

## **APPENDIX A - DATA HELD BY THE SERVICE**

### 1.1 **Specialist Provisions in the city**

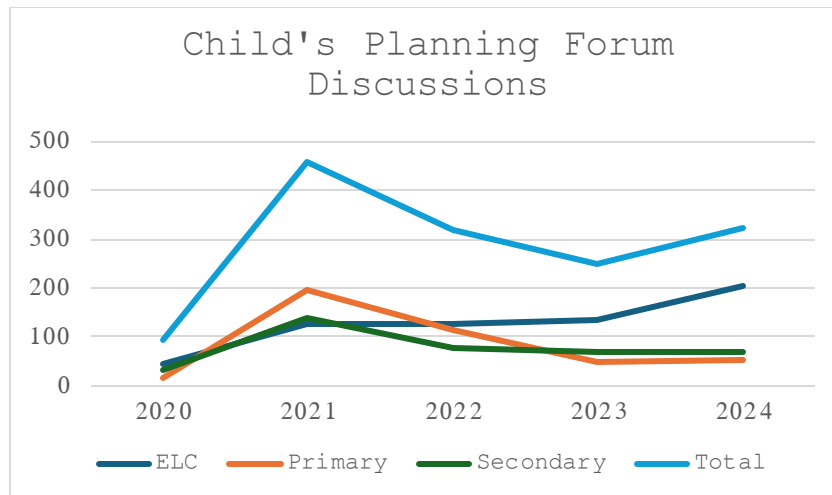
There are currently 9 specialist provisions across Aberdeen. Their composition is shown in the table below.

<b>Setting</b>	<b>Places</b>	<b>Provision</b>
Orchard Brae nursery/Ashgrove	52	ELC
Aberdeen School for the Deaf	11	Primary
Mile End School ASN Wing	78	Primary
Kaimhill School Enhanced Provision	7	Primary
Glashieburn School Enhanced Provision	7	Primary
Bridge of Don Academy Enhanced Provision	7	Secondary
Cults Academy Enhanced Provision	7	Secondary
Bucksburn Academy ASN Wing	96	Secondary
Orchard Brae School	119	Secondary

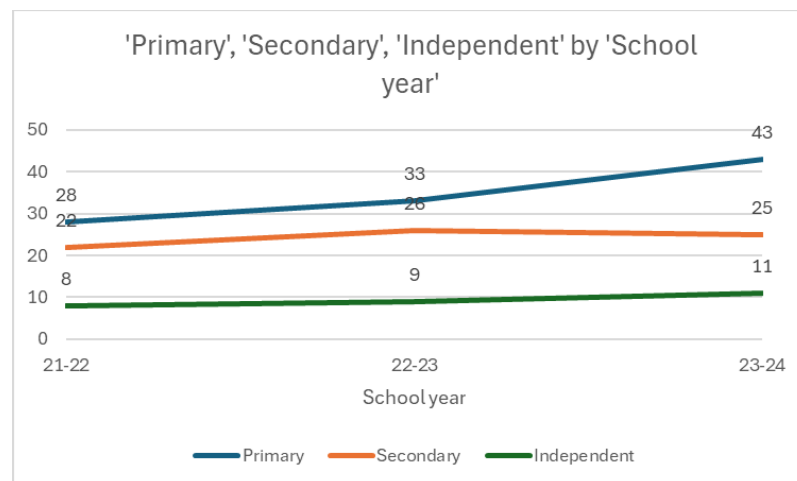
Established  
2021

- 1.2 Orchard Brae is an all through free standing special school for pupils aged 3-18 with profound, multiple and complex needs and currently supports 119 children and young people. Three of the nursery classes are based within Ashgrove Children's Centre. The Children's Social Work Children with Disabilities Team, Autism Outreach Service and Moving and Handling Team are also based at Orchard Brae. The location of the Children with Disabilities team within the provision was recognised as being innovative and impactful during a recent Thematic Inspection of Children's Social Work. There has been one single occasion when a young person from Orchard Brae transitioned to a less supported provision (Buckburn Wing).
- 1.3 Mile End ASN provision and Bucksburn Wing are specialist city wide provisions located within mainstream schools. This model ensures that children and young people can benefit from greater opportunities to be included with their mainstream peers where appropriate. Each provision has distinct ASN class areas and specialist resources but also benefits from those available within the mainstream school. The increase in levels of need across the city has meant that both Mile End and Bucksburn are now supporting children and young people with needs that are more complex than those being supported 10 years ago, as a result, the respective pupil populations less routinely engage with their mainstream peers now. There have been a few occasions where children from Mile End have transitioned back to mainstream.
- 1.4 Aberdeen School For the Deaf is a bilingual (Spoken English and British Sign Language/Sign Supported English) primary school in Aberdeen City supporting Deaf children from Nursery through to Primary 7. The provision is held in high regard by the deaf community. Children transitioning to secondary school are supported by the hearing support outreach team. All children transition to a mainstream secondary school where they are supported by the Hearing Support Service.

