

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	20 January 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Supporting Learners Data Capture
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/21/008
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Eleanor Sheppard
REPORT AUTHOR	Craig McDermott
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1.1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1.1 Further analysis of local and national data has been undertaken to greater understand the changing needs of children and young people in Aberdeen City. This report seeks to share this information with elected members in the context of Request for Assistance data, particularly those pertaining to Child's Planning Support.

2.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:-

2.1.1 notes the ongoing analysis work to better understand the changing needs of children, young people and their families;

2.1.2 endorses the delivery of two primary and two secondary enhanced provisions in order to meet the increasing demand for specialist level Child's Planning Support; and

2.1.3 instructs the Programme Manager to report progress, including supporting data, as part of the Supporting Learners programme update, which is scheduled for EODC in two committee cycles (June 2021).

3.1 BACKGROUND

3.1.1 The Programme Manager – Supporting Learners regularly reports the progress of the Supporting Learners Workstream to Committee to ensure Elected Members remain abreast of progress. In September 2020, Committee endorsed an agile, data-driven approach to service delivery through report

Supporting Learners (OPE/20/126). This ensures services are well placed to identify and target need at the earliest opportunity.

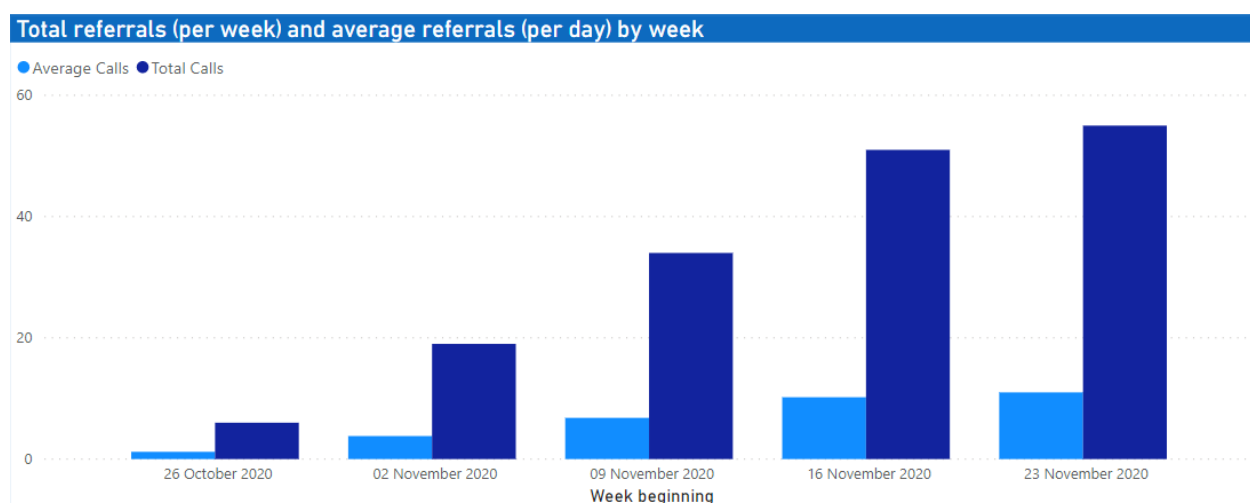
3.1.2 Data gathered throughout 2020 (by the Emergency Support Forum, Virtual School Helpline, Care for People, and the Health and Wellbeing Collaborative) evidences the ongoing impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on families. In particular, difficulties pertaining to poverty (food and finance), mental health and wellbeing, increases in instances of domestic violence, and substance misuse are evident. The 'lockdown period' also posed challenges for families of children/young people with additional support needs, particularly those with an autistic spectrum condition and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

3.1.3 Anecdotal evidence, gathered through face-to-face consultation, about the demand on specialist services and provision was presented to committee in reports *Supporting Learners in an Empowered System* (OPE/20/054) and *Supporting Learners* (OPE/20/219). Both note increased demand on these provisions resulting from the changing needs of children and young people. Advances in medicine and wider societal changes account for an increased complexity of need within specialist services and provision.

