

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education Operational Delivery Committee
<b>DATE</b>	26 November 2020
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Education Improvement Data Surveillance Report
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CUS/20/220
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Andy Macdonald and Rob Polkinghorne
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Martin Murchie and Eleanor Sheppard
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Reyna Stewart and Shona Milne
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.3

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Elected Members information on data used to inform the initial and current Education Service Covid-19 response and outline the present position in regard to data availability from the 2020 SQA exam diet and national analysis of the 2019/20 Curriculum for Excellence outcomes.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 notes how data has informed the Education Service's Covid-19 response and is presently being used to track critical aspects of education provision, aligning with the terms of the Council's current National Improvement Framework priorities; and
- 2.2 notes the current limitations around attainment and achievement data availability, and that a future report will, where possible, offer expanded analysis from the 2019/20 academic year around data tracking of the Education Improvement Journey.

### 3. BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Data Tracking of Service Delivery in the Response Phase

- 3.1.1 Data tracking of service delivery and pupil support during the period of school closures associated with COVID-19 provisions, and monitoring of key well-being indicators, such as access to free school meals, the digital accessibility of the Virtual Curriculum and attendance levels subsequent to re-opening, has been critical to the Education Service's response and recovery phases

#### 3.2 Attainment and Achievement Data

- 3.2.1 At the same time, the Covid-19 pandemic and associated school closures have materially impacted on the data available against the attainment and

achievement themes linked to the Education Improvement Journey at both Senior and Broad General Education phases.

- 3.2.2 As Members will know, the methodology used to determine SQA awards was changed in response to queries around the validity of the algorithm being used and estimated grades were subsequently awarded. As a result, the limited SQA based data for 2019/2020 which is available, is not directly comparable with that of previous years, which precludes rapid analysis or interpretation.
- 3.2.3 Additionally, local authority access to the national Insight Tool, offering additional critical granularity against Senior Phase outcomes, which forms the basis of the detailed analysis of SQA awards within the Interim Education Improvement Journey Tracking report normally presented to Committee, has been delayed.
- 3.2.4 As noted below, the extent of validated data against the Curriculum for Excellence has also been impacted, which limits the Education Service's capacity to analyse and benchmark aggregated outcomes at authority level, although teacher judgement data, where completed, has been used to inform individual pupil assessments.

### **3.3 Senior Phase Data**

- 3.3.1 As advised to Directors of Education by the Scottish Government Learning Directorate on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020, presentation and publication of Insight data has been delayed and is now expected in early 2021. When published, based on the pre-review SQA awards release in August, Insight will likely show a significant increase in attainment because of the amended SQA awards process.
- 3.3.2 In the meantime, the Senior Phase report also being considered at this meeting of Committee considers the extent and scope of 2020 SQA data presently available and offers a high-level analysis of performance which supports the initial review of exam diet outcomes and enables on-going improvement planning.
- 3.3.3 On release of additional SQA analysis through Insight, the Services (Education and Data and Insights) will be enabled to offer enhanced analysis and use this to both validate current understanding of trend directions and 'stress test' the data in full.

