified in several cases involving Supervised Release Orders, where individuals were released without Integrated Case Management or MAPPA-level assessments. Justice Social Work had to respond reactively, convening MAPPA meetings and finalising risk assessments post-liberation. Communication delays and incorrect information (e.g. misidentification of Opioid Replacement Therapy (methadone script) status) were noted, especially during the third tranche. While housing coordination improved compared to previous releases, challenges remained with individuals not attending appointments or being unreachable post-release. Additionally, not all establishments followed through with expected Case Management Board processes, requiring local staff to chase information and arrange contact independently. These issues underscore the need for consistent national protocols and clearer accountability in future early release scenarios.

Feedback from clients

JSW clients completing supervision (either CPO or licence), a CPO Unpaid Work requirement, or Diversion from Prosecution are asked to complete an exit questionnaire. The below table shows the numbers of questionnaires completed, and the increase achieved during the year compared with the previous year (41% overall).

Questionnaires Completed	Male	Female	TOTAL 24-25	TOTAL 23-24
Diversion	40 (78%)	9 (18%)	*51	23**

Supervision	108 (89%)	13 (11%)	121	93
Unpaid Work	160 (90%)	17 (10%)	177	131
TOTAL	308 (88%)	39 (12%)	349	247

* includes 2 for whom gender unknown

** collation of Exit Questionnaires not reinstated until November 2023

Feedback collected is collated and reviewed on a quarterly and annual basis, and considered via our service governance arrangements, including in terms of any feedback which might inform service improvement. Summary highlights are shared with the wider staff group, with more detailed or specific feedback being shared with individual staff members via Supervision arrangements.

Feedback comments for 2024-25 was overwhelmingly positive, including the below areas:

- **Diversion** - the perceived benefits of Diversion, and personal improvements reported by participants
- **Supervision** - improvements in various life issues, relationships with Justice Social Work workers, useful aspects of supervision, behavioural changes, reasons for changes in offending behaviour, and community supports linked
- **UPW** - peoples' experiences, achievements, skills developed, and opinions about staff and community impact.

There were many very positive individual comments about the value of an individual's relationship with their worker/s, and the role played by the worker/s.

Areas for Improvement

The Care Inspectorate's National Thematic Review of JSWS Performance and Quality Assurance (Phase 1) focused on the current capacity of services to evidence performance, quality and outcomes in relation to community-based sentences. This focused on the sector's ability to confidently and robustly evidence the effectiveness of community support and supervision. Undertaking the related self-evaluation activity enabled the service to identify areas for improvement, including looking at how to extract information from the LSCMI database in order to gain increased understanding of our client base and inform how we better meet the needs of those we work with.

At the start of 2025, work was done to refresh the JSW Delivery Plan for 2025-26. The Plan was refreshed taking into account the following:

- Outstanding actions from the previous Delivery Plan;
- Feedback from staff, clients and partners;
- Key data, including comparison with other areas;
- Findings from the above referenced Self Evaluation of Performance and Quality Assurance (as part of a national exercise led by the Care Inspectorate), and from Quality Assurance of case records;
- Alignment with the local Health & Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan and Community Planning Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan priorities; and
- Alignment with national Community Justice priorities.

Areas for improvement and gaps in support or services identified, which were incorporated into our refreshed Plan, include the below.

Local / service issues:

- Potential for improved collaborative working with wider partners including Aberdeen City Council Housing services, mental health services and third sector;
- Further development of our services for women, and also what we offer specifically for men;
- Development of a lower-level domestic abuse programme;
- Developing our in-house expertise in relation to working with individuals with alcohol and drugs issues; and

National / wider issues:

- Preparatory work for implementation of new legislation and other developments, in conjunction with partner & services as relevant, e.g. Children's Care & Justice (S) Act 2024, Bail & Release (Scotland) Act, Review of JSW National Outcomes & Standards, and Trauma Informed Domestic Abuse Courts.

In addition, during the period, Aberdeenshire Council gave notice that they are to cease providing the 'Moving Forwards 2 Change' programme for sex offenders (previously Moving Forwards Making Changes), for Aberdeen City clients, from end March 2026. On average we have between 30 and 35 people on the MFMC / MF2C programme at any time due to it being a three-year programme and people joining and leaving the programme throughout the year. Aberdeen City JSW Service is in the process of developing in-house provision of this service, through relevant staff training and development of appropriate procedures, etc, which will be required to fill this gap.

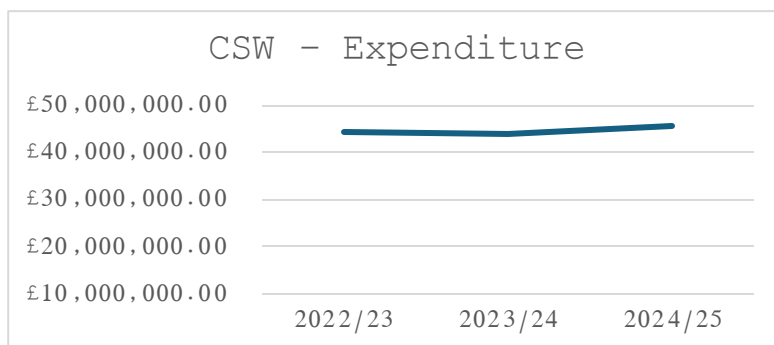
4. Resources

Aberdeen is the third largest city in Scotland with an estimated population of circa 230K. It is, per head of population, the second lowest funded council in Scotland. The significant downturn in the oil industry as well as the impact of austerity and the cost-of-living crisis has significantly impacted on the economic wellbeing of the city.

In recent years, the City's population has increased. As a result of world events, Aberdeen City has welcomed significant numbers of displaced persons from war affected countries. Aberdeen being a city with two universities, our population has been impacted by a high volume of international families coming to the city to study. Since 2019 there has been a 14% increase in the school roll. This change has unsurprisingly seen an increase in the demand for social work intervention at key pinch points – those with No Recourse to Public Funds and supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People to settle into the city.

As a result of inflationary pressures as well as increasing demand, all aspect of the Council and HSCP budgets continue to experience unrelenting pressure. The Council's medium term financial plan shows these pressures are likely to persist, impacting our ability to meet the needs of service users. We also recognise the continuing increase of complexity children, young people, adults and families present with - increased family fragility, poor mental health, delays in the Court system, and pressures on the health system, are all continuing to directly impact on social work services. It also requires more resource to meet their needs.

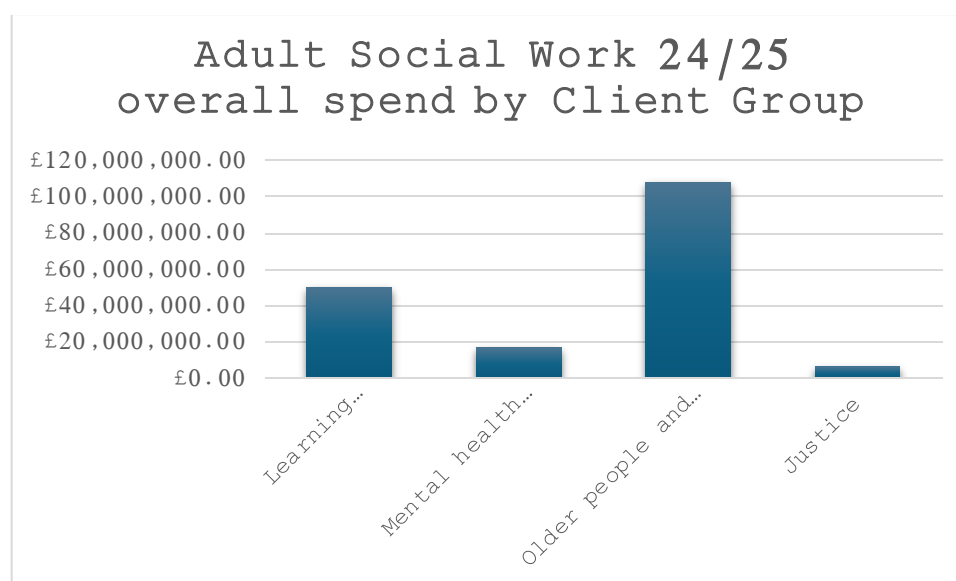
Given this context, it is crucial that new national policies and legislative duties receive full funding. In order to fulfil its statutory duty to deliver a balanced budget, all Council Services in 2024/25 required to identify savings. However it also requires us to continually review how we use the resource we have to greatest effect. Inevitably there has been a need to identify savings across head count, contracts and assets.



We continue to acknowledge the interconnected nature of social work. Most children come to the attention of social work due to care and protection issues arising from difficulties in their parents' lives. This reinforces our continuing efforts to explore opportunities to integrate planning and delivery of services that support the whole family. This concept will be core

to our developing Family Support Model. The graph shows changes to the Children's Social Work budget over the past four years.

Gross expenditure on **Adult & Justice Social Work** was £184.5m in 2023/24 compared to £183.5m in 2024/25 which demonstrates a reduction of £1m in overall spending.



Critical Service Pressures

The welcome progress in medical treatments and medication has resulted in individuals living longer with more complex needs. This complexity necessitates higher levels of care and support, which require greater resource. Service providers are also facing heightened expectations from clients, driving performance metrics such as waiting times. The ongoing cost-of-living crisis in 2024/25 has further highlighted the link between poverty and the demand for social work intervention. Those accessing money advice services and emergency food provisions report daily survival struggles and the detrimental impact on their confidence and mental wellbeing.

Having enough practitioners in all service areas to undertake statutory social work tasks is essential. It is crucial to focus on person-centred interventions to keep children and vulnerable adults safe at home for as long as possible.

In the same vein, [Children's Services Strategic Plan 2023-26](#) reinforces the continuing need to ensure families have access to early and preventative support that mitigates the need for social work intervention. We welcome the intention for Aberdeen City to be one of 6 areas to receive **Fairer Futures Partnership (FFP) Funding**. The intention of this two-year funding has at its core the intention to enable system change to promote early and preventative support that mitigates the corrosive impact of poverty.

Building a strong Family Support Model is a multi-agency responsibility and builds on the work of the FFP funding. The varied funding for Tier 2 family support services brings both challenges and opportunities. Families have told us they want to more easily access early and preventative support

without relying on professionals. These principles remain at the core of our developing Family Support Model.

Our Children's Services Strategic Plan is closely aligned with the HSCP's Strategic Plan. As a partnership, we have made significant efforts to align various strategic documents including the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Child Poverty Plan, Carers Plan, and Corporate Parenting Plan. This endeavour enhances our strategic coherence and optimises our resources to achieve crucial shared priorities.

As a service we are committed to supporting children to remain within their family, where it is safe to do so, without the need for compulsory measures. However, to do this on a sustained basis can often require significant and sustained multi-agency resource to scaffold around families. As a consequence of these efforts our care population has reduced by circa 15% over recent years. This reduction is welcomed but it also masks the continuing resource and cost pressure to deliver Continuing Care (children aged 16 – 21 who remain in care settings but are not deemed looked after). We welcome the attention being given by COSLA to this underfunded policy.

There has been a noted reduction in our foster care population and those looked after at home. As we continue to enhance support for children to remain within their family network, we have seen an increase in children placed in a kinship arrangement as well as a marginal increase to those in residential care. Given the average cost of a specialist residential placement is circa £300k per child annually, any increase has a significant budgetary impact. Further, we are experiencing a rise in requests for additional funding to core placement fees, with several residential providers citing the need to increase staffing ratios due to individual children's needs.

The single biggest cost pressure for Children's Social Work continues to be the cost of specialist care for children who have experienced significant harm and abuse or those who are living with complex of health and disability. The national shortage of foster carers is a challenge, and we continue to work on building our internal fostering capacity. However, this is not a quick or easy fix and is one which directly links to requests for residential care, especially for our older children who are most susceptible to placement breakdown. The cost of specialist residential care has increased well beyond Council budgets. This increase has meant that despite our numbers of specialist residential care placements being broadly similar to the previous year, our overspend has increased from £2.5M in 23/24 to £3.8M in 24/25. Internal Audit has identified that there was robust governance to the decision making and review of placing children in specialist residential care.

While the level of protection afforded by the Scottish Government to the funding of adult social work services is welcomed, there are recognised and significant cost pressures within the system as a result of service demand and inflationary pressures. The primary areas of budget pressure relate to the growing demand and complexity of demand to support older adults, as well as those with adults with complex mental health needs and with complex learning disabilities. Work is progressing at pace to develop local community housing options that will enable several adults living out of the authority to return to be near family members and their local community whilst also mitigating budget pressures.

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Recognising that budgets will remain challenged, the use of technology continues to be part of planning to do more with less. This report references examples of this already in place – Technology Enabled Care; Mind of My Own apps are already positively contributing to service delivery.