3.2 REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

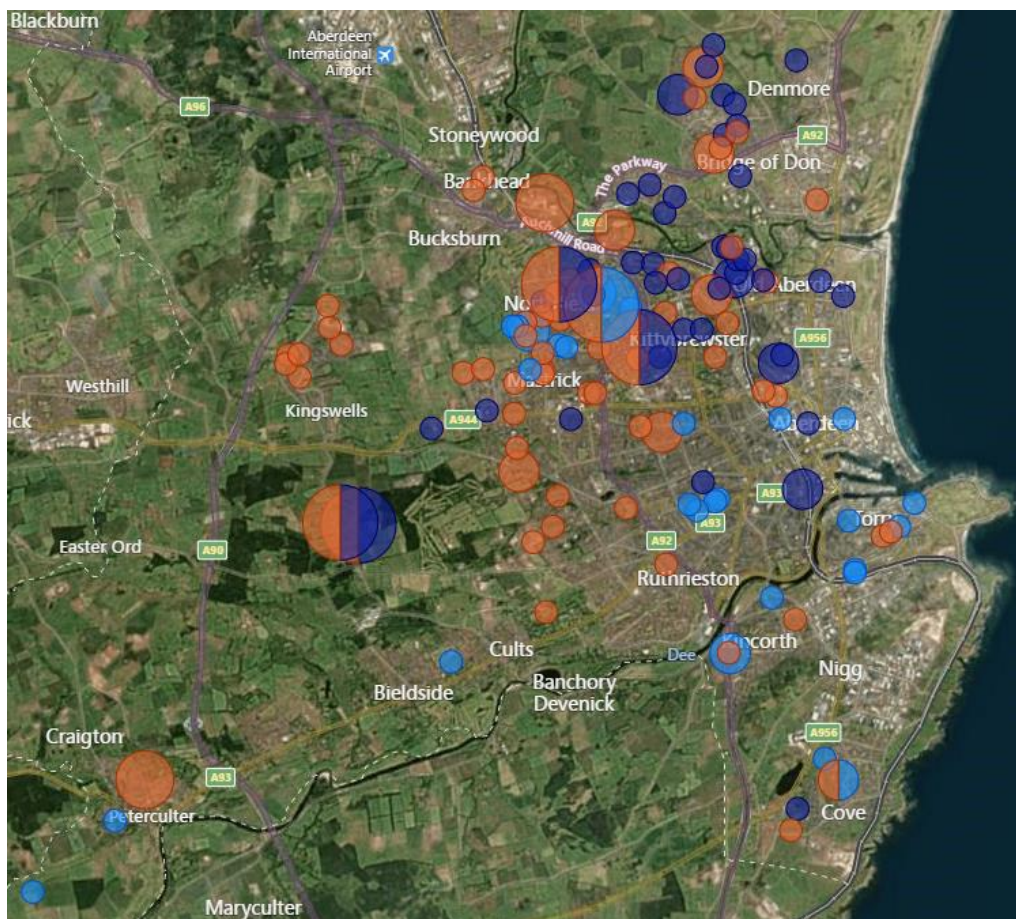
3.2.1 In line with national best practice, the term 'Request for Assistance' is used to describe the process of a Team Around the Child (TAC) seeking support from a partner service/organisation. In keeping with the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), the foundation of request for assistance is partnership working to overcome barriers to wellbeing. The request for assistance system includes education outreach services (e.g. Autism Outreach Service, Educational Psychology Service, English as an Additional Language Service, Dyslexia Outreach Service etc.), Children's Social Work, the School Nursing Service, Language Support Provision, 'Fit Like?' Family Wellbeing Hubs, and Child's Planning Support.

3.2.2 The new request for assistance system went live on 26 October 2020. Initial data capture evidences a steady, week-on-week increase in request numbers:



At the time of writing, the daily average is 11.0 requests. The jump noted during week beginning 16 November 2020 can be attributed to a Child's Planning Support calendar deadline. The initial, sharp increase may be attributed to increasing familiarity with the system, which was secured via webinar-style training and materials made available to staff via SharePoint.

- 3.2.3 Requests are linked to the child's postcode (alongside school, Associated School Group (ASG), and city locality). The following map outlines the postcode spread of the requests received to date:



Although a concentrated number of requests are evident within the North-West city centre, the map indicates assistance being sought across the city. The colour of the circle represents the locality in which the originating school sits: colours stray out with the geographical spread of their locality where a learner attends the school out-of-zone.

