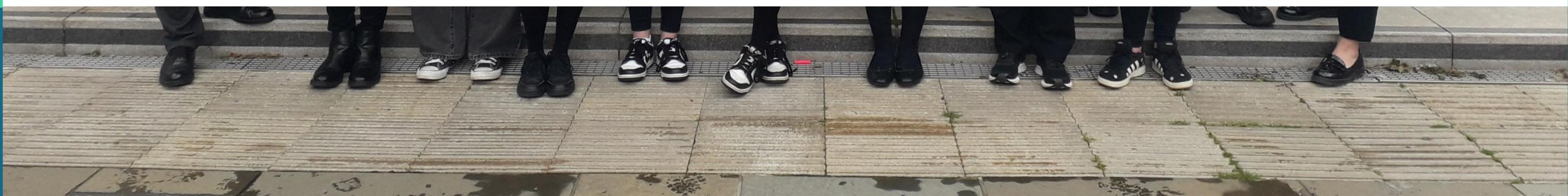




Aberdeen City Council Evaluation of the National Improvement Framework Plan 2024-25



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CONTEXT

The Scottish Government launched the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education in January 2016. The Framework is central to the Scottish Government's commitment to raising attainment for all and closing the poverty related attainment gap. The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 Act amended the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 ("the 2000 Act") to place the National Improvement Framework (NIF) on a statutory footing and introduced requirements for local authorities and schools to plan and report on the measures that they are taking to address the key priorities of the NIF. This evaluation and plan has been structured to take account of the associated statutory guidance.

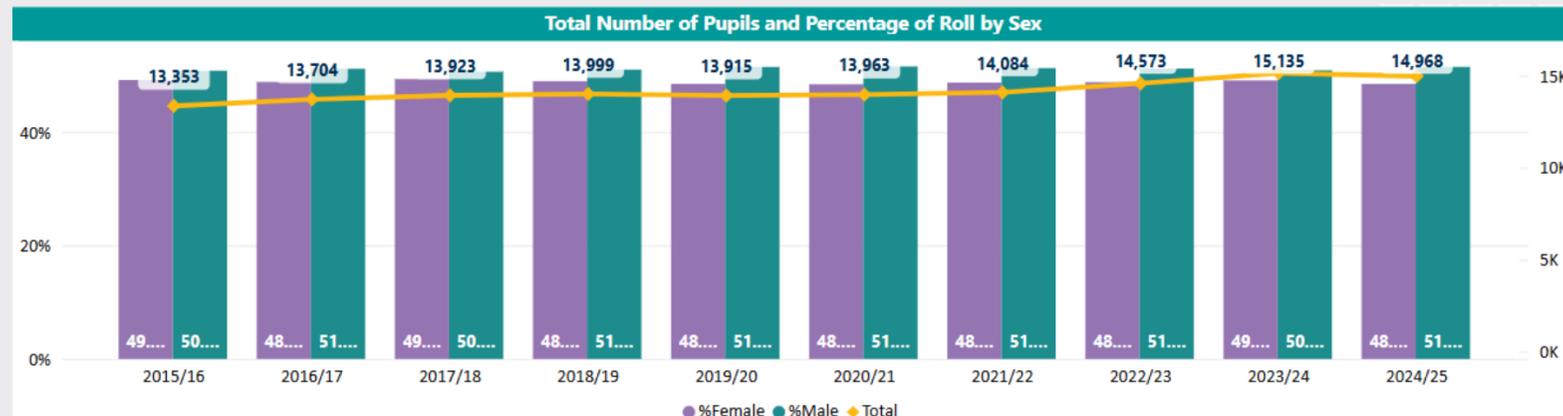
This evaluation and plan has drawn on the Community Planning [Population Needs Assessment](#) and aims to complement our partnership [Children's Services Plan](#) which acts as the children's section of the [Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#) and our shared Strategic Plan. Our Children's Services Board routinely takes stock of and reports progress, through, for example, our Children's Services Plan [Annual Report](#) and evaluation of progress against [The Promise](#). This evaluation and plan draws from all data sources, including published reports, in order to establish priorities for the school session 2025/26.

In order to set priorities with confidence, the service has first reflected on the key achievements and challenges of the 2024/25 school session, articulated progress against local and national priorities, considered governance and emerging risks and then reflected in detail at the performance of different groups. This comprehensive approach has helped the service validate the priorities for the 2025/26 school session.

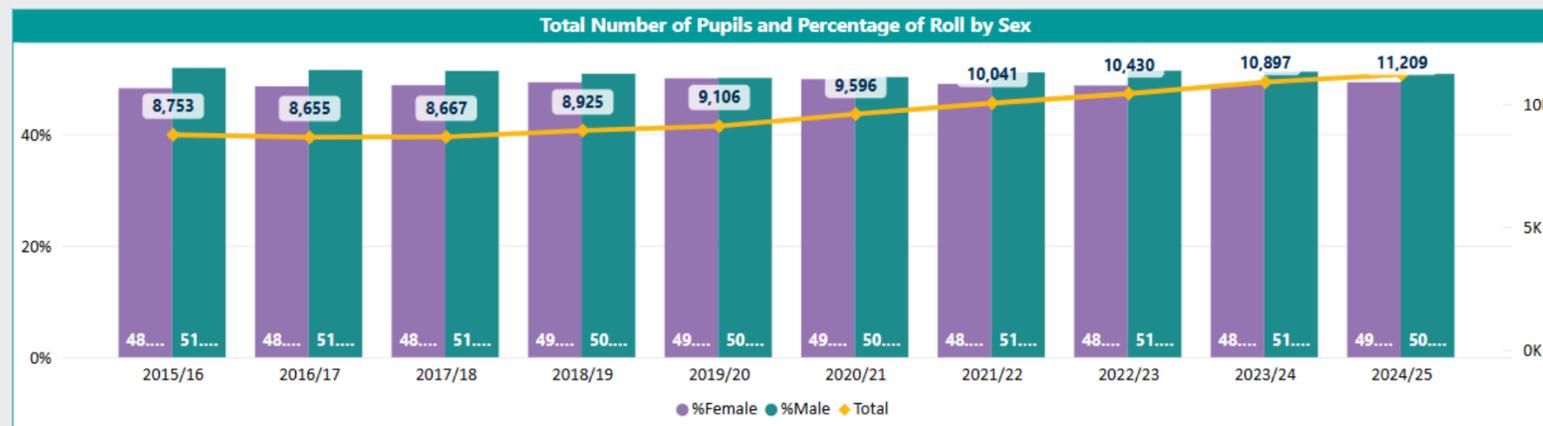


LOOKING BACK ON THE 2024/25 SCHOOL SESSION

The **significant increase in pupil population** over the last few years has continued to present challenges. As a result, the service has continued to prioritise work to maximise and optimise the use of available physical space. After a period of steady growth there is now evidence that the school roll is stabilising with young people moving through the system. As a result of this our primary school rolls have seen a very slight decrease, alleviating some pressure from our primary schools.

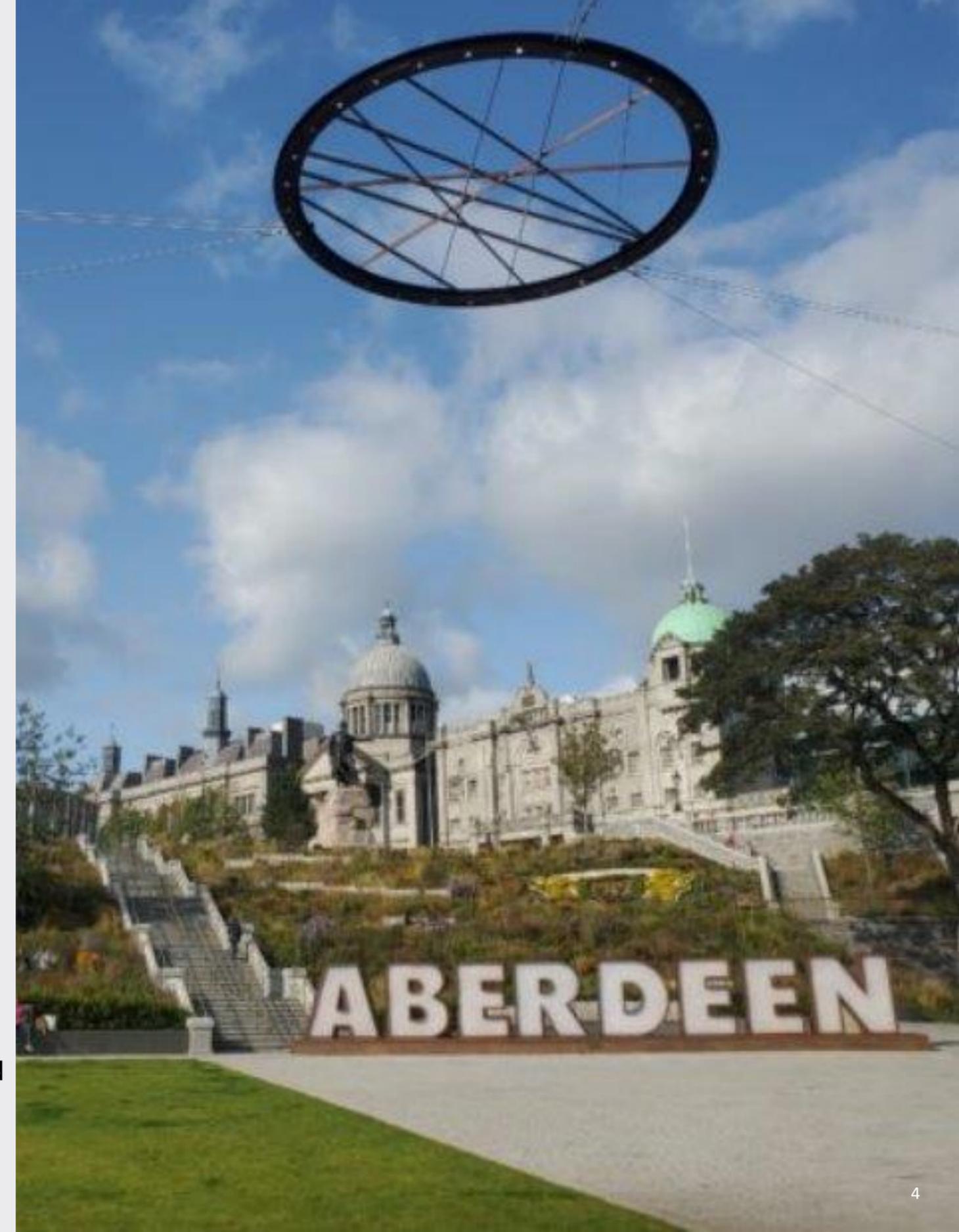


Given the movement through the system, secondary school rolls have increased slightly, bringing further challenges around secondary school placements, staffing and the use of physical space.



Schools continue to respond positively to this challenge, working closely with the central team to maximise space and resources. Secondary schools increased their S1 intake levels for 24/25 and where necessary, this has been repeated for session 25/26.

All schools are benefiting from the most diverse pupil population to date in terms of ethnicity and need.



Given the change in school roll, the Education Service continues to work closely with Corporate Landlord to ensure that the **School Estate Plan** provides adequate and efficient provision of school placements in the immediate and longer term. This highly successful collaboration is supporting our agility to respond to the rapidly changing context.

The unexpected increase in school roll made longer term forecasting challenging and a drop in the child population is predicted in the longer term. In light of this, an updated methodology has been successfully developed and used to help improve the accuracy of our predications. The next iteration of the School Estate Plan will be presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee in September 2025. We will continue to keep methodologies under review.

As a result of our shared work with Corporate Landlord, the new Riverbank School opened its doors for the first time in May 2025 providing excellent facilities for the families of Tillydrone. St Peter's School will make good use of the old Riverbank building for session 2025/26 whilst work gets underway to allow them to return to their new and refurbished building the start of school session 2026/27.

Ferryhill School has been decanted to the old Walker Road site to allow upgrades to their Victorian building. The Ferryhill school community also look forward to a return in August 2026. Work on the new Ferryhill Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision has been ongoing throughout this school year and is now complete, allowing the ELC provision to be fully operational from August 2025 and enabling the youngest Ferryhill learners to watch the school building works progress.

The Early Years team has continued to effectively review the **delivery models for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)** services in order to meet demand from parents and to ensure efficiency, being mindful of a falling birthrate. From August 2025, a further 2 ELC settings moved to a term-time model (Monday – Friday 9am-3pm) in response to how families are choosing to access their entitlement. Close monitoring of attendance during holiday periods evidences an increase in attendance during school holiday periods in 2024/25 compared to previous years, however, attendance remains below that recorded during term time. We continue to work with parents to look at how this could be increased further to maximise the use of resources. We will continue to review delivery models annually given the success of the now established approach.

88.5% of our eligible pre-school population and 83.8% of our eligible ante pre-school population were placed in ELC over 2024/25. Following the ELC application and admissions process from January 2024, 1,283 new children were offered ELC places for session 24/25, a slight decrease on the 1418 places offered the previous year and the first indication of the falling birthrate. In response, the service will pilot a system to allow families to pay to top up their allocation of 1140 hours in two more settings, where capacity allows, to help determine next steps.



Following a focussed drive and better sharing of data, the service has successfully increased the number of **eligible 2s** accessing ELC provision with an impressive 22% increase in the number placed over the last year. Furthermore, the percentage of eligible 2 year old children taking up their funded ELC entitlement has increased by 10% (from 38.3% in 2023/24 to 48.3% in 2024/25). Our focus on those who need us most will continue and we proactively look for opportunities to join data sets to help improve outcomes for learners.

There remain challenges in **recruiting quality ELC staff** at all levels due largely to the volume of staff required on an on-going basis. In order to mitigate this risk, the service is continuing to work closely with the Employability team to support placements for those returning to work, as well as continuing to deliver successful Foundation and Modern Apprenticeship programmes. This highly successful collaboration will continue.

At ELC senior level, 11 of our Senior Early Years Practitioners have successfully completed a BA Degree in Childhood Practice over 2024/25, helping to build more resilience in the leadership of our ELC provisions. This work will continue.

The slight dip in primary school roll has helped to partially mitigate concerns around staffing availability in the primary sector. The Service will continue to monitor recruitment carefully.

We continue to face challenges in **recruiting to secondary STEM subject specialists**. This is mirrored across many of the northern Local Authorities. We continue to engage with national partners to help address this and are utilising ABZ Campus to help mitigate risks to the curriculum.

Access to **quality supply staff** across all sectors remains limited. As a result, school leaders are often covering classes for long periods of time. Officers continue to routinely recruit to the supply bank to mitigate this issue.

Throughout the school session there has been a change in **leadership** in over 17% of our schools, a slight reduction on the 20% seen over session 23/24. Although this mirrors what is being seen nationally, the issue is more acute in the north. In response we have further developed our Middle Leadership, Readiness for Headship and Into Headship courses to try to increase the number of quality applicants for leadership positions. Despite this proactive approach central team members are still occasionally required to cover some vacant school posts, and this can impact on the capacity available to drive improvement across the service. There is some evidence of the positive impact of these courses on the calibre of applicants for Head Teacher posts within the city but there is further work to do in collaboration with national agencies and head teachers. We continue to monitor the impact of our work designed to develop leadership capacity and capability.

Looking forward to 25/26, our Associate Assessors will be supporting the development of networks and regular training for learning and teaching leads, including re-establishing central-led curriculum networks, beginning with Maths.



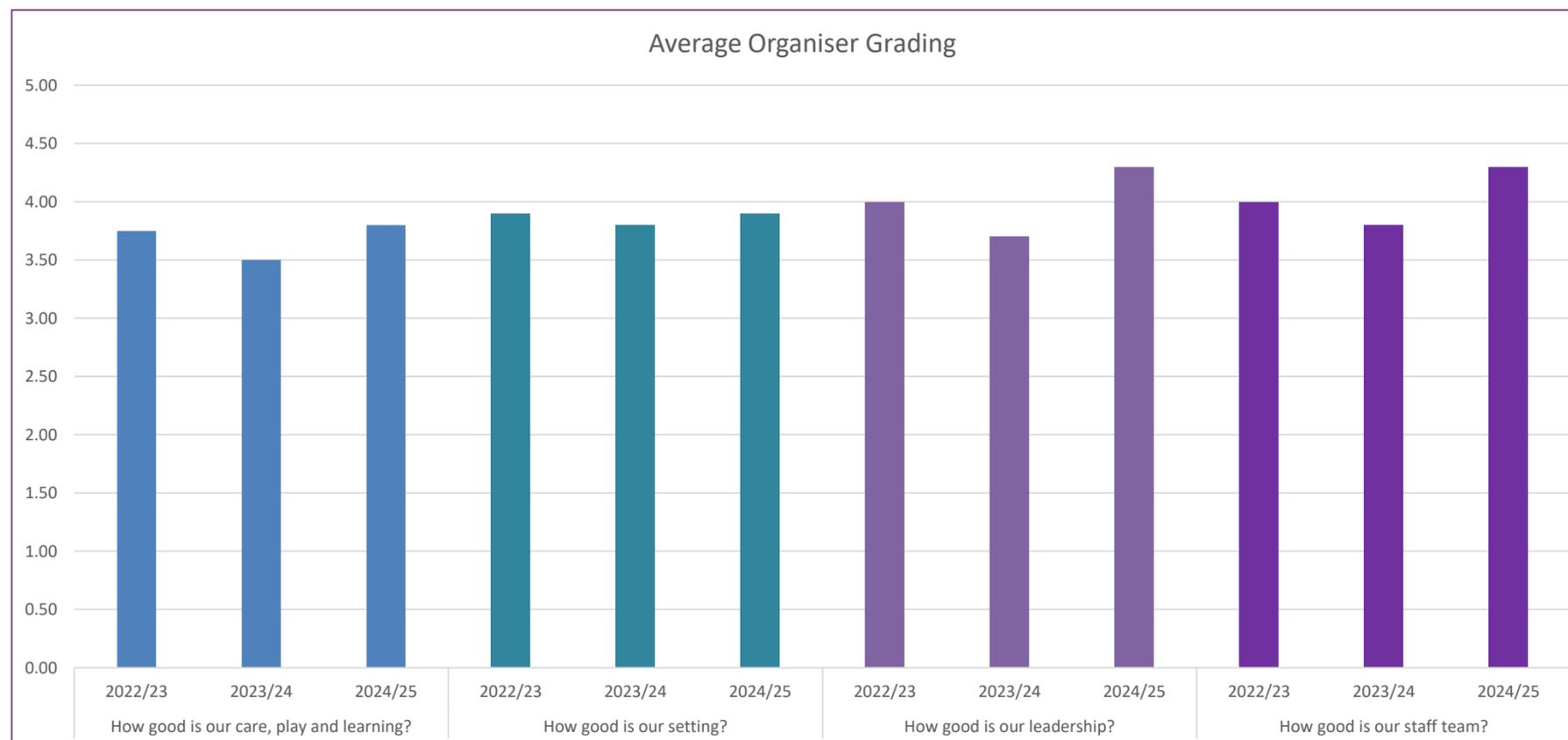
We have had a significant focus on addressing the variation in learning and teaching and leadership across our ELC settings and schools and continue to [evaluate](#) the impact of quality improvement arrangements prior to a new school session. Despite our efforts, there remains more to do.

Our evaluation shows that although there remains some variation in the quality of provision across our ELCs, there has been significant improvement over the last school session as a result of limiting our **improvement activity** to the core vulnerabilities of learning, teaching and assessment and leadership. As a result of this focus, the majority of our Local Authority settings now meet the standard of good or better in all areas. All of our settings are able to demonstrate continuous improvement, suggesting that the focus on leadership and pedagogy over the past 2 sessions has had a positive impact. There is a need to continue this focus to ensure standards are maintained or improved and this is evidenced in our updated 25/26 [ELC Quality Improvement Framework](#). There is learning from the focussed approach taken across our ELC settings which should now be spread to our approach to supporting schools.

Our Early Years team supports 53 Local Authority ELC provisions, 41 Funded Providers and 63 childminders. Following our analysis of our vulnerabilities around quality, over 2024/25 Central officers worked with Education Scotland to deliver training on pedagogical leadership for all school leaders, with an individual offer of coaching made to participants. There is evidence, through recent inspection gradings, that this along with the input on leadership, has had a positive impact on the quality of ELC provision in our settings.

The service welcomes the introduction of the shared ELC inspection framework from August 2025 and hope it helps alleviate the reported mixed messaging from different inspection agencies. One of our funded providers has been inspected using the model and central officers benefitted from being part of the process. This involvement will support the development of training and guidance to be offered locally from August 2025 as the [joint framework](#) goes live. We will carefully monitor the implementation of the new framework and hope that it helps realise greater alignment of expectations across inspection agencies.

How well are our Early Learning and Childcare settings performing against the national quality indicators?



There is clear evidence of continued improvement.

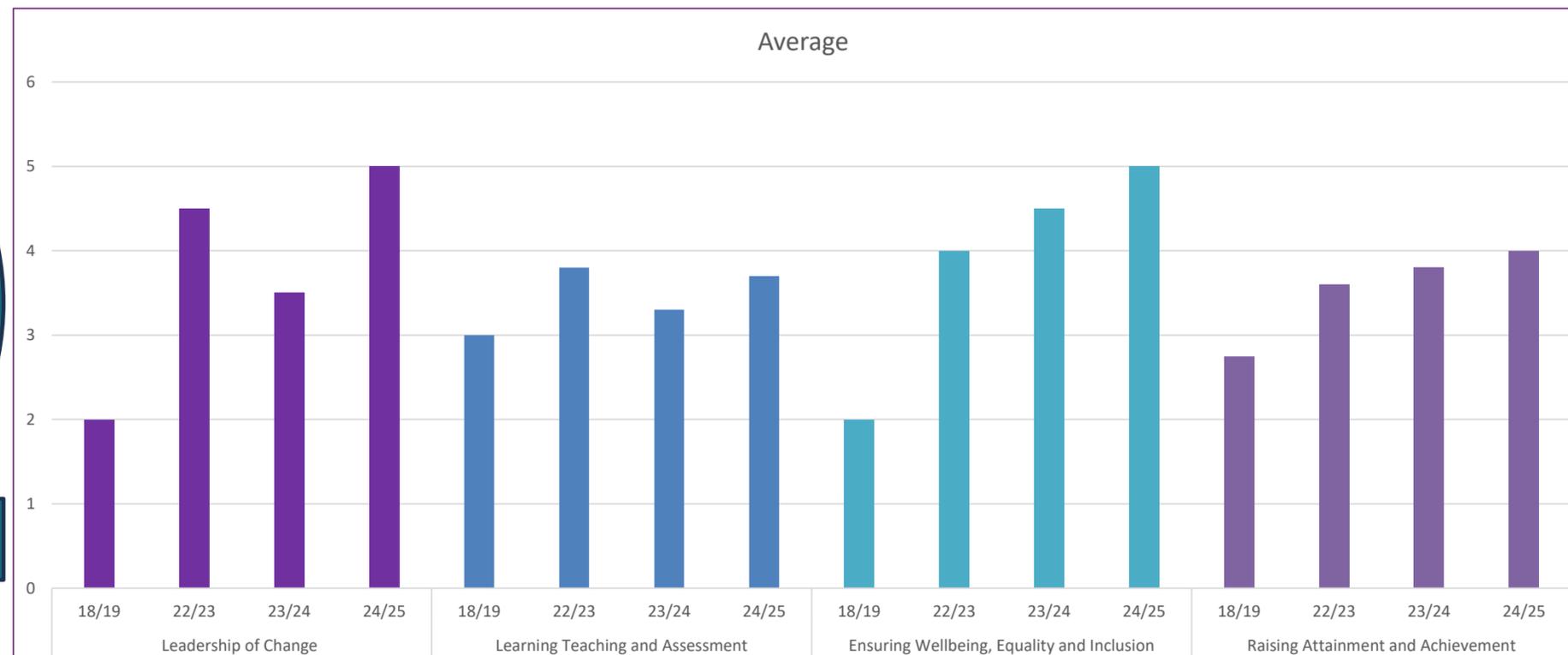
Over the last year the Education Service, along with our Local Authority Quad, undertook self-evaluation against the Quality Indicators in the ADES **Framework for Improvement** in order to set shared next steps to secure collaborative improvement. Working groups have been established to take these shared priorities forward. Collaborative work with other Local Authorities continues to provide a helpful opportunity to look outwards, widen networks and learn for the successes of others.

In September 2024 the service was inspected as part of HMle thematic inspection of Approaches to Quality Improvement. Inspectors noted that the school [Quality Improvement Framework \(QIF\)](#) provides clear exemplification of expected and appropriate processes, standards of self-evaluation, improvement planning and standards and quality reporting at school and local authority level. Aberdeen City Council sets clear expectations for overall standards. The ethos of trust and strong connection between central staff and school-based staff was noted to be a strength, enabling collaborative improvement to take place. HMle recognised that our Head Teachers see themselves as leaders of change across the local authority. Stronger partnerships across secondary school have helped to deliver ABZ Campus. Inspectors could clearly identify how the data gathered was used to inform priorities for the service and the wider Council, validating our arrangements to secure continuous improvement.

The now well-established **Quality Improvement Framework** for schools has been updated for session 2025/26 based on inspection feedback, officer observations and feedback from Head Teachers. Next session, there are clearer roles identified for Associate Assessors to make use of their national knowledge and experience to support and build capacity within the system and help mitigate some of the reduced capacity experienced by the central team when covering key school vacancies which has been mitigated to date through the use of short-term secondments for Head Teachers with strong middle leaders. Moving forward Associate Assessors will have a clear role in quality improvement beyond their own schools.

