

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	24 June 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Incidents and Behaviour Action Plan Progress
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/153
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne
REPORT AUTHOR	Elaine Thomson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1,1.1.2

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the preventative work undertaken to tackle behaviour in school, progress made against the national behaviour plan and a comparison of incidents reported across other local authorities.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee

- 2.1 Notes the content of this report; and
- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer Education & Lifelong Learning to continue to plan preventative professional learning and report progress against the local Behaviour Plan through regular National Improvement Framework updates.

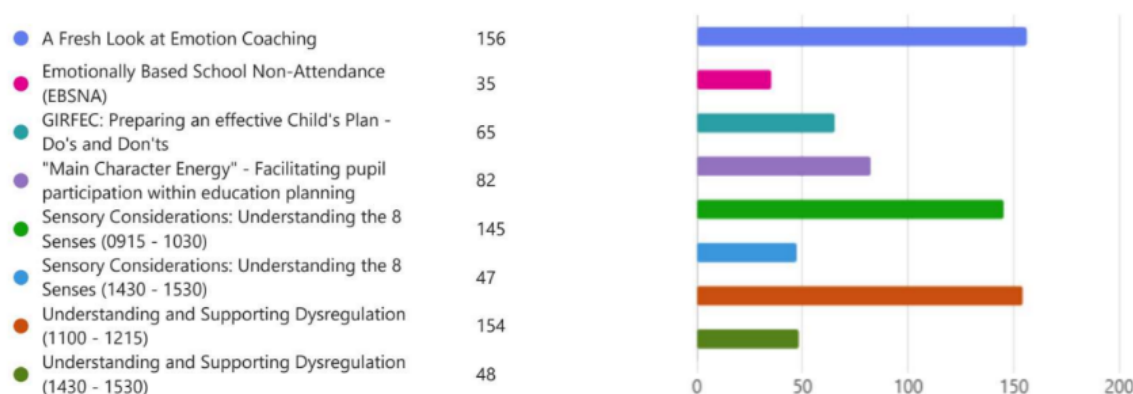
3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Officers have reviewed local and national incident data, progress made against the local and national behaviour plans and professional learning on offer to school staff in order to understand the impact of the interventions currently in place to determine how best to continue to support staff and young people in our schools.
- 3.2 Relationships and behaviour in schools: national action plan 2024 to 2027 was published in August 2024. Phase one of the national plan has just completed and we are about to enter into Phase 2. Members should note that the Aberdeen City Council Behaviour plan was developed and agreed with Trade Unions colleagues prior to the publication of the National Plan and progress has been reported regularly through our performance updates. An overview of national and local progress towards the National Action Plan can be found at Appendix A.
- 3.3 In August 2024 a mandatory staff training module on how to report incidents was rolled out with all staff being allocated time to complete it during in-service

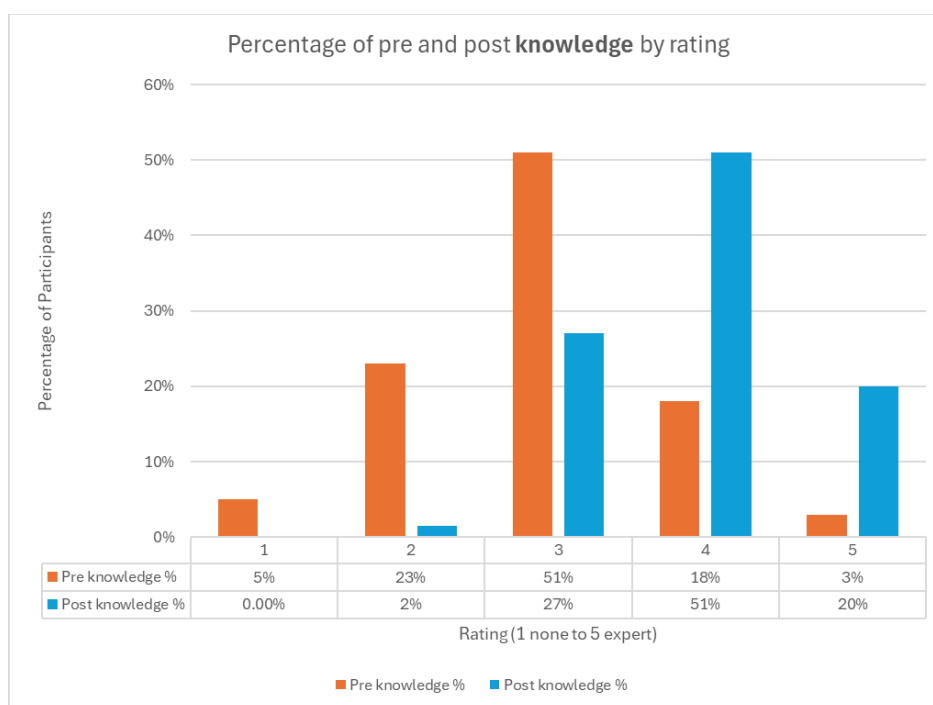
or staff development sessions. This has ensured all staff who completed the module know how to report an incident. An increase in awareness of how to report incidents would be expected to lead to an increase in the number of incidents being reported and this is evident in the upward trend in the number of incidents that have been reported in schools.