3.3 THE NEEDS OF LEARNERS

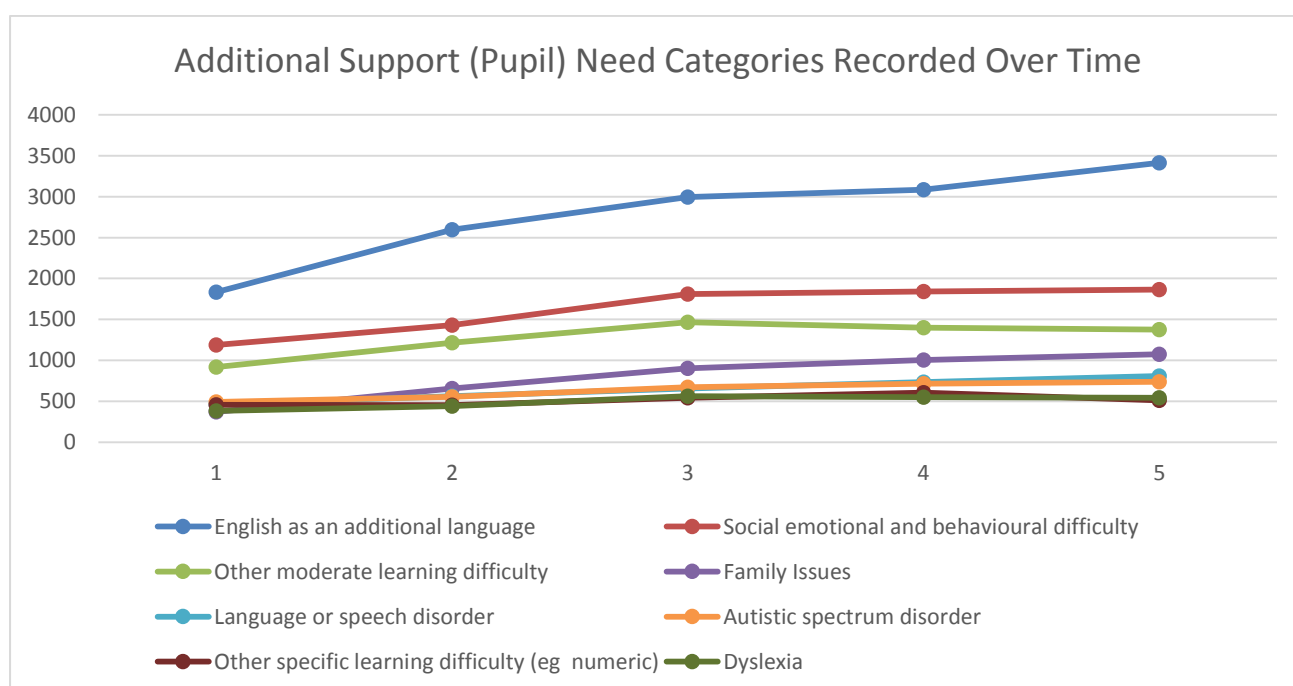
- 3.3.1 A snapshot of learner need data was reported to Committee in March 2020 in report *Supporting Learners in an Empowered System* (OPE/20/054). Guidance for schools has since been published to support the consistency of recording pupil need across the City. Further analysis has been undertaken to better understand the needs profile across Aberdeen City and how it has changed over the past five academic years. Data from SEEMiS and figures available nationally have been used. The following table shows the proportion of school-

aged children/young people with a recorded additional support need during that period:

Academic Year Commencing:	Proportion of Aberdeen City Learner Population	Proportion of Scottish Learner Population
August 2016	20.7%	24.0%
August 2017	27.9%	25.7%
August 2018	31.9%	27.8%
August 2019	33.0%	29.9%
August 2020	33.7%	30.9%*
5-year Average	29.4%	27.5%

*National data for session 2020-2021 will not be published until mid-2021. This figure is taken from the National Review of Additional Support for Learning (Morgan, 2020).