External evaluations of schools by HMle continue to be variable with 4 expecting return visits in session 25/26, 2 being signed off to the local authority for reports and further information in 12 months and 6 receiving positive reports with no further involvement. Although the sample size for comparison is small, there is evidence of improved inspection outcomes in all QIs for session 24/25. There is now a need to utilise the learning from our improvement work across ELC and reduce the number of priorities in order to secure more rapid improvement in Learning, Teaching and Assessment across schools.

How well are our schools performing against the national quality indicators?



There is evidence of continued improvement, but we need to accelerate the pace of improvement around Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

There continues to be positive movement in the [support categories](#) allocated to schools, although the evidence is less compelling than that available for ELC. There are still schools who require support in order to achieve gradings of good or better. We now need to restrict the number of improvement priorities to allow a near exclusive focus on professional learning for leaders and on learning, teaching and assessment for classroom practitioners to increase the rate of change.

During session 24/25 a Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher were seconded one day a week to support the development of the [Northern Alliance Learning and Teaching Toolkit](#). This work has focused on ensuring senior leaders are aware of the content of the Toolkit and how to navigate through each of the sections (further information is included later in this evaluation.) Given our need to focus on, teaching and assessment, the use of the Toolkit has been added to the [Quality Improvement Framework for session 25/26](#). Secondments will continue for session 25/26 with engagement and impact continuing to be measured.

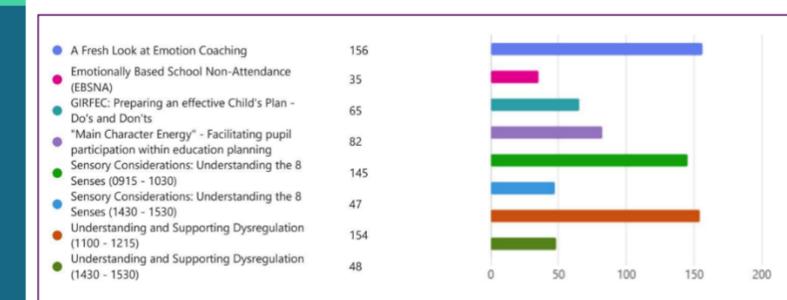
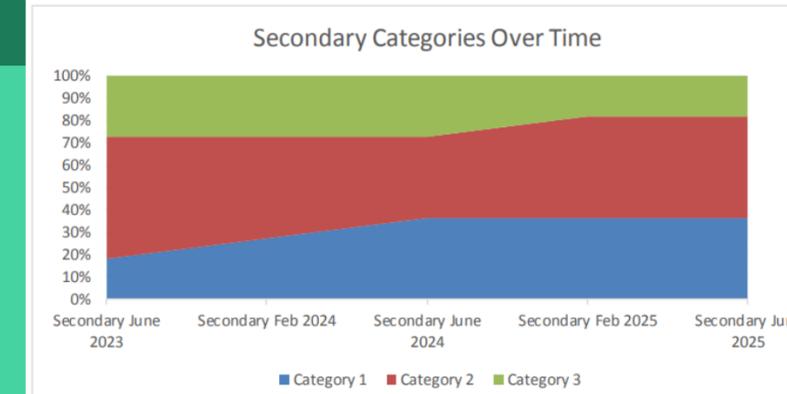
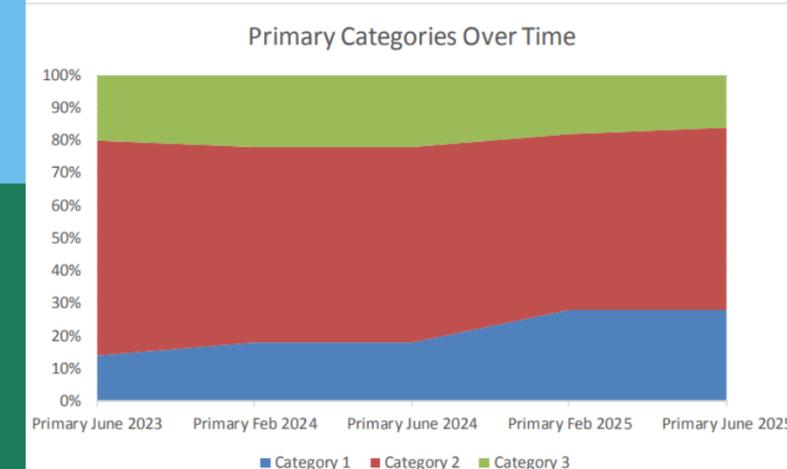
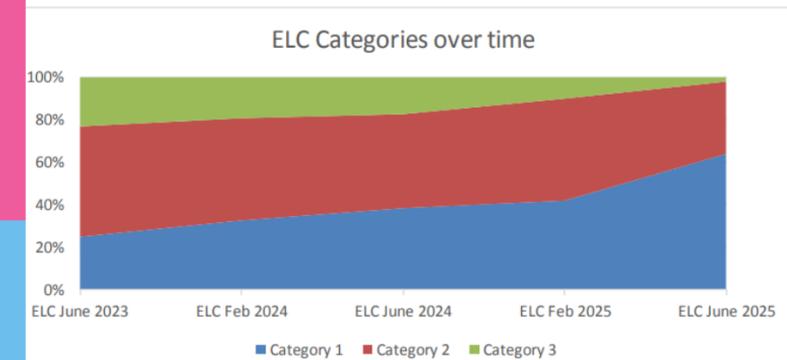
The [Exploration of Learners Needs](#) successfully undertaken by the Educational Psychologists (EPS) identified settings where, despite the challenge of changing needs and rapid increase in school roll, effective systems were in place and were supporting learners well (detailed later in this report). The greater involvement of EPS in strategic analysis and decision making is welcomed and allowing the service to benefit more fully from the unique skills set of the team.

In response to the findings, officers have been working to create an early intervention provision ([The Bridge](#)) to support children and young people (P1 – P4) struggling to access learning in their home school. The model, which will involve the whole family supporting the child or young person, will run as a test of change in session 25/26 and be closely monitored and evaluated. We look forward to our first cohort starting in August 2025 and reporting our learning to the Education and Children’s Services Committee and look forward to considering a secondary model in 2025/26.

The linked 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.

Throughout session 24/25 additional 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.

There is clear evidence that our improvement work is improving inspections outcomes, but there is a need to focus more exclusively now on developing both the leadership of improvement and on sharpening the focus on high quality learning, teaching and assessment.



The Service continues to benefit from the expertise of the **Data and Insights** Team who help ensure school staff and central officers have access to data to support improvement. **Dashboards** are evaluated annually to ensure they remain fit for purpose. There continues to be a training need for staff who are newly promoted and this is being addressed by central staff. Central officers make good use of the dashboards to support regular data discussions.

There are highly effective governance arrangements in place. Members scrutinise the work of the Service against agreed [Plans](#) at the Education and Children’s Services Committee.

Planned work to broaden the curriculum at school and Local Authority level has continued during session 24/25 and signs of increasing breadth can now be seen, in addition to widening of growth sectors covered (example from **ABZ Campus** courses below). Now that confidence in the model has grown, we have seen an increase in the number of applications for ABZ Campus courses, from over 1200 in session 23/24 to over 1500 for session 25/26. There is a recognition that partnerships must now be maximised with fellow local authorities and wider organisations to give young people the best possible range of certified experiences in the senior phase in a sustainable manner.

Phase 3 of ABZ Campus will see closer links with partner local authorities and organisations in order to work together to increase the offer to our young people. In addition to this, we will be working to develop a suite of work placements for young people as part of our Phase 4 offer for session 26/27. There is clear evidence from 2024/25 attainment data that ABZ Campus is effectively improving breadth and depth. More detail on ABZ Campus is provided later in this report.

Session	Courses	L4	L5	L6	L7	Agriculture	Childcare	Construction	Digital	Energy	Financial & Business	General	Healthcare	Life Science	Tourism & Hospitality	Providers	In Person	Virtual	Anytime	Twilight
2023-24	36	1	2	15	18	0	4	0	2	5	5	7	4	4	5	10	35	1	0	0
% 2023-24		2.8	5.6	41.7	50.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	5.6	13.9	13.9	19.4	11.1	11.1	13.9	27.8	97.2	2.8	0.0	0.0
2024-25	70	1	14	30	25	6	5	4	5	9	6	12	6	6	11	16	55	1	12	2
% 2024-25		1.4	20.0	42.9	35.7	8.6	7.1	5.7	7.1	12.9	8.6	17.1	8.6	8.6	15.7	22.9	78.6	1.4	17.1	2.9
2025-26	78	4	14	30	30	5	5	3	5	10	8	20	5	4	11	18	57	1	16	4
% 2025-26		5.1	17.9	38.5	38.5	6.4	6.4	3.8	6.4	12.8	10.3	25.6	6.4	5.1	14.1	23.1	73.1	1.3	20.5	5.1



Learning to shape your future

Wider Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) - Level	Attainment by number of courses from Aberdeen City Council young people in 2024	Attainment by number of courses from Aberdeen City Council young people in 2023	Attainment by number of courses from Aberdeen City Council young people in 2022
SCQF 4	595	400	360
SCQF 5	940	685	480
SCQF 6	730	435	160

ACC Wider Courses	2025	RANK	2024	2024 Rank	2023	2023 Rank	2022	2022 Rank	# change from 2021
L5	1495	9	940	12	685	14	625	17	980
L6	1095	7	730	9	435	10	160	20	880

We continue to carefully monitor the wellbeing of our young people and gather annually self-reports from P6 to S6 learners on their mental health and wellbeing and of their physical wellbeing.

This has provided us with robust evidence that our arrangements are effective for almost all of our pupils. The most recent [Mental Health and Wellbeing Surveys](#) demonstrate continued improvements in almost all areas across the 4 data points and compared to our baseline. We have a reduction in levels of pupils reporting loneliness, low mood and being at risk of depression and see increases in self-confidence levels, and ratings of school support (detailed exploration contained later in this report). We continue to either track alongside national data or are performing better than the reported Scottish average. Schools report challenges in identifying those who need targeted support from the SHINE data, and options will be scoped over 2025/26 with a view to making changes in 2026/27.

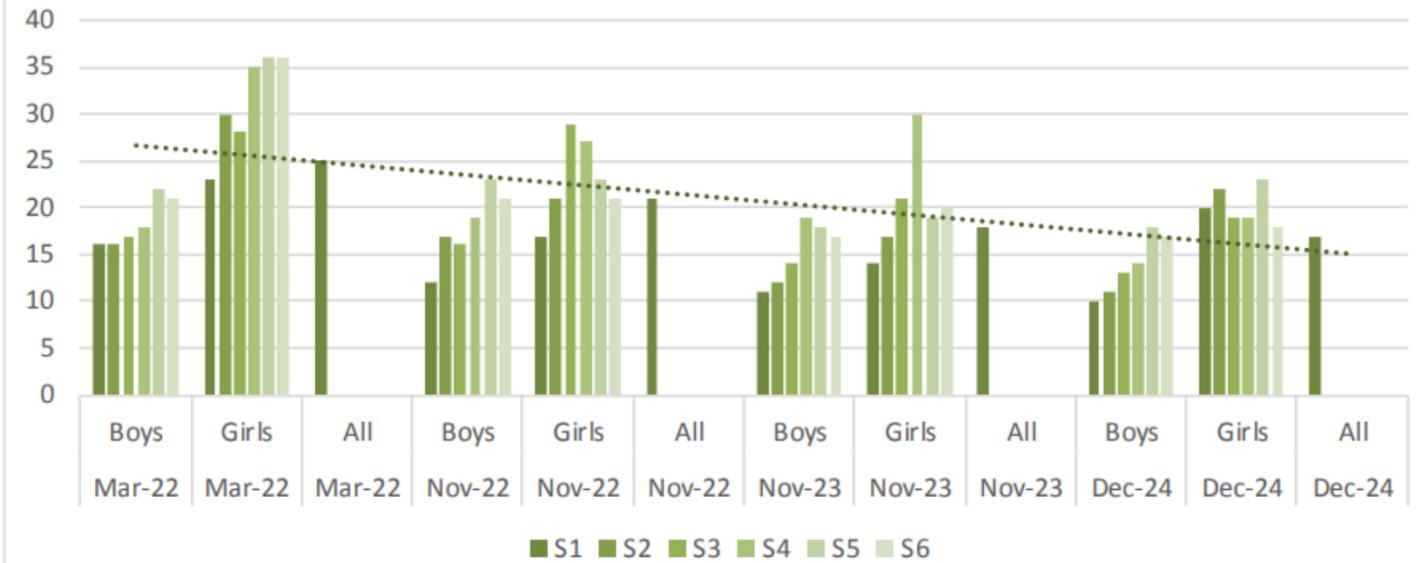
Promoting positive behaviour has been a key focus for the session with a wide range of professional learning being offered to staff through mandatory training, our Educational Psychology Service Universal Professional Learning and Leadership Support Offer, and our Learning Festival in February 2025.

Our e-module on reporting incidents has ensured all staff know the process to follow should they wish to report an incident. The majority of children and young people continue to behave well in our schools. We have worked with Trade Union colleagues to update our local plan in line with the National Behaviour Plan.

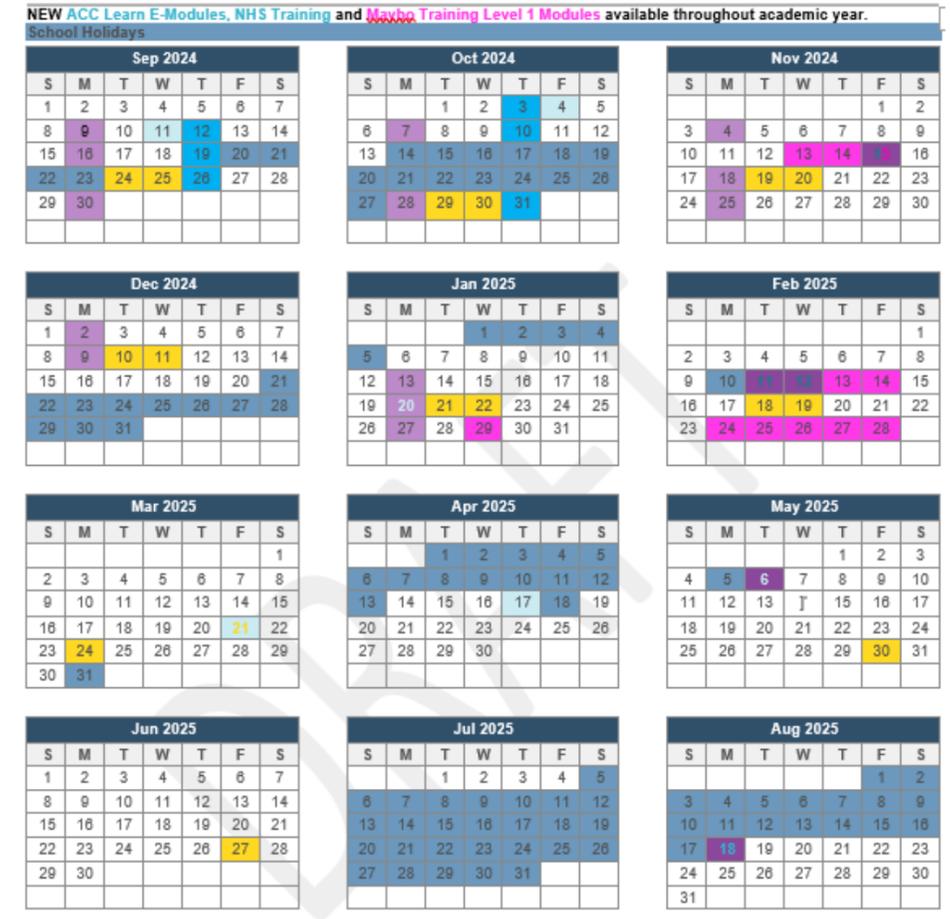
We continue to update local guidance to align with updated national guidance in keeping with our [Behaviour Plan](#) to support improved behaviour in our schools.

All staff have received de-escalation training and designated trainers are in place for each Associated Schools Group (ASG) to ensure sustainability. Progress against the updated plan will continue to be [reported](#) to the [Education and Children's Services Committee](#).

% of Secondary Pupils who Feel Lonely Most or all of the Time



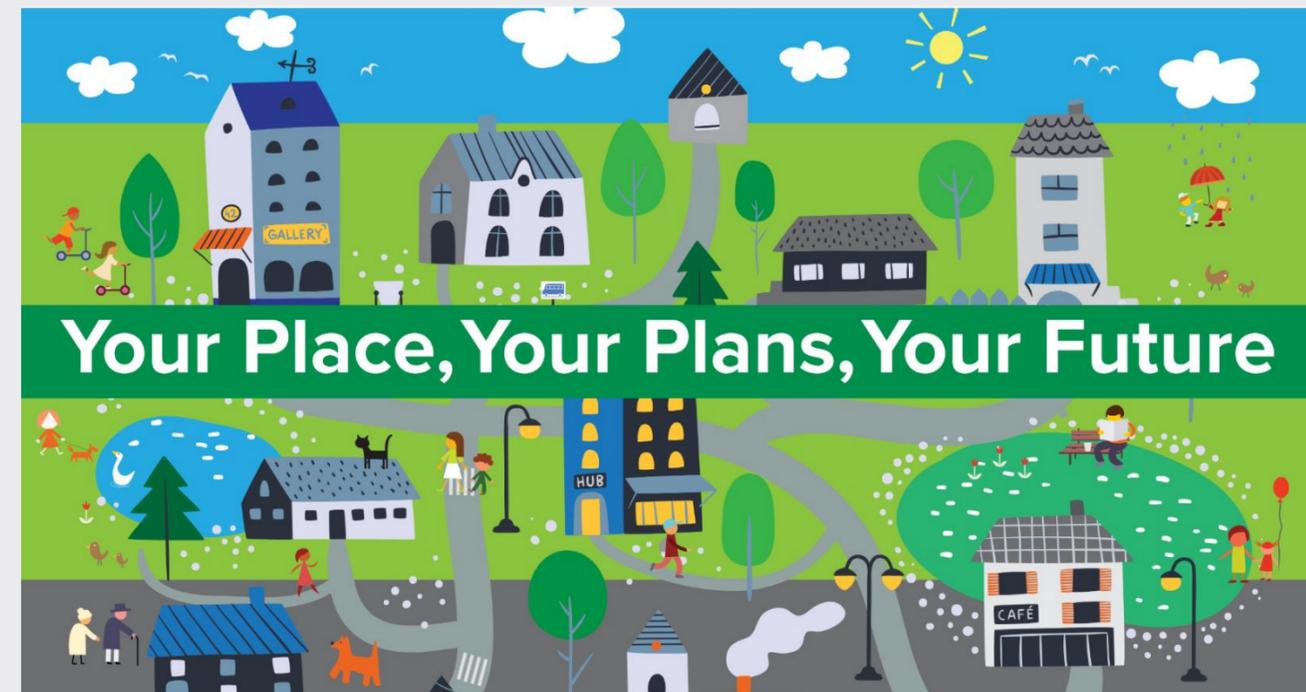
Behaviour Action Plan Training Calendar | 2024 to 2025



Our lead officer for **armed services covenant** continues to update schools on any changes to legislation or best practice guidance. Families can now access the section on the ACC website which signposts to any funding available. This work will be maintained.

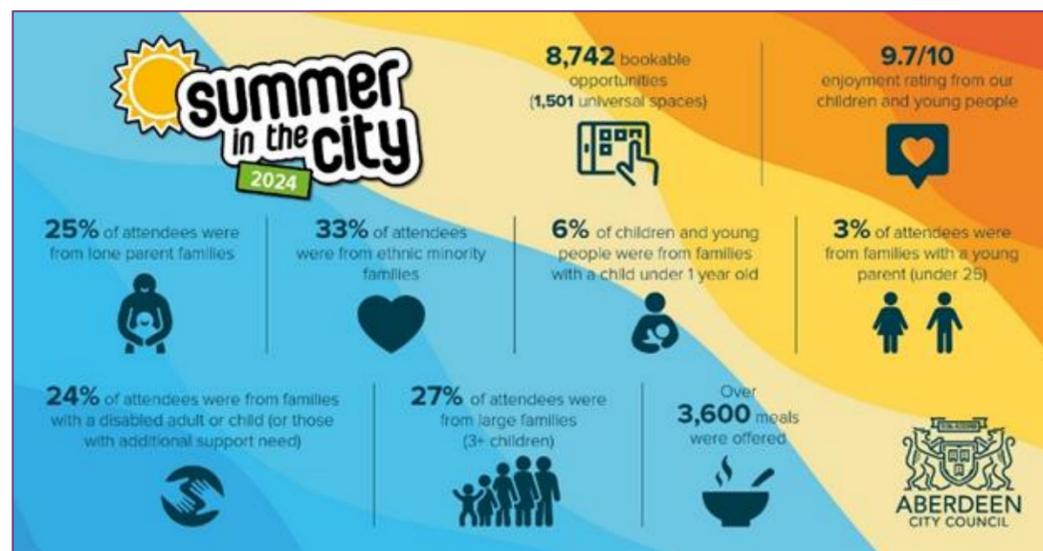
Ensuring the effective **participation of children and young people** remains a key focus for the Service. The [Youth Climate Change Group](#) continues to represent the voice of young people of Aberdeen at national and local events. The Group has set up processes for schools to bid for funds and report their achievements to committee.

The service continues to support the wider organisation to reap the **benefits of eliciting pupil voice** and is becoming more ambitious in approach. Aberdeen Youth Movement has supported young person consultation as part of the Aberdeen City Council budget process and city-wide consultation on Your Place , Your Plan, Your Future with over 500 young people contributing across 4 secondary schools.



School teams have ensured pupil voice is evident in school policies and procedures and provide child friendly versions of policies and plans. Following our early adoption of a child friendly complaints process, we are well positioned to implement the agreed national approach.

The Education Service continues to work well with officers from across the organisation and local partners to plan and deliver popular '**In the City**' holiday programmes to support families during Summer, Autumn and Easter school holidays. Evaluations from children and young people are consistently positive, with an average enjoyment rate of 9.4/10. Priority groups were well represented, and an accessibility adjusted programme was delivered by partners. This will be maintained subject to on-going funding.



The Music Service has continued to expand opportunities for children and young people to perform, offering concerts for parents at two points during the year as well as working with partners to expose young people to a range of genres of music. Progress is reported to Committee on a yearly basis.



This year's **Big Sing** built on the successes of previous years and saw over 3000 P4 pupils singing together at Duthie Park. An added feature this year was the involvement of young people from our twin town of Clermont Ferrand. The event had a nautical theme to link with the Tall Ships arriving in July and there was a surprise appearance from Dory the Dolphin which delighted children and adults alike. The weather was definitely on our side this year and the event was well received by parents and families who came along to watch. Plans have already started for Big Sing 2026 which will be even bigger and better!

As part of our preparations for the **Tall Ships**, the Music Service supported our children to launch the Tall Ships Anthem at the Cowdry Hall and perform on the main Tall Ships stage. Some of our young people also benefited from an international trip to Regensburg.



We continue to be humbled by the **considerable achievements of our young people**, some of which are noted below.

Bucksburn Wing has successfully run a **pop up charity shop** in George Street for the second year. The Senior Phase pupils in the Wing were learning about retail in their pathways classes. Running the Charity Shop in George Street alongside Friends of the Bucksburn ASN Wing provided the learners with real life experiences ensuring they learned about advertising, sorting, cleaning clothes, folding and hanging as well as pricing and how to use a till and a card reader. The project created a buzz of excitement as the young people had the opportunity to practise their skills for real.

Our young people have been successful in **national competitions** during session 24/25. Chizoba Ekeke, representing St Peter's RC School and Aberdeen City in VoiceBox, had the Scottish Parliament in stitches with his joke. This national joke telling competition for primary school children developed by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) was designed to raise awareness of the fun and importance of communication.

Manor Park School Sports Captains secured a **Sports Scotland Gold Sports Award** for the school community, to celebrate all the sporting opportunities provided for young people. These included encouraging and supporting young people and families to participate in the Balmoral 5K run.

Young people have excelled in **language competitions** for the second year running.

The Primary 4 class from Danestone won first prize in their age category in the Concours de la Francophonie/French speakers Competition for the French Film Festival. After watching the French film called 'Drôles d'oiseaux', they recorded their own video review, presented by them in French, which showcased their artwork.

Pupils who attend the weekly Languages Club at Aberdeen Grammar School participated in the SCILT Our World Film Awards and were winners of the Award for Best Content in the S5/6 category for their film, 'Planning for Success'. The team were also jointly awarded a special commendation for Most Creative Use of Language.

You can view the film here: [AGS – Planning for Success Film](#)

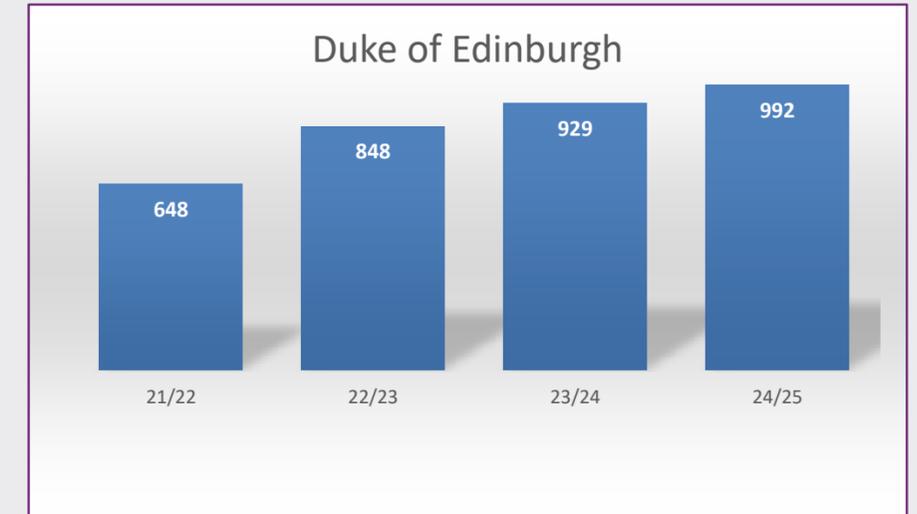




Blake Brewster from Northfield Academy is the Scottish winner of the **French Film Festival** film review prize. This is the second year running Northfield has had a winner. Prizes for this competition were awarded by the Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland.