In October 2022, in partnership with Microsoft, Aberdeen City Council launched 'D365' - its own data system across social work. This system was designed by social workers for social workers. It utilises the existing suite of Microsoft tools but has added functionality and capacity to support real time data reporting. The system has an iterative development programme directly informed by the experiences of those who use it. This flexibility ensures the system can respond at pace to legislative and policy change.

One of the key benefits of D365 is its capability to deliver on the Scottish Governments aspiration that there is a single health and social care record. The realisation of this for frontline practitioners cannot be understated. At a time when we all need to do more with less the integration of key client data in real time will improve planning and decision making and potentially save lives.

Our partnership with Microsoft will continue to allow us to explore evolving opportunities. Currently we are exploring how the use of Microsoft's digital tool co-pilot can support us to reduce the administrative burdens faced by frontline practitioners.

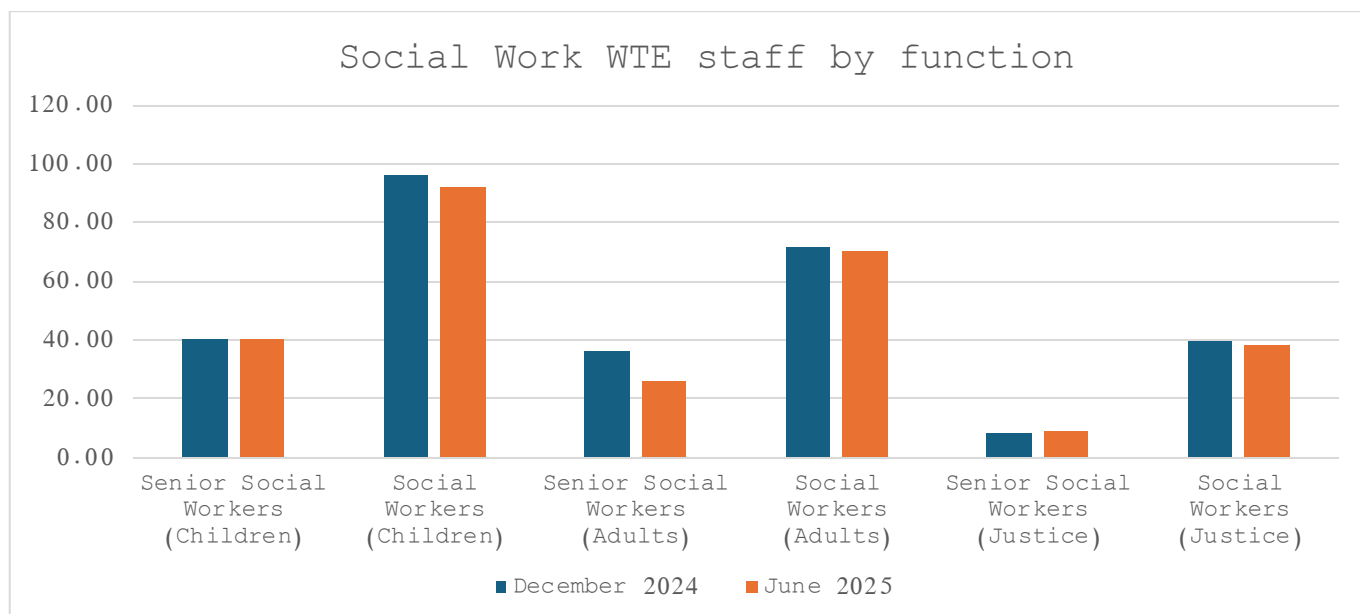
Aberdeen city IJB's Strategic Plan was approved on 1st July 2025. It has two Strategic Aims – 'Modernising our Approach to Service Delivery', which covers making best use of resources and transforming service delivery, and 'Shifting our Focus towards Early Intervention and Prevention'. The associated Year 1 Delivery Plan contains actions to consolidate use of premises; reduce overall headcount (mainly from support services); increase the use of technology in service delivery (recognising the needs of those who are digitally excluded); improve arrangements for maximising income for chargeable social care; review current models of care delivery and find ways to achieve consistency and fairness whilst ensuring value for money; and shift more care provision into the community. A number of these actions have savings targets allocated to them.

Charging policy

Within Adult Social Work our charging policy, for chargeable services, is an important means of generating income. This year we have carried out a review of how our charging policy works, which identified instances where charges were not applied when they should have been, e.g. Housing support services and meals provision. We have worked with finance colleagues, social work staff and clients to understand the reasons for this and the changes needed to ensure that charging and contribute to ongoing sustainability of care provision in 2024/25 and beyond.

4. Workforce

The current social work landscape relies more than ever on us supporting and nurturing our workforce, adapting service delivery to meet escalating demand and complexity. Within the city we continue to experience specific staffing challenges in certain areas of adult social work and across children's social work, especially for those who hold lead professional roles, residential practitioners and those working in Learning Disability and in Mental Health. Such challenges, as previously outlined in Setting the Bar (2019) and Taking the Wheel (2022), were reflected in [Workforce Deep Dive – Approach to Workforce Capacity and Hard to Fill Roles](#), which was endorsed at our Staff Governance Committee in April 2024



The above graph demonstrates the make-up of our social work staff by function. In order to reduce budget during the year council staff were offered voluntary severance and early retirement. The uptake of this, demonstrated above, was highest amongst senior social workers supporting adults and has led to an inevitable loss of experience. Redesign has taken place within the management structure of affected teams to ensure that social work staff continue to receive high quality professional supervision with a more streamlined leadership team.

Frameworks have recently been developed in both Children's Social Work (CSW) - Workforce Development Plan (WFDP) and in Adult Services HSCP Workforce Plan 2022 – 2025 - Aberdeen and Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework (SRF) 2025–2035, aligned to the vision, values and goals of social work, to address the challenges we face by building capacity to meet need.

We recognise ongoing attention, and resourcing will be essential to refine and sustain innovative practices for attracting, recruiting, supporting and retaining diverse talent, and to strengthen workforce capacity in the face of rapid legislative changes, thereby reducing service delivery risks.

A significant feature within the city has been to continue to develop our 'grow our own' approaches to recruitment and succession planning, including providing opportunities for non-social work qualified staff to pursue professional learning to obtain a social work degree and in supporting staff who have the skills and motivation to take on "acting up" duties

Our planning also emphasises the importance of employee wellbeing as a crucial component to ensure the workforce grows in confidence and competence to meet the complex needs of our most vulnerable adults, children and their families. Alongside this, our workforce have helped highlight other areas where improvement will be key – such as our Professional Supervision Working Group.

Mental health and wellbeing is also promoted through a range of activities across the year with Aberdeen's dedicated lead officer who ensures our internal intranet pages publicise our wellbeing approach to our wider staff groups. Reviewing

our collaborative partnership with Robert Gordon's University is a key priority in the year ahead to ensure we influence and benefit from the extensive social work offer they provide.

In April 2024, our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy, was refreshed to reflect changes in legislation and the expectations of our citizens. As a significant public sector employer in our city, we want to lead the way in our commitment to diversity and inclusion. While the majority of our workforce identify their ethnicity as 'white-Scottish', the next highest category being 'white – other British' we welcome and encourage the growing diversity to our workforce which reflects the growing diversity of our city. We however recognise that there is still a way to go for us to have a workforce that truly reflects the demography of our city.

We are clear that social workers who share cultural backgrounds with their clients can better understand and address specific challenges, fostering trust and effective communication as well as creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for those we serve to protect. We are conscious of national reports reflecting on the racism challenges that minority ethnic social workers continue to experience at work. We are committed as a service to ensuring that everyone is included, empowered, and treated with respect. Our Diversity in Recruitment report was presented for Committee approval in the early part of 2024/25.

Training, learning and development

Workforce Development Plans across social work have focussed their [https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s135004/HSCP22.073_APPENDIX A - DRAFT - ACHSCP WORKFORCE Plan 2022-2025.pdf](https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s135004/HSCP22.073_APPENDIX_A_-_DRAFT_-_ACHSCP_WORKFORCE_Plan_2022-2025.pdf) key priorities on recruitment and retention, mental health and wellbeing, and growth and development opportunities. Whilst we have seen some improvement in terms of filling vacancies, we have a long way to go, particularly in some areas. We must continue to strive to ensure that the needs of our workforce are catered for within our plans, and that the voice and experience of social workers are considered in wider workforce discussions.

We continue to celebrate the achievements of our staff both externally through further development, as for example, Mental Health Officers, Practice Teachers, Child Protection practitioners and the undertaking of the MSc in Residential Childcare as well as through our now established annual 'Star Awards' ceremony, where staff are nominated for top recognition across various categories including 'Bright Sparks', most collaborative team, apprentice of the year, rising star etc. Our WFD Plans are multi-faceted, ensuring that whether staff are NQSW's, early years social workers or more advanced practitioners, whether they would wish to consolidate and enhance their skills at practitioner level or to follow a management/leadership trajectory, targeted learning and development is in place, shaped within each member of our workforce's Continuous Review and Development (CR&D.)

Moving more experienced social workers to areas that are harder to recruit to is not deemed to be feasible as ultimately it results in leaving another area with need. Social work vacancies are often attracting NQSW, and we recognise the first 2 years in these posts are a steep learning curve.

Aberdeen has for a number of years now had an annual training programme offer open to NQSWs. The training inducts NQSW and provides the opportunity to enhance knowledge and skills for professional development and practice improvement. The programme has more recently been further developed in cognisance of upcoming changes to the SSSC supported year. This includes the cohort being provided tailored training, information and support, in addition to that provided by their line managers, teams, and colleagues.

Within Children's Social work, the cohort are brought together at least once a month for face-to-face training sessions; they are part of an exclusive MS Teams channel; and are regularly sent information to aid their learning and development. There are ACC internal NQSW intranet pages that provide essential support, guidance, and information for supervisors and

Year	Number of NQSWs Signed Up to NQSW programme
2022/23	23
2023/24	29
2024/25	20

NQSWs. The programme provides an overview of CSW, with opportunity to meet with the CSWO/Chief Officer, Lead Children's Services Manager and external partner agencies, followed by an introduction to our specialist teams, services and partner organisations.

NQSW are supported by dedicated line managers and teams, who help them navigate their first year of being a social worker. The aim is that all NQSWs feel supported, confident, and skilled in their practice, in order to encourage those most suited to working in frontline services to stay within our services for as long as possible. With the recent implementation of the SSSC NQSW supported first year in practice making the 'definitions of employer support' mandatory for all NQSW employers, our supervisors are signposted to the SSSC dedicated website that provides all NQSWs, their employers, managers and supervisors with information, guidance, news, and resources.

In practice, the impact of employer support means ensuring additional protected time to sufficiently support the needs of the NQSW and affording supervisors with the time and support required to conduct that role. Managers feel this now equates to about 50% more time in dedicated supervision and this added resource continues to be a challenge to resource.

Other initiatives, such as an annual CSW workshop in partnership with The Robert Gordon University (which this year saw around 50 final year social work students attend) has now become an established element of our recruitment planning. In March 2025, the soon to graduate students met with experienced and motivated members of our workforce. All were delighted to be joined by one of our care experienced young people, as they all shared their experiences of working in social work within Aberdeen. We are clear these events continue to support recruitment activities and dispel continually held myths of working in a statutory social work setting.

ACHSCP have been encouraging adult social work uptake of Winter Flu and Covid vaccinations to protect our staff and patients. To support health and wellbeing in the workplace we also encourage staff to undertake mandatory training to keep up with health and safety techniques, healthy working lives initiatives and encourage staff to take regular breaks.

In December 2024 the ACHSCP hosted the second staff conference post-Covid. Adult social work had the opportunity to take centre stage providing an overview of a range of areas of development in the service including TEC, the unpaid work team and the benefits of multi-disciplinary working. The outputs of these events have helped inform our next Strategic Plan and will support the development of the next ACHSCP workforce plan, continuing the communication and opportunities to collaborate with our workforce. The value of this type of events support health and wellbeing, showcasing the initiatives available for the staff all year round. Most importantly we ask that our staff give feedback at these events so we can make the most of the time we use together. These events have been well received with overwhelming majority rating them a good use of time.

As welcome as these developments have been, we are mindful that many colleagues continue to hold large caseloads with an increasing complexity of need. They also have significant statutory obligations that require appropriate decisions and effective interventions, to ensure that needs are met, and associated risks are reduced. The commitment in our workforce plans to introduce and enhance our support of staff in different ways including:

- flexible working opportunities to support staff wellbeing, whilst continuing to ensure the exigencies of the service continue to be met
- service and team wellbeing events
- signposting to psychological resilience supports.
- refresh of our Staff Supervision Policy
- bespoke counselling support to staff who have experienced particularly traumatic work-related events
- continuing to give effect to the "Roadmap for Creating Trauma-Informed and responsive change" and adopting trauma-informed and staff wellbeing supports.

The weekly online staff Forum for all Adult Social Work staff, together with the weekly staff bulletin, continues to be a real strength. It provides an opportunity for directed learning as well as creating a culture of peer support and advice. The success of this has been evident through positive feedback from staff.