3.3.2 The following graph shows the eight most frequently recorded pupil need categories and how they have changed over time in Aberdeen City:

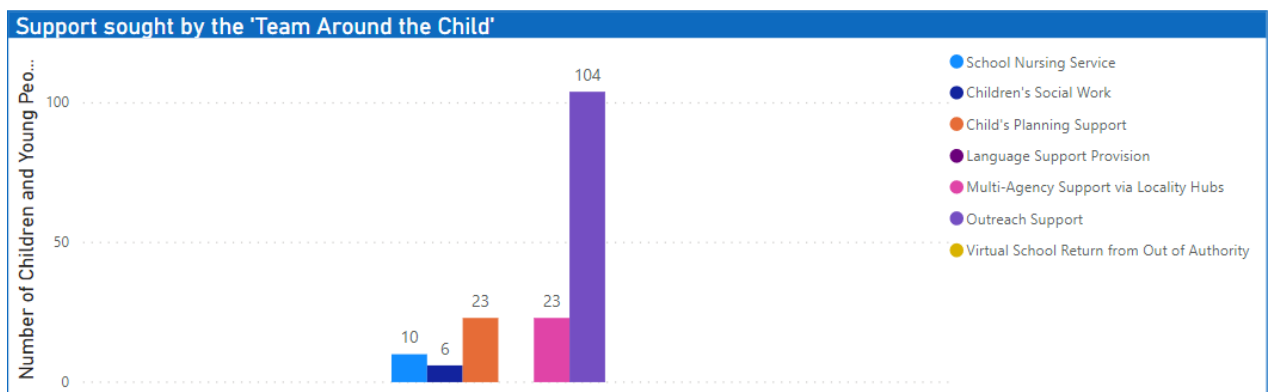


The pupil need categories used by schools are decided nationally and recorded using SEEMiS. Following its introduction in mid/late 2014, the sharp rise noted after 2016 may partially be attributed to increasing staff familiarity with recording pupil need in SEEMiS.

3.3.3 The request for assistance system evidences support being sought for learners with needs recorded within these eight categories, but the frequency of request is not, in most cases, directly proportional with prevalence:

Need Category	Proportion of Requests
Social/Emotional/Behavioural Needs	40.8%
Autistic Spectrum Condition	21.4%
Dyslexia	23.3%
Family Issues	19.9%
Language or Speech Disorder	16.0%
English as an Additional Language	13.9%
Other Moderate Learning Difficulty	4.9%
Other Specific Learning Difficulty (e.g. numeric)	1.9%

3.3.4 To date, a large proportion of requests have been received for outreach support from education outreach services:



In particular, demand has been evidenced for the Dyslexia Outreach Service, Educational Psychology Service, and Autism Outreach Service. Some outreach services (such as Sensory Support Services) support children from birth and receive referrals from the National Health Service; currently, these numbers are not reflected in the request for assistance data capture. As the new system commenced part-way through the academic year, it should be noted that the numbers above do not account for request for assistance received prior to 26 October 2020. This is particularly significant for Child's Planning Support for two reasons:

- 1) Health Visitors make use of a generic email address to request Child's Planning Support for children under school age;
- 2) A calendar deadline passed just before this system went live.

More detailed information about this service is provided below.

3.4 CHILD'S PLANNING SUPPORT

3.4.1 The need for specialist provision is assessed via Child's Planning Support. Consisting of colleagues from education, social work, and health, the Forum now meets several times per year to consider requests for assistance made for

specialist planning. To support a TAC with their ongoing planning, requests are made in conjunction with a calendar of key dates. This is particularly important in terms of enhanced transition planning for children embarking on a significant transition e.g. into Primary 1; from Primary 7 to Secondary 1.

- 3.4.2 68 Child Plans were reviewed at the most recent meeting of the Forum (November 2020). They pertain to requests across all stages: developmental Early Learning and Childcare (ELC); primary; and secondary. The following level of planning was identified:

Level of Planning	Number of Plans
Specialist	37
Mainstream with Targeted Support	21
Mainstream with Universal Support	6
Discussion deferred (due to age/stage)	4

- 3.4.3 Based on the child's current educational setting, plans received represent the following spread across the three City localities:

Locality	Proportion of Plans
Dee	40.4%
Don	28.1%
West	31.6%

- 3.4.4 Certain settings (such as Mile End ASN Provision and Orchard Brae), coupled with the fact parents have a legal right to apply to any school of their choosing, bias the dataset in 3.4.3; it creates a misrepresentation in terms of need spread across the city. When evaluated using child's postcode, the plans received represent the following spread across the City localities.