There are 156 separate **Duke of Edinburgh** groups across all of our 13 centres which includes 11 secondary schools, Orchard Brae, and our Virtual school. Our DofE participants have volunteered 11,154 hours of their time to a variety of causes over the last year which includes charities, social programmes, the library service, sports clubs, after school clubs.

The hours of dedication, effort and achievement of young people making an impact within their community has been calculated by DofE to have a social value of £71,375. The DofE programme in Aberdeen city is fully inclusive using funding streams to ensure an equitable offer for young people.



The Service has supported the **Tall Ships** with 48 primary schools adopting a Tall Ship and following the journey to Aberdeen, communicating with the crew and learning about life on the ship. Each primary school received a treasure box of resources to support learning around a seaside theme. Dory the Dolphin has visited schools ensuring he brings smiles to all he meets. There were 2490 entries for the Art competition from 34 primary and 5 secondary schools.



I am very proud of our Service, the opportunities available for our young people, and how it continues to improve. Decreasing Council resources mean that there is an ongoing need to work more collaboratively towards a self-improving system and maximise the impact of the resources at our disposal. I appreciate the skills and expertise of staff across the Service, across the wider organisation and partners who have committed, and continue to commit to the our children and young people.

Shona Milne (Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning)

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 🏠 The Northern Lights programme being successfully implemented with schools receiving upgraded interactive whiteboards and new devices for both staff and learners
- 🏠 School attendance rates continuing to increase and now sitting above the national average
- 🏠 The continued roll out of CYPIC writing programme resulting in an increase in attainment at P4 and P7
- 🏠 Securing funding to establish and expand free Breakfast Club provision at 10 schools in session 2025/26
- 🏠 The continued development of the Northern Alliance and Teaching Toolkit and as a result, augmenting professional learning for senior leaders in Leadership and Learning and Teaching
- 🏠 Implementation of the agreed Behaviour Plan by working collaboratively with Trade Union colleagues and leaders in schools
- 🏠 Successfully providing universal access to staff training in de-escalation techniques and strategies
- 🏠 Supporting the Tall Ships through the development of an education pack for schools and creating opportunities for young people to demonstrate their creative skills and perform the Tall Ships Anthem
- 🏠 Improved gradings in Local Authority ELC settings with almost all now sitting in support category 1
- 🏠 ELC central officers worked with Education Scotland to deliver professional learning for ELC leaders on leadership and pedagogy resulting in improved learning environments and inspection outcomes
- 🏠 Creation of the early intervention service, 'The Bridge' pilot, in Riverbank School to support children struggling to access education in the early primary years
- 🏠 The delivery of ABZ Campus Phase 2 and preparations for Phase 3 to be implemented from August 2025
- 🏠 More ambitious presentation policies resulting in an increased number of presentations for SQA courses. Wider courses (all SCQF) have increased at all levels
- 🏠 The successful development of progressions and portals to support delivery of Numeracy and Mathematics
- 🏠 Increased number of learners participating in DofE Awards from 848 in 2022/23 to 992 in 2024/25
- 🏠 The Educational Psychology Service presenting nationally on approaches to data analysis
- 🏠 Our children and young people directly shaping the future of their city, through their active engagement in Masterplanning

GOVERNANCE

Each Quality Improvement Manager oversees a strategic remit and retains operational oversight of the performance of a group of education settings/targeted services in collaboration with the Quality Improvement Officer team.

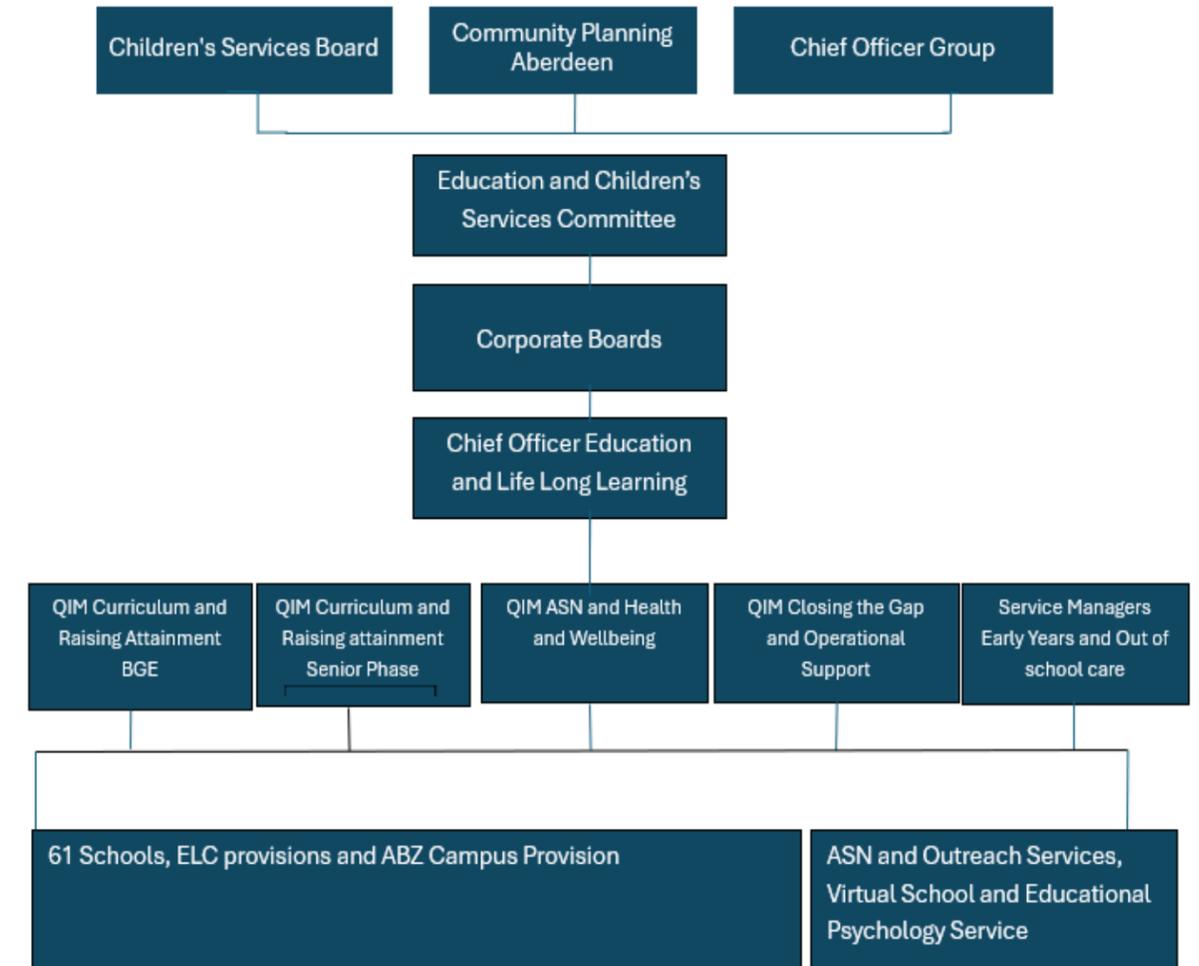
Partnership improvement work is predominantly coordinated through the Attainment and Transition to Adulthood Improvement Group which reports to the Children's Services Board. In real terms however, this encompasses a range of healthy partnerships including those with the Wood Foundation, Developing the Young Workforce Board and with Further and Higher Education partners, as we respond to the Logan Report through the Aberdeen Computing Collaborative and continue our development of ABZ Campus.

As well as external scrutiny from inspection agencies, the Corporate Board structure monitors data and seeks assurance on education performance. The Performance Board is currently carefully monitoring the attainment of our Senior Phase learners who live in SIMD 2 and 3. Elected Members and external members scrutinise performance through Council Committees. In addition, partnership scrutiny is available through Community Planning Aberdeen and the Aberdeen City Executive Group (Chief Officers Group) for Public Protection.

Throughout session 24/25, 28.8% (an increase of 10.4% on session 23/24) of all schools benefited from engagement with His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and all schools were subject to internal scrutiny arrangements. External scrutiny ranged from ongoing engagement, return inspection visits, engagement through short and full model inspections and thematic reviews. A healthy appetite for scrutiny is believed to be a key strength of the service. During session 25/26 we will be working with a link HMIe Inspector as part of an HMIe pilot.

In addition to this, we undertook self-evaluation using the Association of Directors of Education Scotland How Good is Our Education Authority? Framework. We worked with our QUAD local authorities, sharing our evaluation of the outcome indicator and being open to challenge and interrogation of approaches and strategies. Feedback from colleagues was invaluable in supporting the setting of next steps and offering opportunities for central teams across the QUAD to work together on shared priorities. During session 25/26 we will meet again to share evaluation of the remaining quality indicator.

The service welcomes and responds positively to scrutiny.



ACC FOUNDATIONS: ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN

The Council organisational structure continues to drive innovation and more integrated working practices. A refreshed organisational structure, agreed by Council in March 2024, saw the Library and Information Service and Community Learning and Development Service welcomed into the Education and Lifelong Learning Cluster. Sitting within the Communities Function alongside Children's Social Work, Housing and Corporate Landlord, has provided opportunities to further consider the determinates of population health on our families and communities and start to progress our shared work as part of the Fairer Futures Partnership.

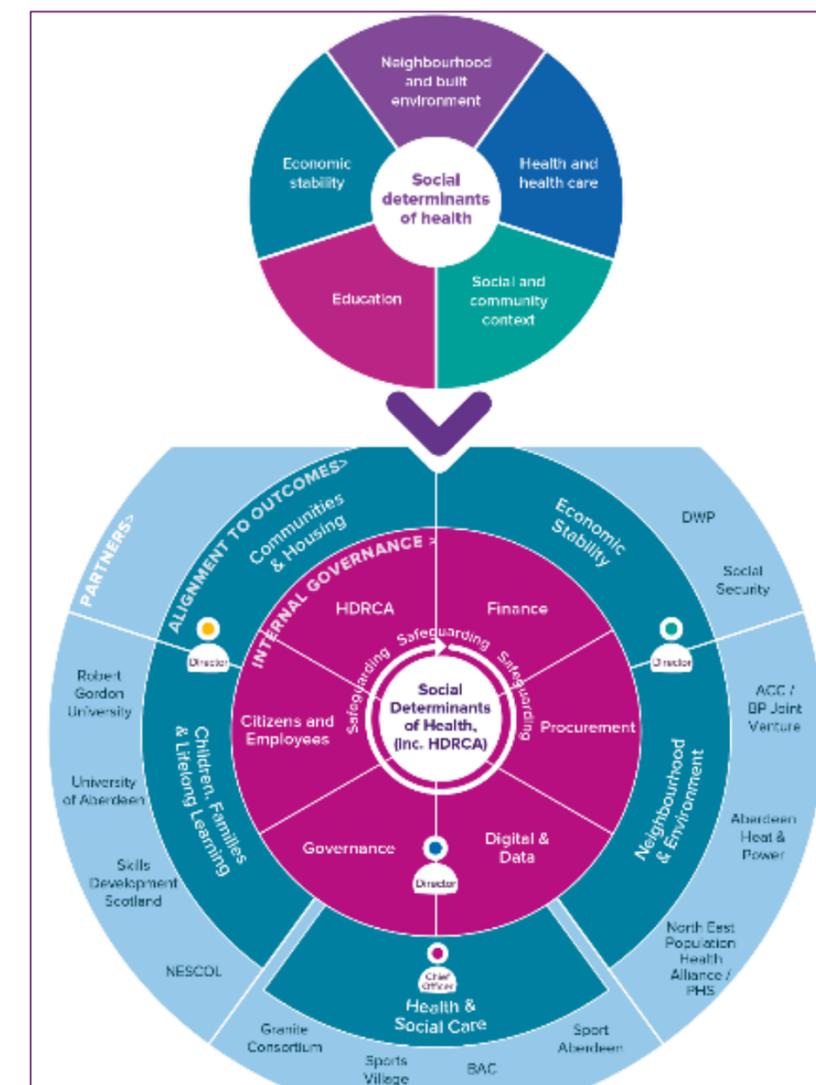
The combination of services in the Education and Lifelong Learning Cluster now provides the opportunity to look at the learning needs of children and families more holistically, as we develop our model of Family Support. Staff across the education cluster have invested time to develop a shared understanding of roles across the service and pooled expertise to help shape Council strategies and Plans. Workshop sessions are planned for session 25/26 to explore opportunities to enhance collaborative working and increase efficiency further across the cluster.

ACC FOUNDATIONS: PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Head teachers continue to work well collaboratively, taking responsibility for improvement beyond their own school. This was noted as a particular strength by HMIE in 2024. During session 24/25 we have had an increased number of Associate Assessors appointed which has provided all schools with a greater insight in the national standards around the core quality indicators.

All Head teachers have participated in a Quality Improvement visit in at least one other school while many have supported visits in multiple schools. Almost all **Depute heads** have also had the opportunity to participate in a visits and this is building confidence in recognising quality learning and teaching and a greater understanding of evidence of the quality indicators. There is evidence that schools have increased the level of challenge being offered during quality improvement visits from both peers and central staff. There is a need to continue provide support in evaluative writing for middle leaders.

The increase in school roll has led to an **increase in staff new to the authority** and the majority of these being newly qualified, there remain challenges in recruiting to some secondary specialisms. Although there are challenges nationally these are more acute in the Northern Alliance. We continue to be one of the local authorities with the lowest average age of staff - Primary (37) National (40.2) Secondary (40) National (40.9). Having a high number of newly qualified teachers can present challenges in secondary schools with small departments and in primary schools with a higher turnover of staff. We will continue to monitor this.



Throughout session 24/25, **Associate Assessors** have been involved in supporting or leading Quality Improvement visits and mentoring new Head Teachers. This provides peer support for operational issues reducing the pressure on the Central team.

11 Senior Leaders completed the **Into Headship programme** in session 24/25 with 2 already having secured Head Teacher roles within Aberdeen City. Our middle leadership professional training offer continues to have high attendance however there is a need to review our arrangements in order to attract a greater number of potential middle leaders from the secondary sector. During session 25/26 a group of Associate Assessors will work with central officers to review the current programme.

Education Scotland delivered 4 sessions of **Pedagogical Leadership training** with Head Teachers, Deputes and Managers from across the Local Authority and Funded Provider settings. 60 practitioners attended and feedback was very positive. Most participants strongly agreed that these sessions will have a positive impact on their role as leaders. Following the success of these sessions, Education Scotland extended their offer to participants of Pedagogical Leadership. 23 leaders went on to participate in a coaching programme. Education Scotland are now working with the Early Years Team to roll the Pedagogical Leadership course out to Senior Early Years Practitioners and Room Leaders across our settings in 2025/2026.

The Universal Services continue to **pool resources** to support children and families in greatest need and have invested time in building relationships further. Plans to open our Bairn's Hoose within the Links Hub are in the final stages, and this will provide further opportunities to strengthen multiagency practice as we develop our Family Support Model.

The Service continues to value weekly meetings with **Trade Unions** and benefits from shared working groups and collaboration on key documentation to support the workforce. Officers have invested considerable time in implementing the agreed Behaviour Plan during session 24/25. The Safeguarding Group has successfully implemented mandatory de-escalation training for all staff in schools as well as updating health and safety policies and risk assessments for schools. Our data group is able to identify schools where support is required. There is a need to improve the quality of incident reporting in some cases and the group are developing guidance to be shared with schools during 25/26.



ACC FOUNDATIONS: TECHNOLOGY

The **Northern Lights digital transformation programme** has made significant progress over the last year. To date, 37 primary schools and 9 secondary schools have successfully onboarded to the new education digital identity and additional Microsoft services. This includes the deployment of modern devices, access to learning applications and digital tools for both teaching and administration.

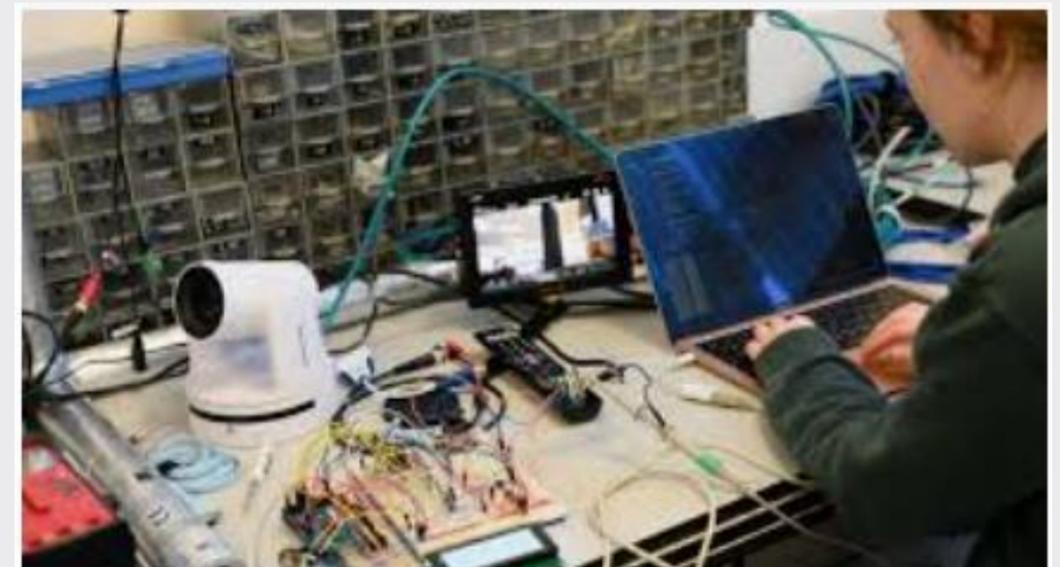
The project team has continued to refine and improve the programme based on feedback from early adopters. Updates to the migration process, improved guidance, and tailored support have made the onboarding experience more efficient for schools. All schools now have digital champions in place who participated in onboarding training during summer 2024 and are playing a key role in supporting implementation locally.

Almost all schools now benefit from improved connectivity and upgraded Wi-Fi infrastructure. The roll-out of interactive classroom technology has accelerated, with all secondary schools now equipped with interactive touch panels and follow-up training completed. 38 primary schools have completed installations, with the remainder scheduled for completion by the end of November 2025.

Looking ahead, the following priorities will guide our continued implementation:

- 🏠 Complete deployments at the remaining 2 secondary schools, 2 special schools, and 9 primary and early years settings
- 🏠 Launch a new professional learning programme for digital champions, developed in partnership with the Digital Schools Award and HP. Running from September to December 2025, this training will focus on tools such as Minecraft for Education and Microsoft 365 learning features
- 🏠 Extend training and support for interactive panels through a partnership with SMART Technologies, offering face-to-face sessions and webinar-style CLPL to ensure staff can make full use of the technology
- 🏠 Continue working closely with Digital & Technology colleagues to resolve technical challenges and modernise infrastructure, including work towards federated identity and improved access to digital services
- 🏠 Support the roll-out of Teams Telephony across schools in preparation for the move to fully digital communications

The Northern Lights programme remains on track for completion by December 2025, delivering a modern, robust, and future-ready digital environment for all learners and staff. This significant investment by the Council will greatly aid the delivery of an innovative curriculum.



ACC FOUNDATIONS: PARTNER ALLIANCES

This year saw a number of key developments in our work to strengthen Computing Science and digital learning across the region through **Aberdeen Computing Collaborative**. A joint bid for long-term investment through the North East Investment Zone was developed and submitted, although this was ultimately unsuccessful in attracting funding. We have strengthened regional collaboration by welcoming Aberdeenshire Council as a partner in the Aberdeen Computing Collaborative, supporting a more joined-up approach across the North East.

Professional learning for Computing Science teachers was successfully delivered in partnership with Scottish Teachers Advancing Computing Science (STACS), based at the University of Glasgow. We also contributed to the national Curriculum Review of Computing Science led by Education Scotland.

A bid to the Just Transition Capital Fund has been submitted to further develop Computing Science education across the region, and we await the outcome. We hope to complete the lease of a dedicated outreach space for Computing Science at OneTech Hub. This space will be equipped and operational from August 2025, with a programme of activities to be developed in partnership with schools and wider collaborators.

[Excelerate](#) is an investment by **The Wood Foundation** to empower system change in education, providing opportunities for school leaders, practitioners, and industry and community to connect and collaborate to develop learning experiences which allow young people to thrive in school in order to effectively prepare them for the future.

Excelerate continues to support Bucksburn, Dyce, Harlaw, Northfield, Oldmachar and St. Machar Academies to develop approaches across learning, teaching and assessment, partnerships, raising attainment and achievement, and curriculum. Each school is focusing on an aspect of development related to their unique context. Below are just two examples of the improvement activities being supported through our partnership with The Wood Foundation.

Northfield Academy continues to outwork **'Crew'** in the S1-S3 (Broad General Education). In S1, this means a 'home' room for each class, an increased amount of time taught by one teacher to further develop positive relationships, and a residential experience at the start of the academic session to create the climate for those positive relationships. S2 classes retain daily contact with their 'Crew' teacher as they continue to experience a broader set of experiences across the school. The school is in Year 3 of this changed curriculum with S3 classes again retaining that positive relationship with their 'Crew' Teacher as part of the curriculum.

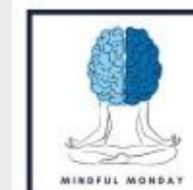


Whithaugh Park - Why?

Build relationships with new crew and crew teacher

Resilience active listening / talking building confidence

Team work Independence Time keeping
Communication Skills Risk taking



The model is now a permanent and established part of the Northfield Academy curriculum with 'Crew' staff now recruited on a permanent basis. Crew continues to draw positive commentary from HMle during visits with the most recent (17th June 2025) letter saying that *Parents speak positively of the 'Crew' model in S1 and S2, as this has developed young people's confidence and more positive attitudes to school.*

Bucksburn and St. Machar Academies hosted a visit from the **Edge Foundation** as part of the *Deeper Learning Network* during 19th and 20th June. The visit to Bucksburn Academy on 19th June included a focus on a new Pathways Course for S3 young people. Young people are invited to go through research on their own growth sector interests before choosing a Pathways course for the entirety of S3, heavily supported by partner businesses and organisations. During this year, they develop their SCRIPT skills (self-management, communication, resilience, ICT & Digital, problem solving and teamwork). The school are now in the second year of this curriculum offer.

Early in June 2025, we received word from **The Wood Foundation** that their operational and financial commitment to Excelerate would end in March 2026 following a restructure from a 10 to a 7 year investment. Our schools have been massively appreciative of the connection and the local authority will continue to benefit through the learning and expertise gained through this investment. We are very grateful to *The Wood Foundation* for all they have done for our schools and our young people.

The City Parent Forum is very active, moving to online, to ensure that Parent Councils can be regularly represented. The Parent Forum makes a very positive contribution to the Education and Children's Services Committee, seeking feedback from parents directly to help shape Council policy.

Central staff continue to be invited to Parent Forum meetings to update on committee business and seek comment on key issues coming through other feedback channels e.g. social media, complaints and compliments.

All complaints are dealt with promptly with every effort made to resolve at the lowest possible level in order to maintain positive relationships between families and school.

Progress against our refreshed [Parent Involvement and Engagement Plan](#), published in November 2024, has included building capacity in Parent Councils through the increased use of the support offered by Connect. 143 parents from 28 Parent Councils have engaged in their online workshops. Work is also underway to streamline communication to parents through the development of the new ACC website. **Stronger Families Series sessions** have continued to respond to the needs of parents with sessions on Wellbeing, ABZ Campus and Supporting Attendance. A suite of workshops in Autumn 2025 will focus on supporting parents of young people with ASN.

The development of strong alliances remains important in benefiting from new perspectives.

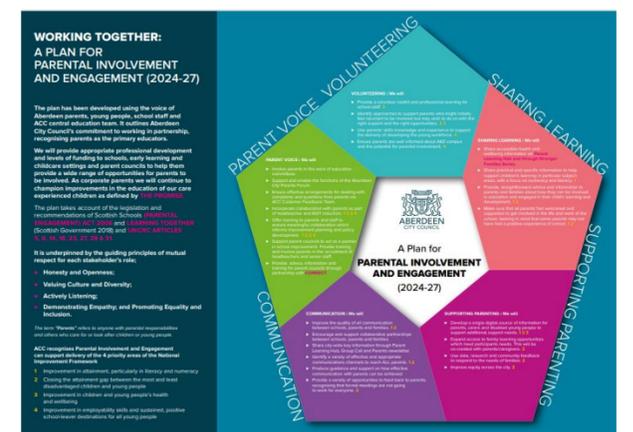


FROM 1st DECEMBER TO 31st JANUARY

We are collecting food pantry items:
For example: Pasta, rice, sauces, spices, tins, jars, cereals, biscuits, etc.

Drop off points at:
Northfield Academy and all ASG Primaries: Bramble Brae, Heathryburn, Holy Family RC, Manor Park, Muirfield, Quarryhill, and Westpark

Collected items will be distributed to:
Cummings Park Centre, Mastrick Community Centre, Middlefield Hub, and Northfield Community Centre





Our pupils continue to benefit from the generosity of and our collaboration with **partners**.

Sport Aberdeen was delighted to receive a generous donation of £26,000 from Saltire Energy to boost sporting opportunities available for children across local schools. Sport Aberdeen put match funding of £19,000 in place and as a result every primary and secondary school in Aberdeen got to choose the equipment they received. The offer has allowed schools to update any outdated equipment and will improve opportunities for young people in all our schools. We are very grateful to both Saltire Energy and Sport Aberdeen for their generosity.