We have a well-established multi agency child and adult protection learning and development (L&D) programme. The programme is consistently quality assured which helps to measure the impact training has had on practitioners' confidence and capabilities in supporting and improving outcomes.

We recognise that our work here has been hindered by key vacancies, such as the Learning and Development Coordinator within Children's Social Work and efforts are underway to recruit to this post during 2025/26.

Annual training needs analysis is undertaken with service managers in order to identify key learning and development priorities for the year ahead. Within Children's social work the following areas have been prioritised:

- Risk assessment and management of harmful sexual behaviour
- Recommencement of the Post Graduate Certificate in Child Welfare and Protection
- Trauma awareness and recovery principles
- Supervision skills
- Leadership and Management

Within Adult Social Work we continue to work to develop the knowledge and skills of existing staff with a focus on long term retention and succession planning. We funded two Social Work trainees who are now in their final year of studies along with 2 MHOs and 3 staff receiving their Practice Learning Qualification. We are dedicated to developing the next generation of social workers and facilitated 26 student placements during this year in a range of settings.

We continue to support staff in our inhouse services to achieve their Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) relevant to their post. During this past year, 20 staff have qualified at either level 6,7, or 9 and have gained their SVQ award. We are well on our way of achieving a qualified workforce and currently have only 33 staff who are a mixture of permanent and relief staff who are still to complete their award.

In 2023/24 Teams across adult social work collaborated to develop a programme of Induction and Core Skill training which is available to new and existing team members. The training incorporates a number of key areas including finances, trauma informed practice, TEC, supporting carers in addition to specific content on each individual service area. This year 95 staff have completed this 12-week programme demonstrating a strong commitment to continuous professional learning across all service areas. As this is a cross-service approach there is added benefit due to development of professional relationships and the increased understanding other areas of practice.

6. Strategic Forward Looking

The above report rightly provides an opportunity to reflect on the past year. The report strongly evidences the efforts and commitment of social work staff to go above and beyond to deliver on Aberdeen City's vision of being **"a place where everyone prospers"**. This year's report also highlights a number of key challenges that are anticipated in the year ahead. This will require social staff and all leaders to continue to manage levels of uncertainty but also continue to adapt with agility and compassion to meet the needs of the citizens in our city who need our support the most.

The key priorities for our collective consideration over the coming year are anticipated to be:

A. Workforce

I have unstinting respect for the commitment and dedication social work practitioners demonstrate on a daily basis to support to our most vulnerable citizens despite significant and sustained operational challenges. I do not take their efforts for granted.

Given the volume and complexity of the work as well as the emotional toll of its impact on the resilience of the workforce the risk of burnout is high. Managers and leaders work hard to mitigate the effects of these through high quality professional supervision as well as other measures to support wellbeing. While this has mitigated some risks, the length of a social work career for some is worryingly short.

Aberdeen City Council are proposing all full-time staff to move from a 37-hour week to a 35-hour working week early in the 2025/26 year. While this change will positively allow for more flexible working arrangements to be considered there is a worry about the financial impact on our workforce and our attractiveness to NQSW's. This change will result in the starting salary for a social worker with Aberdeen City Council being among the lowest of all 32 local authorities and significantly lower than our neighbouring local authorities.

Monitoring the impact on recruitment and retention of the move to 35 hours will be a priority in the years ahead. As noted, critical vacancies continue to be experienced. I share the aspiration of the National Social Work Agency (NSWA) to promote the role of social work and consider what kind of social work service we want for Scotland going forward.

We welcome the intention to develop an Advanced Social Work Practice Framework. This will hopefully ensure greater access to high quality learning and development opportunities for practitioners. In turn this will hopefully contribute to retaining social workers in the profession and to ensure we have a pipeline of future social work leaders.

B. Social Care resilience

The national foster care shortage is being acutely felt. Figures from the Fostering Network state that there is a shortfall of 6,000 foster carers. It is an increasing challenge to identify suitable matches for children with carers. This is not solely due to availability but also reflects the profile of children's needs. As a consequence this increases the risk of children being placed in out of authority residential care settings at a significant cost. The outcomes for children in these settings can often not match the investment made in their care and support.

I therefore welcome the increasing scrutiny and attention Social Work Scotland and COSLA are giving to this area and the need for a greater transparency and accountability of providers to their service provision and fees.

Significant work continues to be progressed to support and strengthen the resilience of the social care market in Aberdeen City. However, we continue to recognise its vulnerability. Demand for care homes, care at home support and personal assistants outstrips capacity. The national spotlight on how we value carers reflects remuneration as well as the societal status given to caring roles.

A number of care contracts have been reviewed in the past year 2024/25 including supported living, care at home and our contract with our arm's length organisation (ALEO) Bon Accord Care. Contracts have been developed with consideration of ethical commissioning, TEC and GIRFE principles in mind. We are working collaboratively with providers, our workforce and service users to focus on sustainability and resilience in the sector but appreciate this remains an area of vulnerability.

We continue to recognise the system challenges of delayed discharge. A programme of work will be initiated called Discharge without Delay. This focuses on a number of key change initiatives including as referenced Discharge to Assess and Frailty at the Front Door. Evaluation of this will be critical to

inform our continuing efforts to ensure older adults are only admitted to hospital where required and discharged back to the community in a planned and timely manner.

C. Legislative & Policy Landscape

The policy and legislative context in which social work operates is fast changing with increasing complexities for the workforce to navigate. The pace of change is daunting for social work professionals. As leaders we need to ensure our support to them responds with equal pace. For a range of reasons including reduced funding, resource capacity and policy clarity this is not always possible to the extent we would want.

The Independent Care Review, [The Promise](#), and the Adult Social Care Review acknowledged the complexity of the social work task, and the challenges faced by staff delivering services to vulnerable individuals and families.

We welcome the publication of Plan 24 – 30 and share the emphasis Promise Scotland has given to all Corporate Parents to step up to the challenge of delivering the Promise in full by 2030. While progress is being made there remains a way to go. We anticipate the publication of the “Promise Bill” in 2025/26. This will be key to delivering some key changes set out in The Promise. The scale of proposed change is significant, and it is critical the detail and resource supports the intended transformation change and leads to improved outcomes for care experienced children & young people.

Full implementation of the Children’s (Care & Justice) Act 2024 is anticipated in 2025/26. We await final details of the Act’s intentions and the funding that will be allocated to support delivery of this key piece of legislation. I however share COSLA’s concerns about the proposed allocation to local authorities being insufficient.

Plans to transform social care across Scotland will be progressed after the Scottish Parliament approved the Care Reform (Scotland) Bill in June 2025. Thousands of people with experience of accessing, delivering and receiving social care, social work and community health services have helped co-design the legislation, putting people at the heart of reform. The Bill will bring forward a number of enhancements to social care that include:

- Enshrining Anne’s Law into legislation to uphold the rights of people living in adult care homes to see loved ones and identify an essential care supporter
- Strengthening support for unpaid carers by establishing a legal right to breaks, following the additional £13 million already allocated for up to 40,000 carers to take voluntary sector short breaks
- Empowering people to access information on their care and improving the flow of information across care settings
- Improving access to independent advocacy to guarantee people are heard and involved in decisions about their own care
- Creating a National Chief Social Work Adviser role to provide professional leadership and champion the sector, as part of plans for a new National Social Work Agency.
- Alongside the Bill, an advisory board will be established to drive progress and scrutinise reform, replacing an interim board that met for the first time in May.

The recently published [Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework](#) is a comprehensive reform initiative aimed at transforming health and social care in Scotland. It promotes a vision where individuals lead longer, healthier lives.

D. Financial Constraints

The increasing complexity of service demand alongside increasing budget pressures are likely to escalate in the coming year(s). This is compounded by the cost-of-living crisis and the impact of poverty. The fiscal pressures on Council’s and Health & Social Care Partnerships are unrelenting. This is being most acutely felt across services within the Health & Social Care Partnership.

Work at a local level continues at pace to strengthen early and preventative support to children, young people, vulnerable adults and families that mitigates the need for social work intervention. Acknowledging the corrosive impact of poverty, I welcome Aberdeen City's engagement in the Scottish Government's Fairer Futures Partnership. Demand continues to outstrip the capacity of social work services. Inevitably this causes frustration for families which can lead to complaints. It also causes frustration to the workforce and an internal conflict with their professional values.

Given the fiscal pressures will continue over the coming years, it is essential we retain a clear focus on our strategic priorities. Ensuring we listen to our children, young people, families and vulnerable adults will continue to ensure we develop and design our services according to their needs embracing the benefits of technology where we can. It will also ensure individuals and families are able to access support in a manner that feels more integrated and relevant to their needs.

I have highlighted throughout this report many examples of effective, innovative, and creative ways of working and service evolution which are delivering high quality care and support to Aberdeen City's most vulnerable citizens. The success of these is down to the daily commitment and determination of social work colleagues delivering social work and social care, despite the challenges. Their passion to empower and support others to improve their lives inspires me as their Chief Social Work Officer.

Graeme Simpson
CSWO/Chief Officer Children and Family Services
10 October 2025

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	25 November 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Aberdeen City's Child Protection Committee Annual Report 2024-25
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/266
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR	Amy Anderson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.1, 2.2, 2.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To share Aberdeen City's Child Protection Committee (CPC) Annual Report 2024-25 to provide assurance that the work of the CPC is effectively helping reduce risks to children and young people.

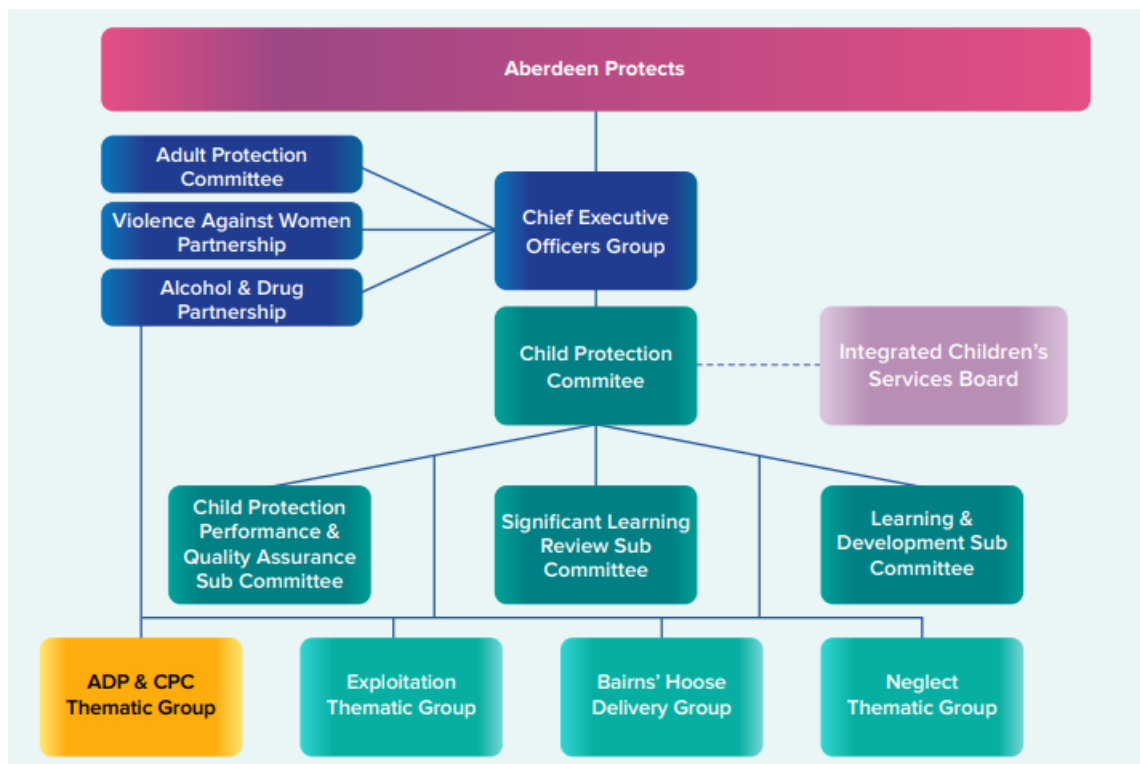
2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes the content of the CPC's Annual Report 2024-25; and
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Social Work Officer to provide Committee with a further report in November 2026 detailing the continuing impact and effectiveness of partnership work in relation to child protection.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Aberdeen City's Child Protection Committee (CPC) is a multi-agency strategic partnership governed by the Chief Executive Officers of Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian and the Police Commander for the area. It is committed to providing individual and collective leadership and direction for the management of child protection services in the Aberdeen City area. Areas for improvement which are identified through self-evaluation are driven through the Child Protection Improvement Programme.
- 3.2 The CPC works collaboratively with other strategic partnerships in the City such as the Children's Services Board, Aberdeen Violence Against Women & Girls Partnership (particularly in relation to child protection and domestic abuse), Adult Protection Committee, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership under the banner of Aberdeen Protects as is outlined in the visual below.