### **3.4 Broad General Education Data**

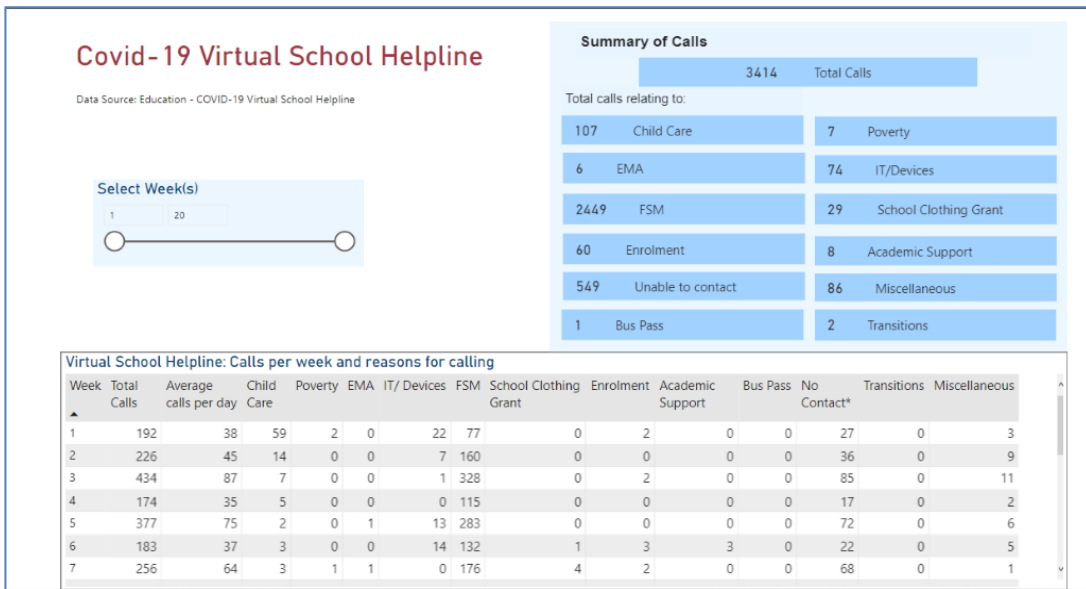
- 3.4.1 Given that school buildings were closed for a significant part of the last session, it was recognised that gathering CfE data, normally collated at academic year end, would have presented a number of challenges for schools, including issues of accurately assessing pupil progress, particularly of younger children and those with ASN, through the Virtual Curriculum.
- 3.4.2 In the letter of the above date, the Scottish Government, in recognition of these issues, confirmed that the required submission by education authorities of 2019/20 Curriculum for Excellence data had been suspended and that its

collation, analysis, and publication through the Broad General Education (BGE) Benchmarking Tool would not be provided to Education Authorities as originally scheduled.

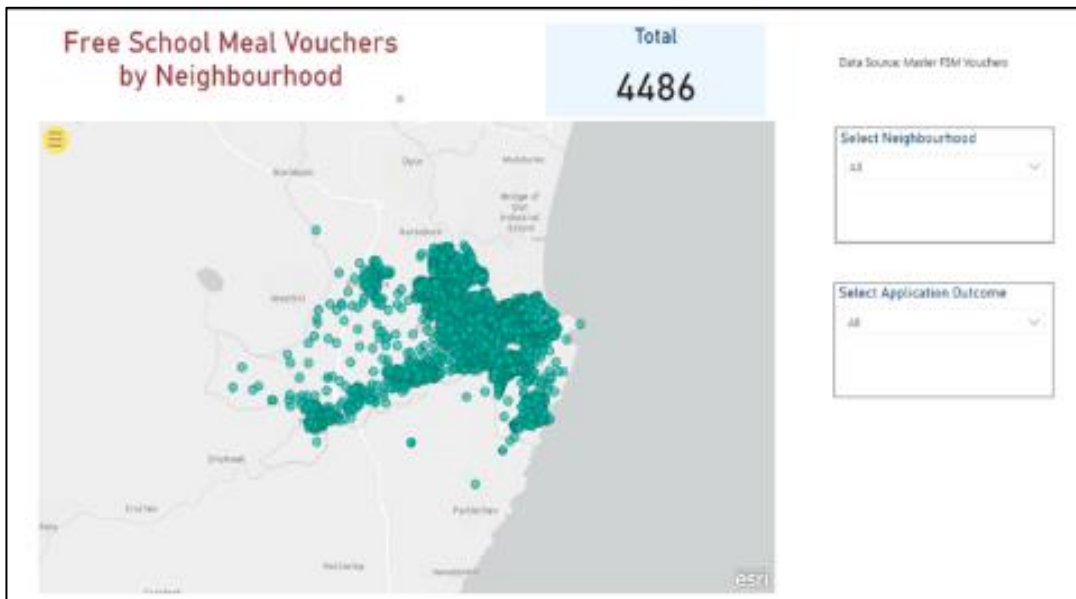
- 3.4.3 Validation, and benchmarking, of each education authority's Curriculum for Excellence outcomes is provided through submission to, and publication of, this data by the Scottish Government.
- 3.4.4 Scottish National Standardised Assessments, which assist with additional validation of Curriculum for Excellence outcomes, are usually undertaken by different year groups over the course of the school year. Only Primary 5 had completed the assessment at the time of school closures in March, so this dataset is incomplete.
- 3.4.5 In light of the above, given the lack of historical and comparable data sets, the Education Service is working closely with Data and Insights to agree how best to reflect and analyse 2019/20 data for future potential granular reporting.