The **Russell Anderson Foundation**, through Russell Anderson Development School (RADS), continues to support 2155 children in 11 schools across Aberdeen. Their 13 free after-school clubs support 410 young people weekly. In addition to fun football and teamwork games, tennis is now being delivered in partnership with the SERVES initiative.

RADS has delivered their 'Young Leader' programme to 98 P7 pupils and almost 500 P4 learners benefited from a football festival at Aberdeen Sports Village.

In addition to this, the Russell Anderson Foundation/RADS provides 4 weeks of free multisport camps during school holidays which are attended by an average of 105 children each day.

The development of Skills Hubs supports education on nutrition and skills including how to plan, prepare and cook cost-effective and healthy meals, linking all outcomes to the curriculum. Over 600 recipe and ingredient bags have gone home with learners this year allowing them to practice skills at home

The Foundation's **NHS Widening Participation partnership** has seen NHS professionals and specialists visiting over 100 classes in partner schools to provide age-specific health and wellbeing workshops.

Pupils at Northfield Academy were so inspired when they learned of the story behind the man their skate park was named after. They wanted to honour the Career of Lance Corporal Allan Douglas and they created a memorial plaque and trophy in his honour. **The Lord Provost** unveiled the plaque made by the pupils on 18th June 2025.

In addition to the plaque the group also raised funds for a memorial trophy to be presented to pupils who have displayed upstanding moral character.

Our focus on effective and collaborative partnership working is enriching the experiences of our young people and will continue.



NATIONAL STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

Pupil voice is at the centre of all planning in schools. Children and young people have a voice in decisions that affect them and in School Improvement Planning. HMIE inspections and our own quality improvement processes ensure we know where best practice is and are able to share this at Head Teacher meetings. The majority of schools are sharing child friendly plans with their school communities.

All of our schools operate **pupil voice groups** and these range from Pupil Council with representation from each class to groups such as ECO, Literacy, Numeracy, Charities etc. which are identified to support the implementation of school improvement plans. The adoption of 'One Good Adult' and young people's involvement in recruitment processes affords young people the opportunity to influence decision-making. Pupil panels were part of the recruitment process for the Executive Director Families and Communities and other senior Council positions. Our young people helped shape the beach masterplan and are now keenly watching their plans become their reality. The strong Council desire to involve our young people in the development of their city is greatly appreciated by the Education and Lifelong Learning Service, as is the opportunity to help develop a Play Strategy with colleagues across the Place Cluster as part of our work on the Local Development Plan.

In September 2024, as part of work led by the **Educational Psychology Service** Exploration of Learners' Needs across the city, learners' views were explored on a variety of education topics. 155 children and young people took part: 116 learners from primary settings and 39 learners from secondary and specialist provisions. In primary settings, almost all (94%) of learners said that they felt "included" in school with most (82%) learners reporting that they felt "included" in secondary settings. The lower percentage within the secondary learners compared to primary to feeling included is in line with other local and national data sources (Shine & ACC Physical Health and Wellbeing Survey). This reinforces the necessity to consider the perception of "feeling included" within the secondary age group further, as part of a wider approach to improving wellbeing.

There is recognition of the value arising from increased practitioner awareness and confidence with how the **Lundy model of Participation** can be utilised to support the conditions necessary to deliver on Article 12 of the UNCRC. A universal training offer from the Educational Psychology Service titled "Main Character Energy: facilitating Pupil Participation within Education Planning" was delivered as part of the Supporting Learning Festival in February 2025. Participant qualitative feedback subsequently guided the development of the EPS Digital Hub Universal Resources for Staff, to incorporate practical examples illustrating how methods can be used with learners, including those with Additional Support Needs. As part of a strategic approach to centralising learner voice, the Educational Psychology Service intend to continue to offer this universal level Professional Learning and Leadership within ACC.



A significant number of our schools (48) are actively engaged in the **UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA)**. Several of our schools successfully achieved accreditation at a range of levels from Bronze to Gold this session, including Orchard Brae and Aberdeen School for the Deaf, who successfully achieved their Silver Awards in December and January respectively. Over the past three years, the Scottish Government has centrally funded the RRSA programme nationally. However, with this national funding concluding in April this year, and as part of our unwavering commitment to children's rights, Aberdeen City Council has managed to secure a maximum discount of 75% to continue access to the programme.

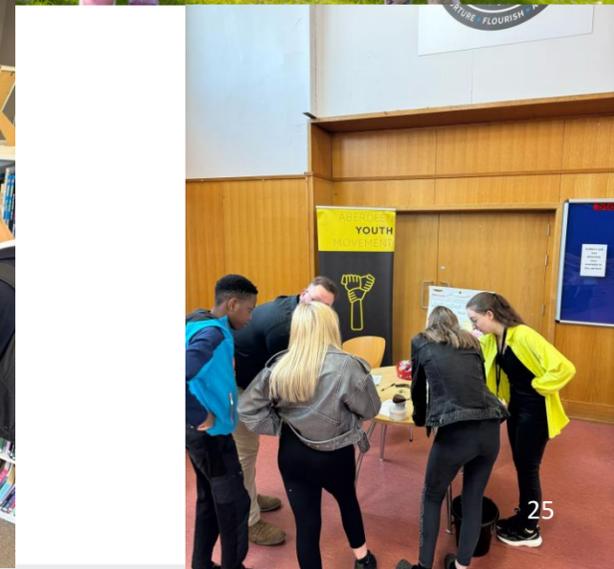
Work is ongoing across the local authority to support services to work closer together at a locality level using the **Health Determinants** research to ensure resources are targeted to those most in need. During 2025/26 work will begin to explore colocation of services within the community to ensure they are accessible and meet the needs of the immediate community. This work involves colleagues from all support services with the Local Authority as well as from NHS and third sector organisations. Through working more closely together and focusing on the family as a whole rather than seeing adults and children separately, this will ensure families will be better served and reduce the likelihood of duplication of services and advice.

The **Educational Psychology Service** engaged in consultation with learners from the Language Support Provisions as part of wider Education and Lifelong Learning work to inform the test of change for The Bridge: Early Intervention Service.

Both the **Young Ambassadors (10-16 yrs)** and **Aberdeen Youth Movement (16-25 yrs)** representatives have been involved in progressing the Child and Young People's rights improvement project. They have provided feedback on the annual Children Services Plan report 24/25, and they continue to promote, develop approaches and empower other children and young people to have a voice and input into matters that affect them across the city. This has included work in secondary schools promoting, developing and delivering Your Place, Your Plans, Your Futures, city wide consultation to capture what's good and what needs to change across the city.

This consultation has informed the development of many strategies and plans, including Community Learning and Development, the Local Housing Strategy and the next Local Outcome Improvement Plan. Both groups have created engaging ways for children and young people to take part in the consultation, with peer engagement at locality events and secondary school roadshows.

Participation and rights are very well developed, but we recognise the need to continue to challenge ourselves in this area.



NATIONAL STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

The mental health of our children and young people is continuing to improve. We were delighted to see year-on-year improvements across most areas. All settings continue to participate in the Schools Health and Wellbeing Improvement Network (SHINE) mental wellbeing survey and the ACC Physical Health and Wellbeing survey to support our understanding of the needs of P6/7 and secondary learners across our settings. This year's surveys had slightly lower completion rates by learners: 458 for SHINE survey and a reduction of 900 for the Physical Health Surveys. However, returns increased from primary staged learners and are still higher than returns at the first 2 data points. The surveys were sent out for completion later this year. This is due to SHINE moving to a new digital platform. This meant the timing approached the end of term which could have impacted on completion rates. The mixture of universal and bespoke interventions provided, and the work undertaken across our settings has led to a continued improving data picture. Positive improvements continue to be seen across mental health and wellbeing areas compared to the previous returns (March 2022 & November 2022) and ahead of the national comparators provided by SHINE. Of particular interest were the following:

- reduction of pupils reporting low mood and at risk of depression
- improvements in the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) which measures mental health difficulties
- increases in reported self-confidence levels and optimism
- Improvements against reporting of loneliness
- Improvements in relation to physical health
- improvements in feelings of safety, inclusion, good health, aspects of sleep, and being listened to.
- Improvements in reporting of liking school, and school support
- Increased reporting of earlier bedtimes

Last year we had an area of concern in relation to our now S5 Girls, who transitioned to secondary school during the Covid-19 pandemic. We have seen improvements in almost every area for them. Not just compared to their reporting last year, but also compared to other S5 cohorts.

In almost every aspect Aberdeen City outcomes continue to sit above national comparator data. Last year saw improvements in relation to two key previous areas of concern for Aberdeen, reports of self-harming, and happiness with appearance. These have again both improved this year. The 'Did Not Disclose' gender, and 'Girls' gender groups both continued to show improvements on previous surveys in these areas. Improvements generally from last year have been maintained.



School leadership teams continue to have access to SHINE reports and the Physical Health and Wellbeing Surveys through a Power BI dashboard. This trend data enables individual schools and Associated School Groups Partnerships to identify positive changes and areas for inclusion in School Improvement Plans for 2025/26. The Educational Psychology Service continues to offer support through Early Intervention Consultations, either around individual children or systemic school issues or areas of attention. The Educational Psychology Service continues to offer training packages, such as Emotion Coaching, Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance, Nurture, Executive Functions and Teenage Brain Development. These can be accessed, or tailored programmes as required can be offered, depending on data and each school's needs. Education and Lifelong Learning's Professional Learning and Leadership programme of training is also reviewed by school leaders to support their capacity building and development of their staff teams.

In 2024/25 the **PEPASS (Physical Education, Physical Activity and School Sport)** group focussed on supporting schools to achieve Sport Scotland Sport Awards, as part of a holistic approach to reviewing PEPASS provision. As of April 2025, 27 schools had achieved the award, 8 of whom had achieved at Gold Level.

Active Schools took over as lead partner for Primary School Football in August 2024. 116 teams, from 29 schools (P2 to P7) play football regularly on a Saturday morning. Active schools have focussed on developing an inclusive offer to encourage more girls and new players. P6-S2 training sessions also run at Garthdee. The programme is growing in popularity, especially in P4 and is reliant on a significant number of parents who volunteer as coaches. Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust (AFCCT) support the programme by offering an optional winter festival at Cormack Park. 22 Primary schools also opted in to the additional festival which was funded in part by Parent Councils.

The **physical wellbeing survey** this year highlighted a decrease in the time spent on technology with **26%** (28% last year and 27% at our baseline in 2022) stating that they spend more than 6 hours on technology at the weekend. 868 (946 last year) of these are primary stage learners. 55% of learners this year reported that technology has not affected any of the choices they make on a daily basis. This is a positive increase this year against the 53% from last year and 50% in baseline. Work in relation to encouraging healthy choices in using technology for learners, and their families should continue, so that we can continue to see a decrease in this area.

The physical wellbeing survey told us that there are times where children and young people do not have the right access to food to meet their nutritional needs. Again, this year **3%, 281** (compared to 3.7%, 256 baseline data) of learners who completed the survey reported that they often or always went to bed hungry because there was not enough food at home. Continued review of this data at local level will help us identify where food parcels, foodbanks, breakfast clubs and other such resources would help us address this and target our support. Initial outcomes and continued targeted work as part of the healthy weight project will inform this work, alongside wider community poverty mapping work.





[Information for Children and Young People](#)



[Information for Parents and Carers](#)



[Information for Professionals](#)

79% (77%, 75%, 71% at earlier data points) of learners feel positive or very positive about their body image, showing a further increase of 8% from baseline data. Similar to the mental wellbeing survey, however 21% (23%, 25%, 29%) of learners reported that most of the time they felt negative or very negative about their body image, this is a reduction of 8% since baseline. Being Me, a programme to promote positive body image, has been running in 7 Primary schools across the city targeting P5 and P6. Schools have reported positive impacts from early cohorts and this may have contributed to the reduction in the number of young people feeling negative about body image and will hopefully build good habits and outlook to appearance.

Sessions on each of the issues raised will be planned through the Stronger Families series, communications with families, and school or ASG level events to support, alongside Personal & Social Education curricula delivered across schools.

Educational Psychology Service

The Educational Psychology Service is playing a far greater role in the strategic work of the Education and Lifelong Learning Cluster now.

The new **EPS Digital System (EPS Dynamics)** for managing targeted case work and storing confidential data has been in operation throughout 2024-25. EPs are finding the system to be an easier, quicker, more efficient and secure way to manage, store and access confidential case records about learners, whether working in the office, remotely, or in schools. This has reduced administration time and freed up time for applied psychology within Education and Lifelong Learning Services. Additional aspects of the digital system remain in development, particularly around the management and storage of information for our universal offer of Early Intervention Consultations (EICs). EPS are working closely with our ACC Digital Technology Team and Hitachi Solutions to continue the development toward full implementation, which will facilitate better management and evaluation of universal EPS involvement. The use of EPS Dynamics to facilitate service evaluation has been hampered by technical difficulties this session, but it is hoped its data gathering possibilities can be fully explored to good effect in 2025-26.

Following a successful test of change with secondary schools over the 2023/24 period, the Educational Psychology Service have now aligned their data collection/analysis points to reflect greater streamlining with the National Improvement Framework and school quality improvement planning and development priorities. EPS annual review/systemic **Early Intervention Consultations** with schools now take place over the course of Term 4 of the academic year. Initial data so far indicates evidence of improved collaboration between schools and EPS on shared priorities, such as implementation planning for Universal Professional Learning & Leadership offers. It is anticipated that this change will also result in improved alignment with the indicators of Highly Effective Practice in QI 2.4 Partnerships and QI 3.3 Improvement in Performance within the National Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists (ASPEP) self-evaluation framework, Improving Local Authority Educational Psychology Services in Scotland, as it will enable the identification of trends over time.

The **EPS Digital Learning and Resources Hub** has undergone a thorough refresh and update of navigation and content, in time for a summer 2025 launch for use during 2025/26 and onwards. The Hub will remain a key resource for the Educational Psychology Service to share information, resources and training with Education staff, but it will now contain new and updated content for staff, and increased content for families. It will be significantly easier to navigate. New, clear links to the wider Council website and the Parent Hub aim to ensure that parents/carers can access all related information when they visit local authority online information.

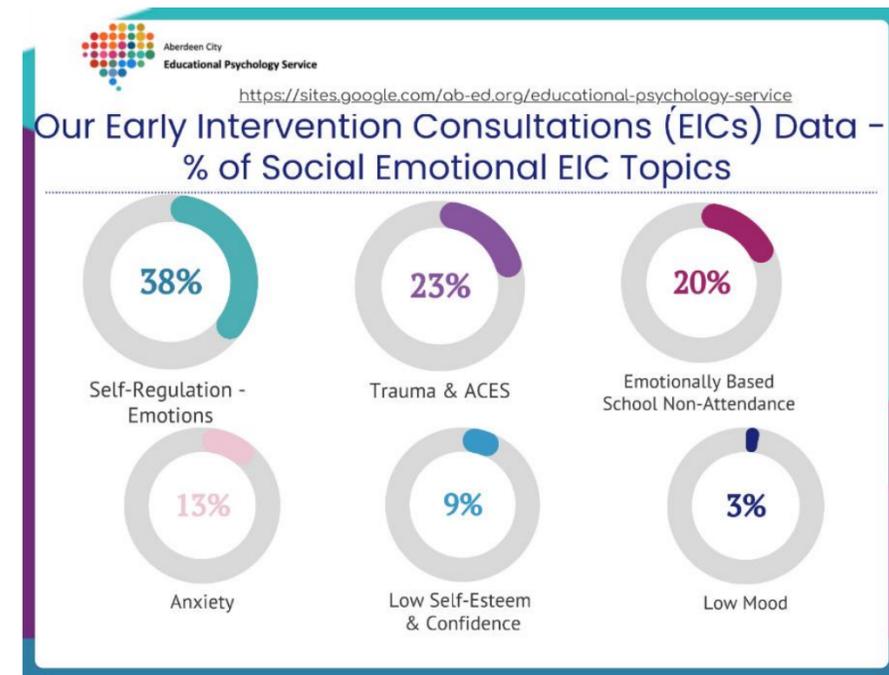
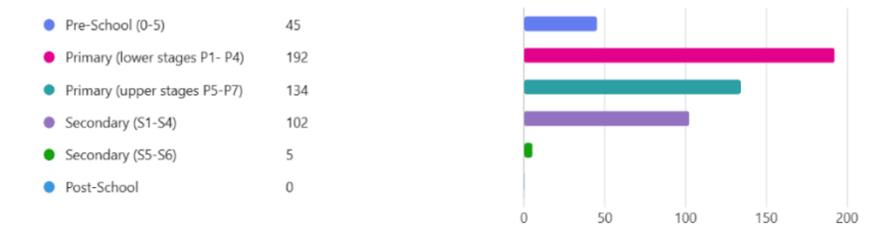
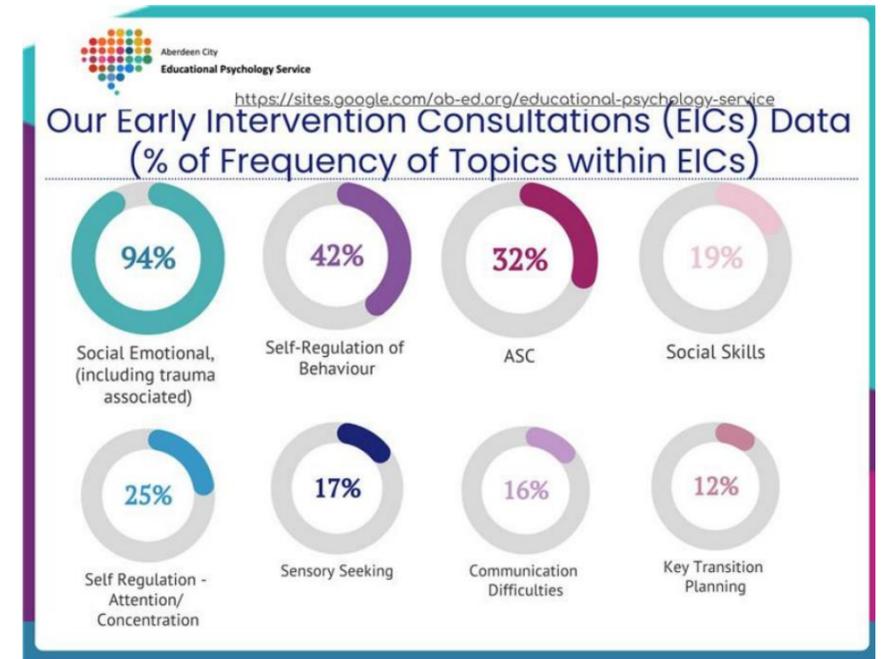
The refreshed **Digital Hub** will be a key element within the EPS process of developing a strong and transparent Universal Support Offer for Parents & Carers. In addition, a Families Working Group has been established to examine and develop our universal and targeted offers to families going forward. This session, the Service has fostered stronger communication links with current services for parents and carers, such as the Family Learning Team and the Stronger Families on-line events, with plans in place to develop new communications for parents/carers and contribute to information sessions and events (e.g. Tues 24th June 2025 Stronger Families online session for parents/carers on the topic of school attendance, including Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance).

A key Universal offer from EPS to Education Services are our **Early Intervention Consultations (EICs)**. EICs can be about individual (unnamed) learners, groups of learners or classes, or systemic topics (e.g., understanding behaviour in the classroom, critical incident support). 576 EICs have been recorded so far this session, on a wide range of topics. This is a slight reduction on last year's total, but this is due to the 6 weeks the Educational Psychology Service spent on the Exploration of Learners' Needs. This is where the Service gathered data from schools, families, Trade Unions, ASN & Outreach Groups to get a comprehensive picture of learners' needs and supports across the city. There has also been a reduction in EPS capacity due to maternity leave. The age range and most frequent topics for EICs about individual pupils are detailed on the right

Coaching is used across Educational Psychology Service support offers. Separate to this, Individual or Group Coaching continues to be offered to promote staff personal and professional development and wellbeing, with 6 practitioners accessing this support over the 23/24 session. Although modest in number, practitioner evaluations are extremely positive in relation to the impact of coaching on their practice and wellbeing. We saw an immediate increase after promoting the offer in our termly newsletter for schools, with 3 people signing up for coaching sessions the week after. We recognise the necessity to actively continuing to promote the coaching offer to support school staff resilience, empowerment, and professional development.

Aligning with the CIRCLE framework, the **Spotlight** resource has been developed and piloted by the Educational Psychology Service Dee Locality to enable the sharing of good practice across ACC settings in supporting the needs of learners with complex ASN in mainstream settings. Some focused implementation processes are currently being trialled which will continue into session 25/26, including the new Bridge: Early Intervention Service.

This session, the EP service launched updated guidance for schools in responding to **Critical Incidents and Bereavement**. EPs have supported several schools this session through difficult circumstances and have developed Operational Guidance for Educational Psychologists to support and guide practice during challenging events.



In session 24/25, the Educational Psychology service continued to offer **training to school staff**, including digital training packages in Emotion Coaching, Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA), Executive Functions, and Teenage Brain Development. EPs also delivered in-person training on Emotion Coaching to the PSA staff of two primary schools and a whole day Trauma Informed Nurture Training with two primary school staff teams. This will be further developed through planned training in November 2025, with the aspiration of developing a universal training offer on this topic. Due to EPS capacity, this will have to be carefully amplified as it is upscaled and delivered more widely. All EPS training includes follow-up coaching sessions to support implementation and help embed new approaches into daily practice.

The Educational Psychology Service contributed to the Supporting Learners Festival in February, with presentations on

- A Fresh look at Emotion Coaching (156 attendees)
- Emotionally Based School Non-attendance (EBSNA) (67 attendees)
- Main Character Energy: Facilitating Pupil Participation within Education Planning (82 Attendees)

Feedback from sessions indicated a rise in attendees' understanding and confidence in all these topics, and follow-up support as discussed in the sessions was sought by some schools in these topics.

The **Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) Programme** continues to thrive. This session 13 PSAs have completed their training to become ELSAs. The EPS has improved their monitoring methodology to ensure an accurate database of ELSAs as staff members leave, retire or move schools, and to ensure fidelity to the ELSA model. While Pupil Support Assistants can use their ELSA skills throughout their role, ELSA sessions can only be delivered by fully trained and currently registered ELSAs who access the ongoing supervision from EPS. There are currently 45 trained ELSAs working in 24 primary schools, 5 secondary schools, and 1 nursery across Aberdeen. There is a large and growing body of robust evidence of the positive impact of ELSA on learners' social and emotional skills, and we are now seeing the beginnings of long-term impacts on attendance and achievement.

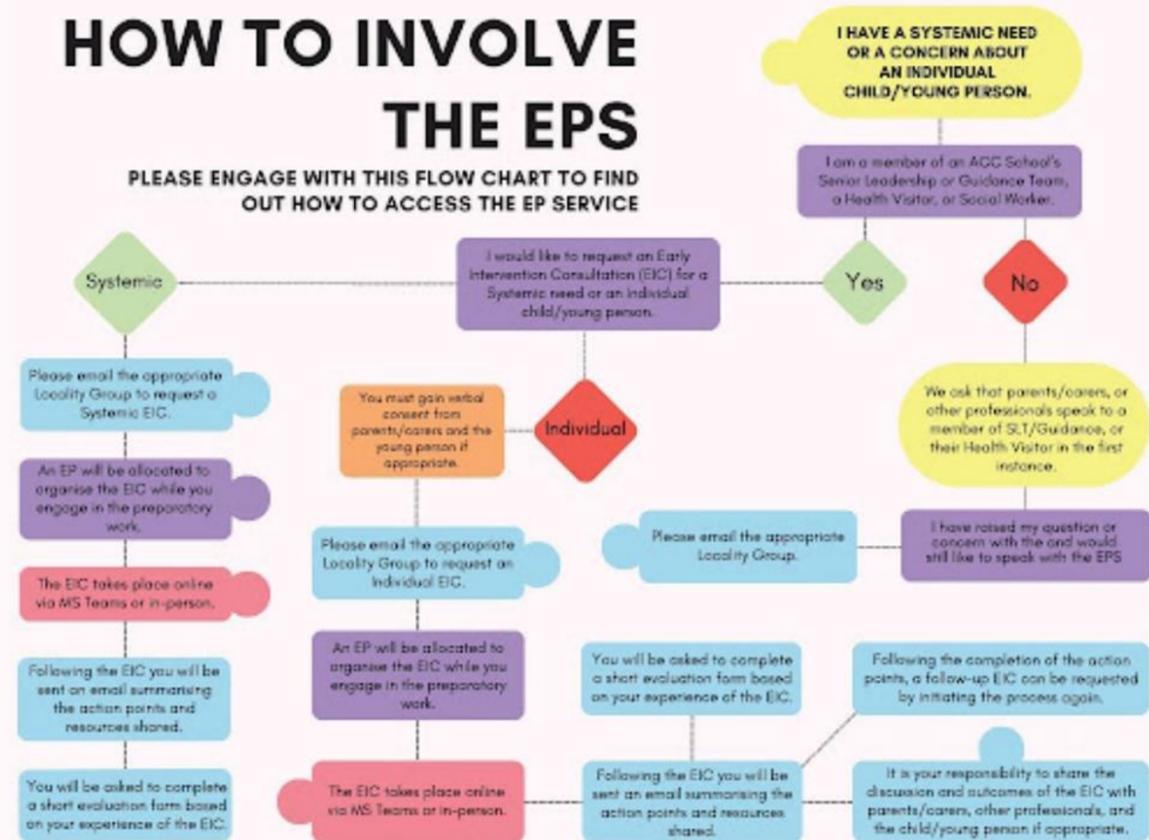
Additionally, 9 PSAs in Specialist and Enhanced Provisions have received up to 3 sessions of supervision support from EPS, sharing and developing practice in using the ELSA principles and the Emotionally Connected Framework to support learners with complex needs.