Locality	Proportion of Plans
Dee	30.4%
Don	33.9%
West	35.7%

- 3.4.5 Continuing to use the child's postcode, the breakdown of those identified as requiring a specialist level of planning is as follows:

Locality	Proportion of Plans
Dee	38.7%

Don	32.3%
West	29.0%

3.4.6 Breaking down the same data in 3.4.5 (children identified as requiring a specialist level of planning, based on the child's postcode) by ASG affords further insight into the spread of need within a locality:

ASG	Locality	Proportion of Plans
Aberdeen Grammar	Dee	6.5%
Cults		16.1%
Harlaw		6.5%
Lochside		9.7%
Dyce	Don	6.5%
Oldmachar		6.5%
St Machar		19.4%
Bucksburn	West	6.5%
Hazlehead		3.2%
Northfield		19.4%

Bridge of Don is omitted as no requests pertain to this ASG when analysed using the child's postcode.

3.4.7 84 requests for Child's Planning Support have been received in advance of the February 2021 Forum, which focuses primarily on transition from Nursery to Primary 1. Work is currently ongoing to better understand the needs represented in these requests. Although the exact number who require specialist level planning has yet to be identified, spaces available for Primary 1 entry to specialist provision are anticipated to be significantly less than the requisite number.

3.4.8 Data generated from session 2019-2020 offers a broad source of comparison, although it must be recognised that a new system is now in place to capture Child's Planning Support: crucially, this process has not concluded for 2020-2021 and the data presented in 3.4.2 – 3.4.7 represents a 'live capture'. The following data combines the two systems for the purposes of comparing the total number / proportion of Child's Planning Support requests:

Locality	2019-2020	2020-2021
Total	88	152
Dee	30.7%	35.21%

Don	29.6%	33.8%
West	39.8%	31.0%

ASG	Locality	2019-2020	2020-2021
Aberdeen Grammar	Dee	7.95%	4.9%
Cults		5.7%	5.6%
Harlaw		6.8%	4.2%
Lochside		10.2%	20.42%
Bridge of Don	Don	1.1%	2.1%
Dyce		5.7%	2.8%
Oldmachar		2.3%	6.3%
St Machar		20.5%	22.5%
Bucksburn	West	11.4%	7.0%
Hazlehead		4.6%	2.1%
Northfield		23.9%	21.8%

The growth in the overall number of requests for support may be attributed to greater visibility of the system alongside a move to increase the number of opportunities to submit such a request. In addition, work has been undertaken throughout 2020 to engender greater transparency around the system. It is, however, extremely likely that the lockdown period has impacted negatively on children with more complex needs and their needs are presenting more acutely.

- 3.4.9 In certain cases, data evidences the need for further professional learning around the presumption of mainstream so there is a shared understanding of the learner profile within specialist provision. This is planned for 2021.

3.5 MANAGING THE DEMAND

- 3.5.1 Enhanced Provision provides an augmented level of support within a mainstream setting. This is particularly relevant where a child/young person's social, emotional and/or learning needs would not be best-met within a specialist provision. The level of education support is provided in accordance with staff:pupil ratios agreed nationally via the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT). In addition, Pupil Support Assistants and partners relevant to a child's plan (e.g. allied health professionals) support the provision. Enhanced Provision employ an individualised approach to allow children/young people to participate in curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. Each enhanced provision has capacity for seven learners.

- 3.5.2 In the context of securing a holistic, best-match location to support need across and between localities, the review of city-wide data (provided above and that

relating to the capacity of the school estate) supports the delivery of Enhanced Provision in Kaimhill Primary, Glashieburn Primary, Bridge of Don Academy, and Cults Academy. For example, because of its physical location in the city, Bridge of Don Academy is accessible across Don and parts of West localities.