- 1.5 Aberdeen's Enhanced Provisions (an ASN class within a mainstream school) were opened in August 2021 in response to the increase in need identified across the city at that time. Each class supports 7 learners. The Glashieburn provision has recently transitioned one learner back into mainstream following the intensive support offered. In almost all cases, children transition to their zoned mainstream school.
- 1.6 Aberdeen operates Language Support Provisions in Sunnybank and Dyce Primaries for learners in P1 - 3 with significant speech and language delay. These provisions offer daily access to Speech and Language Therapists and operate on an outreach model with learners attending the provision fulltime for a maximum of 2 years whilst remaining on the roll of their local school. At the point of transition back to mainstream, the zoned school staff attend sessions in the provision so that they have the skills to support their returning learners, this investment in capacity building helps ensure a smooth and successful transition. This model is particularly effective in supporting a positive transition back into mainstream. More children who are referred to this resource are able to access the service compared to those seeking static places in other specialist provisions.
- 1.7 Nationally there are 149 local authority special schools however the way in which local authorities define special school varies. There is no national list of mainstream schools which contain units specifically for children with ASN. This makes it difficult to compare the volume of our ASN provision to that of other local authorities. We know through discussions with colleagues that we sit mid-range nationally for specialist provisions.
- 1.8 There is considerable anecdotal evidence that the reputation of NHS Grampian's Aberdeen Royal Infirmary (and its provision of medical care across multiple other local authorities) and the proximity of Orchard Brae and Mile End to the hospital results in families often choosing to move to Aberdeen from other parts of Scotland.
- 1.9 Places for all ASN provisions are allocated on a referral basis through the Child's Planning Support Forum. The Forum is a collaborative team of representatives from education, social work and health. This panel meets 7 times a year to review Child's Plans and give recommendations to the named person/lead professionals in the context of the Scottish Government's presumption of mainstreaming.
- 1.10 The number of referrals for a specialist provision peaked in 2020/21 and then decreased steadily to 2022/23. Referrals have remained fairly consistent since. However, the number of referrals is always greater than the places available, and this has always been the case. The pattern for ELC is different with referrals showing a steady increase from 2020/21 to 2022/23, and then a sharper increase between 2022/23 and 2023/24, due largely to referrals from Health Visitors. This would align with qualitative feedback from schools suggesting that the level of need is greatest in the early stages but may also indicate a need to ensure that our Health Visiting colleagues are aware of how our primary schools operate.



1.11 Parents can apply for a place at one of our ASN schools by making a placing request. Requests for places in Secondary provision have been rising in the last 3 years whereas requests for primary are beginning to decrease. This is thought to indicate a higher level of anxiety about transition to secondary. Independent school places (Camphill and Linn Moor) are also sometimes sought. These independent places cost around £40,000 a year per child for a day place.



1.12 The current provision of specialist equipment for those with a range of ASN is provided on a needs basis, irrespective of school, following assessment by an NHS physiotherapist or occupational therapist. Any equipment the learner no longer requires is returned to Bon Accord Care who service the equipment ready for redistribution.

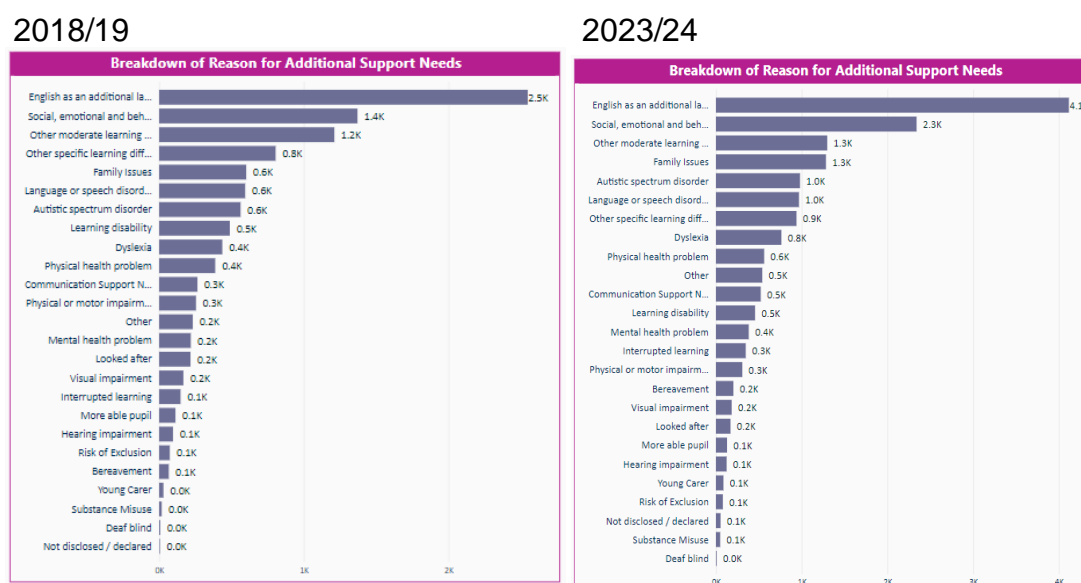
1.13 Schools can also access support from a range of internal Education support agencies: ASN and Outreach (including Dyslexia Outreach, Language Support, Hearing Support, Vision Support, English as an Additional Language (EAL), Educational Psychology, Autism Outreach, Orchard Brae Complex Additional Supports Needs (CASN) Service and the Quality Improvement Team. This support can be bespoke to the needs of the school. Multi-Agency and external support agencies include Fit Like Hubs and Children's and Families Social Work.

1.14 In summary, the current provision of specialist provision is thought to be in line with national averages and Aberdeen City Council is fully aligned to national policy. There is evidence that irrespective of the number of placements, demand will always be greater than the number of places available and require a level of prioritisation.