Ongoing Preventative Work

- 3.4 Aberdeen City Council has promoted the Crisis, Aggression, and Limitation Management (CALM) System across complex Additional Support Needs provisions to support the management of distress in learners. There are nine staff in the CALM Team who can deliver theory, physical intervention and bespoke support to schools in relation to strategies, risk assessment, and planning.
- 3.5 Over 400 Aberdeen City Council staff are trained in CALM Theory, since 2022, 166 staff from specialist settings, 24 staff from secondary and 78 staff from primary have attend the two day course. Following the training schools have ongoing support from the Aberdeen City CALM Team. CALM Theory. This training includes inputs on de-escalation as well as recognising and supporting trauma and distress
- 3.6 Maybo Training was introduced in August 2025 to support staff with positive behaviour and de-escalation. Over the past year over 3235 staff have been trained in level 1. Level 2, level 3, and train the trainer programmes are also being piloted in the hope of rolling these further programmes out pending successful evaluation. To support our preparedness, the service now has 9 Level 2 and 3 Level 3 Trainers to offer further training as part of the professional learning offer for session 25/26.
- 3.7 The Supporting Learners Festival, held in February 2025, saw over 250 staff from across the education service attend to further develop their knowledge and skills. The first day had input from education staff, focusing on understanding and supporting dysregulated behaviour.



Data shows that following the inputs all staff noted an increase in both knowledge and confidence in supporting dysregulated or distressed young people. Further data will be collected 6 months from now to determine how the training is continuing to impact on practice in school.



- 3.8 Throughout session 2024/25 further resources have been developed for both universal and targeted aspects of Child Inclusion Research Curriculum Learning Education (CIRCLE). Over 200 participants attended a workshop on day two of the Supporting Learners Festival in February, indicating a progressive shift to meeting learners' needs. CIRCLE approaches will continue to be developed and shared through the CIRCLE leads' network and our professional learning offer for session 25/26.
- 3.9 Restorative Practice training was attended by 170 staff. The training emphasised the importance of building relationships with a trauma-informed approach and provided practical tools and techniques through scenario discussions.
- 3.10 As part of our review of professional learning we will be tracking the impact of any training delivered locally on outcomes for young people 6 months post the input. This ongoing engagement enables the service to shape future training and gain a greater understanding of the style and content of professional learning which delivers greatest impact on practice in the classroom.
- 3.11 Following the success of the Supporting Learners Festival in February, officers and practitioners offered professional learning on supporting those with ASN to 150 ELC staff on the in-service day in May 2025, focusing on understanding and supporting distress, sensory considerations, and the CIRCLE Framework for Supporting Learners. This will ensure consistency across all sectors and supports our early intervention model.
- 3.12 Following the publication of the Scottish Government's Guidance Included, Engaged, and Involved part 3. *Supporting learners: A relationship and rights-focused approach to physical intervention*, updated local guidance for schools was issued in April 2025.

- 3.13 A group, consisting of secondary Headteachers and central officers, is exploring interventions for young people who are exhibiting risk taking behaviours in secondary. The work of the group includes the review and refresh of Person Centred Risk Assessment procedure and guidance. In addition to this the group are scoping the establishment of a city wide secondary intervention to mirror the interventions offered through 'The Bridge' at Riverbank.
- 3.14 A Complex Additional Support Needs Teacher has been leading on 3 key pieces of work related to Aberdeen City Council's Behaviour Plan. These include bespoke professional learning offers, Senior Leadership Book Group, Sensory Ambassadors test of change and supporting the ACC Pupil Voice group.
- 3.15 The Emotion Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) programme continues to be implemented with 45 trained ELSAs working in 30 Educational Establishments. Learners engage in individual or group sessions, typically within one term, targeting their social and emotional skills, emotional awareness and regulation, self-esteem, sense of belonging, and resilience.
- 3.16 Universal training on Emotion Coaching and on Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) continues to be offered and there is planned refresh and update of the materials in both courses to respond to feedback and evolving need.
- 3.17 The next phase of the supporting learners professional learning offer will focus on the Social Communication Emotional Regulation Transactional Support (SCERTS) approach, which will support school staff working with young people with more complex needs.