### **3.5 Data collection in the Response Phase – Pupil Wellbeing and Support**

- 3.5.1 Power BI has materially helped the Education Service to monitor and analyse data effectively and at pace and is used to inform the Council wide understanding of the situation so that responses can be tailored to more immediate needs and trends.
- 3.5.2 The Education Service and Data and Analytics have worked closely over the course of the pandemic to develop and make extensive use of Microsoft Forms and Power BI, enabling the Service to examine robust data and tailor responses to Covid based on this information.
- 3.5.3 The Virtual School Helpline was set up to coincide with the closing of school buildings. Calls were logged and input into a Power BI dashboard. This enabled the service to identify any repeated enquiries and consider support approaches and the Service's communications. The insight from the Virtual School Helpline informed the provision of vouchers for those in receipt of Free School Meals and helped the Service to ensure that families in need of a Chromebook had one made available to them.

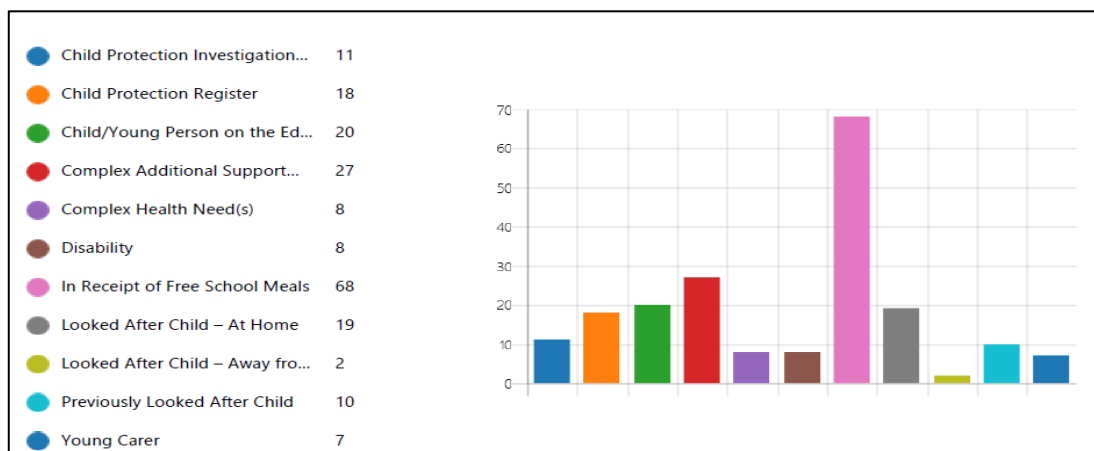


3.5.4 Registrations for free school meals, in the form of voucher distribution during the Response period, increased significantly as a result of families being impacted by changing financial circumstances. The Education Service and Customer function were able to monitor uptake through a heat map. This information was invaluable in helping the partnership ensure communities were sufficiently supported over the lockdown period and was used to inform partnership surveillance of the changing needs of the community.



3.5.5 Hubs were established to support children and young people who were identified as in need of particular care and attention over the lockdown period. The suite of Microsoft tools was used to gather information on the presenting needs of children and families to ensure that the support being offered could be shaped around needs. This informed the allocation of Hub placements and enabled multi-agency partners to plan appropriate programmes for children and young people.

3.5.6 Officers used this data to help get a sense of how needs were changing over the course of the lockdown period and have followed this model in preparing for the introduction of Wellbeing Hubs. As a result of this data the Hubs began supplying food to children and families in addition to respite support.



3.5.7 A number of surveys have been conducted to help identify any emerging issues in our children, young people, staff, and families. The Learning at a Distance survey helped us amend our provision of home learning to support families. The Service’s engagement around a return to school buildings helped check on how the school community felt about the return to school so that we could target communications and support to the areas. The more recent wellbeing survey (see Appendix A) provided an indication of how the pandemic has impacted families and is informing short, and longer-term planning.



