

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	26 November 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/24/315
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne
REPORT AUTHOR	Niki Paterson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1,1.1.2

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the refreshed Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan (PIE) 2024-2027

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee -

- 2.1 note the evaluation of the Council's current state;
- 2.2 approve the new Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan; and
- 2.3 instruct the Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to report progress through the regular updates provided to Committee on progress towards delivery of the National Improvement Framework Plan.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1.1 The Scottish School (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 recognises the vital role that parents and other carers play in children's learning and development. Parents are the first and ongoing educators of their own children.

- 3.1.2 Local Authorities have a duty to prepare and regularly review approaches to parental involvement and engagement. The Plan currently in place covers the period 2021-2024.

Parental Involvement and Engagement Plans document how the Local Authority will:

- involve parents in their own child's education, and that provided by a school to its pupils generally;
- give advice and information to parents in respect of their own child; and
- promote the establishment of Parent Councils in schools and support their operation.

- 3.1.3 The education authority must seek and take account of the views of all those with an interest in the authority's implementation of its duties when developing or reviewing its approach, with experience telling us that drawing from a broad

range of evidence helps build a more comprehensive and impactful Plan. As a result, a range of approaches have been used to engage and consult with key stakeholders including:

- regular engagement with parents through focus groups at termly meetings with Aberdeen City Parent Forum
- utilising a city wide survey of parents and carers to check emerging themes for further development;
- Focussed PIE working groups including parents, headteachers and education central staff (including those with corporate parenting responsibilities), children and young people from both primary and secondary settings.

3.1.4 Post-pandemic living and the cost-of-living crisis has undoubtedly presented several challenges for families and highlighted a need to address issues such as mental health and wellbeing more fully in the Plan. The education service has deliberately kept planning high level to enable on-going agility.

3.2 CURRENT STATE

3.2.1 The PIE for 2021-24 was organised across 6 themes:

- **Communication** – high quality communication from home to school;
- **Sharing learning** – at home, school, and community;
- **Supporting parenting** – strengthening families to support children in all aspects of their learning and development;
- **Volunteering** – contributing to the life and work of the school;
- **Parental Voice** – genuine influence in decision making in planning, policy making and school improvement; and
- **Collaboration with community** – working in partnership with parents and partners to support families.

3.2.2 Feedback suggests that organising the plan under key themes provides a useful structure for both schools and the Local Authority., It also allowed sufficient flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. It is felt that the simple visual put in place in 2021 helped develop a shared understanding of the Plan.

3.2.2 In reviewing the impact of the 2021-2024 Plan, each of the themes has been explored with Focus Groups of young people, headteachers, central staff, the City-wide Parent Forum and through a survey issued to all parents and carers in February 2024. The information from all sources is broadly aligned.

3.2.3 The survey received a total of 1897 responses and parents/carers with children and young people across all schools were represented. 68% of responses were from Early Years/Primary settings, 31% from Secondary and 1% from Specialist provision.

3.3.1 **Communication** – 88% of Aberdeen parents/carers who responded to the survey said that key information about school life was regularly shared with them. 92% found schools approachable (an improvement on the 89% who reported positively in 2021). 87% said their views and suggestions were

welcomed, an 8% increase from the last survey point. 81% agreed that their views were sought to inform school improvement and this area will form a priority in the refreshed Plan.

3.3.2 Communication was the most popular topic raised in free text responses to the survey, suggesting that experiences vary. Children and young people also said parents should know more about happens in school. The headteacher focus group raised the need for school communities to be aware of Stronger Families Series and about being consulted in the development of Family Learning programmes. As a result, communication will remain a priority.

3.4.1 **Sharing Learning** – Schools continue to share learning and are creative in how they celebrate children’s achievements with parents and carers. 82% of those who responded to the survey stated that they received regular information about what their child was learning. 85% said they were kept well informed about their child’s progress. This is a 15% increase on the 70% who participated in 2021 and is welcomed. 82% of parents and carers told us that they have the opportunity to share their views about their child’s learning.