The EPS have developed guidance for **supporting Refugee and Displaced Families in education settings**. They are working collaboratively with Quality Improvement Team colleagues to get this finalised. Draft guidelines will be completed by September 2025, ready for wider consultation with stakeholder groups over the 25/26 period.



HOW TO INVOLVE THE EPS

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The EPS has further developed its knowledge and skills in the **SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Support)** Framework in targeted casework and has increased the level of collaboration with multi-agency partners (e.g. Speech and Language Therapy Services) during SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Support) assessment and support plan development.

The EPS is leading on creating a range of new guidance and materials to support Aberdeen City's education practice to align with the national pathway for **Dyscalculia**. This work alongside ASN and Outreach partners is almost complete, and ASN and Outreach partners will now take this forward.

The EPS has further developed its knowledge and skills in the **Dynamic Assessment** of children and young people's learning in targeted casework. Extending this learning into universal work and following up on plans from the previous session, materials will be developed in 2025-26 on the related topic of Mediated Learning Experiences (MLE), sharing key principles of engagement, bridging and meaning in learning tasks to explore differentiation and support teaching staff to ensure that learning support across settings is appropriately tailored, motivating and challenging for all learners. This will support the wider Education and Lifelong Learning work in relation to Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

The service also identified the following as the key psychological frameworks and approaches that shape our service delivery:



In 2024/25 the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) has continued to embed its enhanced knowledge of **trauma informed practice** across its universal offers, Early Intervention Consultations (EICs), locality or setting specific work, and training and coaching support. A training offer for schools on universal nurture and trauma-informed approaches is currently being piloted with a small number of schools. Feedback from this test of change, due to complete in November 2025, will inform the development of a wider offer for education settings.

There is recognition of the necessity to adopt a multi-agency approach to Trauma Informed Practice, in line with the aspirations of the National Trauma Transformational Programme. The EPS has developed a resource on Trauma Informed Interactions, for presentation at the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee, to support staff in client and customer facing roles to consider how trauma impacts on an individual's presentation, and how adaptations can be made to the way in which we interact. The intention, following feedback, will be to offer this resource to the wider workforce via ACC Learn by November 2025.

The EP service continues to be involved in analysis of data around **incidents and near misses** in school. Targeted support is offered to senior leadership teams alongside QIOs in school where deemed appropriate, or at a school's own request.

CIRCLE Resources for Primary and Secondary have continued to be updated throughout the 24/ 25 session based on usage and feedback from schools, services and individual practitioners. The resources are fully accessible, editable to ensure setting autonomy and can be easily updated [CIRCLE UNIVERSAL - 24/25 session](#) and [CIRCLE TARGETED - 24/25 session](#).

A city-wide audit of CIRCLE workshop needs took place at the beginning of the 24/25 session. This indicated an increase in knowledge of CIRCLE in Aberdeen city schools and services but still inferred a need for CIRCLE workshops focussed on universal level and targeted level. Listening to school feedback it then made sense to divide training for the framework into two stand-alone sessions – 1 for universal level and 1 for targeted level, with most participants opting to attend both. This allowed for schools and services to evaluate the current impact of CIRCLE implementation and invest time in the workshops that suited their specific needs at the February 2025 Inset Day. It also serves to ensure quality universal supports to be in place prior to focusing on targeted interventions which, without quality supports at universal level, are not always necessary or appropriate. The Inset was well attended (over 200 attendees in total) with a good spread of schools and services attending.

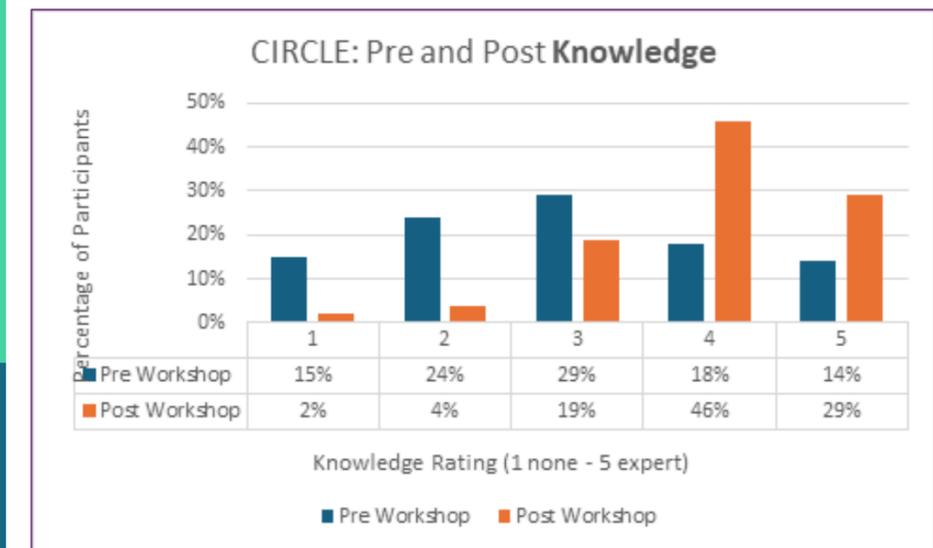
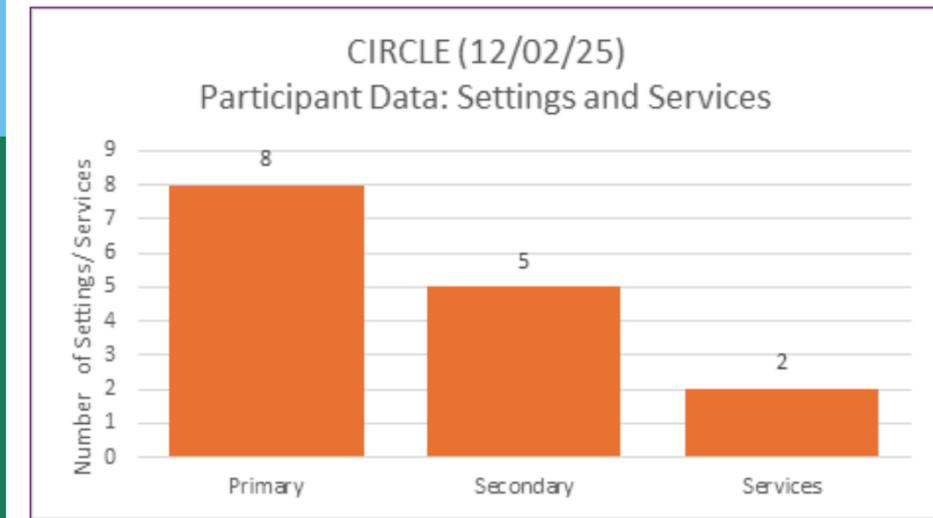
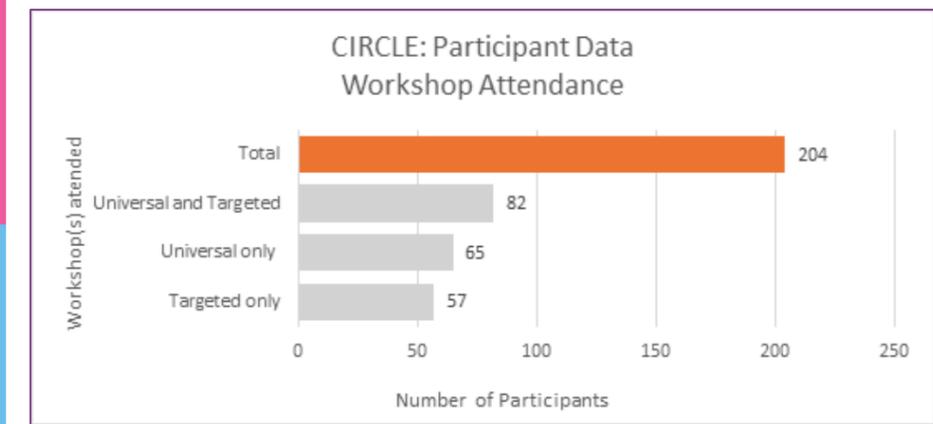
Impact and feedback from the sessions was extremely positive overall in terms of an increase in knowledge of the framework. Knowledge of the framework improved significantly at pre-workshop stage. Most responses clustered around 2–3 shifting to 4–5 post attendance. Confidence to implement also improved.

In May 2025 two CIRCLE for ELC workshops were offered. There was a significant uptake with over 150 colleagues from ELC settings across the city participating. Strategic integration of CIRCLE is now evident in almost all settings' improvement plans, reflecting a strong city-wide commitment to inclusive education.

Work has been ongoing to develop the whole system approach to **Healthy Weight**. A Strategic Networking Group (SNG) has been established with members from Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP), Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian, and Community Planning Partners. This will be extended over time to include wider educational establishments and representatives from the business world. The Education Service is represented by a central officer, a secondary headteacher, a primary headteacher and an Early Learning and Childcare Locality Lead. Family Learning and the School Catering team are also represented.

Progress is being made against the six phases of a whole system approach and following the completion of phase 3 and phase 4 the group will be able to provide recommendations which will inform actions to be taken forward as part of the LOIP.

Considerable partnership work to monitor and improve the health and wellbeing of our young people will continue. Our work around healthy weight and the effective use of CIRCLE will continue to be maintained. Continuing to align all resources around shared work will also continue.



NATIONAL STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

The **Scottish Attainment Challenge** (SAC) utilises two main funding streams to address the poverty-related attainment gap: Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) and Strategic Equity Funding (SEF). PEF is allocated directly to schools and focuses on targeted, school-level interventions, while SEF provides a wider, strategic framework for local authorities to work with schools and other partners to achieve the goals of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Both aim to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a particular focus on improving outcomes in health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy.

Head Teachers work with their whole school community to plan best use of **PEF funding**, taking account of a wide range of data and the unique context of the school. The full involvement of stakeholders, including pupils, parents, and community partners, in supporting schools with shaping their pupil equity plans and trackers continues to be a priority. Schools receive support and advice through annual guidance issued by the central Quality Improvement team and the **authority-wide Equity Network**, which meets termly.

During the 2024/25 session, authority-wide meetings have focused on Scottish Government guidance on school uniform, attendance, Cost of the School Day and continued professional dialogue to build knowledge and confidence. Head Teachers have shared good practice with colleagues in similar sectors and across Associated School Groups. The Equity Network Teams channel continues to be used by practitioners to access information, guidance, and support to promote equity. The Equity Network, led by the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor, has seen good engagement from most schools, with evaluation suggesting it is supporting professional learning and collaboration. To develop HT skills further there is a commitment to participate in the Education Scotland Equity for Leadership training during 2025/26.

Following the implementation of a revised **equity plan and tracker in 2023-24**, the setting of specific outcomes and measures has improved. Continued evaluation suggests that most schools are increasingly confident in using data to ensure their plans reflect a clear understanding of context. This evaluation indicates that interventions are continuing to be more time-specific and regularly tracked, with schools showing greater confidence in adapting or abandoning strategies if progress is not achieved. The tracking tool continues to support Head Teachers to plan interventions and target support to address the poverty-related attainment gap more effectively.

Attendance continues to be monitored regularly by the central Quality Improvement team through data discussions with Head Teachers. Parents are sent attendance information termly to remind them of the impact non-attendance can have on attainment. A focus on P1 has been added to discussion agendas to address an emerging downward trend in the attendance of this group.

Schools are developing early intervention approaches to address school refusal linked to mental health issues. This includes providing support within schools and through proactive outreach to prevent issues from escalating. The Educational Psychology service is working closely with schools to share strategies to support emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA).



Improvement activity over 2024/25 has realised an improvement in school attendance from 91% to 92%.

*90% of communities are performing better in out of work benefits than might be expected (when comparing them to other similar communities).
Torry east,
Heathryfold/Middlefield,
Woodside, Mastick and
Northfield have the poorest outcomes.*

The number of people now successfully claiming universal credit has increased from 7.705 in March 2020 to 20.145 in Sept 2024.

A reduction in the % of children experiencing child poverty in the least deprived communities from 3.9 in 2021/22 to 3.7% in 2022/23. This is significantly lower than the national average of 6%.

In the 2023 calendar year, there were an estimated 13,500 workless households in Aberdeen, a fall of 1,700 on 2022.

The claimant count, as a % of the working age population has remained stable at 3.2%. This is in line with the national average

In 2022/23 Median Earnings for Aberdeen rose to £533 (+7%), slightly faster than the Scotland level.

Preventing families from experiencing poverty wherever possible

Aberdeen City schools are working closely with various services and community organisations to provide integrated services which address the needs of children and families affected by poverty. This includes the development of a community-based Family Support Model in Northfield and Torry, which aims to provide tailored assistance and improve overall family wellbeing.

The positive impact of a collaborative approach across services in the local authority to supporting children, young people, and families continues to be evident. Schools are providing crucial support through free breakfast clubs, increased uptake of free school meals, accessible clothing grants, uniform swaps, and partnerships with foodbanks. The successful implementation of Cost of the School Day position statements in almost all schools during 2024/25 has increased awareness and improved access to vital resources. Schools will continue to evaluate their statements and update these as necessary to support learners and their families.

Effective sharing of data and appropriate metrics across services to indicate where children and young people are experiencing poverty continues to inform targeted support to mitigate the barriers to learning that poverty creates.

Schools across the city continue to work in collaboration with each other, other services and agencies to target families most in need of help and either provide that help at source, or signpost families to the most appropriate source of assistance. As a result, a wide range of support has been made available to families with children attending school or ELC in Aberdeen city.

Continued investment of Strategic Equity Funding in **money advisors** has been successful in increasing families' awareness of and access to financial entitlements. Ongoing and comprehensive support has continued with the creation of a regularly updated information booklet which is issued both electronically and in paper format to all families with children attending Aberdeen City schools and settings. This ongoing holistic approach, including debt management, payment plan negotiation, and emergency fund access, is positively impacting child poverty, wellbeing, development, participation, and family resilience, significantly reducing the risk of family breakdowns and homelessness.

Data from April 2024 – March 2025 shows the following:

	Total for period April 2024- March 2025
Financial Gains	£382,881.03
Debt Cases	86
Total Debts of	£534,337.82
Benefit checks	225
Benefit Claims	61
Benefit Challenges	4

During session 2024/25 Scottish Attainment Challenge funded Family Learning, Youth Work and Pathways Advocates.

In academic session 23/24, 250 young people were tracked by a **Pathways Advocate**. This has risen to 300 in 24/25. In 2023/24 a fifth of the young people had regular or intensive support with this increasing to a quarter of young people in 2024-25.

During the second year of having this role, there is increased confidence that intensive support is being targeted to young people who most need it. It is therefore anticipated (and showing in the emerging 2024/25 data) that we are supporting the young people who are encountering the most significant barriers in their education.

Overall, we are seeing a positive impact of the role on attendance, progress and relationships. Case studies and feedback from staff and young people, evidence key successes for individual young people as a direct impact of having the role within the school.

Positive destinations showed a decline for 2023/24 compared to 2022/23. Care experienced young people are often unable to sustain positive destinations. This is a priority for improvement next session.

With SEF funding, **youth work programmes** have expanded significantly, providing essential support to young people. The initiatives focus on personal, social, and educational development, fostering resilience and confidence among participants. One-to-one support has become a core offering in youth work, addressing mental health and emotional well-being. This personalised approach has proven effective in building trust and improving young people's confidence.

Families and educators have provided positive feedback on the impact of youth work services. Testimonials highlight improvements in mental health, confidence, and overall well-being among participants. Families report feeling reassured and hopeful due to the support received. Teachers note significant increases in learner engagement, confidence, and attendance linked to youth work interventions.

Youth work programmes have led to measurable improvements in health and well-being among participants, focusing on self-awareness, respect, and resilience. Evaluations indicate a strong positive impact across various indicators.

School actively support anti-poverty measures across their communities and this will continue.

Quotes from young people accessing the youth work programmes

“They help me with my confidence, help me make new friends, I can talk about stuff I haven’t told anyone.”

“I have made more friends. It has calmed me down and helped me understand certain things.”



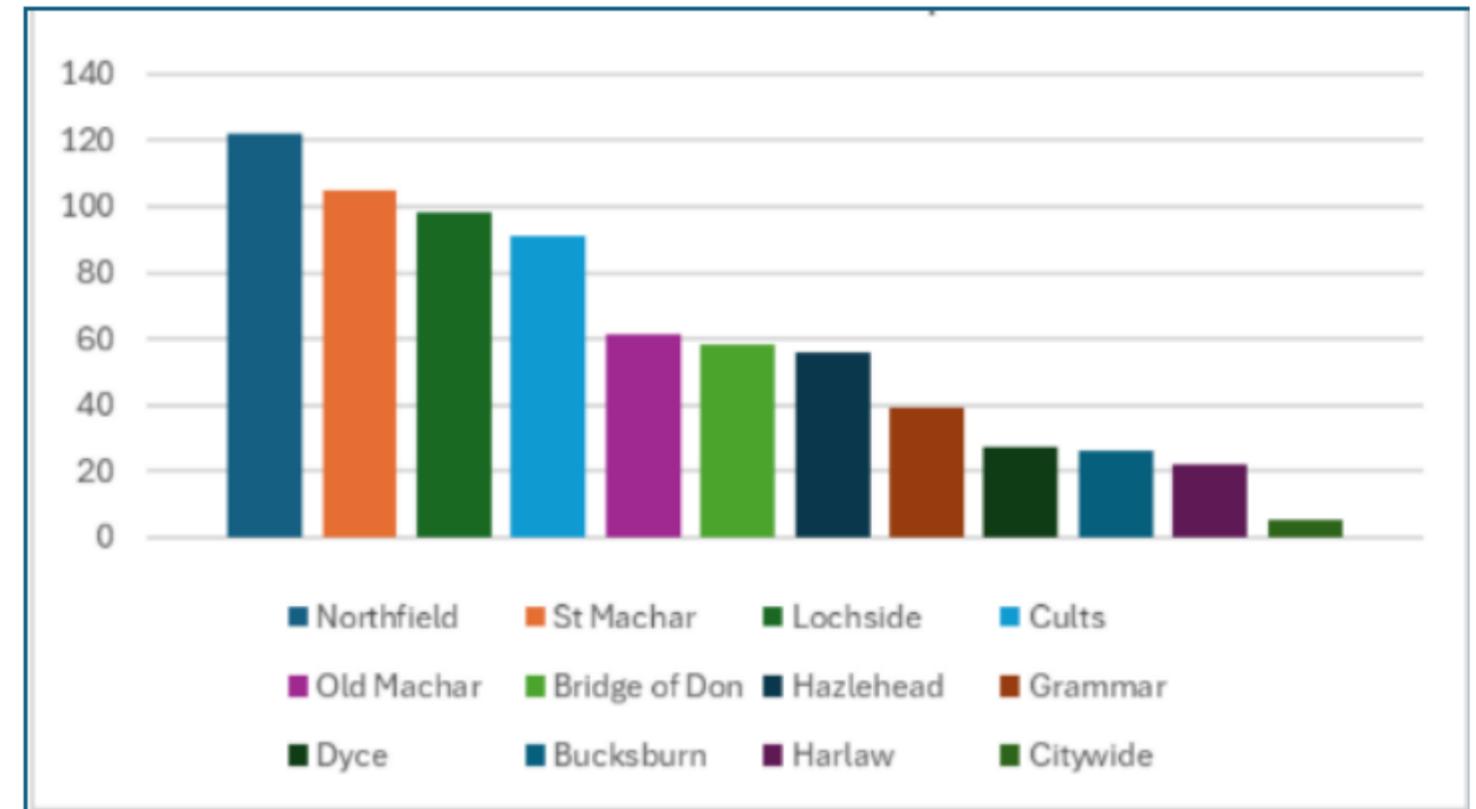
The Family Learning team delivers tailored support to families, focusing on their unique needs and challenges. A diverse range of courses and activities are available to parents and caregivers, focusing on parenting support, mental health, and family learning activities. These programmes aim to build knowledge, skills, and community connections.

The Family Learning team actively supports families facing poverty and crisis, providing essential resources and assistance. They organise various activities to engage families, promote learning, and foster community connections. These activities are designed to be fun, educational, and accessible to all families. The programmes' reach and impact are evident through participant demographics and engagement levels. Family Learning workers measure various health and wellbeing outcomes, demonstrating improvements in participants' confidence, skills, and overall wellbeing. The programme tracks progress and next steps for continued support.

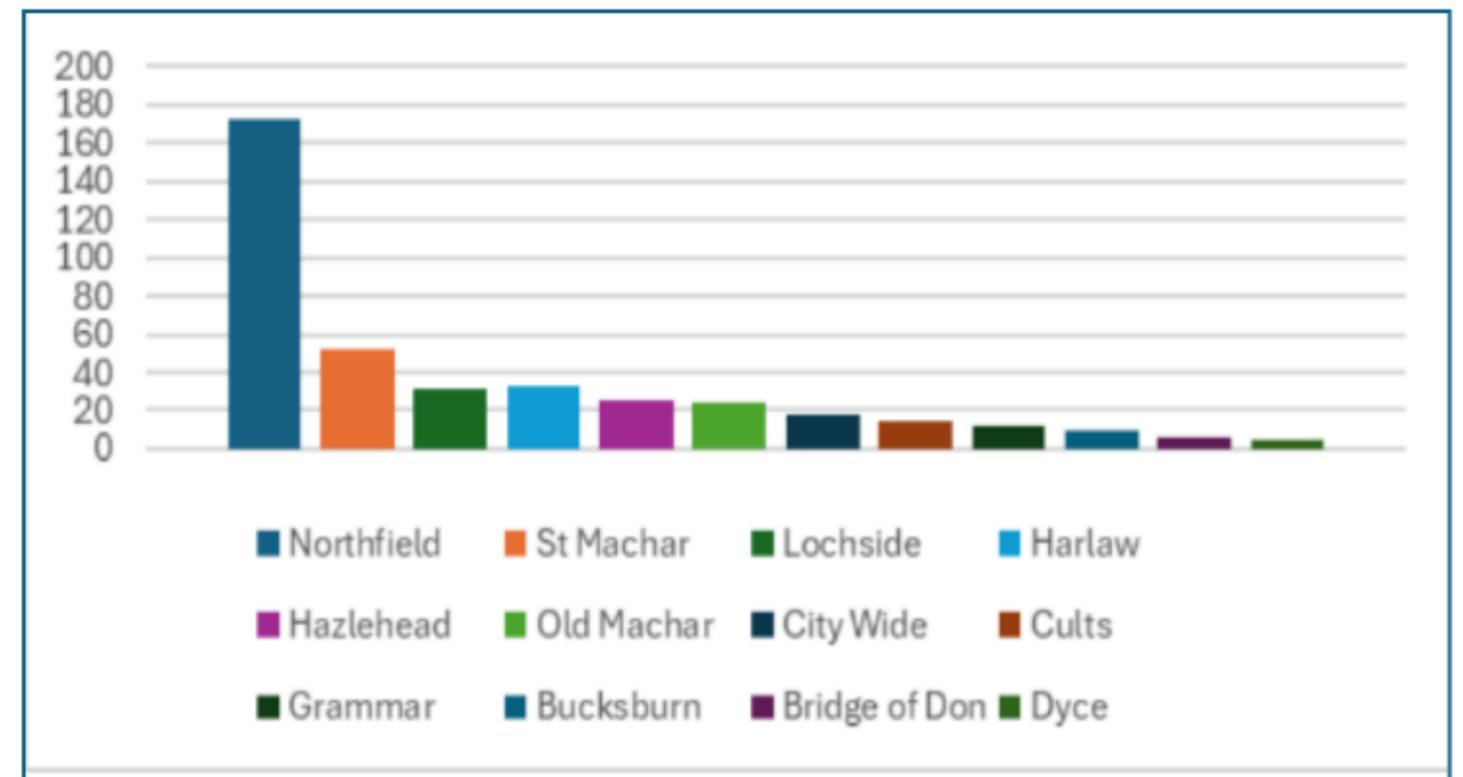
Feedback is positive, families report building friendships and receiving tailored support that meets their needs; schools recognise the value of Family Learning workers in supporting diverse school communities and partners commend the team's flexibility and responsiveness to family needs, enhancing community connections.

The impact of investment in these areas will continue to be monitored during session 25/26 with a view to them becoming central to our model of Family Support.

Youth Work Activities per ASG 2024/25



Family Learning Activities per ASG 2024/25



Delivery of The Promise

In line with Scotland’s national commitment to *Keeping The Promise*, the pilot programme has continued to reflect and consider how children and families are supported through a whole-family, relationships-based approach. Since its launch in November 2022, the pilot has embedded the core values of *The Promise* by delivering integrated, multi-agency support across Associated School Groups (ASGs), operating 52 weeks a year.

The pilot’s expansion to a third ASG, St Machar, in April 2025 has enabled the leadership team to test the model’s scalability and adaptability across diverse community contexts. Quantitative data from 2024/25 highlights improvements in attendance and a reduction in exclusions, particularly where early and sustained intervention has been in place. The high proportion of learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) further underscores the importance of co-ordinated, tailored support.

The pilot’s dynamic and needs-led approach is evident in its flexible response to changing family circumstances and alignment with Early Intervention services such as Fit Like . In 1 ASG, for example, 8 referrals were considered to be best supported at universal or Fit Like levels, while 1 young person required specialist intervention. These decisions were made collaboratively with school and Fit Like teams to ensure appropriate planning. One young person re-engaged with the pilot following a significant change in family circumstances, demonstrating the team’s agility and responsiveness. Additionally, 5 Senior Phase pupils successfully transitioned out of school and are now supported by Skills Development Scotland (SDS), while 2 others moved to universal support due to positive progress—highlighting the pilot’s role in enabling successful transitions and reducing reliance on specialist services.