3.5.8 The use of live data over the course of the lockdown period has aided the Service to be agile and respond to the situation. This best practice is being used to inform our ‘business as usual’ approaches now that school buildings have re-opened.

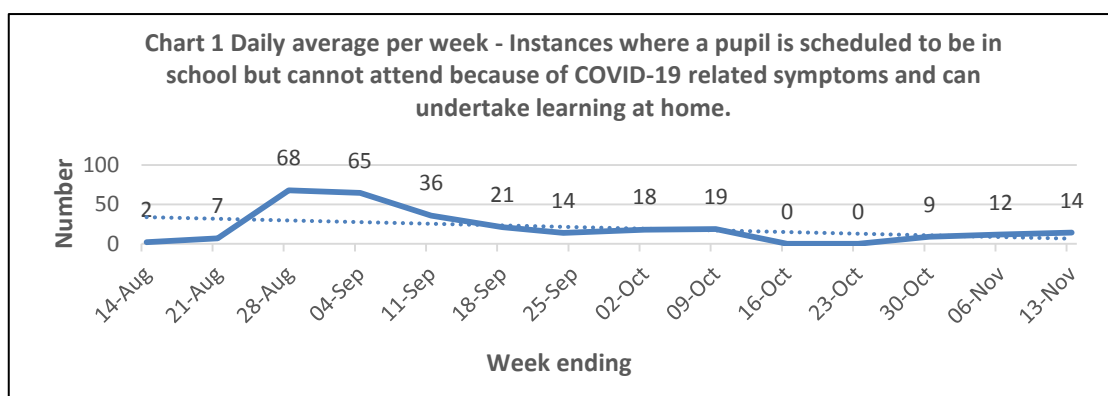
### 3.6 Data collection in the Recovery Phase – Attendance

3.6.1 Attendance levels, through various latitudinal research and tracking of pupil outcomes, are recognised as being significantly associated with the delivery of priority support for both children’s well-being in the current circumstances and their attainment and attainment in the longer term.

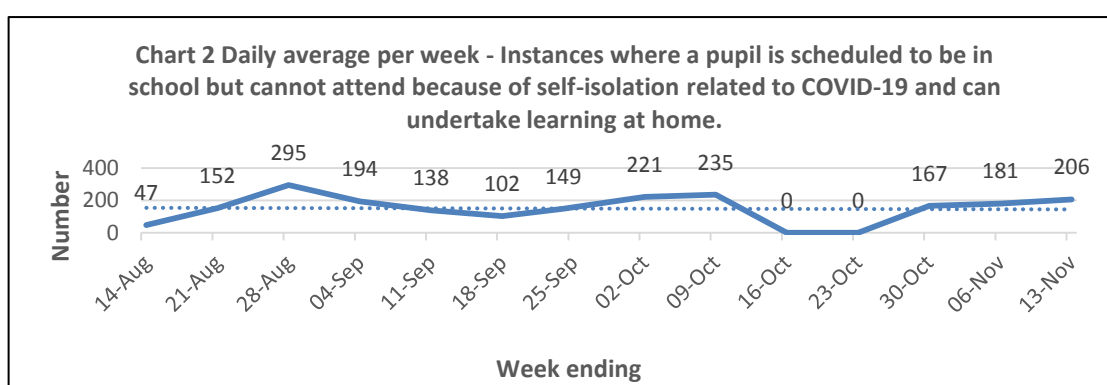
3.6.2 Given this, data is collected through SEEMiS on a daily basis as an operational data management tool whilst school administrations, through Excel, feed this data into Power BI directly so that central Officers can review any changes in attendance patterns at establishment and authority level as real time data.

3.6.3 N.B. It should be noted that aggregation, and analysis, of data in Charts 1-5, is based on the average number of instances of daily absences/attendances recorded across each weekly period rather than individual pupil absence e.g. a pupil being absent for five days will be reflected as five absences in that week.

3.6.4 The detailed management data dashboard helps Officers monitor the number of children who are learning at home because of having Covid-19 symptoms. Initial uncertainty around symptoms (and confusion between common cold symptoms and Covid-19 symptoms) evident in the dashboard has now subsided and we see more predictable patterns emerging.