3.4.2 77% of parents indicated that they receive enough information to support their child’s learning at home. However, focus groups suggest that there are inconsistencies in arrangements and as a result this area has remained a priority for the new plan.

3.5.1 **Supporting Parenting** – Scottish Attainment Challenge funding has been used to commission Family Learning to provide families with 1:1 or group support sessions across all of our schools. Family Learning opportunities have become more innovative and have helped build the capacity in families. The expansion of the Family Learning offer has enabled delivery of four core offers; 1:1 intensive support, universal courses, open access groups and targeted holiday provision.

- In 2021- 22, Family Learning delivered 85 activities across the city to 452 participants. This equated to 4556 Learner Hours (registered) and 5736 Total Learner hours including children.
- In 2022-23, Family Learning delivered 350 activities across the city to 621 participants. This equated to 9777 Learner Hours (registered), and 15716 Total Learner Hours including children.
- In 2023-24, (to-date/June '24), Family Learning have delivered 277 activities across the city to 464 participants. This equates to 8355 Learner Hours (registered) and 14325 Total Learner Hours including children.

The diverse abilities of the team are greatly enhanced by taking a multi-agency approach which includes working alongside over 30 local and national organisations. Key partners include Fit Like Family Wellbeing Team, Education, Social Work, Kinship, The Promise Support Pilot, SensationALL, Homestart, Scottish Childminding Association, Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen Science Centre.

- 3.5.2 The city survey indicated only 23% of parents who responded to the survey had engaged with parental supporting opportunities such as Family Learning, PEEP and the Stronger Families Series. This may indicate that there is more to do in raising awareness of the supports available.
- 3.5.3 81% of those who have taken advantage of the offer said that the support and information they received from parenting workshops had increased their confidence and knowledge as a parent.
- 3.5.4 The Parent Learning Hub website was launched in April 2020 and although originally designed to support Learning at Home, it has continued to support parenting, and signpost families to a wide range of support agencies post pandemic. It continues to be updated. The site hosts the Stronger Families Series online series of parent workshops which have received over 1300 views since January 2023. A parent focus group will help inform the further development and potential location of the Digital Hub to ensure we maximise the potential of the site and ensure that it is easily accessible to families.
- 3.5.5 The Education Service continues to work in partnership with a range of partners who continue to help support families in many ways, and we remain grateful for their expertise in this area. NSPCC, Alcohol and Drug Action, Sport Aberdeen and SAMH have all provided support over the last year.
- 3.6.1 **Volunteering** – Curriculum enrichment, supporting fundraising and using parents' skills, time and interests for wider achievement are vital to support the work and life of our schools. Parent councils and fundraising groups contribute many hours in volunteering to ensure that families benefit from activities and community events. Feedback from a school focus group has resulted in the provision of a citywide volunteering resource to support parent involvement in school. Recruitment of volunteers can be challenging for some schools and will remain as a priority in the new plan.
- 3.6.2 89% parents said they were given opportunities to be involved in the life and work of the school. 60% said they were actively involved in the parent council.
- 3.6.3 Post pandemic, a small number of schools have struggled to recruit volunteers and are operating with a minimum quorum. Some still choose to meet virtually or via a hybrid model to maintain engagement. ACC officers will continue to work alongside parent support organisation Connect to develop recruitment to parent councils.
- 3.7.1 **Parent Voice** – All Aberdeen schools have a Parent Council although some operate with minimum members. It will be important to maintain our focus on this area. All School Improvement Plans now record the involvement and contribution of parents in self-evaluation. 92% of parents in Aberdeen City report that they feel that Parent Council views and suggestions are considered by senior management. In line with the learning outlined in paragraph 3.3.1, there is a need to ensure that opportunities to influence school improvement planning processes are extended beyond Parent Councils where possible.