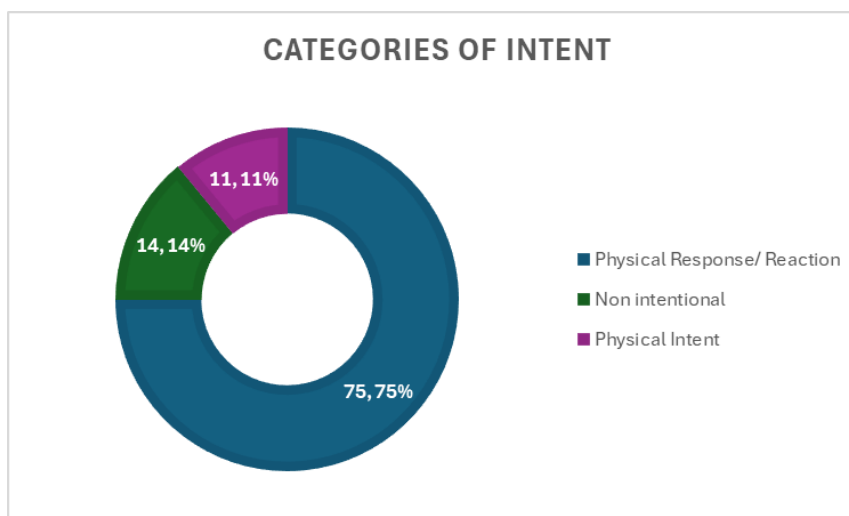
Analysis of Recent Incidents in Schools

- 3.18 Officers have reviewed the last 100 incidents reported and analysed these in some detail to better understand causes and responses to incidents in schools. Data was analysed by timing and location of incidents, roles and individuals involved, incident descriptions, injuries and outcomes, risk assessments and resolutions. In addition to this, each incident was categorised, using the description provided, into a category of intent.

Categories of Intent

- Physical Intent - Deliberate, unprovoked actions.
 - Physical Response/Reaction - Reactive behaviour following perceived provocation.
 - Non Intentional - Accidental or circumstantial actions.
- 3.19 The analysis revealed patterns and variations across schools in the language used to describe incidents, the detail provided as part of the report and how the incident was investigated. 81% of incidents reported were one-off, suggesting that post incident interventions or adaptations are effective. 19% were repeat incidents and a result targeted support has been offered to the school. 82% of incidents involved children with an additional support need and these ranged from a single need to those with multiple and complex needs.

28% of incidents occurred in special school settings. Most injuries resulted from physical responses/ reactions and a few injuries occurred as a result of deliberate intent.



- 3.20 Analysis of the incident data has highlighted inconsistencies in the level of detail reported. Not all reporting made it clear what was happening prior to the incident making it difficult to determine a potential antecedent. In order to address this the safeguarding group will look to update the training to include a section on essential information to be recorded.

Comparison with other Local Authorities

- 3.21 The tables below represent the number and frequency of Violent Incidents (Primary and Secondary combined) in consecutive academic years benchmarked by the City's Local Government Benchmark Framework and Urban Authority Family Group comparators. This data is extracted from a third party FOISA request submitted to all Scottish Local Authorities with responses provided by each according to data availability for the respective academic years. In some instances, individual Local Authorities were not enabled to offer data in response to this FOISA request against specific years.
- 3.22 When interpreting the data it is worth noting that across the 32 Scottish Local Authorities, a variety of differing recording methodologies are, and have been, used. These have been developed independently by individual Local Authorities to meet the educational and health and safety strategy/policy frameworks and priorities of each Authority.
- 3.23 The robustness of this metadata, and the extent to which it offers the capacity for direct comparisons between Local Authorities, is stronger in 2023/24 and 2024/25 but should not be taken to represent universal consistency of recording methodologies across all 32 Local Authorities even in these later years.