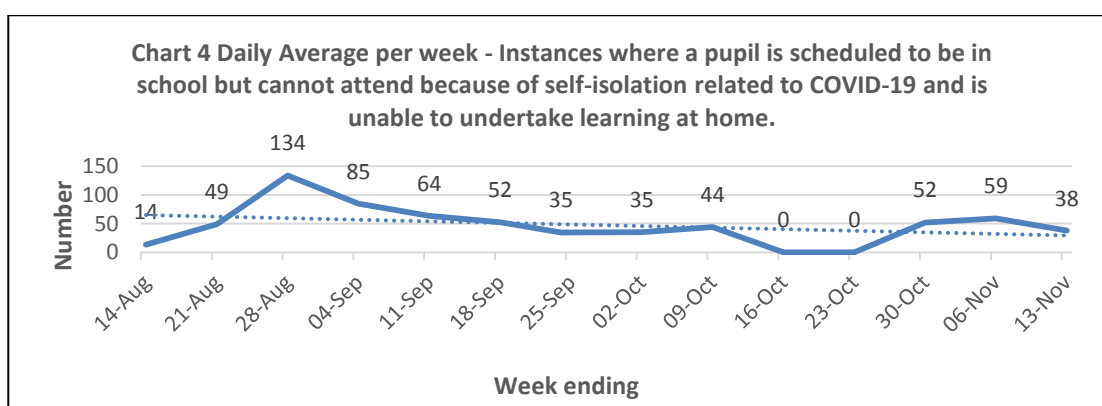
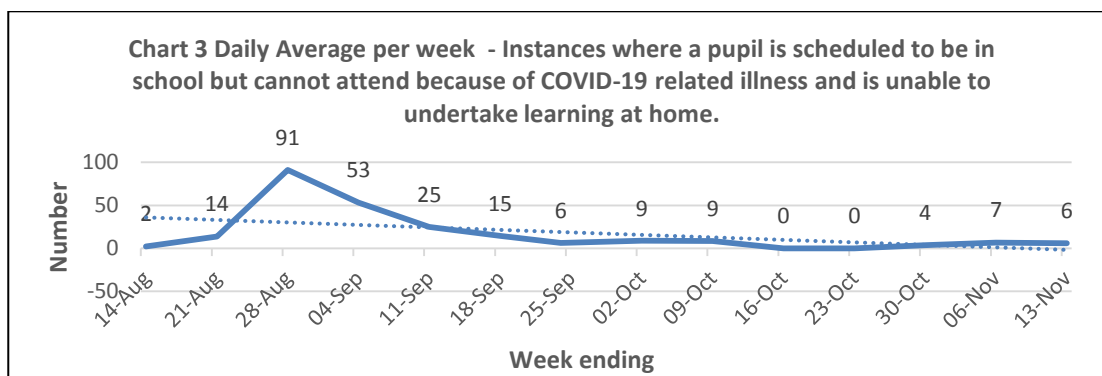
3.6.5 Officers are also enabled to monitor the number of children of families who have been advised to self-isolate through Test and Protect and are learning from home. Children and young people in this situation are provided with continued access to learning through Google Classroom and other e-learning provision.



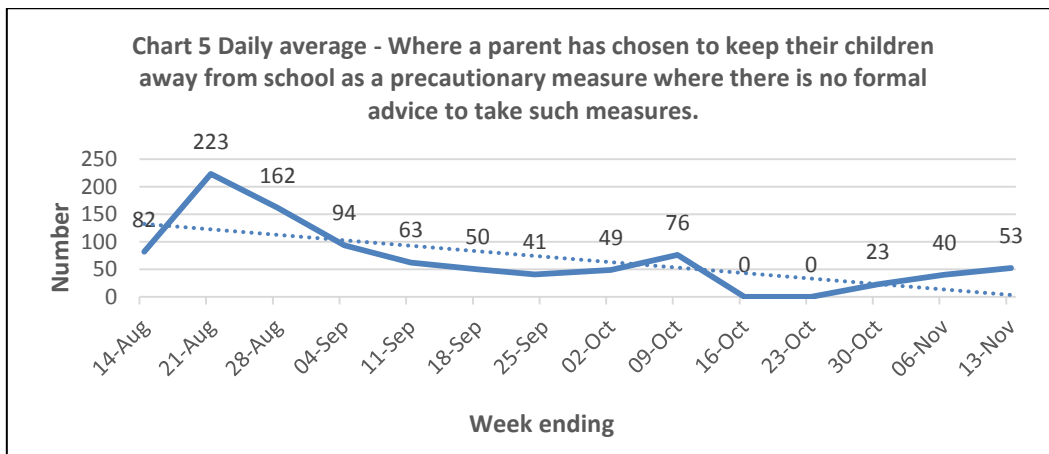
3.6.6 The number of instances of children and young people who have COVID-19 related symptoms or have been advised to self-isolate but are unable to learn from home is recorded.