- 3.3 The CPC routinely analyses and evaluates the impact of our collaborative work to keep children safe. Areas for improvement are detailed in the CPC Child Protection Programme 2024-26 which aims to improve the safety, wellbeing and life chances of vulnerable children and young people. Improvement activity is reported to and monitored by the CPC through its connected sub committees which are; the Learning Review, the Performance & Quality Assurance, and the Learning & Development sub committees. Improvement activity set out in the Child Protection Programme 2024-2026, is and will be subject to the inspection scrutiny of the Care Inspectorate.
- 3.4 The CPC produces a statutory Annual Report to demonstrate the work of the CPC over a full year in both leading and improving child protection arrangements. The report is informed by the now well embedded Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) and audit programme.
- 3.5 The Annual Report highlights many achievements including the development of our Bairns' Hoose following our successful pathfinder application in 2023, several self evaluation activities such as the distribution, collection and analysis of the Care Inspectorates Staff Survey, a case file reading exercise, joint development sessions with the Children's Services Board (CSB), and self evaluation of our progress to achieve the Bairns' Hoose Standards.
- 3.6 The Child Protection Improvement Programme 2024 – 2026 commenced in August 2024. The programme was informed by learning from our data, audits, notifications for learning reviews, and our self evaluation activity. The CPC priorities set out in the Child Protection Programme 2024-2026 are:
- Neglect
 - Child Protection & Parental Substance Abuse
 - Exploitation

- Child Protection & Domestic Abuse
- Interdisciplinary Multi-Agency Working
- Learning & Development

- 3.7 Aberdeen City was last inspected in 2019 and received a rating of **Good**. The CPC agreed, based on the evidence from the self evaluation activity undertaken and embedding of the identified areas for improvement, that as a Partnership we have undoubtedly improved since the last inspection.
- 3.8 In January 2025, the Partnership were informed that Scottish Government had instructed the Care Inspectorate to change the focus of strategic inspections to have a focus on children who are looked after at home by their parents. This was in recognition of the fact that outcomes for this group of looked after children are amongst the poorest of all looked after children groups. Key to the inspection will be how well, as a Partnership, we are working to support children to remain at home where it is safe for them to be there. The updated methodology for undertaking these inspections is yet to be published. Despite a change in focus for inspection, activity undertaken by the Partnership over the last 12 months will only enhance our position and our capacity for improvement.
- 3.9 As part of our commitment to continuous improvement and in response to evolving national inspection priorities, the CPC and CSB initiated Audit 8 under the Quality Assurance Framework 2024–2025 in June 2025. This audit focuses on services provided to children in the ‘care system’ who are living at home with their parents under compulsory supervision orders. Through this audit, we aim to assess the quality, consistency and effectiveness of multi-agency support, identify areas of strength and development, and ensure that children looked after at home receive the support they need to achieve improved outcomes. This audit activity will be extended further by engaging with staff who would support children looked after at home, and engagement with children (and their family) who are looked after at home. The findings and recommendations from this audit will be presented to the CPC in December 2025.
- 3.10 Feedback from our Care Inspectorate Link Inspector, who attends CPC meetings, continues to reflect very positively on the work of the partnership.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 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.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant risks identified			
Compliance	No significant risks identified			
Operational	Required improvements and developments in practice are not identified and actioned.	Children, young people, their families and the professional workforce can be assured that services in Aberdeen City are continually appraised in order to improve the quality of locally delivered services.	M	Yes
Financial	No significant risks identified			
Reputational	Organisational failings in relation to child protection can bring significant media interest and scrutiny of services delivered to children and young people.	The public can be assured that: the Council ensures compliance with legal requirements, national standards and guidance; partners respond to self and external scrutiny; and identified areas for improvement are addressed.	M	Yes
Environment / Climate	No significant risks identified			

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	The work of the CPC is aligned to other strategic partnerships, namely the Children's Services Board, Violence Against Women & Girls Partnership, Alcohol and Drug Partnership, and the Adult Protection Committee, whose aims are aligned collectively to the Council Delivery Plan 2025-26 and

	the Working in Partnership for Aberdeen Policy Statement.
Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The functions of the CPC are central to supporting and assuring that the multi agency Children's Services partners deliver on the outcomes of the LOIP – Prosperous People (Children and Young People) and People (Adults) Stretch Outcomes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12 to ensure our children are safe from harm. Children, young people and families who are adequately protected from threats to their health, safety and economic wellbeing are more likely to prosper than those who are not.
Regional and City Strategies	The work of the CPC is relevant to Aberdeen City Council Delivery Plan, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, the Children's Services Plan and the Child Protection Improvement Programme

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Graeme Simpson, Chief Social Work Officer, Families & Communities – Children's Social Work on 17 October 2025.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required for this report
Other	Not required for this report

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Aberdeen City CPC Annual Report 2024-2025

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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It's everyone's job to make sure I'm alright

**Aberdeen City's Child
Protection Committee
Annual Report 2024–2025**





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ACRONYMS

ADP	Alcohol and Drugs Partnership
APC	Adult Protection Committee
CEC	Criminal Exploitation of Children
COG	Chief Officers Group
COPFS	Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
CPP	Child Protection Partnership
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CPR	Child Protection Register
CSB	Children's Services Board
IRD	Inter-Agency Referral Discussion
JII	Joint Investigative Interview
LOIP	Local Outcome Improvement Plan
P&QA	Performance & Quality Assurance
SCIM	Scottish Child Interview Model
SCRA	Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
SCTS	Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service
VAWGP	Violence Against Women & Girls Partnership



PREFACE FROM CHIEF OFFICERS

It is with pride and gratitude that we present this year’s Annual Report from the Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee. The dedication, resilience, and collaborative spirit combined with respectful and robust challenge that have characterised our work over the past year have provided a strong foundation for the continued protection and wellbeing of children and young people across our city.

Our achievements have been realised through the tireless efforts of all partner agencies, who have worked together under the shared vision that, “It’s everyone’s job to make sure I’m alright.” This ethos has guided us as we have refined our structures, strengthened our leadership, and driven forward improvement initiatives to ensure that every child in Aberdeen is safe, supported, and able to flourish.

This year, we have continued to develop robust multi-agency partnerships, guided by the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021-23 and our ongoing Child Protection Improvement Programme for 2024-2026. The collaborative work of the Committee, supported by our Chief Officers Group and in close alignment with other key partnerships such as the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership and Children’s Services Board, has enabled us to deliver effective and innovative responses to the complex challenges facing children and families. Regular reviews, learning opportunities, and the commitment of our Independent Chair and dedicated staff have been instrumental in ensuring that our services remain responsive, evidence-based, and rooted in the needs and voices of our community.

As we reflect on the year’s progress, we also look ahead with ambition and purpose. We recognise that effective child protection is an ongoing endeavour—one that requires vigilance, adaptability, and the collective will of all those committed to safeguarding Aberdeen’s children and young people. With the support of our partners and the community, I am confident that we will continue to build on our achievements, address emerging challenges, and strive for excellence in every aspect of our work.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our shared mission over the past year. Together, we will keep children and young people at the centre of all we do, ensuring a safer, brighter future for every young person in Aberdeen.



Angela Scott
*Chief Executive
Aberdeen City Council*



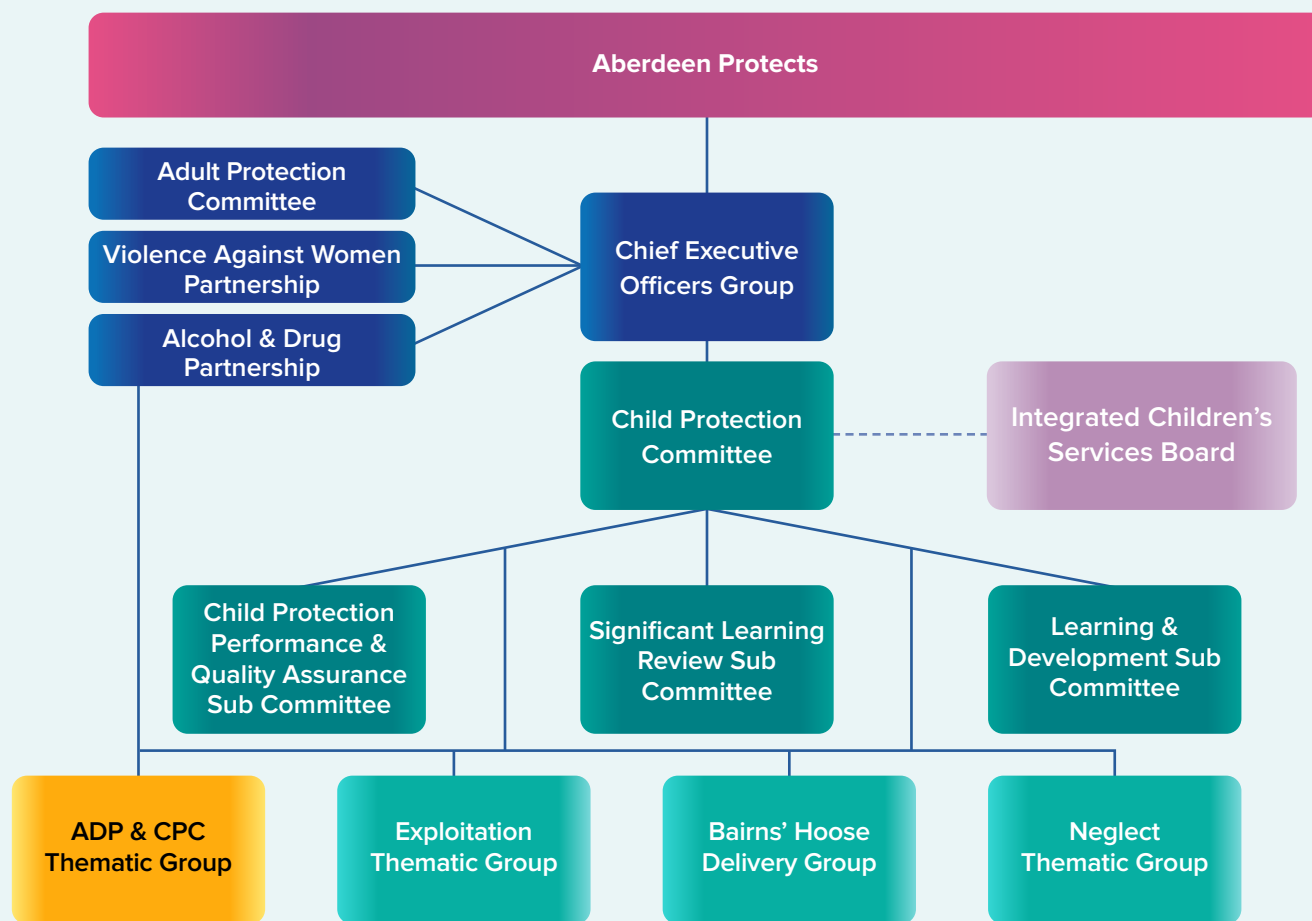
Laura Skaife-Knight
*Chief Executive
NHS Grampian*



Kate Stephen
*Divisional Commander
Police Scotland*

CPC LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

The CPC structure for 2024/2025 can be found below



The Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee (CPC) is the key local body responsible for implementing and improving child protection strategy across and between agencies, bodies and the Aberdeen community. The CPC has a crucial role in identifying and managing risk to children and young people, monitoring and improving performance and promoting the ethos that, **“It’s everyone’s job to make sure I’m alright.”** Its role, local structures and membership, provide leadership and direction for the management of child protection services across Aberdeen City.

As illustrated above, the CPC is governed by the Chief Officers Group (COG) who have clear responsibilities set out in the [Protecting children and young people: Child Protection Committee and Chief Officer responsibilities guidance](#) published by the Scottish Government in February 2019.

The Aberdeen City COG is well established as is the relationship between the COG and CPC. The structure also illustrates the connectedness through the COG of the CPC with the other strategic partnerships in the City, namely APC, VAWGP, and ADP, all working together under the banner of Aberdeen Protects to take forward child protection policy and practice across the local area and across Scotland. Strong links exist between the CPC and Aberdeen City’s Children’s Services Board (CSB) through the [Children’s Services Plan 2023-2026](#), enhanced further by the Chief Social Work Officer as chair of the CSB and vice chair of the CPC.

CPC MANAGEMENT & STRATEGIC LINKS

The CPC operates in line with the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021-23, with this report detailing the progress made and ongoing self-assessment. To fulfil its main responsibilities, the CPC relies on its established structure and the collaborative, multi-agency Child Protection Improvement Programme covering 2024-2026.

An Independent Chair, who also chairs the Adult Protection Committee, provides a unified approach to governance, supported by senior figures from partner organisations throughout Aberdeen. The Committee convenes quarterly to review performance data, share learning, consider national developments, and discuss ongoing improvement work. In addition to regular meetings, a development session was held with input from subcommittees and thematic working groups.