1.15 Transitions continue to cause anxiety for parents and there is limited appetite for transitioning to a less supported provision. In the absence of a change in national policy (and associated funding) there is a need to think about how best to mitigate a further increase in referrals. There is much to learn from the operation of our Language Units where a short term intervention is offered prior to transitioning back to mainstream.

## 2.1 Children and young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN)

The number of children with Additional Support Needs (ASN) has increased significantly from 34.6% in 2018/19 to 39.67% in 2023/24, this is similar to the national average. This increase can be attributed to the increase in learner needs post pandemic, increased awareness of requirements within Additional Support for Learning legislation, and advances in medical science.



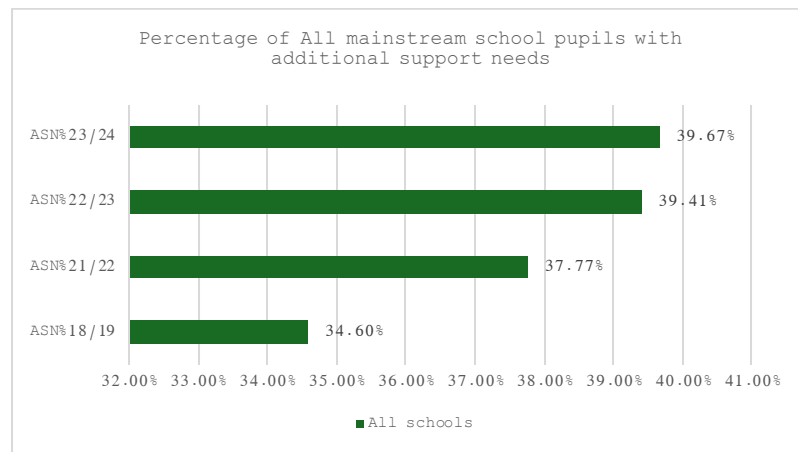
2.2 The greatest increases in identified need since 2018/19 are in English as an additional language which has risen from 2,500 to over 4,000. This is not surprising given the well reported rise in our school rolls. The English as an Additional Language Service has responded positively by offering a more targeted offer to schools to replicate the successful Dyslexia Service Model.

2.3 There would appear to be a rise in the number of children and young people with both Autism Spectrum and speech and language needs. Qualitative data would suggest that this is probably a conservative number and an area that could benefit from further consideration.

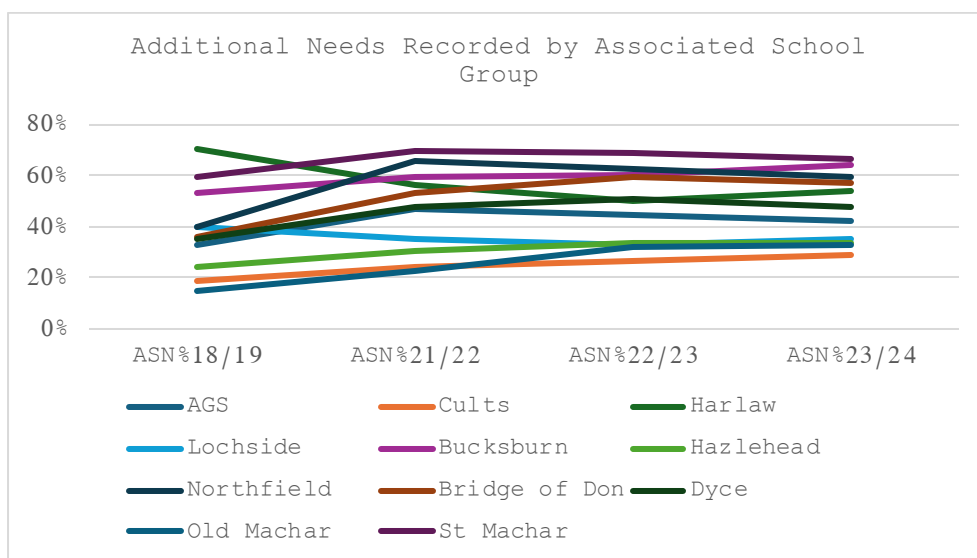
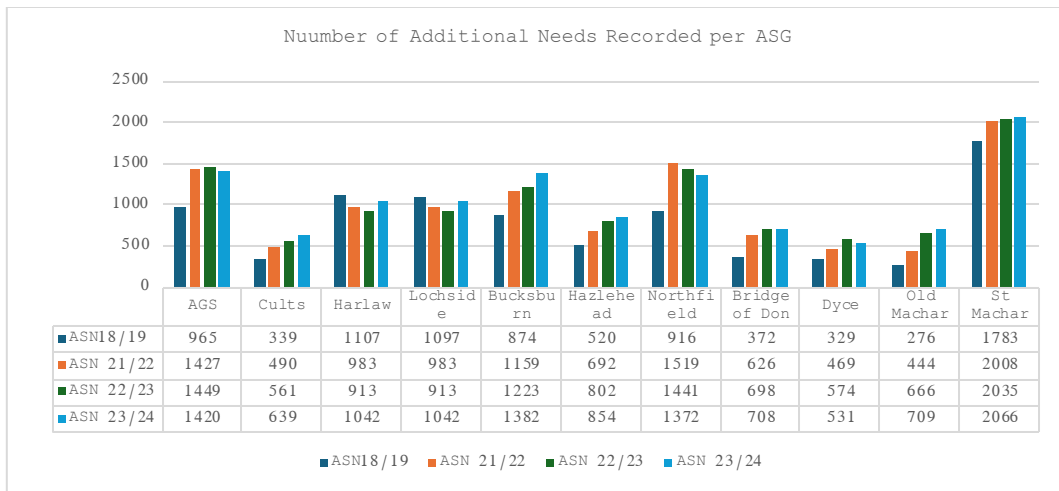
2.4 Social, emotional and behavioural needs have also seen a significant increase with the number of needs reported having increased from 1400 to 2300. This is