3.6.7 The reasons behind any inability to learn could be influenced by several different factors, which are best understood at establishment level through the confidential discussions between schools and parents/guardians. As a result of

on-going and flexible interventions put in place by the Service to support home learning the numbers in these two categories daily are very small now (39 pupils on 13<sup>th</sup> November) and trending downwards continuously from a peak in late August, despite a recent localised post October holiday uptick.



- 3.6.8 The dashboard enables the Service to see the number of families who may be self-isolating their children against protocols contained within current national and local Covid-19 advice derived from the Scottish Government's [Coronavirus Strategic Framework](#)
- 3.6.9 High numbers of children being removed from school due to parental concern for their child's safety in school may indicate a lack of confidence in the school controls, be a reaction to increased perceptions of levels of community COVID-19 infection or be driven by other circumstances. The Service engages with these parents/guardians at an early stage to understand the restrictions which prevent attendance and facilitate their child's on-going engagement.
- 3.6.10 Although minimal as a proportion of all absences, the trend in the number of incidents where parents have felt it necessary to remove their child from school for these reasons has significantly reduced over time suggesting that parents have a level of confidence in school controls and interventions designed to support them, although weekly variations in trends, related to local spikes are still observable, as has been seen in the early part of November.

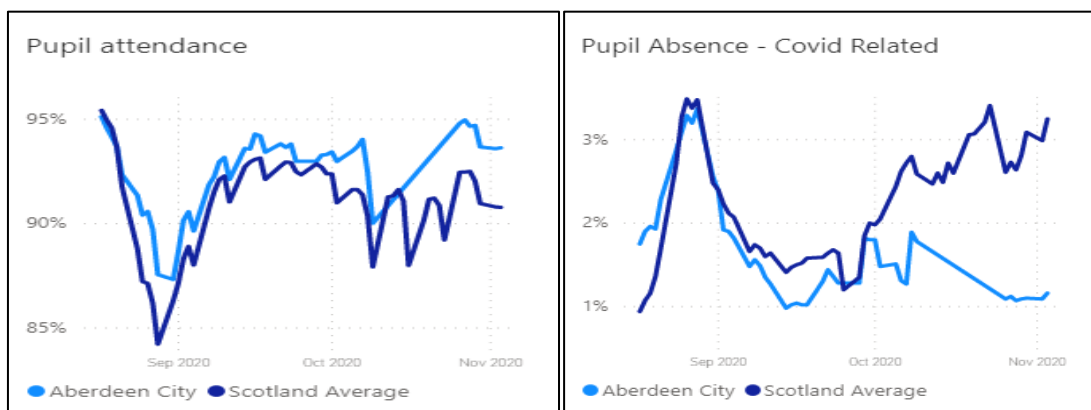


3.6.11 It should be noted that, as a precaution, some families may choose to remove siblings (who are not experiencing symptoms), of those pupils who may be experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms or where another household member is, and this has not been confirmed through a positive test or resulted in a self- isolation requirement at that point.

3.6.12 These pupils are also included in the category above and, where local spikes are evident, can substantially influence short term trends as the length of absences tend to be limited to no more than a few days whilst awaiting either test results or establishing that symptoms are not related to COVID-19.

### 3.7 Attendance and Absence Data Benchmarking

3.7.1 These datasets feed into the national pupil attendance surveillance set up by the Scottish Government to monitor overall attendance and COVID-19 related absence. The most recent data derived from this surveillance indicates that the City has been consistently performing well in comparison with national averages against both of these measures.