The Aberdeen City Chief Officers Group (COG, comprised of representatives from Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian, and Police Scotland, oversees both the strategic direction and resource allocation for the CPC. Their support ensures sufficient funding for essential staff, key priorities identified in this report, learning reviews, and delivery of the Child Protection Programme 2024-2026. Key staff include the Independent Chair, a dedicated Lead Officer, and a multi-agency Learning & Development Coordinator.

Regionally, the Child Protection Partnership (CPP) brings together the Lead Officers from the CPCs of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, and Moray. The CPP's main responsibility is managing the North East Child Protection Register, with costs shared by Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Moray Council, NHS Grampian, and Police Scotland.

Beyond the North East, the CPC maintains strong links with external bodies such as the Care Inspectorate, the Central & North Scotland CPC Consortium, the Scottish Government, CPC Scotland, and the National Leadership Public Protection Group. These connections help shape the CPC's ongoing improvement strategy and planning.



CPC ACTIVITY IN 2024/25

Over the course of the year the CPC, and all those working across the partnership, have worked towards delivering on the many initiatives and improvements striving to support and improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

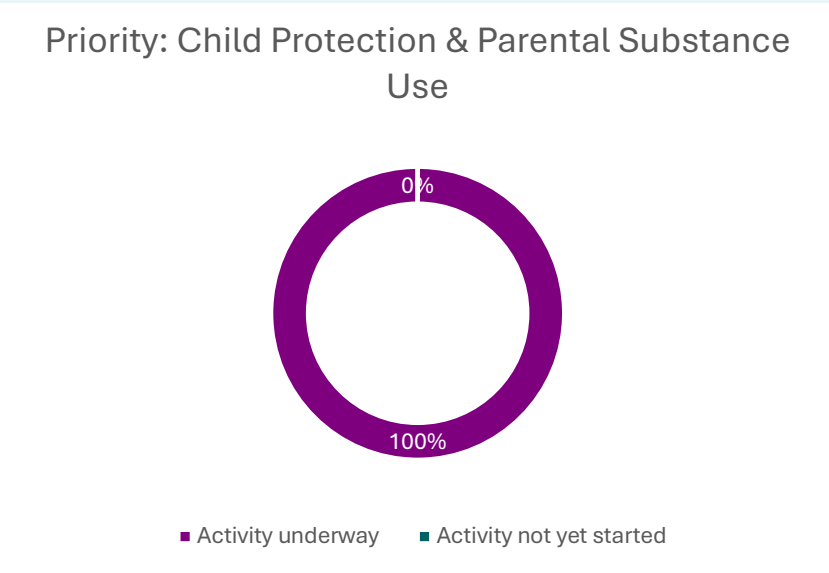
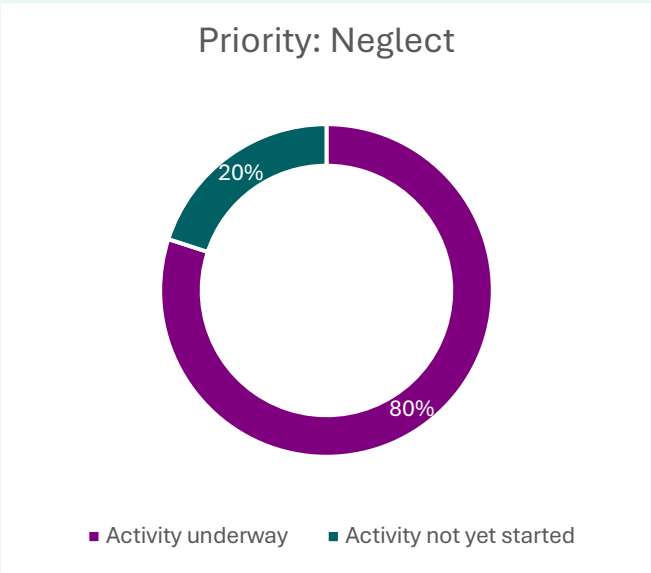
- Bairns Hoose
- QAF audit
- Staff Survey
- Self Assessment
- Introduction of our CP improvement programme 2024-26
- Q&A Webinars



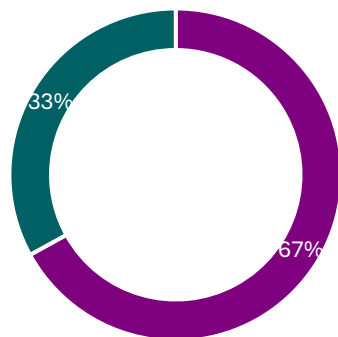
CHILD PROTECTION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME 2024-2026

Yearly Progress

The pie charts below illustrate our progress on the activities we have undertaken to deliver on the priorities in our improvement programme.

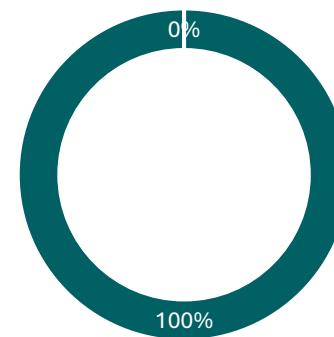


Priority: Exploitation



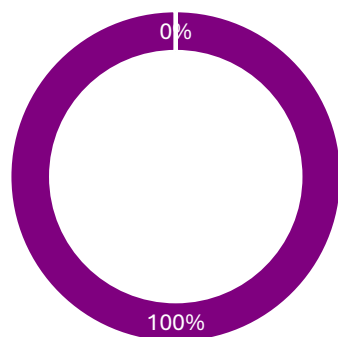
■ Activity underway ■ Activity not yet started

Priority: Child Protection & Domestic Abuse



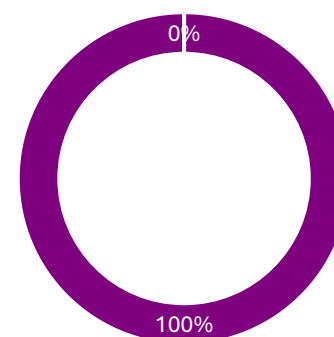
■ Activity underway ■ Activity not yet started

Priority: Interdisciplinary multi agency working



■ Activity underway ■ Activity not yet started

Priority: Learning & Development



■ Activity underway ■ Activity not yet started

SUB-COMMITTEES AND THEMATIC GROUPS

Sub Committees and Thematic Groups are multi agency in representation and have met regularly through 2023/2024, with each delivering on specific improvement priorities.

Performance & Quality Assurance Sub-Committee

Why is this important?

The P&QA sub-committee submits quarterly data and scrutiny reports to the CPC, based on the national minimum data set version 2 and local indicators adopted in November 2022. Through regular meetings, the members are able to take a holistic view of the Partnerships performance and, as a result, are able to respectfully challenge each other to tease out potential gaps in service provision that may require the attention of the CPC. Similarly, the sub-committee are able to recognise through data and discussion areas of strength and improvements.

Quarterly reports highlight key child protection trends for the CPC's attention and show the landscape of child protection in Aberdeen City through our data (see Appendix 2).

What have we done?

The P&QA sub-committee provided robust oversight of child protection data trends and performance indicators across the partnership.

The P&QA sub-committee continue to refine their methods of scrutiny aided by PowerBI. Further, the sub committee have made more improvements to its scrutiny and analysis by considering and discussing:

1. What in our data tells us there are improving outcomes for children & young people?
2. What in our data is helping us understand cause and effect?
3. How does our data tell us children & young people are safer?

In 2024/25, the committee's quarterly reports highlighted several key shifts in our data since 2023/24:

- 10% reduction in the number of referrals received by Children's Social Work
- 24% reduction in the number of IRDs undertaken
- 23% reduction in the number of JIIs undertaken

- 21% increase in the number of children on the CPR at year end (31 July)

7% increase in the number of children registered on the CPR because of parental/carer mental health.

What we plan to do next

The sub-committee identified areas for improvement, including:

- Understanding the "other concerns" category in child protection registrations.
- Strengthening therapeutic support for adults with mental health needs.
- Supporting the development of Aberdeen City assessment tool for neglect, in collaboration with the Neglect Thematic Group.



Learning Review Sub-Committee

Why is this important?

The Learning Review sub-committee are mandated by the CPC to review and conduct Learning Reviews on its behalf. The sub-committee follows the National Guidance for CPCs undertaking Learning Reviews, which was updated in 2023. Learning Reviews are used for detailed analysis and reflection to better understand complex situations and to inform approaches for improving practice and systems within agencies. Decisions about cases selected for review are submitted to the CPC and the COG for ratification.

What have we done?

The Learning Review sub-committee has actively contributed to child protection efforts throughout the reporting period. Key activities included reviewing the Perth and Kinross Learning Review, which will lead to the development of multi agency guidance for the supervision of children in hospital settings, coordinated by NHS Grampian.

The group also supported new guidance for the management of childhood poisoning and explored relevant health guidance for wider sharing. In response to regional data on child deaths, the sub-committee discussed underlying factors such as poverty and prematurity, and committed to more detailed reporting to better understand these trends.

Collaborative work has focused on safe sleep messaging and substance use risks, with NHS colleagues engaging in focus groups to improve outreach to vulnerable families. The sub-committee has played a vital role in integrating local informal efforts with the formal Child Death Oversight Group, ensuring ongoing review and enhancement of protocols to protect children across the North East.

During this reporting period, the Learning Review sub-committee considered one initial notification for a learning review. This did not proceed to a learning review due to no **new or additional learning** being identified. When considering the initial notification, the sub committee identified many areas of good practice such as regular support, timely responses, good information sharing, and that literature for safe sleep practices were being shared with parents.

In response to the revised National Guidance for Child Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews (2021, updated January 2024), Aberdeen City CPC collaborated with partners across Grampian to deliver a comprehensive Learning Review Training programme aimed at strengthening local capacity to undertake systemic reviews.

What we plan to do next

Looking ahead, the Learning Review sub-committee will continue to strengthen the local Learning Review process by finalising updated multi-agency practice guidance. This work aims to ensure a shared understanding of when a Learning Review should be initiated, how agency information is assessed following a notification, and what outcomes are available. The revised guidance will support robust scrutiny at each stage of the process, ensuring it is both efficient and effective.

Additionally, the committee will explore the integration of Safe Sleep messaging at the IRD stage, particularly for families with substance use vulnerabilities, and will continue to contribute to the Child Death Oversight Group, with a focus on poverty-related data analysis and improved support pathways.



The CPC is committed to ensuring that the Learning Review trained professionals are given opportunities to apply their learning in upcoming reviews. The Learning Review Sub Committee will continue to monitor and support the implementation of the training outcomes, ensuring alignment with national standards and local improvement priorities.

Additionally, it is the CPC's intention to deliver a webinar for the workforce which will cover the principles of a Learning Review and its potential outcomes, particularly where there isn't a requirement for a Learning Review, however other learning has been identified.



Learning & Development Sub Committee

Why is this important?

The L&D sub-committee is responsible for identifying and addressing opportunities for multi-agency child protection learning that enhance professional practice throughout Aberdeen City, thereby contributing to improved outcomes for children and young people.

What have we done?

The CPC's Learning & Development Coordinator post has been vacant since October 2024. Notwithstanding this vacancy, the L&D sub-committee has delivered a wide-ranging programme of training, development, and strategic planning aligned to the CPC Improvement Programme 2024–26. The sub-committee has focused on enhancing practitioner confidence, embedding national frameworks, and responding to emerging needs across the child protection workforce. The sub committee has supported and delivered a diverse range of training opportunities:

Multi-Agency Training Highlights

- Safe and Together Overview & CORE Training: Delivered to 38 participants across Social Work, NHS, Housing, and third sector partners.
- Mock Children's Hearing: A fictional hearing scenario delivered by SCRA, CHS, and Aberdeen City

- Social Work, attended by 43 professionals.
- Non-Disclosure Training: Focused on principles and application within Children's Hearings, attended by professionals from NHS, Social Work, and Education.

The CPC are also re-assured that single-agency training continues to be delivered:

- NHS Grampian delivered sessions on Neglect, Protecting Children and Substance Use, and Case Supervision for Supervisors, reaching over 40 staff
- Police Scotland provided inputs on IRD processes, GP awareness, and Sgt Continuous Professional Development programmes, enhancing understanding of child protection procedures.

The sub-committee launched a new series of Q&A Panels to provide accessible, practitioner-led learning on key child protection topics:

The first panel, held in Spring 2025, focused on Physical Abuse and was attended by over 150 practitioners, followed by Neglect in June. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants valuing the opportunity to engage directly with experienced professionals and ask questions in real time.

"I felt that it was reassuring to hear that everyone from different services had the same attitudes and goals - but highlighted that there may still be a lack of knowledge on the part of some services on what Social work can and should do when child protection matters arise. It was also helpful to hear, Health, Police and Education all acknowledge that it is not the responsibility of social work to solely manage child protection concerns and that their services can be offering support."