3.24 Comparisons with Local Government benchmark authorities

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 (to date)	Incidents per 10,000 pupils 2024/25
Aberdeen	401	807	491	441	401	1.5
Aberdeenshire	223	196	852	1099	1186	3.3
East Dunbartonshire	99	258	321	381	251	1.5
Edinburgh	408	799	2454	2908	1843	3.5
East Renfrewshire			467	390	185	1.0
Orkney	64	42	113	7	113	4.1
Perth and Kinross	442	595	1003	1080	467	2.6
Shetland	68	144		537	501	15.7
Family Group Average						2.8
All local authorities						3.6

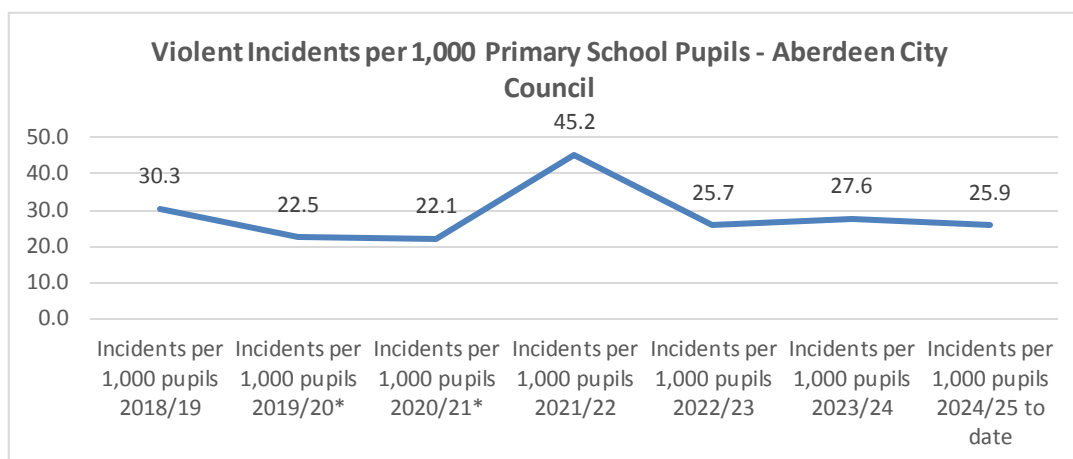
The number of violent incidents recorded (Primary and Secondary Combined) in Aberdeen is 1.5 per 10,000 pupils. This is below the family group average of 2.8 and less than 50% of 3.6 per 10 000 which is the average of all local authorities.

3.25 Comparisons with other urban local authorities

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 (to date)	Incidents per 10,000 pupils 2024/25
Aberdeen	401	807	491	441	401	1.5
Dundee City	794	914	1237	1645	225	1.2
East Dunbartonshire	99	258	321	381	251	1.5
Edinburgh	408	799	2454	2908	1843	3.5
Glasgow			2300	4049	2790	4.0
North Lanarkshire	261	423	969	697	296	0.6
Renfrewshire	191	342	576	1208	712	3.0
West Dunbartonshire				1518	1286	11.1
Family Group Average						2.9
All local authorities						3.6

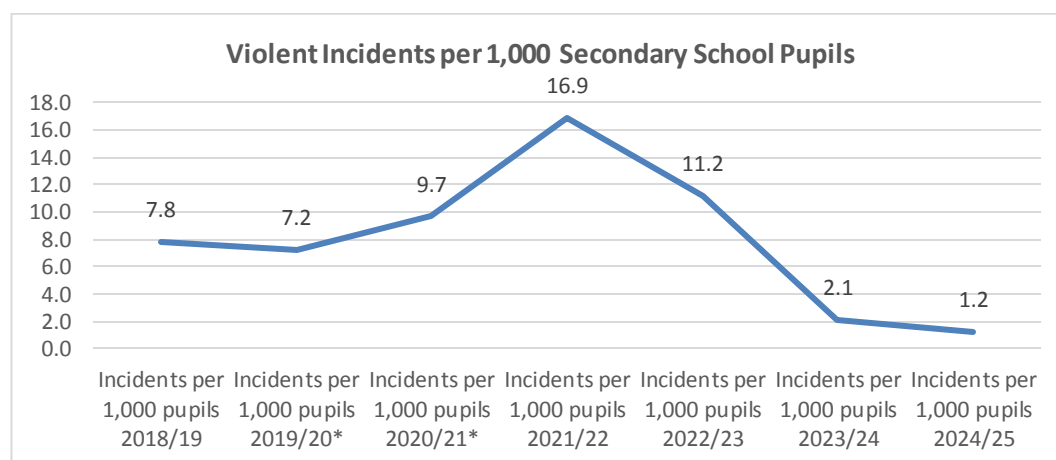
When we compare with other Urban Local authorities, we continue to be significantly below both the family group average and the average of all local authorities. Over the last 3 years the number of violent incidents reported has reduced from 807 in 2021/22 to 441 in 2023/24. To date this session, we have had 401 incidents reported which is likely to return a slight increase by the end of session. This would be expected as all staff have undertaken training in how to report incidents.