most likely linked to the impact of the pandemic and the recent increases in learner and parent anxiety. Staff now have an increased understanding of the impact of trauma on learners and how this may be displayed. Trauma itself would not be recorded as an ASN, but some presenting behaviours, such as emotional dysregulation, sensory presentations, or emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA) would be.

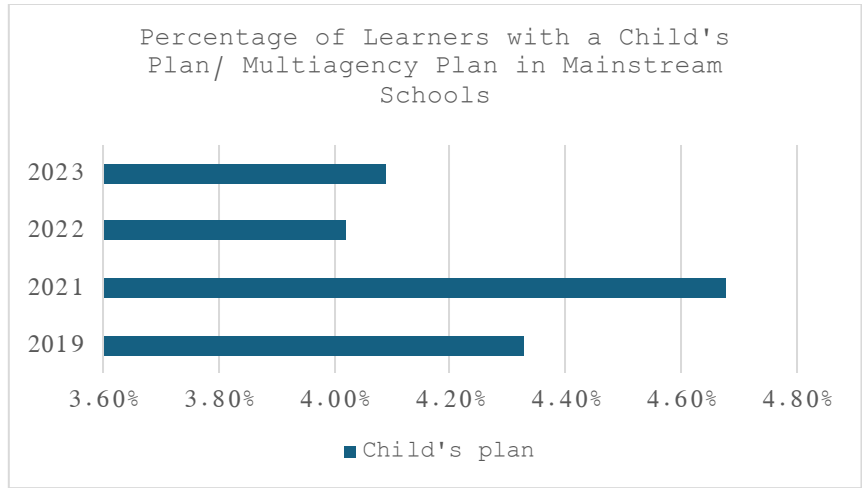
- 2.5 To understand where the greatest need is in the city, we need to consider the data by Associated school group (ASG).
- 2.6 The number of additional needs identified within mainstream schools has increased steadily post pandemic with the largest increase (3.17%) between 18/19 and 21/22. This would reflect the impact of the pandemic on learners returning to face to face learning. The rate of increase has reduced significantly between 22/23 and 23/24.



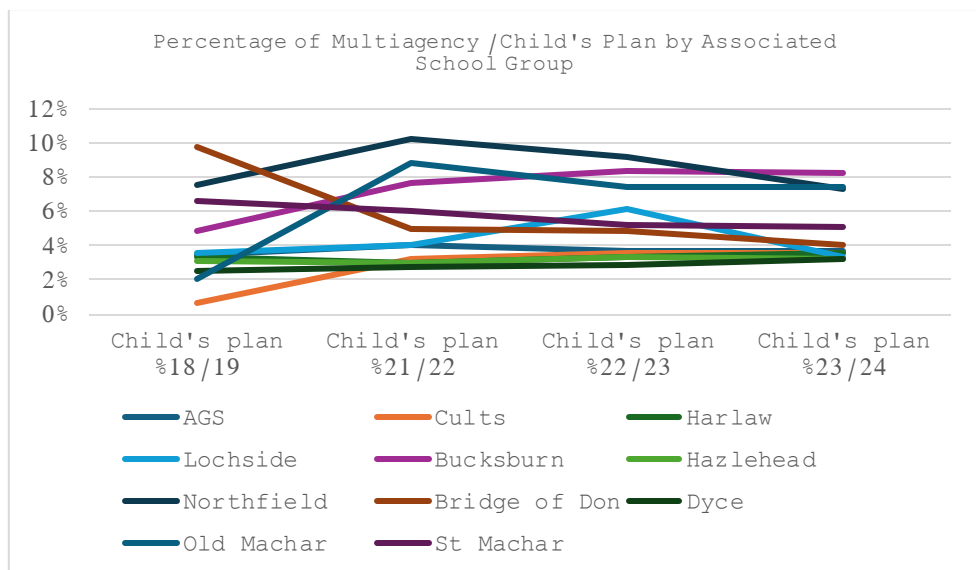
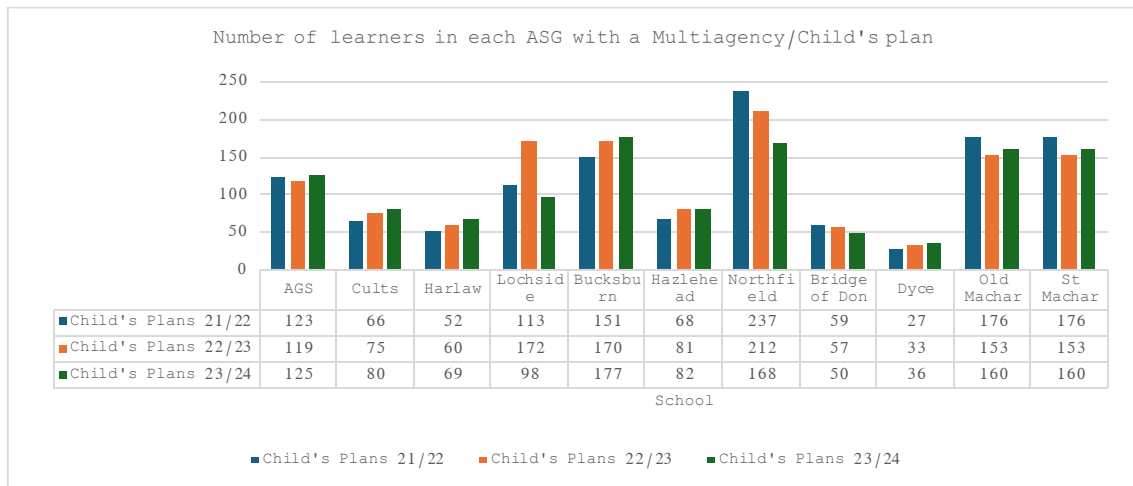
- 2.7 If we break the data down to the number of times an additional support need is recorded by individual ASGs, trends vary due to the individual context of each ASG. The ASG with the highest number of additional support needs recorded is St Machar and this has been consistent for the last 3 years. An individual learner may have one or more additional needs identified, as a result the percentages below do not equate to the number of learners with additional support needs, rather the number of recorded needs (with an individual potentially having multiple needs recorded).