Social Work



“Although the duration of the session was probably only an hour for a reason, maybe as this was a practical length of time to fit in with everyone’s schedules, it could easily have been longer and covered more info. I think it is a great idea as a way to learn more and for information sharing across different agencies.”

Social Work

“Really enjoyed hearing from the staff involved in the decision making process and felt it was very relevant to my role.”

NHSG

Planning is underway for the next panel scheduled for Summer 2025. The sub-committee is exploring how to use these panels to address recurring themes from audits and Learning Reviews, such as Safe Sleep, substance use, and information sharing. These panels are designed to complement formal training and provide a flexible, responsive format for workforce development.

What we plan to do next

It is expected that the CPC’s L&D coordinator post will be filled in September 2025, which will allow us to regain our learning & development momentum. Key priorities for next year are to:

- Enhance our communication with the workforce
- Ensure better alignment in learning and development across public protection
- Collaborate with the Violence Against Women & Girls Partnership to deliver on year 2 of our CPC improvement programme
- Become more innovative in the way that learning and development opportunities are delivered and accessed.



Exploitation Thematic Group

Why is this important?

The Exploitation Thematic Group supports the coordination of the multi agency response to exploitation. The group, and the CPC, recognise that all identifying, preventing, and responding to all forms of child exploitation is a priority for Aberdeen City, and nationally. In this reporting year, the criminal exploitation of children has been a focus for this group.

The prevalence and impact of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is recognized as a significant issue, particularly for children aged 14-17 years. These children face severe risks, including physical and sexual harm, trauma, and developmental issues. National and local data indicate significant numbers of referrals, with many involved children experiencing substantial harm. County lines groups deliberately target victims of exploitation due to factors such as age, sex, or disability, making these individuals disproportionately affected due to their specific vulnerabilities.

What have we done?

A strategic governance oversight group was established in February 2025 to oversee the pilot and ensure effective governance. This group includes members from various partnerships to reflect shared governance and accountability. The

group has linked with COPFS to ensure child criminal exploitation is recognised and responded to correctly under a child protection lens.

Actions identified include adopting the working definition of Child Criminal Exploitation from the National Guidance for Child Protection Guidance in Scotland, supporting attendance at a CEC Framework focused workshop sessions for multi-agency staff delivered by Action For Children. Additionally, members of the Group have explored examples of best practice for supporting practitioners to work with children who are or at risk of being exploited.

What we plan to do next

The group plans to continue its work in alignment with the CPC Improvement Programme throughout 2025. This includes enhancing data collation to better understand the shifting local context and collaborating with other areas of the country where multi-agency practice has developed further. The group will also work on putting in place information-sharing protocols to ensure shared accountability of risk and inform safety planning.

More broadly, the Exploitation thematic group have, over the course of the year, began to explore and understand more about Tech Facilitated Sexual Exploitation, Child Sexual Extortion, and AI Generated Child Sexual Abuse Material.



Neglect Thematic Group

Why this is important

The Neglect Thematic Group was re-established in 2022 after a quality assurance audit. Neglect is a priority for us, as it is the most common issue for children on our Child Protection Register.

What have we done?

The Neglect Thematic Group has made progress this year in developing a structured, evidence-informed approach to identifying and addressing neglect across Aberdeen City. Building on national guidance and examples of best practice, the group has focused on designing a bespoke assessment toolkit that supports early identification, intervention, and improvement tracking.

Following a detailed scoping exercise, the group agreed to adapt the Somerset Family Strengths and Needs Assessment Tool and its companion Effective Support for Children Toolkit to create an Aberdeen-specific resource. The neglect thematic group engaged directly with the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership, who shared their implementation journey, challenges, and lessons learned. This included access to training sessions and practical advice on embedding the toolkit into core practice

The neglect thematic group are committed to developing the Aberdeen City Family Strengths & Needs Toolkit, a strength-based, SHANARRI-aligned tool designed to:

- Support practitioners in identifying neglect and measuring change.
- Align with The Promise and the National Practice Model.
- Provide operational guidance on use, recording, and escalation.

- Enable early help and preventative pathways
- Identify the correlation between poverty and neglect.

What we plan to do next

The neglect thematic group will continue to develop our Aberdeen City specific toolkit over the course of the next year. The thematic group have established a timeline to ensure:

- Focus group engagement and practitioner input.
- Two test-of-change phases with iterative revisions.
- Development of training materials and operational guidance.
- Full implementation and evaluation



ADP/CPC Thematic Group

Why this is important

- Our learning from our data and notifications from learning reviews has told us that we need to enhance our preventative approach in a whole family way where there are drug and alcohol concerns. In September 2024, the CPC and Aberdeen City’s Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) agreed to establish a joint thematic to group to improve the outcomes for families affected by problem substance use within Aberdeen City.

What have we done?

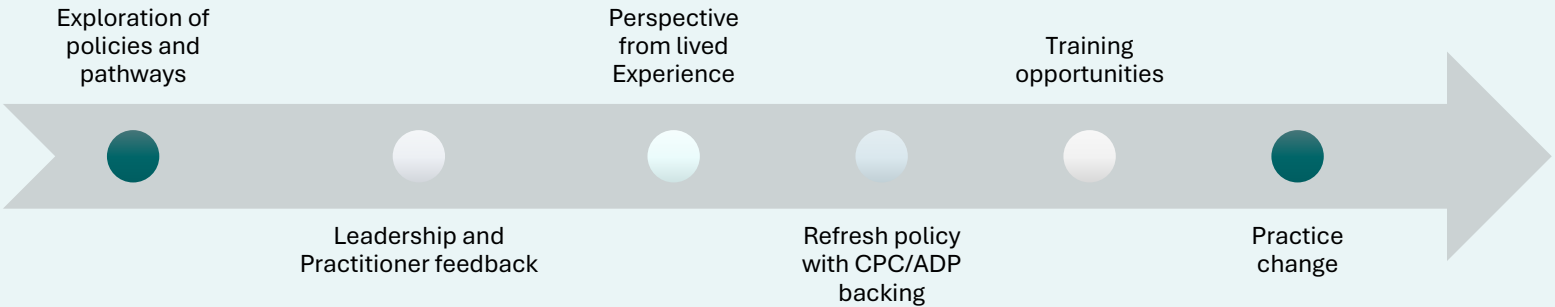
The thematic group have agreed three priorities:

1. Develop a multi-agency escalation pathway for young people exhibiting early indications of problematic alcohol and/or drug use.
2. Develop an escalation pathway for parents/adults that are exhibiting high levels of vulnerability due to their alcohol and/or drug use and/or mental health needs and they are not possibly being picked up between services due to complex trauma
3. Establish joint leaning opportunities for Adult and Children’s Services, specifically in respect of points 1 and 2.

Over the last 12 months the group have undertaken various activities to achieve these priorities.

What we plan to do next

The pathways are expected to be embedded within practice in late Summer 2025 following a test of change. Notwithstanding, this area is a priority for both adult and children’s services and is expected to feature in the 2026-2036 Local Outcome Improvement Plan.



Bairns Hoose Delivery Group

Why this is important

In November 2023, Aberdeen City Partnership were notified that we were one of the 6 Bairns Hoose pathfinder sites in Scotland. The aim of a Bairns' Hoose is to deliver integrated support to best meet the needs of children and young people who are victims of abuse or have witnessed violence as well as children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour (currently 12 years of age) has caused significant harm to others. A key aim of the model is to reduce the number of times children have to recount their experiences.

What have we done?

Aberdeen City's designation as a Pathfinder site for Bairns Hoose marked a transformative step in delivering trauma-informed, child-centred justice and recovery services in Aberdeen City. Over the past year, the multi-agency Bairns Hoose Delivery Group has made substantial progress across capital development, system change, health integration, recovery planning, and justice reform:

- The redevelopment of our identified site for a Bairns Hoose is now complete. Significant alterations to the building have been made taking on board the feedback from Children and Young People who told us what they liked and what they didn't like.

- Learning from the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) and direct feedback from children and families has driven system improvements.
- Children are now offered choice in interview location, a change that has moved from pilot to standard practice.
- Operational guidance for Bairns Hoose is in advanced development, ensuring consistent understanding of the service and its "four rooms" model.
- A Health Coordinator has been appointed by NHS Grampian to lead health and wellbeing checks and address unmet needs within the Bairns Hoose.
- A test of change is expanding support for children with complex communication needs, enabling best evidence through the Speech and Language Therapy service.
- A recent successful bid has enhanced local paediatric capacity, allowing a broader range of medicals to be conducted on-site.
- Aberdeen City's recovery model is being finalised, with a test of change underway in Northfield ASG to develop a pathway for children to access support when ready. The model adopts a whole-family approach, recognising that most Joint Investigative Interviews (JIIs) relate to abuse by parents or caregivers.
- Strong links are being built with community supports and income maximisation services to ensure proportionate and holistic responses.
- A deeper dive into the Justice element confirmed that system improvements are reducing the need for children to give evidence in court.
- COPFS, SCTS, and SCRA have endorsed the facility, with SCTS committing to install live link IT equipment to enable remote evidence-giving from Summer 2025.





Why this is important

Planning has been enhanced to ensure the Bairns Hoose is future-proofed against policy changes, including:

- Potential increase in the age of criminal responsibility.
- Changes to rules of evidence for children.
- Implementation of Trauma Informed Domestic Abuse Management (TIDAM).
- Rollout of the Children's (Care & Justice) Act.

The group continues to take a considered and incremental approach to integrating these changes into the Bairns Hoose model. As we continue on our Pathfinder journey we will continue to evaluate the impact of our Bairns Hoose in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh. In the coming year this will have an increased focus on our model of recovery support provided to children, young people and families.



Our Bairns Hoose logo, designed by our Changemakers Group

CAPACITY FOR IMPROVEMENT

Child Protection Improvement Programme 2024-26

Why this is important

In August 2024, the CPC launched its [Improvement Programme for 2024–26](#), setting out a clear and ambitious agenda to strengthen child protection practice across Aberdeen City. This programme builds on the city's trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches, and is shaped by local self-evaluation, national learning, and strategic priorities outlined in the Children's Services Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

The programme identifies six key priorities: Neglect, Child Protection & Parental Substance Use, Exploitation, Child Protection & Domestic Abuse, Interdisciplinary Multi-Agency Working, and Learning & Development. These priorities reflect both the most pressing concerns identified through local data and learning reviews, and the areas where collaborative, multi-agency action can have the greatest impact. Each priority is supported by a structured plan that outlines what will be done, how it will be achieved, and how progress will be measured.

The CPC retains oversight of the programme's delivery, ensuring that progress is regularly monitored and that the programme remains responsive to emerging needs, including findings from audits, inspections, and case reviews. This flexible and phased approach enables the CPC to embed sustainable improvements in practice while making the best use of available resources. A summary of progress made during the first year of implementation can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.



Self Evaluation Activity

In our report last year, we reported that the CPC had undertaken several self evaluation activities and had formulated a working group to take forward further evaluation work. Over the course of 2024/25, the CPC undertook further comprehensive self-evaluation activity to assess the effectiveness of our services for children and young people in need of care and protection. This initiative involved a multi-agency approach, where we engaged various stakeholders to gather insights and feedback. The key activities were:

- Distribution, collection and analysis of the Care Inspectorate’s Staff Survey
- The extent to which we involve children and young people in the development of our services
- Case File Reading Exercise
- A CPC/Children’s Services Board Development Session
- Self assessment of progress to achieve the Bairns Hoose Standards.

What We Found Out

The analysis of the staff survey indicated a generally positive response from the workforce. Practitioners expressed confidence in their understanding of relevant guidelines and felt that leaders were visible, communicative, and knowledgeable about the quality of frontline work. The survey highlighted the strength of multi-agency training, with 79% of participants

reporting improved collaboration, and 84% having a clear understanding of the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021-23. The survey also identified areas for improvement, such as the need for more consistent multi-agency collaboration, better information sharing, and greater access to mental health services for families. Additionally, staff expressed concerns about understaffing and its impact on service delivery.

The self-evaluation also focused on involving children and young people in the evaluation process. By embracing the UNCRC and implementing a Rights Respecting approach, we have ensured that the voices of children were heard and valued, including those who are pre-verbal or face communication challenges. This is further evidenced by the engagement with children and young people through our Changemakers Group, who have been influential in the design of our Bairns Hoose.

Our dedication to capturing and responding to the views and complaints of children, young people, and their families is reflected in improved documentation and service delivery.

A joint CPC/CSB development session focused on what our data tells us and doesn’t tell us, and how we can make better use of data to enhance improvement planning. The CPC’s Performance & Quality Assurance sub-committee receives child protection data from various sources, including children’s social work, Police Scotland, and Health.

This data is presented using PowerBI, which allows us to visualize the journey of a child protection concern into children’s social work services. Since the introduction of D365, a new data recording system for social work in October 2022, we have seen significant improvements in what data can be collected and presented.