Local Government COVID-19 Data Dashboard. Week 28. Please note that individual local authority calculations may differ from the above. This is because some openings currently counted as 'not in school due to COVID-19 related reasons' in the national submission may be reflected locally as an 'attendance' (i.e. pupils self-isolating with education provision)

3.7.2 In summary, absenteeism levels related to COVID-19 are now largely appearing as singular data spikes in schools where groups have been asked to self-isolate, (rather than implying rising infection rates at a local authority level), with overall attendance levels being in line with the annual outcome from 2019-20.



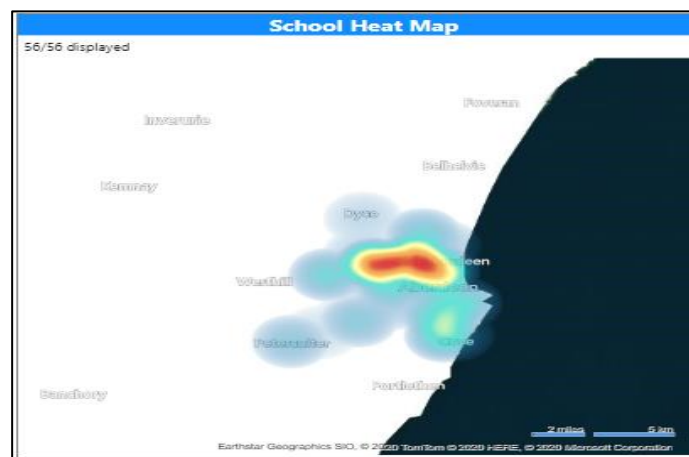
3.7.3 As the scope of, and community engagement with, Test and Protect measures continue to evolve, this may have an influence on future attendance/absence levels as, it is anticipated, might any changes in the application of tiered interventions from the national Coronavirus Strategic Framework.

3.7.3 Respectively, Aberdeen City's pupil attendance in week 28 (as at 3<sup>rd</sup> November) was 93.6%, compared to a national average of 90.8% and COVID-19 related absence levels were 1.2%, as opposed to a Scotland average of 3.2%

### 3.8 Heat Map usage

3.8.1 Consistent use of Power BI tools have also provided for the introduction of heat mapping (example below) for each attendance and absence category.

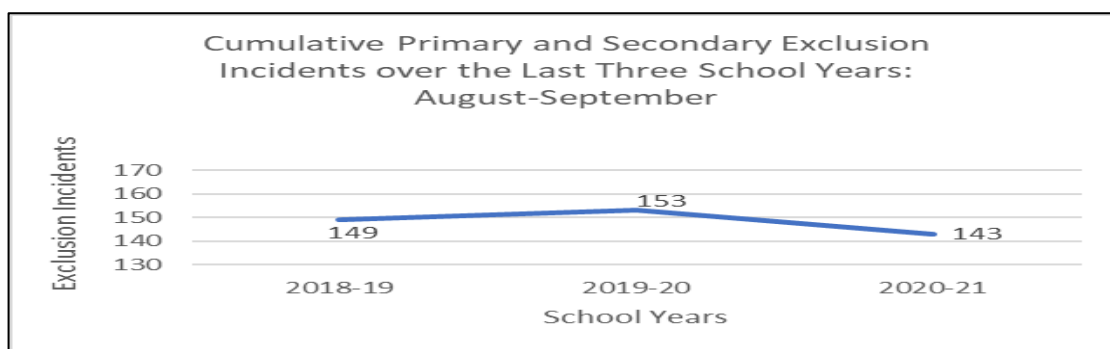
3.8.2 The Service uses these to monitor the situation across the City through geographic visuals which assist in identifying spikes in Covid related activity around particular catchments, which could potentially 'bleed' into additional establishments, and offer additional guidance to schools on the track of locality infection/self-isolation rates.



### 3.9 On-going General Data Monitoring - Exclusions

3.9.1 The Service is closely monitoring levels of exclusion on an ongoing basis, as these give an indication of how well young people are responding to the return to school buildings and how effectively our schools are supporting wellbeing. Officers are currently reviewing exclusion data on a weekly basis.