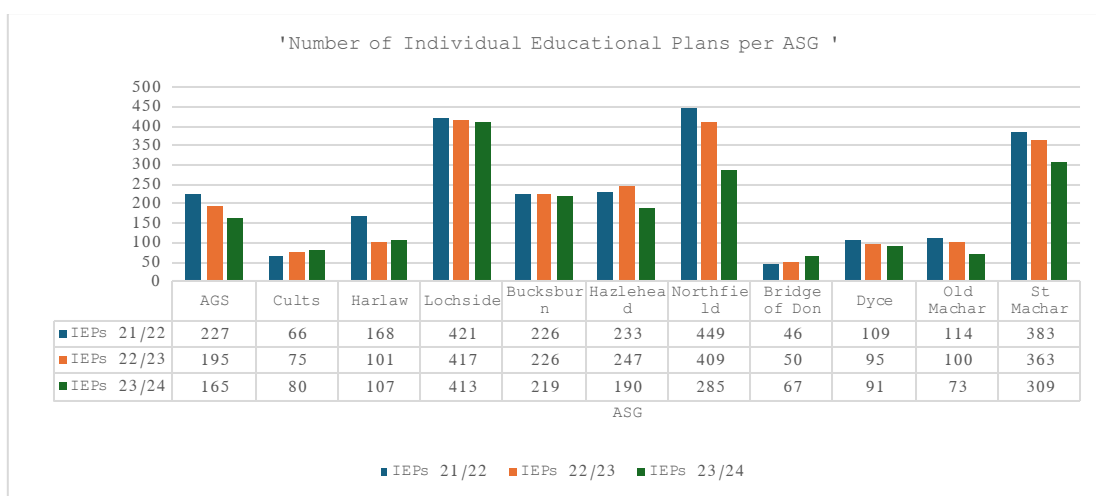
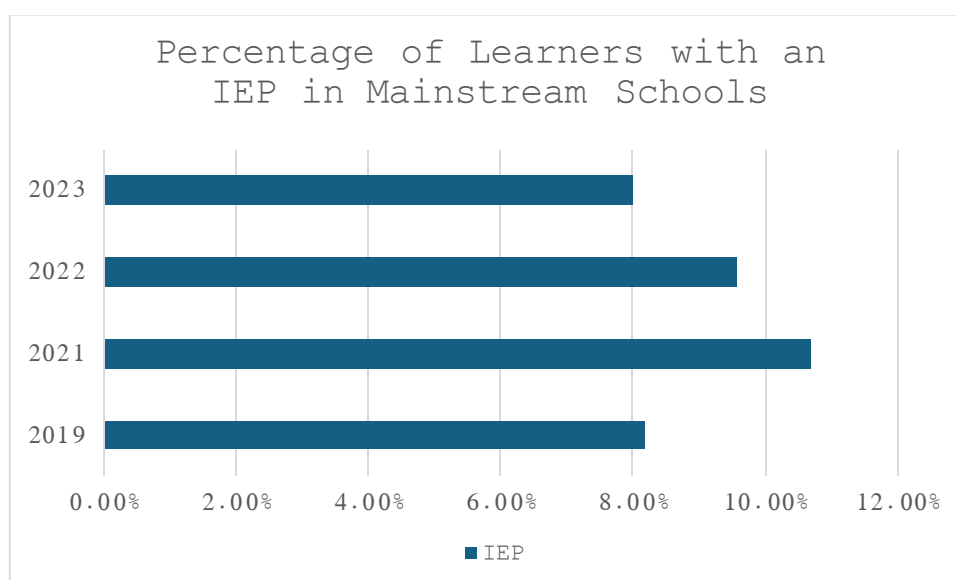
- 2.8 The very wide definitions of additional support needs within the Addition Support for Learning Code of Practice, means that children who require only small adaptations to thrive, are counted in a similar way to those who require a more detailed level of multi-agency planning. The data in the system does not provide detail on the complexity of needs of individuals. If a learner has more complex needs, they are likely to have multiple agencies supporting their needs and therefore have a Child's Plan and/or Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP) to help coordinate support for the learner and their family. Analysing the number of multiagency plans allows us to analyse the number of learners with more complex needs with multi-agency support packages in place.
- 2.9 The majority of ASGs have seen an increase in the number of multi-agency plans over the last 3 years and this would correlate with qualitative information gleaned suggesting an increase in the number of children with complex needs within our schools. This data only shows Plans that have been initiated by education and therefore not those coordinated by Children's Social Work, who have care and protection needs.