3.7.2 ACC continues to work together with Aberdeen City Parent Forum (ACPF) collaboratively and share information on the work of the education service. ACC actively promotes city wide opportunities to support development of ACC policies and frameworks. Parents continue to be represented on the Education and Children's Services Committee as valued voting members.

3.8.1 **Collaboration with Community** – Schools continue to actively form partnerships with businesses and third sector partners to support the delivery of the curriculum as well as offering targeted interventions to learners and families. This is being greatly supported through Business and Community Support Officers, in some of our secondary schools, who ensure all programmes are well managed and provide a positive experience for children.

3.8.2 Family Learning continues to develop strong partnerships with families and are a key partner in our Fit like Hubs. The plan looks to ensure families are well informed of the Fit Like universal offers.

3.9 LOOKING FORWARD 2024 – 2027

3.9.1 The new plan continues to be strategic so that the service can continue to respond to changing needs with important levels of agility. It focuses primarily on 5 areas of parental engagement: Sharing Learning, Supporting Parenting, Communication, Volunteering, and Parent Voice. It is compliant with the UNCRC requirements as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024, ensuring that we fulfil our obligations as duty bearers to respect, protect and fulfil children's rights.

3.9.2 A key focus of our work will be to review the content and location of the Parent Hub to ensure that the resource continues to support families. There is also a need to improve the visibility of a range of Family Supports across the city including those helpful to families of children with additional support needs.

3.9.3 Increasing opportunities for parents to build confidence and skills to support their children's learning at home and school will remain our focus. Education services will continue to strengthen partnerships with agencies who can help to support parents creatively in their children's learning particularly with numeracy, literacy and children's health and wellbeing.

3.9.4 Parental Engagement is a driver in the National Improvement Framework Plan. Aligning the new PIE plan with the National Improvement Framework Plan will bring a focus on working together with parents and partners to improve outcomes across the 4 national priority areas:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children;
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing; and
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people.

3.9.5 It is proposed that progress against the high level PIE Plan (**Appendix A**) will be regularly reported to Committee through the established National Improvement Framework Plan reporting.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 requires the local authority to prepare and publish details of activities undertaken annually regarding their parental involvement plan. They should comply fully with this requirement while also ensuring that parental engagement is included in the broader National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan reports.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no negative 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	N/A			
Compliance	Statutory duties and relevant legislation	Implementation of the PIE Plan will satisfy these legal duties.	L	Yes
Operational	Clear guidance and planning together with staff training around PIE.	Strong partnership working with services & parents to engage and support their children's learning and family wellbeing. An increase in staff confidence and capacity to understand and support PIE.	L	Yes
Financial	The PIE is unlikely to	All activity will be met from existing budgets.	L	Yes

	carry any financial risk.			
Reputational	Not effectively supporting parents and families with their child's learning could present a reputational risk to the Council, including higher numbers of parental complaints.	Effectively implementing the plan and close monitoring of impact will enable the Council to positively report on progress made in involving and engaging parents in their children's learning.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	N/A			

8. OUTCOMES

Council Delivery Plan 2024	
Impact of Report	
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following ACC Priorities:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise attainment and achievement • Support improvement in the health and wellbeing of children and young people • Maximise the impact Of Early Learning and Childcare
Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
<p>Prosperous People (Children and Young People) Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The proposals support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 3 - 95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27-30 month review by 2026. Through offering support to all parents and sharing parenting opportunities we will create networks of support for families.</p> <p>The proposals within this report also support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 6 – 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026. Through developing</p>

	partnerships and working with parents we will ensure families will be able to support their children to achieve.
Regional and City Strategies Children's Services Plan National Improvement Framework Plan	The recommendations within this committee report are fully aligned with the relevant purpose and priority contained in both the Children's Services Plan and National Improvement Framework Plan.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not Required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Niki Paterson
Title	Education Support Officer – Health and Wellbeing / Parental Engagement
Email Address	nikpaterson@aberdeencity.gov.uk