- 3.5.3 The impact of such a provision will be monitored carefully by school leadership teams, central officers, and the Child's Planning Support Forum. Ongoing moderation and consistency of approach will be monitored by the PT Outreach – Child's Planning Support over the course of the year to determine if this enhanced support should be considered as an interim measure post COVID-19 or a longer term provision.
- 3.5.4 The Devolved School Management (DSM) scheme was reviewed, consulted upon, and presented to Committee in September 2020 in report *Devolved School Management* (OPE/21/112). This DSM scheme does not include specialist provision. The formulae pertaining to specialist provision has not been reviewed in several years. As such, benchmarking work is ongoing to afford officers greater insight into how local authorities across Scotland best deploy specialist resource to meet the needs of learners. Officers are confident that agile use of resource will enable effective resourcing of the provisions.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Enhanced Provision Teacher and Pupil Support Assistant posts will be budgeted from existing vacancies within pupil support services.
- 4.2 Where applicable (in accordance with national policy) transport will be provided. Alternative delivery models – such as virtual engagement – has created flexibility that can be deployed to support budgeting and absorption of transport costs e.g. sourced from within an existing funding envelope. The review described in 3.5.4 will support a long-term and sustainable approach to this moving forward.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Local Authority has many legal duties including those of:
- The Children (Scotland) Act 1995
 - The Standards in Schools etc. (Scotland) Act 2000
 - The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

The approach being taken to establish the provision outlined in this Report will assist the Council as Education Authority to fulfil these duties more effectively, and secure necessary and appropriate education and additional support for our children and young people.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	Risk of not achieving positive outcomes for children and young people.	L	Changes to our provision and service delivery will enable primary prevention and early intervention thereby reducing potential risk.
Compliance	Non-compliance with legislation, financial claims and legal challenge (tribunals).	M	Mitigated by services being realigned to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City and prevent escalation of need.
Operational	Staff are overwhelmed, which leads to low morale as staff feel unable to meet the needs of vulnerable young people. This may trigger an increase in incidents/near miss.	L	Mitigated by offering high quality professional learning for staff to ensure that they meet their statutory duties under The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010.
Financial	Risk of not having sufficient resource.	M	Mitigated by realigning service delivery and resource to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City today.
Reputational	Risk of not effectively meeting the needs of all learners. Risk of staff feeling overwhelmed.	L	Data scrutiny drives flexible approach to service delivery to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City.
Environment / Climate	Risk of environmental factors inhibiting positive outcomes for learners	L	Service realignment will strengthen universal/targeted support and sharing of best practice, thus preventing escalation of need through strengthened practice and reasonable adjustment.

7. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	<p>This report outlines proposed activity to strengthen the education authority's position with regards to securing positive outcomes for all learners, whilst meeting statutory requirements associated with additional support needs and equality. The overall programme has proactively subsumed the recommendations of the 'Support for Learning: All Our Children and All Their Potential' Report, which makes express mention of such provision. In particular, this report links to the Policy Statement in relation to People, 7: 'Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners across the city'.</p>
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcomes 1 and 6. Continued judicious use of funding and appropriate targeting of additional resources will ensure that children and young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are fully accessing education and more likely to achieve their potential and contribute to the economy.</p> <p>Specific links:</p> <p>Stretch outcome 1 10% increase in employment across priority and volume growth sectors 2026</p> <p>Stretch outcome 6 95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.</p>
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals in this report seek to ensure the best use of resource in the system, promoting an understanding of the circumstances of individual children and young people to ensure that appropriate and timely personalised support is available to them.</p> <p>Effective use of all resources and allowing each school community full control of these resources will help to ensure all initiatives and interventions are selected and implemented based on the needs of each school community and planned effectively to impact positively on all children and young</p>

	<p>people and are particularly targeted at those who are adversely affected by poverty.</p> <p>Specific links to:</p> <p>Stretch Outcome 4 90% of children and young people will report that they feel mentally well by 2026</p> <p>Stretch Outcome 6 95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026,</p> <p>Stretch Outcome 7 Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026</p>
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	Underpinning the work of all schools in Aberdeen City is reducing the poverty related attainment gap and achieving excellence and equity for all.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	<p>Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 as amended (and associated Code of Practice)</p> <p>Equality Act 2010</p>

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Full impact assessment not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

10. APPENDICES

None

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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