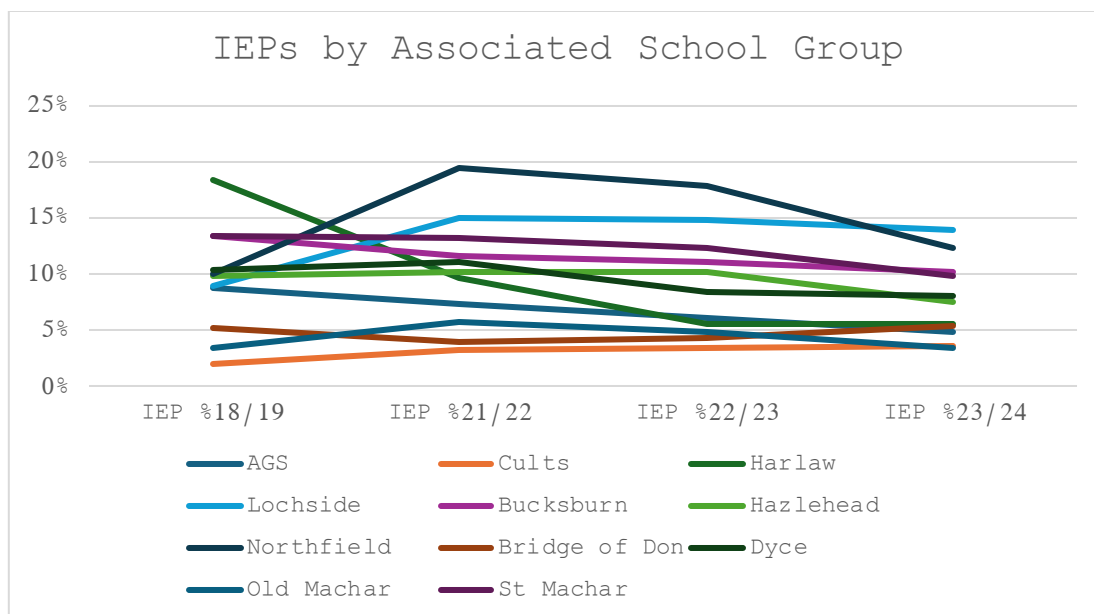
2.10 As can be seen in the data, a high proportion of Child's Plans are in place across Bucksburn and Aberdeen Grammar ASG (due in part to the specialist provisions in place), and also across Northfield and St Machar. The elevated levels across Northfield and St Machar can be partially attributed to known links between levels of deprivation and some additional support needs.



2.11 Schools also have single agency plans, Individual Educational Plans (IEP), for learners where the learner does not require, or meet the threshold for, the support from multi-agency partners. The number of Individual Education Plans varies from school to school however the trend shows a reduction over time in most ASGs. This may be because of the increase in whole school approaches such as utilisation of the CIRCLE framework and Compassionate and Connected Communities. The data for 18/19 has been included, however there were inconsistencies across ASGs at that time which have subsequently been addressed. This data would suggest that a high proportion of learners with additional support needs are benefiting from universal adaptations being made by schools.







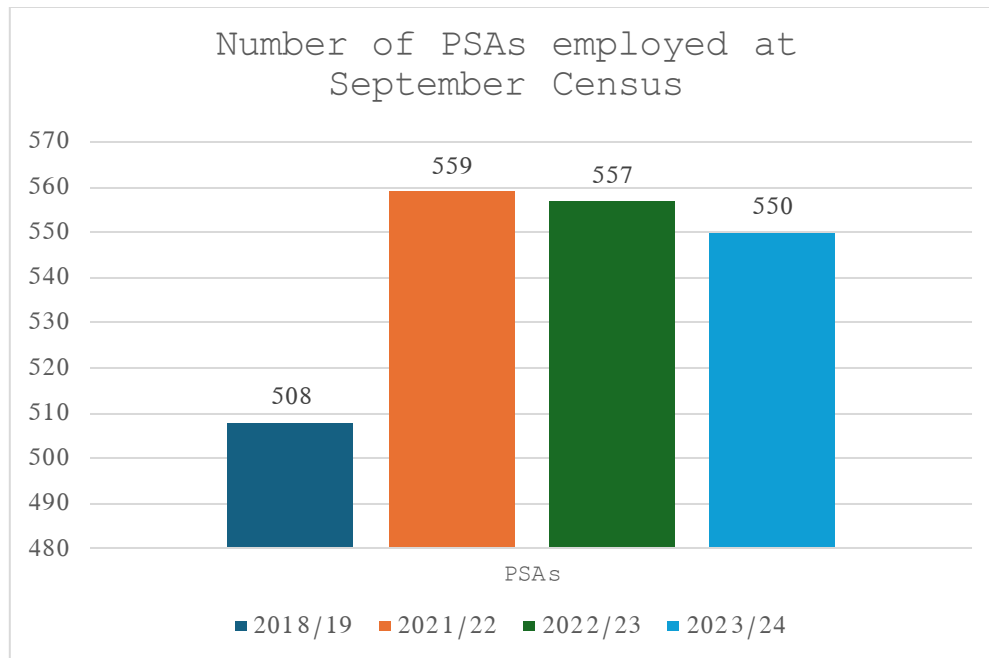
2.12 As with multiagency plans and identified needs, there was a substantial increase following the pandemic reflecting the impact the pandemic had on learners and their families. Single agency plans have reduced below pre-pandemic levels, and this could be an indication of successful short term interventions in schools.