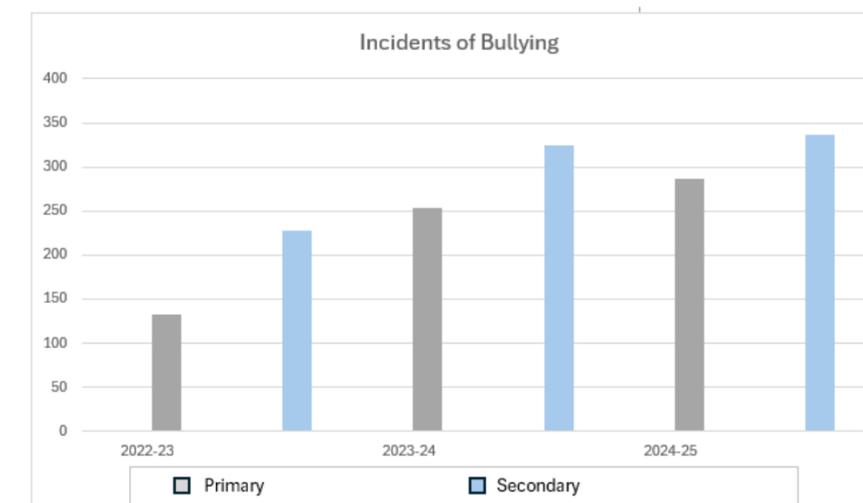
As the pilot moves into the 2025/26 academic year, its continued focus on improved data-informed planning, the integration of wellbeing measurement tools, and strengthened links with community resources will be critical to increasing its impact and sustaining progress in delivering on *The Promise*. Work to align our work around the Promise is now being driven by a newly established internal Promise Board.

Implementation of the revised anti-bullying policy

Our revised Anti-Bullying Policy was approved in July 2023 and shared with Head Teachers in September 2023. In early 2024 a session was run to allow colleagues to share practice to support their development of local school policies. The Anti-Bullying Guidance has been updated to reflect the recommendations from the updated: Respect for All National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People (November 2024). Key developments included expanded guidance on on-line bullying and an update definition, considering the emotional impact of bullying. Officers met with the Director of Respectme (Scotland’s Anti-Bullying Service) on 26 March 2025 and there was a discussion on the amendments made to our guidance.



	Primary			Secondary			Total		
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
May	12	23	40	8	27	37	20	50	77
Jun	14	21	25	11	50	35	25	71	60
Jul		3	3		5	8		8	11
Aug	3	6	7	12	13	6	15	19	13
Sep	9	30	20	47	42	35	56	72	55
Oct	8	15	15	28	16	21	36	31	36
Nov	13	25	40	34	33	49	47	58	89
Dec	12	23	34	8	19	42	20	42	76
Jan	21	28	32	22	29	39	43	57	71
Feb	16	24	29	19	31	24	35	55	53
Mar	18	43	24	27	38	27	45	81	51
Apr	6	12	17	12	22	14	18	34	31
Total	132	253	286	228	325	337	360	578	623





equally safe at school

a whole school approach to preventing gender based violence



Data is reviewed monthly and trends and anomalies are identified and shared with Quality Improvement Managers to support conversations with senior leaders in schools. This follows further clarification of the expectations on recording and monitoring incidents and the processes that should be followed when an allegation of bullying is reported. All incidents of reported bullying must be recorded. During session 24/25 schools have been more consistent in their reporting, making effective use of the Bullying and Equalities module on SEEMiS. This has resulted in an increase in the number of incidents being recorded and there is now a broader spread of schools which reflects the more robust and systematic arrangements in place. There was a total of 623 recorded incidents, 286 Primary and 337 Secondary.

Throughout 2024/25 staff have engaged in professional learning on offer, developing their skills and experience in dealing with and responding to bullying incidents. Staff have registered with the respectme online CPD resource. Several schools have provided QR codes which enable pupils to make disclosures quickly and discretely. Pupil surveys show there is greater awareness of key adults and where to go to if there is a need to report. We will continue to review the impact of the policy and share successes across the service.

Staff have engaged with the Digital Discourse Initiative. This is a free online professional learning module for teachers and educators, developed by TIE (Time for Inclusive Education) and ISD (Information Services Division) as part of a new international collaboration. It provides bespoke educational tools to address the effects of online hate and disinformation on children and young people. The course covers online hate, safeguarding and educational counter strategies.

All secondary schools have registered on the **Equally Safe at School** website and identified a lead person for this remit. Bucksburn Academy continue to work with ESAS as part of the pilot programme. Incidents of gender-based violence will be tracked and reviewed as part of the ongoing audits into bullying incidents over session 2024/25. This will support the collection, monitoring and review of the data. There were 2 incidents related to GBV recorded in February and March 2025. Schools are currently reviewing their Relationships and Sexual Health and Parenthood curriculum to ensure it includes learning about equalities and gender-based violence.

All secondary schools have staff and young people trained in the **Mentors Against Violence programme** and schools are at various stages of implementation. 4 schools have fully implemented the programme, 3 are currently refreshing the programme and the remainder planning to implement during session 24/25. The primary version of the programme is almost ready for release, and we have asked to be considered as an early adopter for 25/26.

To support increased awareness of the impact of trauma on young people, all staff in schools engaged with the NHS national trauma training with all staff completing foundation and intermediate during session 24/25. Undertaking this training will support greater understanding of the issues impacting young people who have experienced trauma in their life and how best to support individuals and families. This will be offered again in session 25/26 to support new staff.

Additional staff have engaged with opportunities to train as trainers for Mentors in Violence (MVP) at a 2-day course in March 2025. This doubles the MVP training capacity within ACC to support the training of staff in schools and ensuring that we are self-sufficient as an authority. As a result of our self-sufficiency as an authority, Education Scotland requested that ACC trainers support colleagues in the independent sector to achieve their roll out of MVP.

A total of 93 staff across 11 secondary schools are currently trained to deliver the MVP programme and to support pupil mentors within their contexts, usually through PSE or wider achievement programmes. Additionally, we will be arranging further ACC training in terms 2 and 3 of session 25/26, to support new staff to this programme and refresh existing staff. This area of work will not be maintained, with central team capacity utilised to support the implementation of a primary model when released.

Systems to support LGBTQIA+ community in school

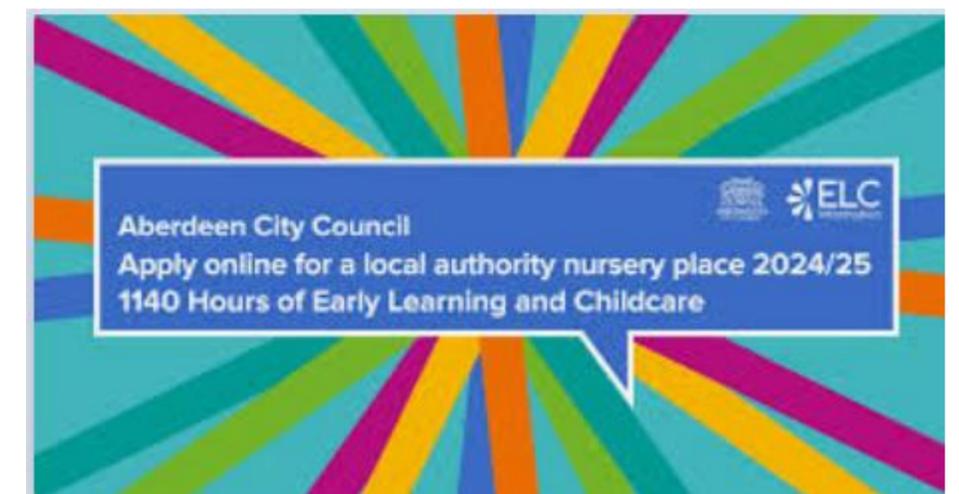
Schools continue to engage with Time for Inclusive Education. We have 450 teaching staff across 60 education settings who have completed Stage 1 of the E-Learning Module. 3 Schools are involved in Stage 2 professional learning. 1 School has completed all the outcomes. and there will be a further offers later in the session.

To support the published Guidance on LGBT Inclusive Education staff had the opportunity to attend professional learning delivered by TIE in April 2025.

LGBT groups from our schools collaborated with each other and with schools across Aberdeenshire to coordinate an event for LGBT students which took place at Northfield Academy on the 25 April 2025. The event and disco was a huge success and brought 49 pupils and staff together to celebrate diversity and inclusion. There are plans to build on this success with another joint event to be held on the 20 June 2025. Four Pillars continue to deliver the certified LGBT+ Awareness Training to school staff. The two-hour sessions which are delivered via TEAMS are running from the 25 March to the end June 2025. This work will be maintained.

Increase provision of ELC to those from low income households

We continue to work with the Scottish Government Data Pipeline to help us identify eligible 2s families. Once identified the families are sent information about eligible 2s and details on how to apply. Based on the data shared with the local authority, information was sent to 488 families. The Service currently supports over 250 eligible 2s in our ELC provisions. This is a 22% increase on the number of children placed in 2023/2024. In addition, the number of eligible children taking up their eligible 2s funded entitlement has increased by 10% from 38.3% in 2023/24 to 48.3% in 2024/25. We will continue to work to increase this positive upward trajectory in session 2025/26.



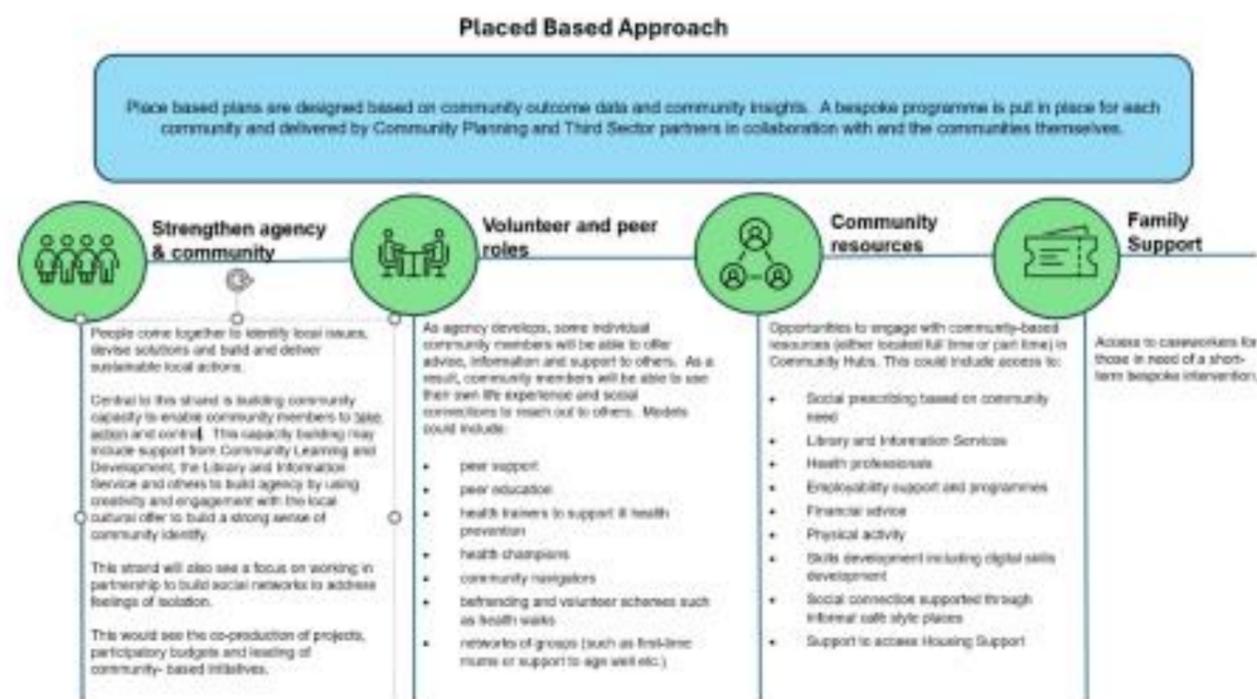
Multi-agency data shows that poverty continues to impact on our families and that this is likely to continue, although there are some signals from more recent information of an apparent stabilisation of the employment market and an increase in those who are economically active and in employment/self employment may feed through to future improvements in poverty related measures.

There is a need to ensure that our communities have the agency they require to continue to overcome the challenges they are experiencing as we develop our **Future Libraries Model**. There is now a further tranche of data-based evidence that families are increasingly being supported to access locally and nationally managed entitlements and this is encouraging but does highlight the number of those who need our continued help, and those whose changed circumstances have required engagement with support mechanisms for the first time.

There is a need to continue to carefully target those groups recognised as most likely to be impacted by poverty, and to increase our knowledge and support of them whilst maintaining an awareness that the evidence may challenge our responses in areas, and for residents, falling out with historically understood need/priority. Our place-based approach to the development of our Future Libraries may offer a helpful context to explore some of the challenges facing families more fully

Our model of family support continues to focus on those groups at greatest risk. Outcomes for those in SIMD 1 continue to be of greatest concern. Our work continues with Fairer Future Partnerships and work is ongoing to explore how services can work together in a smarter way. This model is looking at the resources available and how they can be remodelled to ensure they are targeted to ensure maximum impact for those with greatest need.

A Promise Board has been established to bring together services to develop and monitor the implementation of strategies, policies and plans designed to support the Council's delivery of The Promise, whilst considering the contributing internal factors on those in or on the edge of care. This will help build on our progress as articulated in our Promise evaluation.

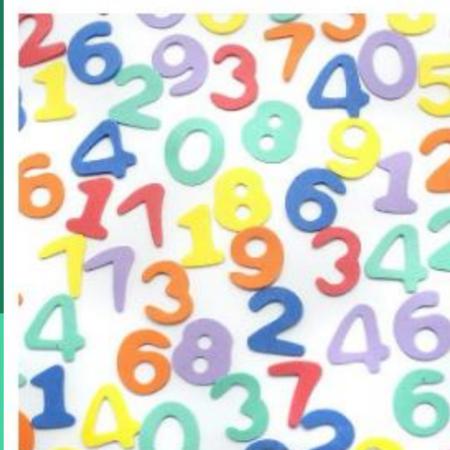


NIF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

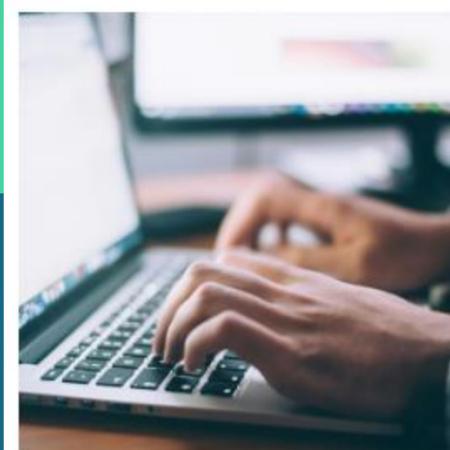
Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy



2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment



Numeracy & Maths Resources



Teacher Languages Professional Learning Site

The Northern Alliance, Learning Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Toolkit has been extensively populated and is now a supportive resource to enhance development activity as part of a school's improvement plans. It is designed to add value to schools' existing practices and resources. The Toolkit is built upon strong methodology and supports the impact of improvement within 6 key sections, identified as requiring support through analysis of HMIE school inspection reports across Scotland. It supports practitioners and school leaders to access high quality materials to implement effective staff development. Integral to improvement within these themes is high quality leadership which runs through each element of the Toolkit. Implementation of the leadership cycle supports schools to know whether learning experiences are leading to achievement.

Aberdeen's Learning, Teaching and Assessment officers have worked in partnership with colleagues from the seven local authorities that make up the Northern Alliance. In Terms 1 and 2, our LTA officers spent time in schools piloting the methodology of the Toolkit. This hands-on engagement allowed them to evaluate its effectiveness and gather valuable insights to inform ongoing development leading to effective implementation. The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Toolkit is a high-quality resource with all the necessary elements to support meaningful school improvement. Schools are still at the early stages of implementation and more dedicated time, sustained attention and leadership are needed to ensure its use leads to school improvement

More recently they have focused their time on writing quality Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) sessions specifically for school leaders to support effective implementation of the Toolkit. These sessions have been positively received with around 70 leaders attending sessions 1 and 2. Feedback highlighted the relevance and practical value of the content. As a result of these CLPL sessions, increased engagement with the Toolkit has been seen. Schools are beginning to incorporate it more actively within their staff development activities demonstrating its growing impact.

Evaluations from these CLPL sessions identified that school leaders wish increased opportunities for collaboration and to find out how others have implemented the toolkit in their own settings. In response to this, two additional CLPL sessions were delivered to continue to build confidence and deepen engagement. School leaders also expressed an interest in having a dedicated space to share ideas, strategies and examples of successful practice. To support this a Teams site has been established for school leaders to connect, exchange experiences and access shared resources.

Schools are at the early phase of working through the different elements of the Toolkit implementation and need more time to pilot, evaluate and measure the impact of the Toolkit on their improvement work. Building a shared understanding of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment reduces perception gaps in teachers' practice and is a key driver of improvement. Officers continue to work closely with schools to identify and share ideas for this. Coaching with individual school leaders also supports improvements in identifying next steps and the formation of a quality action plan. Provocations and signposts have been added to the newly created Teams site to support professional dialogue and collaboration. To ensure the methodology of the toolkit is successfully embedded in school practice there is clear value in incorporating it within Aberdeen's Quality Improvement Framework. Identifying ways in which individual themes can be explicitly linked to our quality improvement visits would further strengthen its use and enhance impact on school improvement.

27 of our Primaries have now completed the **CYPIC National Writing Programme** training. 70 P4 teachers and managers have attended the extensive training with another 123 teachers from P3-7 attending the spread and scale twilight training to allow for continuity of approach from P3 – 7 in our trained schools (training has also been delivered to our probationers across ACC and the central Education team, with all staff taken through the quality improvement journey stages using a recognised graphic. Data from our most recent cohorts has shown a significant increase in projected writing data at the P4 stage with ambitious stretch aims being met, with almost all achieving or superseding these aims. The methodology is included in the refreshed literacy progression and training will continue to be rolled out to the remaining ASGs over 25/26 to support further increases in attainment.



An online Literacy Hub platform has been created to support teachers in delivering the Literacy curriculum. This has been populated and piloted for the writing element and we are now working through the reading aspect so that these are ready for schools to embark on in 2025/26. The Hub also has video links to suggested pedagogical approaches and gives stimulus and resources via populated links. Our Literacy Journey group have met regularly over this session with a visual now created and education Literacy plans shared with all the stakeholders. Libraries are now working closely with education to raise the profile of Literacy, with an event planned for June 2025 bringing Literacy Champions identified in all our schools together with Library staff and Scottish Book Trust. A more joined up offering of Literacy support for citizens across the city is being planned which will be shared with groups for feedback and comment.



Guidance on Managing & Promoting Pupil Attendance had been circulated to all schools in July 2023 in recognition that poor attendance was impacting on attainment. The Guidance was updated and re-issued in April 2024. The flow chart included continues to ensure that a consistent approach to promoting attendance is adopted across ACC settings. Quality Improvement visits are used to monitor compliance and to ensure consistency in this approach. The Power BI Broad General Education Tracking & Monitoring system provides a platform to monitor attendance easily. Attendance discussions take place termly between Senior Leaders and QIO/QIMs to ensure rigour.



Pupil Attendance – a guide for parents/carers - has been re-issued three times in 2024/25, in September, November and February, to reinforce the message about the impact of attendance on achievement, attainment and wellbeing. Overall, attendance continues to be higher in Primary settings. Following the issue of the updated parent guidance in February there was a 2% increase in attendance across all sectors (Primary, Secondary and Special). Average attendance in Term 4 is 93.2%. The guidance will continue to be reviewed and reissued at the beginning of each term.

A test of change undertaken at Manor Park School in relation to attendance saw a trainee school nurse working with 10 families (P.6 and P.7) with low attendance over a ten week period. Attendance rates rose for almost all learners. This test of change will be replicated next session at Bramble Brae School with a school nurse supporting 5 families (7 children).



Central officers continue to promote Education Scotland [Learning resources](#) for Head Teachers to use in their own settings, including the most recent support materials, Engaging Parents and Families to Improve Attendance in Schools and Partnership and Multi-Agency Working (both updated May 2025). This area of work will be maintained through implementation of our agreed Quality Improvement Framework.

NATIONAL STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

Young people involved in **ABZ Campus courses** for 2024/25 have completed their courses and assessments with new courses having commenced recently for the 2025/26 session. Key developments during 2025/26 are:

- 🏠 An increase in the number of courses from 72 to 80 in 2025/26, and a further increase in the number of non-NESCOL partner-delivered courses from 24 to 29.
- 🏠 Further partnership discussion and working developing across other Northern Alliance local authorities
- 🏠 A consolidation of the virtual and anytime courses offered for young people
- 🏠 Continued commitment to the importance of listening to our young people and their experiences of our ABZ Campus Courses with surveys and focus groups now an annual part of the quality assurance process
- 🏠 A continuation of the ASN Employability experience for young people with more complex needs

For session 2025/26, we have increased the range of courses through ABZ Campus.

Year	Total	School Courses	NESCOL Courses	Courses from Other Providers	Foundation Apprenticeship Courses
2023-24	36	23	3	10	8
2024-25	72	31	17	24	25
2025-26	80	34	17	29	23

Over 1500 applications have been made for ABZ Campus courses for session 2025/26.

An overview can be found in the table below:-

Applications	
Applications for ABZ Campus for School-Based Courses	926
Applications for Aberlour & Bon Accord Foundation Apprenticeships*	165
** not included are applications for Aberdeenshire FA Courses**	
Applications for NESCOL Foundation Apprenticeships / HNC	370
Applications for Anytime/Twilight Courses	59

Aberdeenshire Council has developed an effective Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) delivery programme. Phase 3 continues to utilise our partnership with this neighbouring local authority where four FA classes will run in Aberdeen City schools and be delivered by Aberdeenshire Council FA staff. As with previous years, these courses are to cater for demand amongst our young people for Construction FAs.



Progress against Stretch Aims (2025-26) and targets

Stretch aims and trajectories for individual groups are included in the graphs and tables later in this report.



Stretch aims were first set in 2022, before the unexpected increase in pupil population. Despite this, the service has retained the ambitious aims but acknowledges that our context is considerably changed now. Stretch aims will be reviewed in full to support planning from 2026/27.

Unvalidated ACEL tracking data for 2024/25 suggests that learners have continued to make progress in key areas, with Listening and Talking and Numeracy forecasts remaining stable or improving slightly despite the significant increase in school roll. P4 and P7 attainment has held steady across most measures, indicating sustained performance for learners in middle and upper primary. While P1 attainment has dipped in Reading, Writing and Listening and Talking, this provides a clear focus for improvement and targeted support in the early years. The planned reintroduction of early language interventions will support this work going forward.

The overall attainment picture continues to reflect strong engagement and recovery following the pandemic. However, the poverty-related attainment gap remains a significant challenge. Forecasts show that outcomes for learners in SIMD Quintile 1 remain below target in most curricular areas. The data highlights the importance of maintaining support for schools serving communities with higher levels of deprivation, with a focus on moderation, targeted interventions, and early identification of need to ensure equitable progress for all learners.

Attainment for learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) remains consistent in Numeracy and Listening and Talking, though a small drop is noted in Literacy and Writing.

Forecast data for Looked After Children (LAC) shows an encouraging improvement in Writing attainment, though progress is still required in other areas. Due to the small cohort size, percentages can vary significantly, reinforcing the importance of close tracking and consistent partnership working with providers of care-experienced support.

Trajectory values provide a “direction of travel” for improvement as we work towards overall stretch aims. Education Scotland has asked that this be shown as a range, indicating both upper and lower values.

Forecasts provide indicative performance for 2024/25 based on pre-validation data. These are subject to final quality assurance checks and may be updated in line with the validated attainment release from Insight in later in 2025.

ACEL Reading

Stretch Aim: 85% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2025/26.

The overall forecast for session 2024/25 is 78.48%, representing a slight decrease from the 79.37% achieved in 2023/24 and just below the national average of 80%.

The small decline in the combined figure is driven primarily by a dip in Reading attainment at P1 (Early Level), which has decreased from 80.75% in 2023/24 to 78.80%.

In contrast, attainment at P4 (First Level) and P7 (Second Level) has remained broadly stable or improved slightly, indicating that the issue is concentrated in early literacy. This will be a focus area for improvement activity across the next school session and necessitates close partnership working with our ELC provisions.

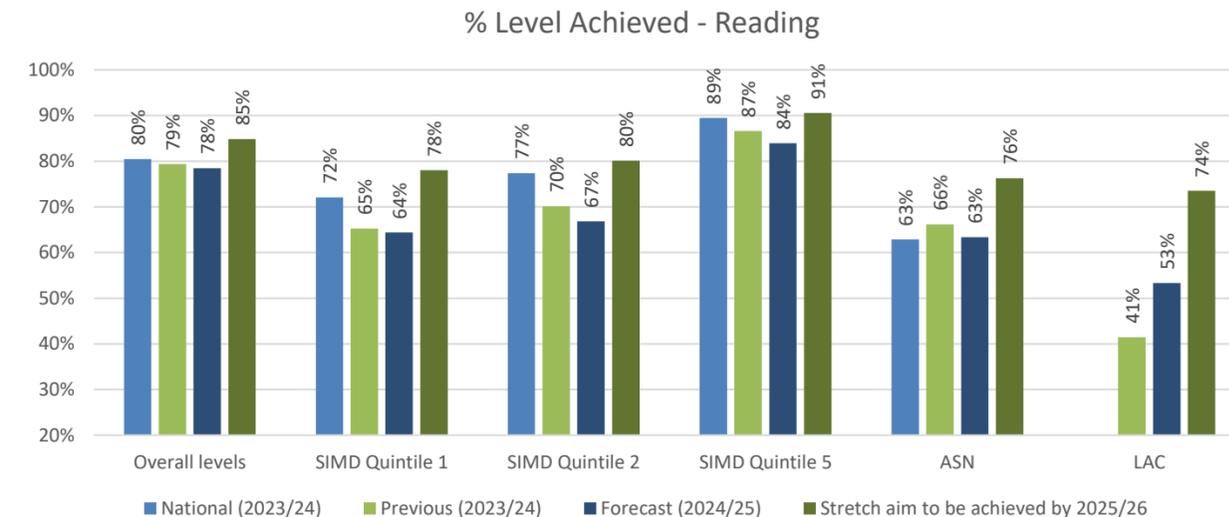
Attainment among learners from SIMD Quintile 1 is forecast at 64%, down from the 69% achieved last year, and well below both the national level (72%) and the 2025/26 stretch aim of 78%. The relative size of the cohort has impacted. Learners in Quintile 5 are forecast at 84%, resulting in a Q1–Q5 gap of -19.5pp, which is a slight widening from 2023/24 (-18pp) and further from the 2025/26 target gap of -13pp. The central team has identified those schools who require further support and have planned enhanced engagement as part of their quality improvement arrangements.