3.26 Violent incidents in Primary Schools



The number of violent incidents in primary schools per 1000 pupils fluctuates year on year. The highest number of incidents was in 2021/22 with 45.2 incidents per 1000 pupils, this could have been predicted given that children returned to schools following the periods of lockdowns and had to come to terms with the very restricted school environment. 2021/22 was the year all staff and pupils returned to face to face teaching and some young people struggled with the restrictions in place. The number of incidents being recorded remains lower than those recorded in 2018/19.

3.27 Violent Incidents in Secondary Schools



The number of violent incidents in secondary school has reduced year on year for the last 3 years and is now sitting well below the level in 2018/19.

The data shows that the number of incidents in both primary and secondary is sitting below the levels in 2018/19. The total number of incidents recorded is below both family group and national average.

Conclusion

- 3.28 Officers were instructed to provide an overview of the preventative work undertaken to tackle behaviour in school; progress made against the national

behaviour plan and a comparison of incidents reported across other local authorities

- 3.29 In reviewing the evidence gathered it is clear there has been a significant amount of professional learning offered to all staff during session 24/25 which has been welcomed by school leaders and staff. The impact of this will be subject to on-going review. There is a need to improve the guidance to include an antecedent (what was happening prior to the incident) within an incident report in order to make best use of this valuable data in determining next steps.
- 3.30 The Safeguarding Group, comprising Trade Unions and officers, has overseen the progress made against the local behaviour plan and we have overtaken all of the actions in Phase 1 of the National plan. The safeguarding group will now look to update the local plan to take account of Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the National Plan.
- 3.31 The work we are doing to reduce the number of incidents in our schools is having impact and when we look at the number of incidents across our family group and other urban local authorities we are below the average of both groupings. Officers will continue to monitor trends to help determine any required changes in collaboration with Trade Union colleagues. Through the safeguarding group officers will propose a joint survey developed in conjunction with the HDRC (Health Determinants Research Collaborative) to gather feedback from all staff in order to support future strategic planning for professional learning and support for schools.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 every education authority must make adequate and efficient provision for the additional support required by each child or young person having additional needs and monitor and review that support. This Report addresses how these duties can be fulfilled more effectively.

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	Risk of young people and staff not being appropriately supported after an incident	Training for all staff and appropriate supports put in place	L	Yes
Compliance	Risk of not complying with legislation and legal challenge (tribunals)	Mitigated by appropriate supports being in place for young people and staff receiving appropriate training	L	Yes
Operational	Staff not feeling listened to and unsure how to support young people	Mitigated by high quality professional learning to ensure staff can meet their statutory duties under The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010.	L	Yes
Financial	N/A			
Reputational	Risk of recording of incidents not being consistent or accurate reflection	Training in how to record an incident increase consistency.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	N/A			

8. OUTCOMES

Council Delivery Plan 2024	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise the impact Of Early Learning and Childcare
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	<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 of children with additional support needs.</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 partnerships and working with families to ensure all young people have access to a positive destination</p> <p>The proposals within this report also support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 8– 100% of children with Additional Support Needs /Disabilities will experience a positive destination by 2026. Through developing partnerships and working with families to ensure all young people have access to a positive destination. Through improving support for parents and supporting young people with an early intervention model.</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 resources will help to ensure all initiatives and interventions impact positively on all children and young 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 report they feel listened to all of the time 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 83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence 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.
Community Empowerment Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 16 – 50% of people report they feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026.</p> <p>There will be consultation with parents as part of the process for allocating additional support through the early intervention setting</p>

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 on 30 May 2025.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	N/A
Other	

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Behaviour Action Plan, -[F&C/24/322](#)

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A - ACC Progress against the Relationships And Behaviour In Schools: National Action Plan 2024 To 2027

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Elaine Thomson
Title	Quality Improvement Manager (Acting)
Email Address	elthomson@aberdeencity.gov.uk