2.13 The number of learners with additional needs in our schools increased following the pandemic. This increase in need triggered a higher number of multiagency and Individual Education Plans to be put in place. The number of Individual Educational Plans has reduced from 10.70% in 2021 to 7.99% in 2023 suggesting bespoke early interventions post pandemic were successful. However, the slight increase in Child's Plans from 4.02% 22/23 to 4.09% for session 23/24 would suggest that ASN learner needs are becoming more complex and require agencies to work closely together to support. This is key learning as we develop our model of Family Support.

### 3.1 Allocation of Pupil Support Assistants

3.2 Each school has a core allocation of Pupil Support Assistants (PSA) based on their school roll. In addition to this there is a small amount of (short-term) flexibility which is allocated through the Child's Planning Support Forum to support transitions or specific needs identified in a Child's Plan. Pupil support staff are not allocated as a one-to-one support for learners.

3.3 The number of PSAs in schools increased by 10% from 2018/19 to 2021/22, in keeping with increases in the school roll, and has remained broadly consistent for the last 3 years. These numbers are gathered from the validated data at census and only represent a moment in time in September each year. The number of PSAs employed at any one period in time will vary throughout the year.



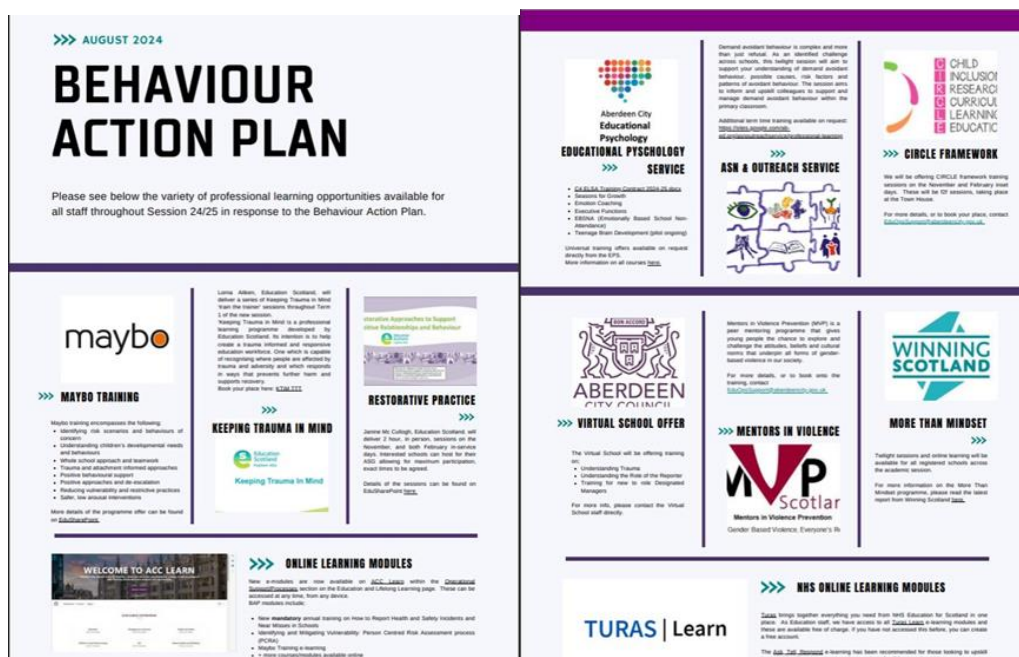
- 3.4 Headteachers decide how they will allocate their PSA provision across the school. Any additionality for transition is to build independence in the learner to allow them to be supported within the school's normal allocation following transition. PSAs are also used to supervise in the playground during break and lunch supporting children with Additional Support Needs with social interactions. In addition all PSAs are trained in first aid and ably assist with the administration of medicines.
- 3.5 The role of the pupil support assistant is to support learners under the direction of the class teacher. There are no formal qualifications required to undertake the role of PSAs and as they are employed for the hours that learners attend school this can limit training opportunities to in-service days. PSAs often build close relationships with the learners they support and training such as ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant training) can enhance the support they offer. Quality Assurance observations would highlight the level of skills in many, although as would be anticipated this is not consistent. There may be a need to consider how PSA time can be released more frequently for professional learning.
- 3.6 The support provided by Pupil Support Assistants often allows learners to become more independent and increase in confidence whether that be academically or socially. Schools are looking at how they can creatively deploy PSAs to ensure maximum impact for learners. The good practice identified needs to be shared across schools to support improvement in outcomes for all learners. Quality Improvement Visits highlight that there are some highly skilled PSAs who could be utilised to help build the capacity of others, in keeping with arrangements in place for other staff groups.