The proportion of learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) expected to achieve appropriate levels is forecast at 63%, down from 66% and below the 2025/26 aim of 76%. A positive development is seen for Looked After Children (LAC), with a forecast increase from 41% to 53%.

The number of young people in P1 with an identified additional support need has risen from 17.9% in 2022/23 to 23.6% in session 2024/25 and this has impacted on attainment. There is a need to plan additional interventions to support this cohort as they move through school.

During session 25/26 ELC settings will ensure all settings prioritise a literacy rich learning environment to promote early literacy skill development to support cohorts currently accessing ELC.

Trajectory for 2025/26 – Between 81% and 84% of learners expected to achieve predicted levels.

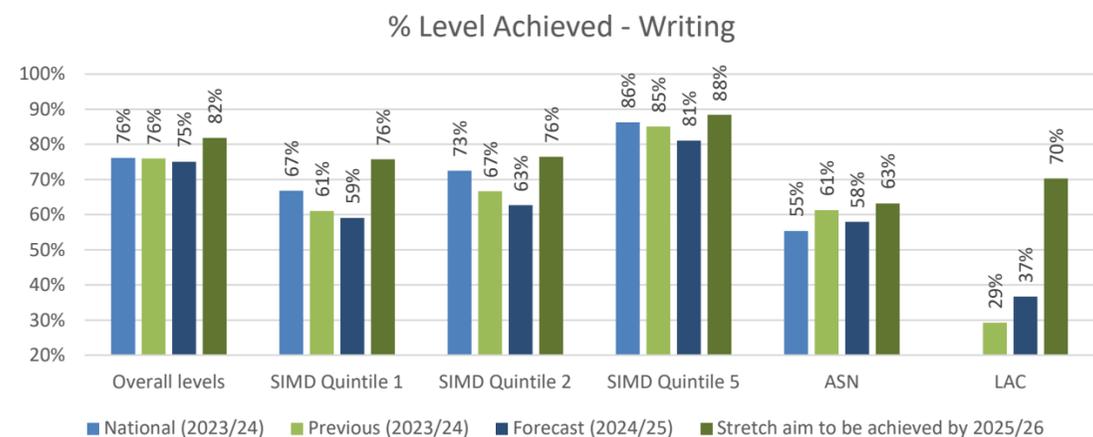


ACEL P1, P4, P7 Reading Combined

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	80%	72%	77%	89%	17.5pp	63%	
Previous (2023/24)	79%	65%	70%	87%	21pp	66%	41%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(80% - 81%)	(67% - 70%)	(70% - 72%)	(84% - 85%)	(15pp to 17pp)	(69% - 71%)	(70% - 71%)
Forecast (2024/25)	78%	64%	67%	84%	19.5pp	63%	53%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(81% - 84%)	(70% - 77%)	(73% - 77%)	(84% - 88%)	(14pp to 15pp)	(72% - 77%)	(70% - 74%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(1% - 3%)	(3% - 7%)	(3% - 5%)	(0% - 3%)		(3% - 6%)	(2% - 3%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	85%	78%	80%	91%	13pp	76%	74%

ACEL Writing

Stretch Aim – 82% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2025/26.



ACEL P1, P4, P7 Writing Combined

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	76%	67%	73%	86%	-19.4pp	55%	
Previous (2023/24)	76%	61%	67%	85%	-24pp	61%	29%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(78% - 79%)	(65% - 69%)	(70% - 72%)	(86% - 87%)	(-18pp to -21pp)	(61% - 62%)	(67% - 70%)
Forecast (2024/25)	75%	59%	63%	81%	-22%	58%	37%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(79% - 82%)	(68% - 76%)	(73% - 76%)	(86% - 88%)	(-18pp to -18pp)	(61% - 63%)	(67% - 70%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(1% - 3%)	(3% - 7%)	(3% - 4%)	(0% - 1%)		(61% - 63%)	(67% - 70%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	82%	76%	76%	88%	-13pp	63%	70%

The forecast for session 2024/25 indicates that 75% of learners across P1, P4 and P7 are expected to achieve the expected level in Writing. While this is a small dip from 76% in 2023/24, performance at P4 and P7 remains stable, providing a strong foundation from which to build. A renewed focus on Early Level writing and literacy will support continued progress toward the stretch aim.

Performance at P1 (Early Level) had previously shown strong results and, while a decline is forecast this session, there is evidence of an increase in additional support needs for this cohort and this presents a clear opportunity to strengthen early support. Priorities will include enhanced provision for early language development, phonological awareness, and fine motor skills - key enablers of writing readiness. By focusing on these early interventions, we aim to secure long-term gains in writing outcomes.

The poverty-related attainment gap remains a key focus. Forecasts show SIMD Quintile 1 learners achieving 59%, compared to 81% for Quintile 5, resulting in a Q1–Q5 gap of -22 percentage points. Although this remains above the national gap (-19.4pp) and just outside the local target range (-18pp to -21pp), improvement activity will continue to target schools serving the highest proportion of learners in Quintiles 1 and 2, ensuring effective moderation and assessment practices to improve equity in outcomes.

Encouragingly, outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) are forecast to rise from 29% to 37%, reflecting the positive impact of targeted support. While this remains below the stretch aim of 70%, it represents a step in the right direction. Outcomes for learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) are forecast at 58%, and improvement plans will focus on ensuring high-quality, tailored support is maintained and strengthened.

Planned improvement activity for session 2025/26 includes:

- 🏠 Targeted support at P1 to enhance early writing readiness through language and motor skill development
- 🏠 Expansion of the successful P4 writing intervention programme, supporting sustained progress
- 🏠 Moderation and assessment support through the QAMSO (Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer) team, focused on schools with higher proportions of learners in Quintiles 1 and 2
- 🏠 Asking our ELC settings to ensure that literacy rich environments promote literacy skill development

Trajectory for 2025/26 – Between 78% and 79% of learners expected to achieve predicted levels.

ACEL Listening and Talking

Stretch Aim - 90% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2026

The forecast for session 2024/25 is that 88% of learners will achieve expected levels in Listening and Talking. This reflects a 1 percentage point increase from the previous year (87%) and is in line with our trajectory. However, the overall figure masks a slight dip in performance at P1, which has moderated the overall rate of improvement.

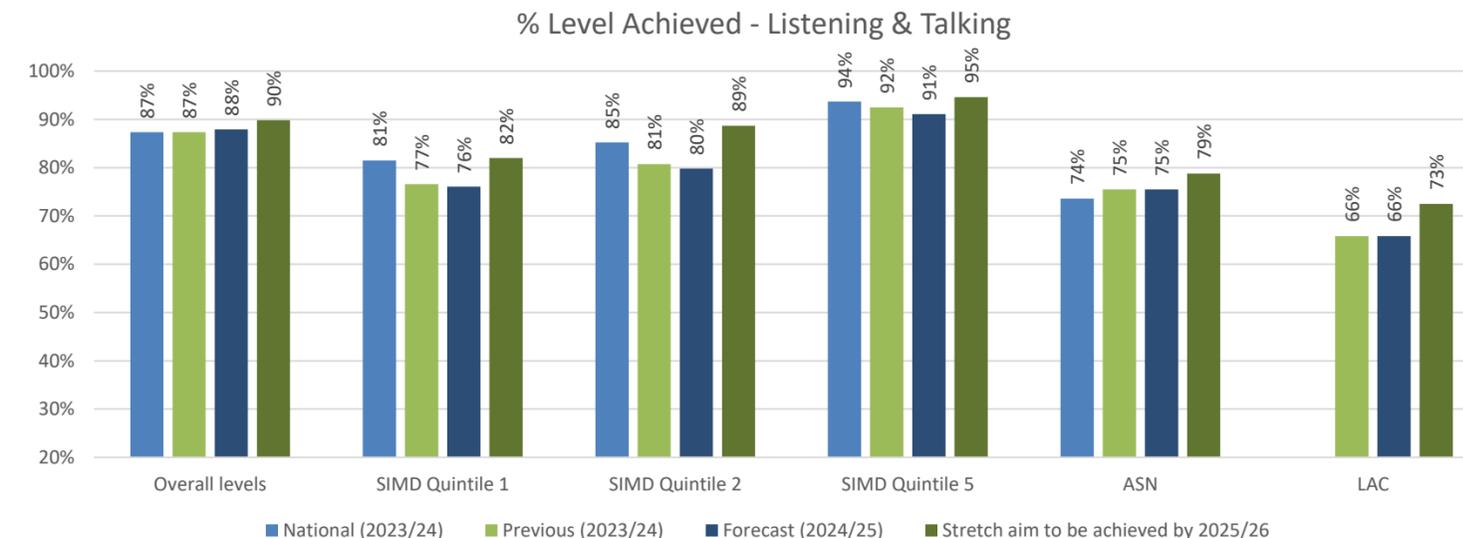
Attainment across P4 and P7 remains stable, suggesting that the dip is isolated to the early stages and may be attributed to ongoing challenges in oral language development, including increased numbers of learners with English as an additional language and speech and language delays.

The poverty-related attainment gap (Q1–Q5) is forecast at -15.9 percentage points, a negligible improvement from -16pp last year but still above the national gap of -12.2pp. Performance for SIMD Quintile 1 is forecast at 76%, below the 2025/26 stretch aim of 82%, while Quintile 5 learners are forecast to achieve 91%. There is a need to focus on learners in Quintile 1 however the small numbers in this group mean any fluctuations in attainment can be significant. Plans are in place and attainment for this group will be focussed on during data discussions.

Attainment for learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) remains steady at 75%, and Looked After Children (LAC) are forecast at 66%, consistent with the previous year.

In 2025/26, improvement actions will focus on:

- Supporting P1 learners through enhanced oral language and vocabulary development
- Targeted intervention in P2, following the identified need from previous years
- Continued and wider use of TalkBoost and Early TalkBoost in Nursery to P3 settings

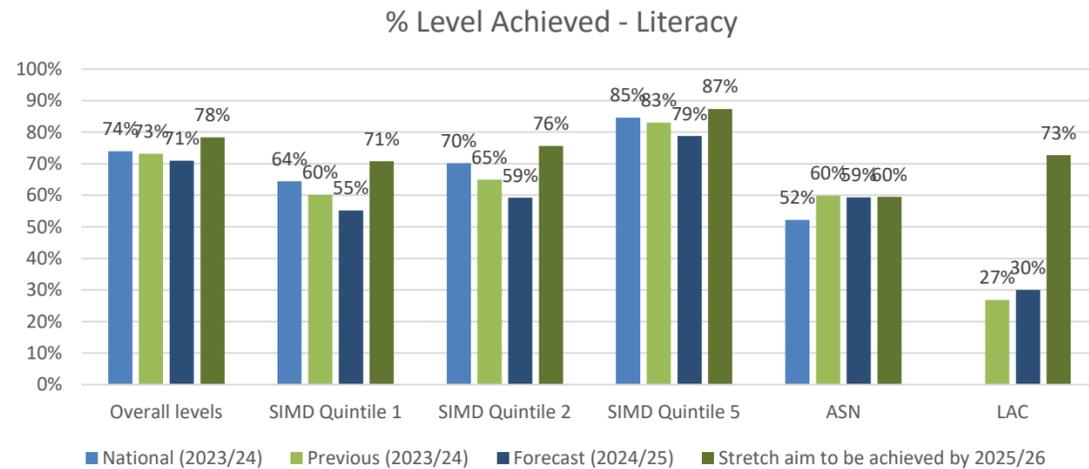


ACEL P1, P4, P7 Listening & Talking Combined

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	87%	81%	85%	94%	-12.2pp	74%	
Previous (2023/24)	87%	77%	81%	92%	-16pp	75%	66%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(88% - 89%)	(79% - 80%)	(83% - 85%)	(92% - 93%)	(-14pp to -14pp)	(76% - 77%)	(66% - 67%)
Forecast (2024/25)	88%	76%	80%	91%	-15.9pp	75%	66%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(88% - 90%)	(81% - 82%)	(86% - 89%)	(92% - 94%)	(-12pp to -14pp)	(76% - 78%)	(66% - 67%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(0% - 1%)	(2% - 2%)	(3% - 4%)	(0% - 1%)		(0% - 1%)	(0% - 0%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	90%	82%	89%	95%	-13pp	79%	73%

ACEL Literacy Combined

Stretch Aim – 78% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2025/26.



ACEL P1, P4, P7 Literacy Combined

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	74%	64%	70%	85%	-20.2pp	52%	
Previous (2023/24)	73%	60%	65%	83%	-23pp	60%	27%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(74% - 75%)	(63% - 65%)	(68% - 70%)	(84% - 85%)	(-20pp to -21pp)	(61% - 62%)	(59% - 63%)
Forecast (2024/25)	71%	55%	59%	79%	-23.7pp	59%	30%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(75% - 77%)	(66% - 69%)	(71% - 74%)	(84% - 86%)	(-18pp to -20pp)	(62% - 64%)	(59% - 73%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(1% - 2%)	(3% - 4%)	(3% - 4%)	(0% - 1%)		(1% - 2%)	(2% - 6%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	78%	71%	76%	87%	-17pp	60%	73%

The forecast for session 2024/25 indicates that 71% of learners across P1, P4 and P7 are expected to achieve the expected level in Literacy. This is broadly in line with national and overall performance at P4 and P7 has remained steady. The forecast highlights a need to refocus improvement activity, particularly in early level literacy to take account of the increase in additional support needs, to support continued progress toward the stretch aim.

The combined Literacy figure is influenced by a dip in P1 (Early Level) attainment across Reading, Writing, and Listening and Talking. This trend reflects the continuing challenges faced by early learners, including increased numbers with English as an additional language and the prevalence of speech and language needs. Building on the strong foundation at upper stages, the coming session provides an opportunity to strengthen support for early learners, ensuring they are equipped with the skills needed to thrive in Literacy.

The forecast for SIMD Quintile 1 learners is 55%, compared to 79% for Quintile 5, resulting in a Q1–Q5 gap of -23.7 percentage points. Although this is slightly wider than last year’s figure, targeted interventions and moderation support in schools serving higher proportions of learners in Quintiles 1 and 2 will continue to promote greater equity.

Learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) are forecast to achieve 59%, reflecting a small shift from the previous year. Looked After Children (LAC) are projected to improve from 27% to 30%, showing promising progress in this group. Continued partnership working and refined tracking will support further gains across all measures for care-experienced learners.

In 2025/26, key actions will include:

- 🏠 Focused early intervention at P1, with renewed emphasis on early language, vocabulary, and writing readiness
- 🏠 Expansion of the successful P4 writing improvement programme, supported by partnership work with CYPIC
- 🏠 Moderation and assessment support through the QAMSO team, prioritising schools in lower SIMD quintiles
- 🏠 Reintroduction and wider use of TalkBoost and Early TalkBoost from Nursery to P3, to support speech, language, and communication development

Trajectory for 2025/26 – Between 75% and 77% of learners expected to achieve predicted levels.

ACEL Numeracy

Stretch Aim – 84% of learners will achieve predicted levels by 2025/26.

The forecast for session 2024/25 indicates that 79% of learners are expected to achieve the appropriate level in Numeracy, maintaining the strong performance seen in 2023/24. This is broadly in line with national data and this stability reflects continued resilience and progress in the context of increasingly diverse learner needs.

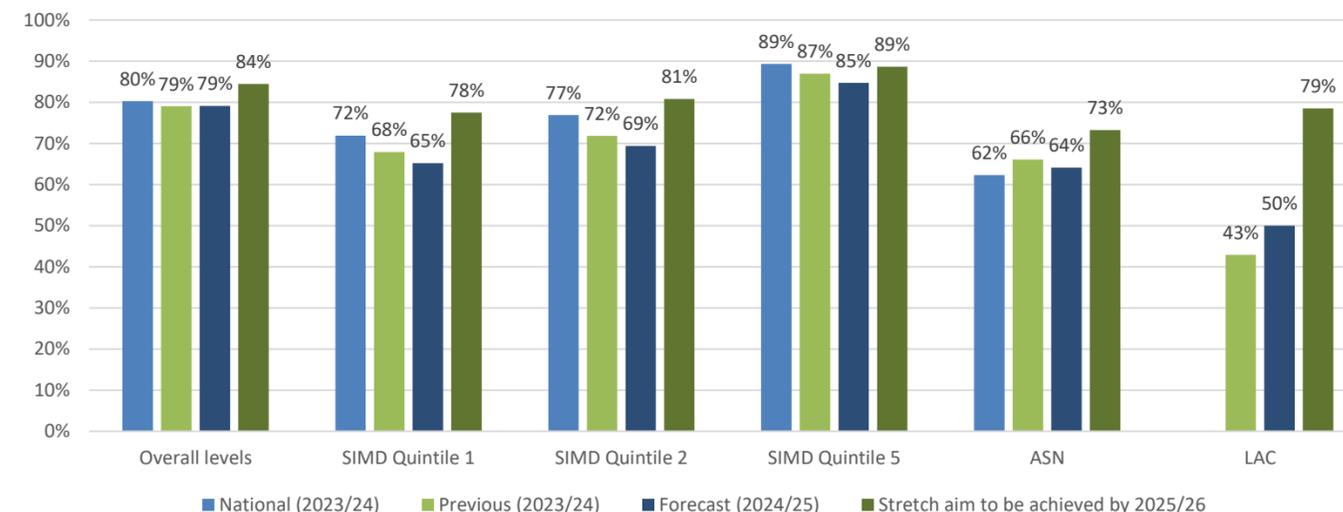
Encouragingly, performance has been sustained across the system, with high levels of attainment in SIMD Quintile 5 (85%) and signs of growing engagement across other groups. The poverty-related attainment gap remains an area of ongoing focus, with the forecast gap between SIMD Quintile 1 and 5 currently at -19.0 percentage points. While this is consistent with the previous year, it reinforces the importance of continued, targeted support to help all learners achieve their potential.

Performance for learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) remains positive, with attainment forecast at 64%, demonstrating continued strength in this group. Notably, outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) are forecast to increase from 43% to 50%, representing a promising improvement and reflecting recent efforts to strengthen tailored support for care-experienced learners.

Looking ahead, the city-wide numeracy approach to strengthening numeracy and the refreshed progression framework will continue into 2025/26 with a renewed focus on transition points and early intervention, particularly in P1 and P2. The numeracy working group will continue to strengthen curriculum pathways and pedagogical alignment across the BGE and senior phase, ensuring learners benefit from coherent and consistent progression in Numeracy.

Trajectory for 2025/26 – Between **81% and 84%** of learners expected to achieve predicted levels.

% Level Achieved - Numeracy



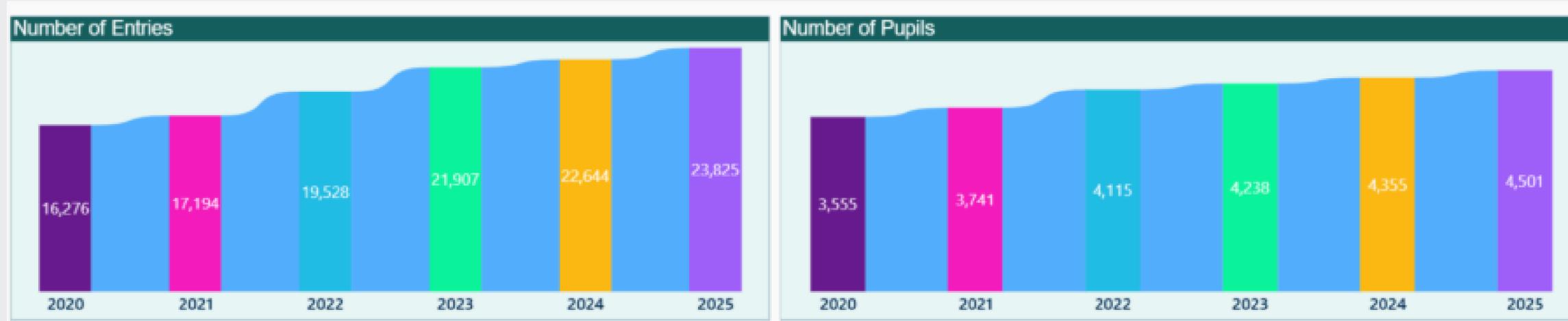
ACEL P1, P4, P7 Numeracy Combined

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	80%	72%	77%	89%	-17.4pp	62%	
Previous (2023/24)	79%	68%	72%	87%	-19pp	66%	43%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(80% - 82%)	(71% - 75%)	(74% - 78%)	(87% - 88%)	(-13pp to -16pp)	(68% - 70%)	(73% - 75%)
Forecast (2024/25)	79%	65%	69%	85%	-19.0pp	64%	50%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(81% - 84%)	(73% - 81%)	(76% - 83%)	(87% - 89%)	(-14pp to -13pp)	(69% - 73%)	(73% - 79%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(1% - 2%)	(2% - 6%)	(2% - 5%)	(0% - 1%)		(1% - 3%)	(2% - 3%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	84%	78%	81%	89%	-11pp	73%	79%

SQA Results for Session 2024-25

The SQA release at this time only represent a partial picture of the success of our young people. Increasing numbers now opt to take wider, less traditional SCQF courses and the full impact of the success of these only really becomes available when INSIGHT data is published in mid-September. To illustrate, last year young people achieved success in over 2,250 additional courses at Levels 4 to 7 (including HNC qualifications and Foundation Apprenticeships). Our forecast is that the broadening of curriculum offer and further development of ABZ Campus will have further extended the number and range of these courses in 2024-25.

There were 4,793 young people in the senior phase of our secondary schools at the point of school census in September 2024. This is 118 more than at the point of census of September 2023 (4,675). As can be seen below, there are almost 1000 more young people now being presented for SQA awards compared to 2020. 23,825 SQA presentations were made in 2025 compared to only 16,276 in 2020.



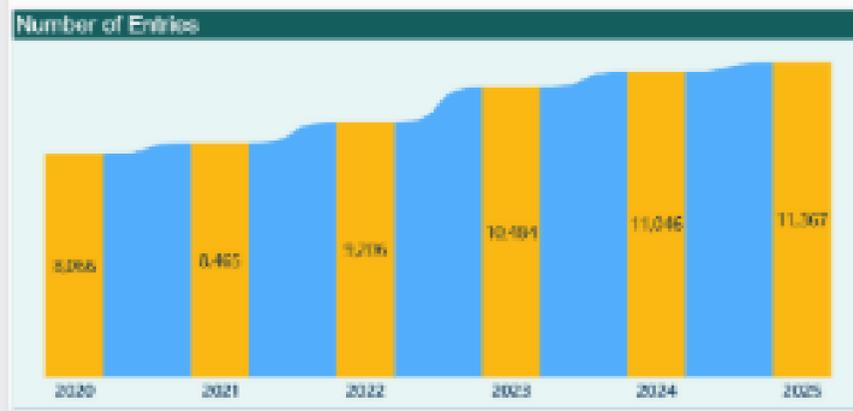
This is the highest number of entries on record. The service has been deliberately working to increase presentations given that previous attainment data suggested that schools were playing overly safe and in doing so, limiting the total achievements of young people (breadth and depth). Breadth and depth is a particular focus of HMIE and can only be fully analysed when Insight is released, although the National 5 data below indicates positive movement.

On average, each young person was presented for 5.29 SQA qualifications. On average, across all levels of SQA qualification, there was a 80% pass rate.

The table to the right demonstrates that, not only has there been a significant increase in roll (18% increase in young people sitting N5, 25% increase in young people sitting Higher and 43% increase in young people sitting Advanced Higher), but this has been matched and exceeded by the percentage increase in entries. Percentage increase in entries has outstripped the increase in pupil numbers, supporting the evidence of increased ambition and expectation.