3.9.2 The number of exclusions for August/September is recording a comparable three year low against this period.



**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. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	None	N/A	N/A
<b>Compliance</b>	No significant related legal risks.	L	Publication of service performance information and data in the public domain ensures that the Council is meeting its legal obligations in the context of Best value reporting.
<b>Operational</b>	No significant related employee risks.	L	Oversight by Elected Members of core employee health and safety data supports the Council's obligations as an employer
<b>Financial</b>	No significant related financial risks.	L	Overview data on specific limited aspects of the cluster's financial performance is provided within this report
<b>Reputational</b>	Lack of sufficient access to information for citizens	L	Placing of information in the public domain is contributed to by this report. Reporting of service performance serves to enhance the Council's reputation for

			transparency and accountability.
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	None		N/A

## 7. OUTCOMES

<u><b>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</b></u>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	<p>The provision of information on cluster performance supports scrutiny of progress against the delivery of the following Policy Statements:</p> <p>2 - UNICEF Child Friendly accreditation</p> <p>3 -Work with the Scottish Government to provide flexible and affordable childcare for working families on the lowest incomes</p> <p>4 - Support the implementation of Developing the Young Workforce, seek to gain the highest level of investors in young people accreditation and ensure there is a focus on supporting pupils excel in STEM subjects</p> <p>7 – Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners in the city.</p>
<b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b>	
<p><b>Prosperous Economy</b> 10% increase in employment across priority and volume growth sectors by 2026.</p>	<p>The data within this report supports the delivery of Children &amp; Young People Stretch Outcomes in the LOIP, and informs many the improvement projects within the LOIP including to. Increase the number of people employed in growth sectors (digital/ creative; food and drink. life sciences; tourism; social care and health and construction) by 5% by 2021</p>
<p><b>Prosperous People</b> 95% of children (0-5years) will reach their expected developmental milestones by the time of their child health reviews by 2026.</p> <p>90% of children and young people will report that they feel mentally well by 2026.</p> <p>95% of care experienced children and young people</p>	<p>The detail within this report supports the delivery of each of the Children &amp; Young People Stretch Outcomes 3 to 7 in the LOIP. This includes the following projects:</p> <p>Increase the confidence of school-based staff to recognise and respond to children who require support and directing them to the school Nursing Service to 90% by 2021.</p> <p>Increase the confidence of parents and young people to recognise and seek support in response to deteriorating mental wellbeing by</p>

<p>will have the same levels of attainment in education, emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.</p> <p>95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.</p> <p>Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026.</p> <p>25% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.</p>	<p>2022.</p> <p>Increase the number of young people who effectively transition from primary school to secondary school by 2021</p> <p>Increase the range and number of accredited courses being provided by schools &amp; partners by 25% by 2021.</p> <p>Increase the number of young people taking up foundation apprenticeships to 142 by 2021. Reduce the number of winter leavers with no positive destination by 50% by 2021.</p> <p>Increase the number of young people who leave school with a minimum of SVQ 3 in literacy and numeracy and 4 other qualifications to 98% 2021</p> <p>Increase the number of young people living in Quintiles 1,2 and 3 who achieve a sustained positive destination by working with communities to 90% 2022.</p> <p>Increase the number of curricular offerings shaped by school communities by 20%, by 2021.</p> <p>Increase the number of opportunities to discuss and record skills for life, learning and work from S1 by 20%, by 2021.</p> <p>Increase children, young people, and families' awareness and understanding of future skill requirements by June 2021.</p>
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The data in this report also impacts on LOIP Stretch Outcome 11- Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026.</p> <p>Respectively, this informs delivery of the following improvement projects:</p> <p>Increase the number of people with autism who are supported to be in education, employment or training by 2021.</p> <p>Increase number of people in local communities promoting wellbeing and good health choices by 2021.</p>

	100% of schools have a progressive, cohesive and relevant substance misuse curriculum by 2021.
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	The report reflects outcomes aligned to the City's National Improvement Framework for education
<b>UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes</b>	The report reflects outcomes aligned to the Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework, The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000, Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 as amended and Education Act (Scotland) 2016

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Impact Assessment</b>	The recommendations arising from this report do not require that a full Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment be completed
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Education Improvement Journey](#), Education Operational Delivery Committee, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018

## 10. APPENDICES

Appendix A Health and Wellbeing Survey

## 11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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