We also undertook a file reading exercise using the Care Inspectorate's guidance to review the impact of services on the lives of children and young people in need of care and protection. The audit report highlighted several strengths in our child protection services, such as timely sharing of concerns, effective multi-agency collaboration, and the quality of the initial multi-agency response. However, it also provided key recommendations for improving child protection services, including better information gathering, considering the views of children and parents, and improving immediate action responses.

Next Steps

To address the identified areas for improvement, we have already initiated several actions. We are developing and delivering a series of themed Q&A Panels to enhance practitioners' understanding of each other's roles and address any unrealistic expectations. These sessions are facilitated by CPC members and will include both operational and strategic leaders as subject matter experts. Additionally, we are working on improving our record-keeping practices by sharing a practice note with the workforce, highlighting examples of good recording and areas for improvement. The CPC's Learning and Development sub-committee will continue to monitor and report on progress to ensure that our improvement activities are effective and aligned with our priorities.

The Self Evaluation Group concluded their activity by presenting the findings to the CPC in January 2025. The CPC agreed that while areas for improvement have been identified, there were no critical or previously unknown areas for improvement.

The CPC and the Self Evaluation Group agreed on the following areas which require focus:

- communication with the workforce about our child protection improvement activity and progress
- increasing staff confidence in the skilled and collaborative intervention they are involved in
- better illustrating and communicating the links between strategy and practice
- increasing the quality of recording
- better understanding the roles and responsibilities of the multi-agency practitioners involved in supporting children and families.

Aberdeen City was last inspected in 2019 and received a rating of Good. At the focus session in January 2025, it was agreed that as a Partnership we have undoubtedly improved since our last inspection.

Despite a change in focus for inspection, from children in need of care and protection to children looked after at home by their parents, activity undertaken by the Partnership over the last 12 months will only enhance our position and our capacity for improvement. Our honest and transparent approach

has been delivered by a partnership willing to appropriately challenge each other as we strive to improve our service delivery against many of the current challenges, not least poverty.

We are confident our governance processes will ensure the areas for focus are delivered timeously. Overall, the self-evaluation has contributed to improving outcomes for our workforce and most importantly children and young people within Aberdeen City.



LOOKING AHEAD INTO 2025/26

Looking ahead, the CPC remains committed to driving forward its Improvement Programme with a continued focus on the priority area of Child Protection and Domestic Abuse. This strand of work recognises the complex and often hidden nature of domestic abuse and its profound impact on children and young people. Over the coming year, the CPC will work with the Violence Against Women & Girls Partnership to strengthen multi-agency responses, improve identification and support, and embed learning from case reviews and national guidance into everyday practice.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement and in response to evolving national inspection priorities, the CPC and CSB initiated Audit 8 under the Quality Assurance Framework 2024–2025. This audit focuses on services provided to children in the ‘care system’ who are living at home with their parents under compulsory supervision orders. The decision to undertake this audit follows the Care Inspectorate’s announcement of a shift in inspection focus and reflects our own self-evaluation findings. Through this audit, we aim to assess the quality, consistency and effectiveness of multi-agency support, identify areas of strength and development, and ensure that children looked after at home receive the support they need to achieve improved outcomes. The findings and recommendations will be reported to the CPC at its business meeting in September 2025.



FINAL THOUGHTS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am pleased to bring you the eleventh annual report for the Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee. The CPC is a key local body for developing, implementing, and improving child protection strategy across the City and beyond. The CPC performs several crucial functions to jointly identify and manage the risk to children and young people. It also ensures the functions are carried out to a high standard and are aligned to national strategies.

Child Protection is not exempt from the many challenges that are faced both nationally and indeed locally, not least child poverty. That said the partnership continues to work collaboratively to ensure all children and young people remain safe throughout Aberdeen City.

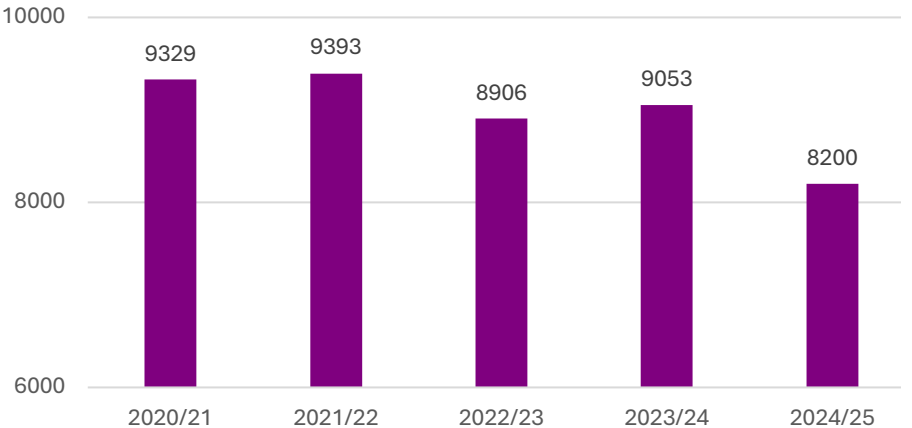
A significant internal, self-evaluation exercise aligned to Care Inspectorate methodology, rated the partnership Very Good, albeit as ever there are always areas in which we can improve, which are detailed within the report. I think it would also be fair to say the recent development and opening of the Aberdeen City Bairns Hoose is truly transformational in how the partnership responds and cares for children and young people who have faced abuse and trauma in their lives.

I would wish to take the opportunity to sincerely thank everyone across the partnership, both statutory and voluntary, who amid the challenges faced, strive selflessly to keep children and young people safe. I would also wish to thank Amy Anderson, our Lead Officer for her significant contribution to the work of the CPC over the past year.

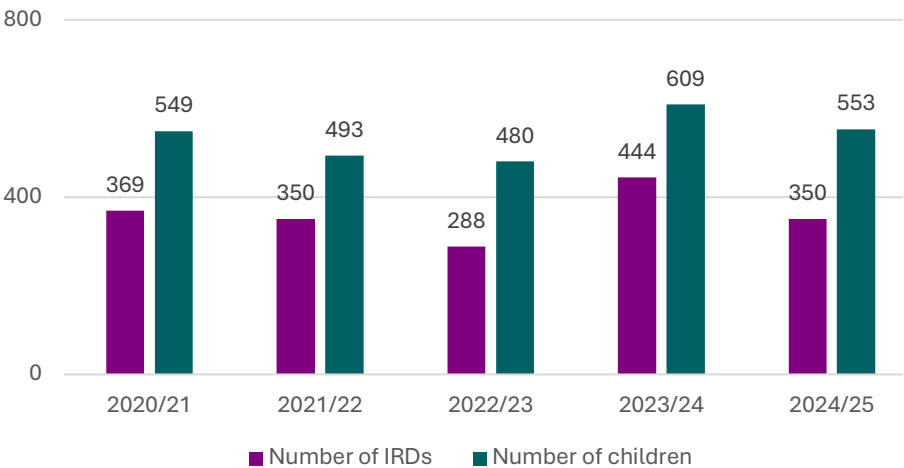
Campbell Thomson QPM
Independent Chair of Child Protection Committee



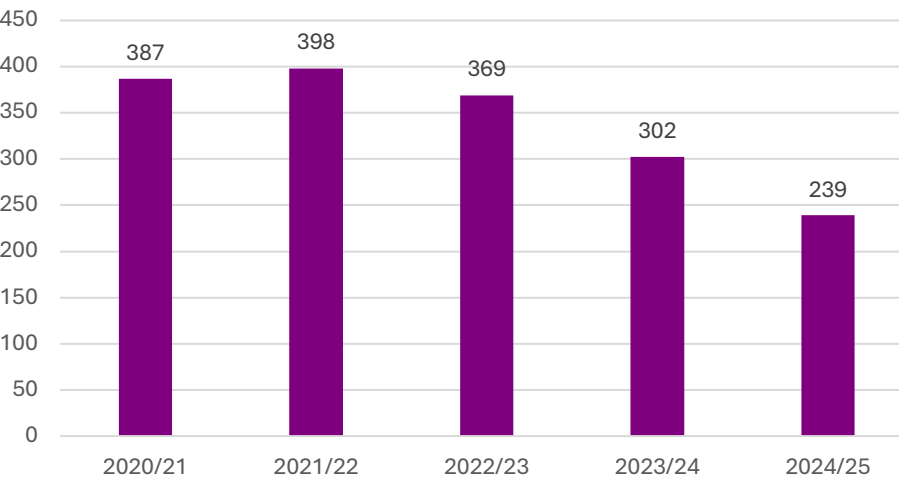
Total number of referrals to Children's Social Work (includes initial & further referrals)



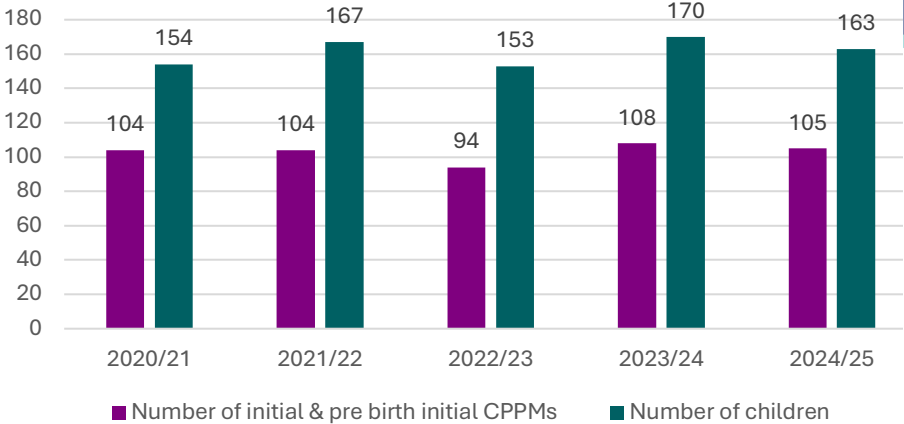
Number of IRDs & Number of children



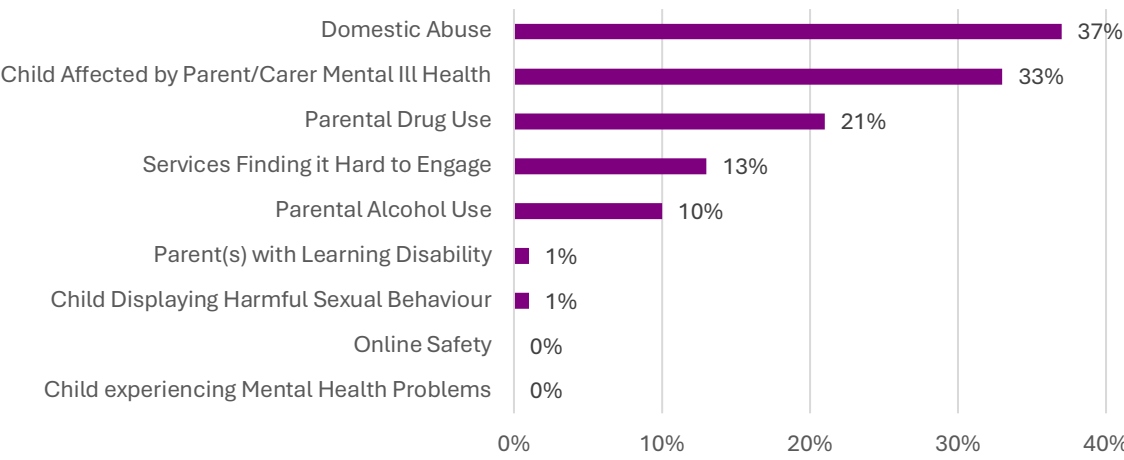
Number of JIs



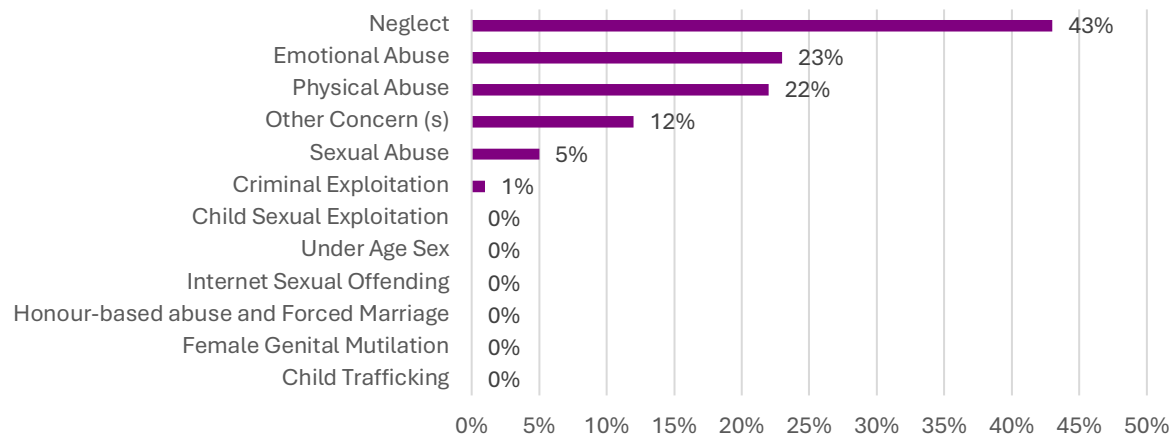
Number of initial & pre-birth initial CPPMs, and number of children