#### 4.1 Professional Learning & Leadership (PLL)

4.2 Aberdeen city's Schools and Early Learning Centres (ELC) have access to an in-depth but focused range of training and development opportunities to support practice.

4.3 Staff undertake mandatory training in line with requirements for all employees, including training in reporting incidents and near misses. In addition to this there is a Professional Learning and Leadership programme which is reviewed annually to align with school improvement plans and National Improvement Framework Priorities. An audit of need has recently been reintroduced.

4.4 The programme for this year has a specific section linked to our behaviour plan for all teaching and support staff.



4.5 The increase in complexity of need means there is a need for additional training to ensure learners continue to be adequately supported. In order for training to take place we need to consider how we support PSA induction as a local authority and at school level.

#### 5.1 Support for Families

5.2 The termly universal newsletter which is sent out to all families is an inclusive one, containing information for all parents and carers, including those of learners with ASN.

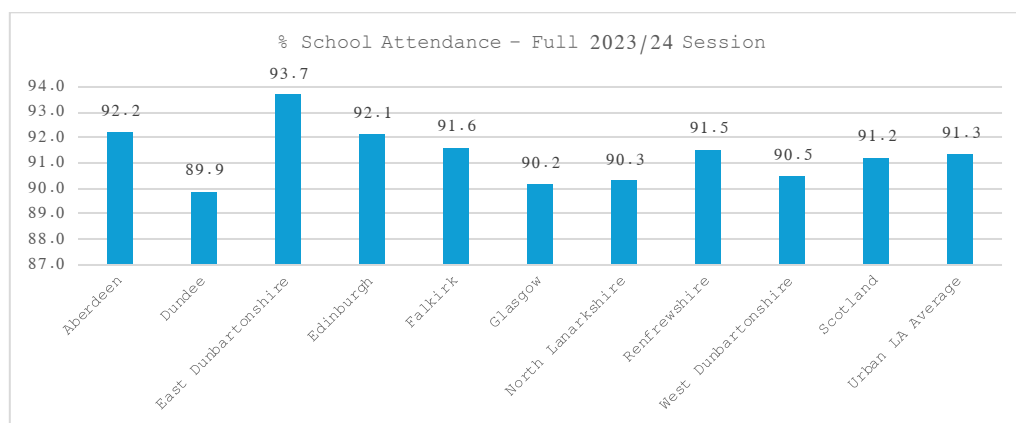
5.2 The Parent Learning Hub website was launched in April 2020 and although originally designed to support Learning at Home, it has continued to support parenting, and signpost families to a wide range of support agencies post

pandemic. It continues to be updated. The site hosts the Stronger Families Series online series of parent workshops which have been received over 1300 views since January 2023.

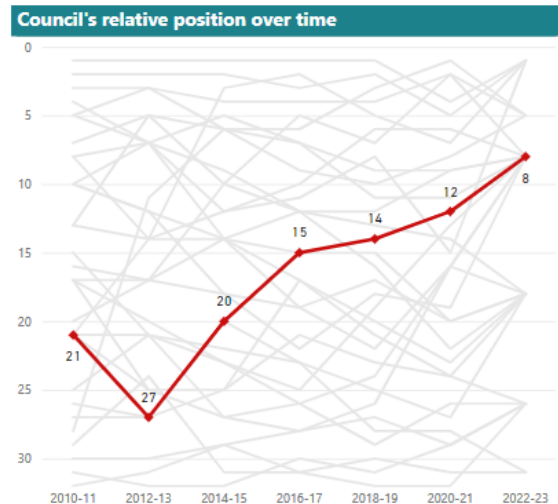
- 5.3 The EPS have a parents/carers section within their EPS Digital Resource Hub. In addition to this there is general information or process information on applying for a place and supports available on the local authority website.
- 5.4 Officers work closely with the We Too service, attending sessions for parents on a termly basis to answer any queries or concerns families may have.
- 5.5 Parents are confused by the terminology and legislation around ASN often struggling to navigate the different sites we manage. There is a need to simplify this through the creation of a single page on the council website to host all information and support available pertaining to Additional Support Needs. As part of the parent involvement and engagement plan a focus group will help inform any further digital support for parents.

## 6.1 Levels on non-attendance in schools

6.1 Attendance levels are falling across Scotland and although our city-wide attendance sits just above national average, there is a continued need for this to increase back to pre-pandemic levels. The most recent validated data for attendance 23/24 shows national attendance at 91.2% and Aberdeen City attendance at 92.2% however this is still below pre pandemic levels of 93.3%. There has been increased scrutiny around attendance from the central team and this is helping to identify target groups for further consideration.



6.2 Our relative position compared to other local authorities has moved from 14<sup>th</sup> place in 2018/19 to 8<sup>th</sup> in 2022/23. Settings across Aberdeen are beginning to explore and develop Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance approaches, and reflecting these in their practice, policies and approaches.



6.3 There is a clear focus on improving attendance at both at authority level and school level. Officers regularly challenge schools on the appropriateness of the curriculum on offer and the length of any flexible pathway in place to ensure there is a plan to return to fulltime attendance. The Educational Psychology Service have a training package, including post training implementation sessions, for school staff on Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance. A group of officers and headteachers will consider roll out of this and are beginning to explore and develop other Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance tools and these will be shared across all settings through Headteacher engagement sessions.