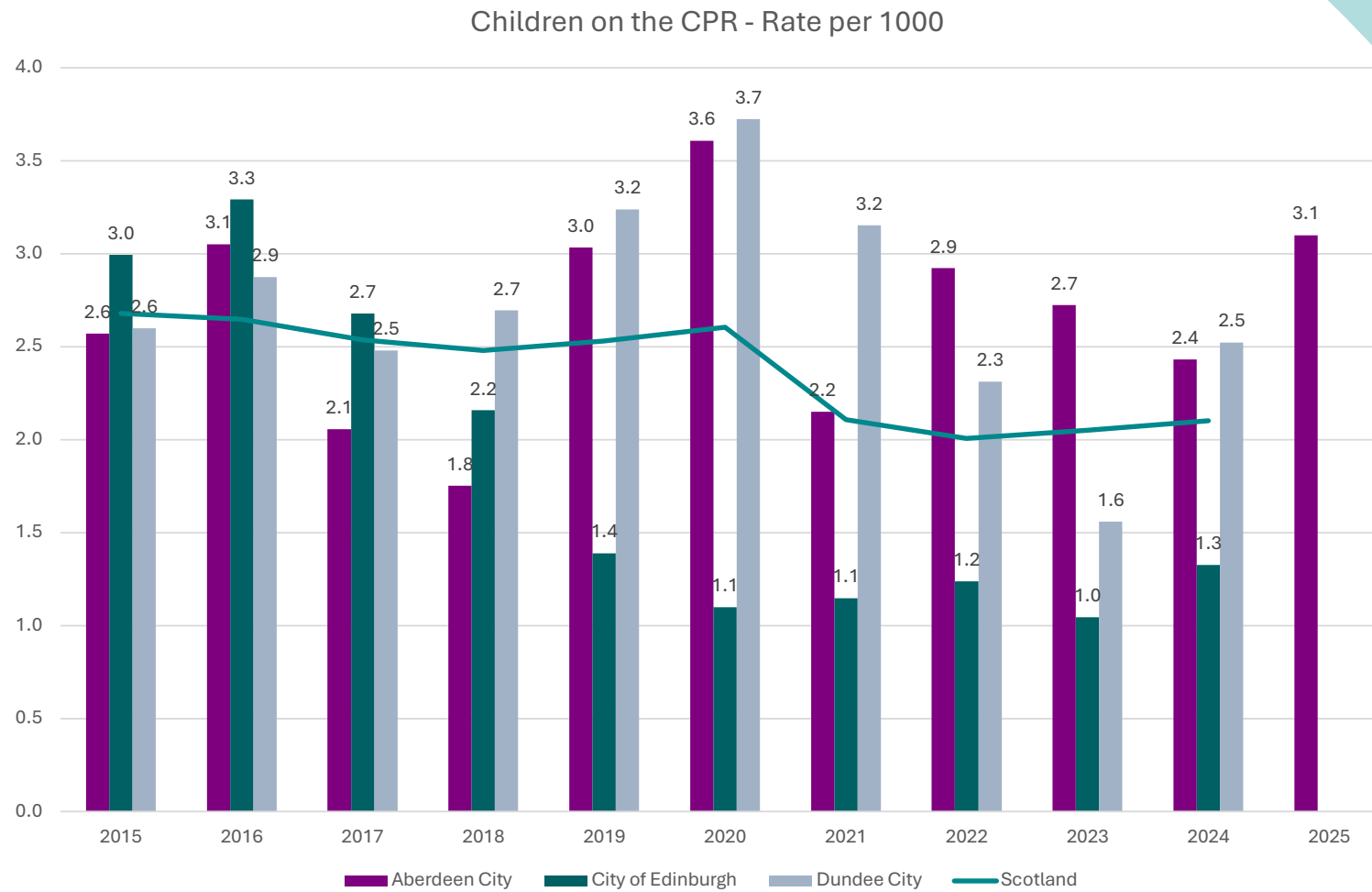


Vulnerability concerns for children on the CPR (on 31 July 2025)



Impact on the child for children on the CPR (on 31 July 2025)





Appendix 2 – CP Improvement Programme 2024-26 with 1st year progress

Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee Improvement Programme 2024-2026

Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee (CPC) is a multi-agency strategic partnership governed by the Chief Executive Officers of Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian and the Police Commander for the area. It is committed to providing individual and collective leadership and direction for the management of child protection services in the Aberdeen City area. Improvements are driven through the Child Protection Programme.

The CPC works alongside Integrated Children's Services in Aberdeen to ensure that improvement areas are aligned. In this way we ensure the best and most effective use of resources. The CPC also aims to work collaboratively with other strategic partnerships in the City such as the Children's Services Board, Aberdeen Violence Against Women & Girls Partnership (particularly in relation to child protection and domestic abuse), Adult Protection Committee, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

Progress on improvement activity is reported to and monitored by the CPC through its connected sub committees which are; the Significant Learning Review, the Performance & Quality Assurance, and the Learning & Development sub committees. The CPC produces an Annual Report which is made widely available across agencies and demonstrates the work of the CPC through these connected structures.

CPC Improvement Aims

The Child Protection Programme aims to improve the safety, wellbeing and life chances of vulnerable children and young people. As a partnership we achieve this by

- recognising and responding when children and young people need protection
- helping children and young people stay safe, healthy and, for those who have experienced abuse and neglect, to recover from their experiences and
- providing strong and effective collaborative leadership to deliver the Child Protection Programme ensuring the CPC is ready to adapt and adjust as required to both local and national developments

Improvement Activity

The Child Protection Programme includes and is aligned to improvement activity identified by:

- Local self-evaluation through data analysis, case file auditing, local and national learning from Learning Reviews, and the collaboration of multi agency professionals in the City,
- National initiatives driven by legislation and other Scottish Government priorities and
- Local priorities identified in the Children's Services Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

This programme will be delivered on a phased basis, building on the trauma informed and strength based practice approaches used across the City. All improvement priorities are a multi-agency responsibility and sit collectively with the agencies and members of the CPC. This will ensure and support the embedding of improvements in practice as well as realistically enabling the CPC to deliver on the programme with the resources available. It is acknowledged that, whilst this is a comprehensive programme, it requires to be sufficiently flexible to be adjusted as needs arise, such as from the findings of case reviews, audits, joint inspections as well as developing areas identified in the LOIP or by Integrated Children's Services.

Our priorities in the programme 2024-2026

- Neglect
- Child Protection & Parental Substance Use
- Exploitation
- Child Protection & Domestic Abuse
- Interdisciplinary multi agency working
- Learning & Development

Alignment to LOIP 2016-2026

The delivery of the CPC improvement programme directly supports the delivery of the [LOIP](#), in particular stretch outcomes that relate to children, young people and families (SO3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10,11, and 12)

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	How will we know?	Lead Group	Period	Progress July 2025
Neglect (This is a priority because Neglect is the most prevalent concern for children on our Child Protection register and also has featured within Learning Review activity)	<p>Increase practitioner's skills and confidence in preventing, identifying, and addressing neglect. This will recognise the correlation between poverty and neglect.</p> <p>In collaboration with the ADP/CPC thematic group, explore our messaging and approaches to safe sleep practices.</p>	<p>Review & refresh the remit of our multi agency thematic group.</p> <p>Establish a multi agency workforce group to identify and mitigate the barriers to naming and responding to neglect.</p> <p>We will seek to understand the lived experience of children, young people and families who have experienced neglect.</p> <p>Consider the use of the Graded Care Profile.</p> <p>Explore the development of a neglect pathway that mitigates the escalation into child protection/ statutory processes.</p>	<p>Review of the multi agency Neglect training.</p> <p>Monitor data around neglect and children re-registered under neglect.</p> <p>Children & families will tell us that they are receiving early and preventative support.</p> <p>Data from our audit and learning review activity.</p>	<p>Neglect Thematic Group</p> <p>Clear links with Best Start In Life</p>	Throughout 2024-2026	On target

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	How will we know?	Lead Group	Period	Progress July 2025
Child Protection & Parental Substance Use (This is a priority because it has been identified Learning Review activity, and through our data & scrutiny reports. Parental substance use continues to feature prominently in our CPR registrations)	<p>Ensure an aligned framework for understanding & risk of problematic substance use.</p> <p>Develop an escalation pathway for young people exhibiting early indications of problematic drug/ alcohol use.</p> <p>Explore the interconnectivity of related child protection and substance use activity to develop a more cohesive and preventative approach to whole family support.</p> <p>In collaboration with the Neglect thematic group, explore our messaging and approaches to safe sleep practices.</p>	<p>Establish a joint thematic group with Aberdeen City's Alcohol & Drug Partnership.</p> <p>Thematic group will determine the priorities for improvement activity to drive the 'what will we do' activity.</p>	<p>The escalation pathway will be implemented across the workforce.</p> <p>Quality Assurance Framework audit.</p> <p>Children & families will tell us that they are receiving early and preventative support.</p>	ADP/CPC Thematic Group	Throughout 2024-2025	On target

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	How will we know?	Lead Group	Period	
Exploitation (This is a national and local priority. Our exploitation thematic group share this position and recognise, like the rest of Scotland, there are few children on our CPR under this category)	Increase practitioner's skills and confidence in preventing, identifying, and responding to all types of exploitation. Consider how we communicate with the public to raise awareness of the risk of all types of exploitation.	Develop, review and disseminate local multi-agency guidance, or other awareness raising materials in relation to Child Criminal Exploitation, Sextortion, and other relevant forms of exploitation. Improve data gathering in relation to all forms of exploitation, particularly in universal services. Develop and disseminate a contextual safeguarding e-module.	The guidance or other materials will be developed and disseminated across the workforce. The impact will be measured by engaging with the workforce. The data from universal services will illustrate the prevalence of children and young people at risk of exploitation in Aberdeen and the impact of preventative interventions.	Exploitation Thematic Group (Establish links with Youth Justice, and the Corporate Parenting Groups) L&D Sub Committee	Throughout 2024-2026	On target
Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	How will we know?	Lead Group	Period	
Child Protection & Domestic Abuse (This is a priority because it has been identified through Learning Review activity and through our data & scrutiny reports)	We will undertake a joint learning & development session in collaboration with the Violence Against Women Partnership to explore the interconnectivity of related activity to develop a more cohesive and preventative approach to supporting women and girls who experience violence and abuse.	Establish a joint thematic group with the Violence Against Women Partnership to deliver on improvement priorities in relation to violence and abuse experience by women and girls.	Improvement priorities will be identified through the joint development session. This will include quality assurance activity. Women and girls will tell us that they are receiving early and preventative support.	VAWP/CPC Thematic Group	Throughout 2025-2026	On target

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	How will we know?	Lead Group	Period	
Interdisciplinary multi agency working (This is a priority because services to children and families need to be more holistic)	Align strategies and procedures to the fullest extent across public protection. Provide whole family support where there are children & young people at risk of significant harm, or are at risk of causing significant harm. Ensure children, young people and their families have their say in decisions made about them and that they are listened to.	Review practitioner guidance in relation to the transition from child to adult services. Continue to explore opportunities to integrate and collaborate via the public protection leads group. Review our local child protection operational guidance ensuring that the family's journey through our child protection processes is proportionate. Develop and open our Bairns' Hoose.	Young people will be supported by the service that best meets their needs. Develop a work programme for the public protection leads group. IRD quality assurance, P&QA data and conversion rates. Evaluation of our Bairns' Hoose.	CSB/IJB (CPC/APC) PP Leads Group/CPC Lead Officer P&QA Sub Committee Bairns' Hoose Delivery Group	Throughout 2024-2025	On target

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	How will we know?	Lead Group	Period	
Learning & Development (This is a priority because it is a fundamental part of the learning and development function required from the CPC)	Ensure all multi-agency staff have access to appropriate learning and development resources in relation to our child protection improvement priorities.	Undertake a learning needs analysis to identify the learning & development requirements of the workforce, and refresh our L&D plan.	Develop and deliver a workforce learning & development strategy, in collaboration with other strategic public protection groups to meet the learning requirements of the workforce.	L&D Sub Committee	Throughout 2024-2026	On target
	Develop our Learning & Development strategy to the National Framework for Child Protection L&D in Scotland 2024 .	Communicate with the workforce in relation to child protection improvement activity. Consider how we communicate with the public in relation to child protection improvement activity. Further develop the Aberdeen Protects website.	Issue quarterly CPC bulletins to the workforce reflecting local and national priorities and activity. The workforce will tell us.	CPC Lead Officer and L&D Coordinator		

Report Author: Amy Anderson

Designation: CPC Lead Officer



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