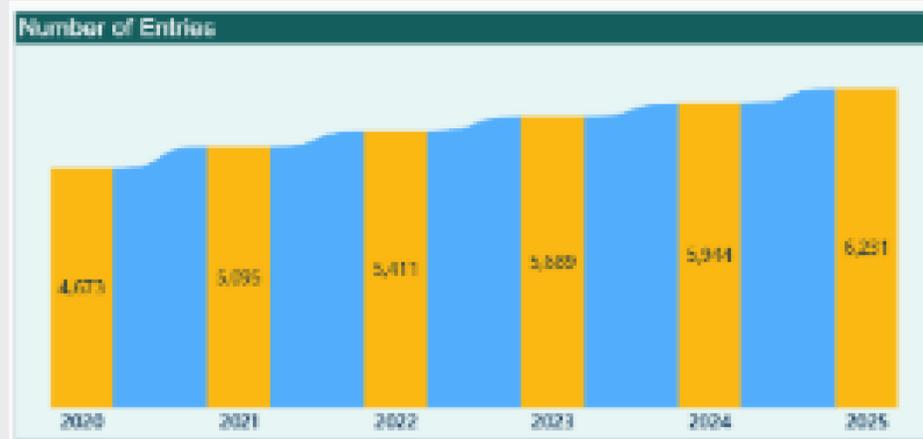
Year	N5					Higher					Adv. Higher							
	Entries	Diff	% Increase Entries	Pupils (PowerBI)	Diff	% Increase Pupils	Entries	Diff	% Increase Entries	Pupils (PowerBI)	Diff	% Increase Pupils	Entries	Diff	% Increase Entries	Pupils (PowerBI)	Diff	% Increase Pupils
2020	8,060			2274			4670			1601			650			346		
2021	8,440	380	5	2441	167	7	5080	410	9	1724	123	8	640	-10	-2	346	0	0
2022	9,170	730	14	2552	111	12	5390	310	15	1798	74	12	740	100	14	429	83	24
2023	10,465	1295	30	2632	80	16	5665	275	21	1834	36	15	815	75	25	439	10	27
2024	11,015	550	37	2714	82	19	5925	260	27	1897	63	18	890	75	37	468	29	35
2025	11,350	335	41	2693	-21	18	6200	275	33	2006	109	25	945	55	45	495	27	43

The number of presentations at **National 5** increased by 321 to **11,367** from 11,046 in 2024. This continues the now established year-on-year improvement trend and is the highest on record for the local authority.

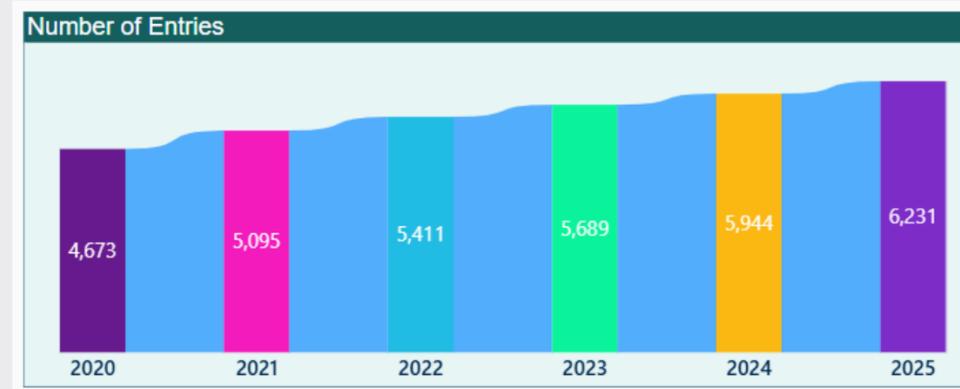


At National 5, the A-C pass rate for 2025 is **75.3%**, an increase of 2.47% from the 72.83% in 2024. The National pass rate has increased by 1.2% from 2024 and currently sits at 78.4%. Aberdeen City results follow the national trend.

Our relative position at National 5 (when comparing our results with the other Local Authorities) has improved for A-C from 26th to 22nd out of 32 local authorities.



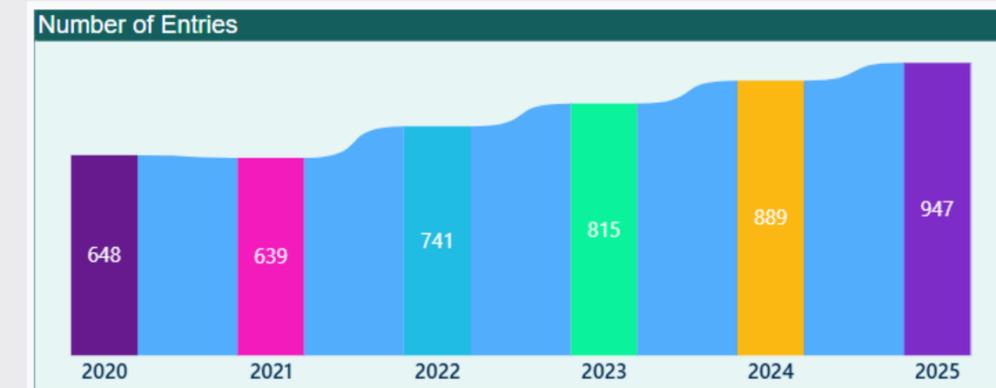
The number of presentations at **Higher** increased by 287 to **6,231** from 5,944 in 2024. This continues the year-on-year trend of being the highest number on record for the local authority.



At Higher, the A-C pass rate for 2025 was **72.9%**. This represents a marginal decrease of 0.69% from the pass rate of 73.59% in 2024 and was anticipated given the dip at National 5 last year. The National pass rate for Higher has increased by 1% from 2024 and currently sits at 75.9%.

Our relative position for A-C at Higher (when comparing our results with the other Local Authorities) has dropped from 14th to 20th out of 32 local authorities but with an increased number of entries.

The number of presentations at **Advanced Higher** increased by 58 to 947 from 889 in 2024. This again is the highest number on record for the local authority.



At Advanced Higher, the A-C pass rate for 2025 was **74.13%**, an increase of 1.8% from 72.33% in 2024. The National pass rate has increased by 1.4% from 2024 and currently sits at 76.7%. Aberdeen City results follows the national trend.

Our relative position at Advanced Higher for A-C (when comparing our results of the other Local Authorities) is now sitting at 13th out of 32, an increase from 16th in 2024, and one of a minority of authorities with an increase in Advanced Higher presentations.

At National 5, **37.48%** of presentations achieved an A grade in 2025, an increase from 35.58% in 2024. At Higher **29.90%** of presentations achieved an A grade in 2025, a slight decrease from 31.56% in 2024. At Advanced Higher, **28.09%** of presentations achieved an A grade, a decrease from 29.47% in 2024.

As outlined, schools presented a record number of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher presentations in 2025. Although there is a corresponding increase in school roll, there is evidence of a balance of steady increase in the number of presentations for SQA awards per pupil demonstrating increasing ambition for young people.

At National 5 in S4, the per pupil presentation increased to **5.65** in 2025 from 5.5 in 2024, an increase of 0.15. At Higher in S5, the per pupil presentation decreased to **3.63** in 2025 from 3.68 in 2024. At Advanced Higher in S6, the per pupil presentation increased to **0.93** in 2025 from 0.89 in 2024, an increase of 0.04.

These results indicate that the strategies put in place around presentation policies and our on-going development of ABZ Campus are now realising improvement.

Highlights

Our National 5 results placed our percentage A passes at 13th, and our A-C passes at 22nd out of 32 local authorities.

- 🏠 1,357 young people in S4 took National 5 English with 41.2% achieving an A pass and 86.5% achieving A-C.
- 🏠 76 young people in S4 took National 5 Accounting with 56.6% achieving an A pass and 88.2% achieving A-C.
- 🏠 853 young people in S4 took National 5 Maths with 52.5% achieving an A pass and 76.7% achieving A-C.
- 🏠 157 young people took National 5 French with 65.6% achieving an A pass and 92.4% achieving A-C.
- 🏠 161 young people took National 5 Drama with 54.7% achieving an A pass and 95% achieving A-C.

Higher

Our Higher results placed our percentage A passes at 9th, and our A-C passes at 20th out of 32 local authorities.

- 🏠 66 young people were presented for Higher French with 62.1% achieving an A pass and 91% achieving A-C.
- 🏠 321 young people were presented for Higher History with 37.7% achieving an A pass and 81.9% achieving A-C.
- 🏠 118 young people were presented for Higher Music with 44.1% achieving an A pass and 83.9% achieving A-C.
- 🏠 53 young people were presented for Higher Spanish with 67.9% achieving an A pass and 90.6% achieving A-C.

Advanced Higher

Our Advanced Higher results placed our percentage A passes at 8th, and our A-C passes 13th out of 32 local authorities.

🏠 Selected Advanced Higher Highlights by subject

- 🏠 35 young people were presented for Art & Design (Expressive) at Advanced Higher, with 45.7% achieving an A pass and 94.3% achieving A-C.
- 🏠 38 young people were presented for History at Advanced Higher with 31.6% achieving an A pass and 84.2% achieving A-C.
- 🏠 41 young people were presented for Modern Studies at Advanced Higher with 36.6% achieving an A pass and 87.8% achieving A-C.

A-C Attainment			
Year	National 5	Higher	Advanced Higher
2025	75.77% from 11,367 entries (75.3% without Skills for Work)	72.9% from 6,231 entries	74.13% from 947 entries
2024	73.29% from 11,046 entries (72.83% without Skills for Work)	73.59% from 5,944 entries	72.33% from 887 entries
2018	77.96% from 7,922 entries	78.14% from 4,849 entries	81.34% from 659 entries

A Attainment (%)			
Year	National 5	Higher	Advanced Higher
2025	37.5%	30%	28.10%
2024	35.58%	31.56%	29.47%

SCQF Level 5

Stretch Aim – 90.5% of all young people will attain 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 5 by 2026.

As a key benchmark of success, 1 or more at SCQF Level 5 continues to be an important indicator of attainment in our schools for leavers. The 2024/25 forecast shows that 88.5% of young people are expected to achieve this measure, placing us just below the lower end of our trajectory range for this year (88.8% – 89.3%). While this is a small step away from the target, it represents continued improvement on previous years.

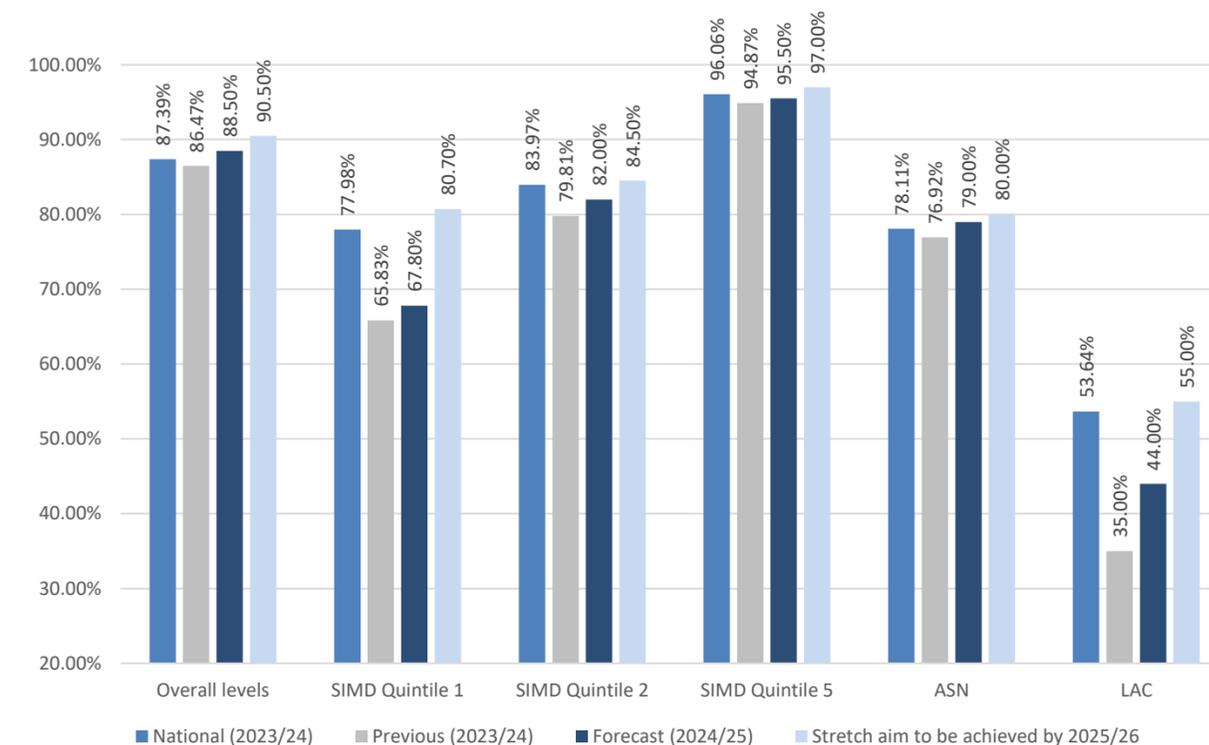
The poverty-related attainment gap between SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) and Quintile 5 (least deprived) is forecast at 27.70 percentage points in 2024/25. Although this would be above the current year’s target range, it highlights where we must focus our efforts most strongly. Targeted interventions for learners in SIMD Quintile 1 (forecast 67.80%) are already being strengthened, building on strategies that have shown positive impact in Quintile 2 (82.00%), where attainment is forecast to be within 2 percentage points of the national figure (83.97%). Performance in SIMD Quintile 5 remains consistently high (95.50%), forecast to be in line with national levels (96.06%) and within our target range.

For learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN), attainment is forecast at 79.00%, remaining close to national performance (78.11%) and showing a steady trend that positions us to achieve the 80% stretch aim by 2026. Outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) are forecast to have improved notably to 44.00%, up from 35.00% last year. While still below the national figure of 53.64% and our target range, this year’s improvement would reflect the positive impact of enhanced support and targeted work with this small but important cohort.

Overall, the data continues to show strong performance at a city-wide level, with consistent gains in key areas and clear evidence of improvement for some of our most vulnerable learners. Focused and sustained action in SIMD Quintile 1, ASN, and LAC groups will help secure further progress and support us in achieving our ambitious 2026 stretch aims.

Target for 2025/26 – Between 88.5% and 89.70% of young people will attain 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 5 by the end of 2025/26.

Attaining one or more passes at SCQF Level 5



Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 5 based on Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	87.39%	77.98%	83.97%	96.06%	18.07%	78.11%	53.64%
Previous (2023/24)	86.47%	65.83%	79.81%	94.87%	29.04%	76.92%	35.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(88.80% - 89.30%)	(76.78% - 78.28%)	(81.38% - 82.63%)	(95.39% - 96.59%)	(18.61p p to 18.31pp)	(80.48% - 80.48%)	(56.52% - 56.52%)
Forecast (2024/25)	88.50%	67.80%	82.00%	95.50%	27.70pp	79.00%	44.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(88.50% - 89.70%)	(68.30% - 70.22%)	(83.00% - 83.87%)	(95.50% - 95.91%)	(26.70p p to 26.40pp)	(79.00% - 80.00%)	(44.00% - 49.00%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(0.0pp - 1.20pp)	(0.5pp - 2.42pp)	(1.0pp - 1.87pp)	(0.0pp - 0.41pp)		(0.0pp - 1.00pp)	(0.0pp - 5.00pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	90.50%	80.70%	84.50%	97.00%	16.30pp	80.00%	55.00%

SCQF Level 6

Stretch Aim – 74% of all young people will attain 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6 by 2026.

1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6 remains a key attainment indicator, reflecting both academic achievement and the breadth of course offer across our secondary schools. The 2024/25 forecast indicates that 67.5% of young people are expected to achieve this measure, placing us within the target range for the year (66.42% – 70.42%) and showing continued progress from the previous year’s result of 64.43%.

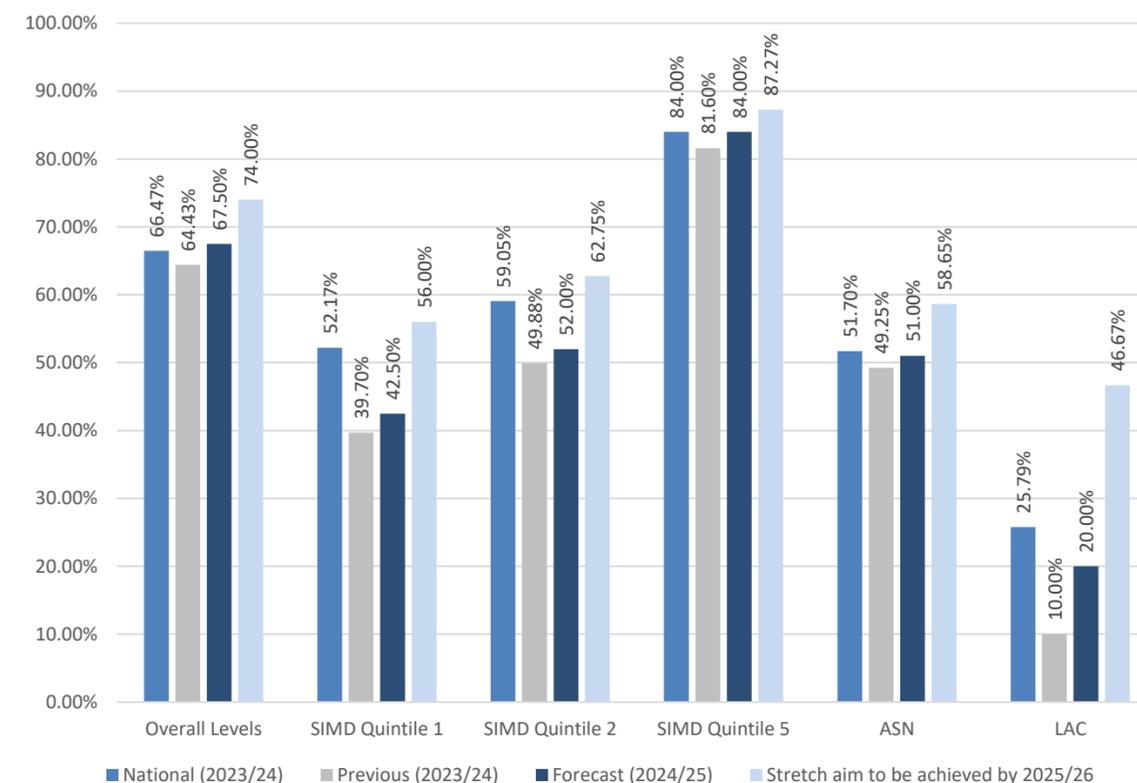
The poverty-related attainment gap between SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) and Quintile 5 (least deprived) is forecast at 41.50 percentage points in 2024/25, a slight improvement on last year’s 41.90pp. SIMD Quintile 1 attainment (42.50%) is forecast to increase from 39.70% in 2023/24 and be within the target range (41.50% – 47.50%), with further gains expected in 2025/26. SIMD Quintile 2 attainment (52.00%) is also forecast for improvement from 49.88% and sits within target range, while SIMD Quintile 5 performance remains strong at a forecast of 84.00%, in line with national levels.

Attainment for learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) is forecast at 51.00%, representing a small rise from last year and maintaining performance above the lower end of the target range. Our forecast shows improvement in outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) 20.00%, from last year’s 10.00%. While still below the national average, this improvement is a positive indication of the impact of targeted interventions and support for this group.

The continued expansion of the curriculum offer across schools, combined with the opportunities provided through ABZ Campus, is helping to increase attainment and provide broader learning pathways for young people. The focus for 2025/26 will be on building further momentum, particularly for SIMD Quintile 1 and 2 learners, maintaining performance in the other Quintiles, and ensuring sustained gains for ASN and LAC learners.

Target for 2025/26 – Between 68.5% and 72.5% of young people will attain 1 or more pass at SCQF Level 6 by the end of 25/26.

Attaining one or more passes at SCQF Level 6



Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 6 based on the Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations

	Overall Levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1-Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	66.47%	52.17%	59.05%	84.00%	31.83pp	51.70%	25.79%
Previous (2023/24)	64.43%	39.70%	49.88%	81.60%	41.90pp	49.25%	10.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(66.42% - 70.42%)	(41.50% - 47.50%)	(50.15% - 56.15%)	(84.11% - 85.11%)	(42.61pp to 37.61pp)	(50.92% - 54.92%)	(15.04% - 30.04%)
Forecast (2024/25)	67.50%	42.50%	52.00%	84.00%	41.50pp	51.00%	20.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(68.50% - 72.50%)	(46.50% - 52.50%)	(55.00% - 61.00%)	(85.00% - 86.00%)	(38.50pp to 33.50pp)	(52.00% - 56.00%)	(22.00% - 37.00%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(1.0pp - 3.58pp)	(4.0pp - 8.50pp)	(3.0pp - 6.60pp)	(1.0pp - 2.16pp)		(1.0pp - 3.73pp)	(2.0pp - 16.63pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	74.00%	56.00%	62.75%	87.27%	31.27pp	58.65%	46.67%

SCQF Level 3 in Literacy & numeracy

Stretch Aim – 95.14% of all young people will attain a minimum of SCQF Level 3 in literacy and numeracy by 2026.

Positive attainment in Literacy and Numeracy remains a key benchmark of success in the Senior Phase, reflecting both the breadth of the curriculum and the support provided to ensure that all learners achieve a strong foundation for life beyond school. The 2024/25 forecast of 92.00% for all leavers is above the current year’s target range (87.45% – 90.95%) and would represent an improvement from last year’s 90.67%.

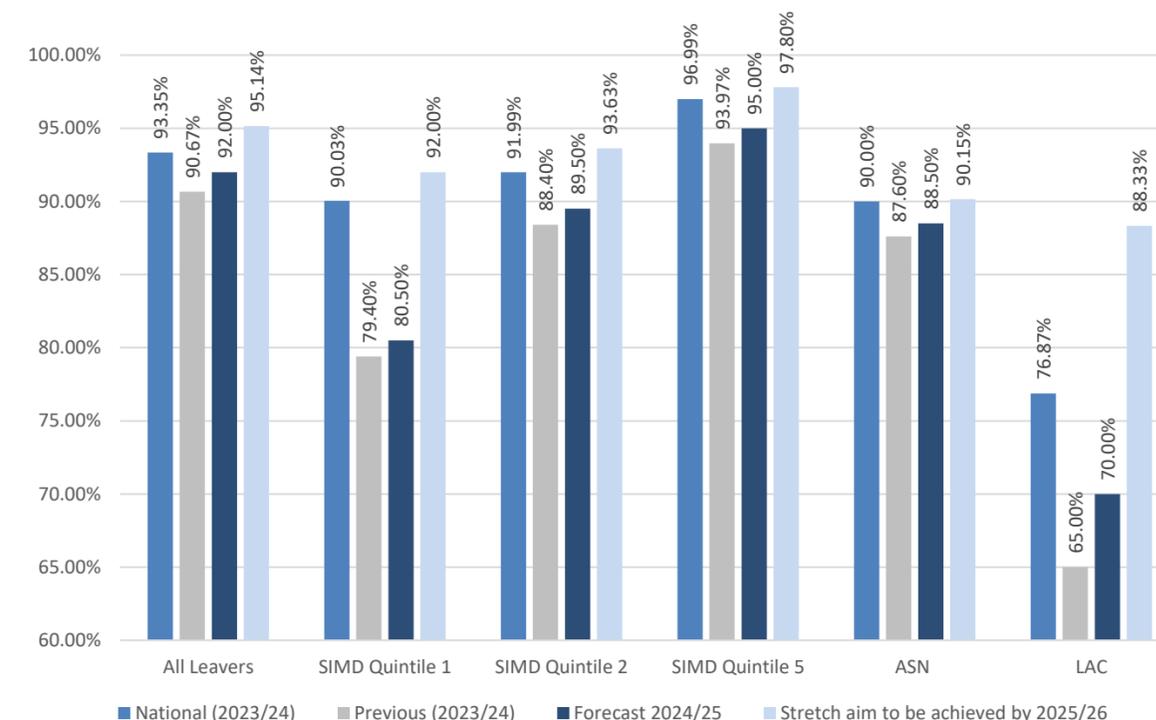
For SIMD Quintile 1 learners, attainment is forecast at 80.50%, up from 79.40% last year and within the target range. Continued progress in this area will be a key driver in reducing the poverty-related attainment gap, which is forecast at 14.50 percentage points this year. While the gap remains above the long-term target, the steady gains being made in both Quintile 1 and Quintile 2 (forecast 89.50%) indicate that focused support is having a positive impact. SIMD Quintile 5 attainment is forecast to remain high at 95.00%, consistent with national performance.

Attainment for learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN) is forecast at 88.50%, an improvement on last year and already at the lower end of the 2025/26 target range. For Looked After Children (LAC), performance is forecast to have risen to 70.00%, which would represent a notable improvement from 65.00% in 2023/24 and above the lower end of the target range. These gains reflect the commitment to targeted interventions and inclusive practice across schools.

The current trajectory suggests that, with continued emphasis on equity, high-quality teaching, and targeted support for our most disadvantaged learners, Aberdeen City can sustain this momentum, working towards our ambitious stretch aim by 2026.

Target for 2025/26 – Between 94% and 95.14% of young people will attain a minimum of SCQF Level 3 in literacy and numeracy by the end of school session 25/26.

Proportion of school leavers attaining a minimum of SCQF level 3 in literacy and numeracy



Proportion of school leavers attaining a minimum of SCQF Level 3 in Literacy and Numeracy

	All Leavers	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	93.35%	90.03%	91.99%	96.99%	6.96pp	90.00%	76.87%
Previous (2023/24)	90.67%	79.40%	88.40%	93.97%	14.57pp	87.60%	65.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(87.45% - 90.95%)	(77.56% - 84.56%)	(79.48% - 81.48%)	(89.83% - 90.05%)	(-12.27pp to - 5.49pp)	(85.23% - 85.73%)	(73.91% - 76.91%)
Forecast 2024/25	92.00%	80.50%	89.50%	95.00%	-14.50pp	88.50%	70.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(94.00% - 95.14%)	(81.50% - 87.94%)	(90.50% - 93.50%)	(95.00% - 97.80%)	(-13.50pp to - 6.72pp)	(88.50% - 90.15%)	(70.00% - 80.00%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(2.0pp - 3.14pp)	(1.0pp - 7.44pp)	(1.0pp - 4.00pp)	(0.0pp - 2.80pp)		(0.0pp - 1.65pp)	(0.0pp - 10.00pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	95.14%	92.00%	93.63%	97.80%	5.80pp	90.15%	88.33%

Proportion of leavers entering Positive Destinations

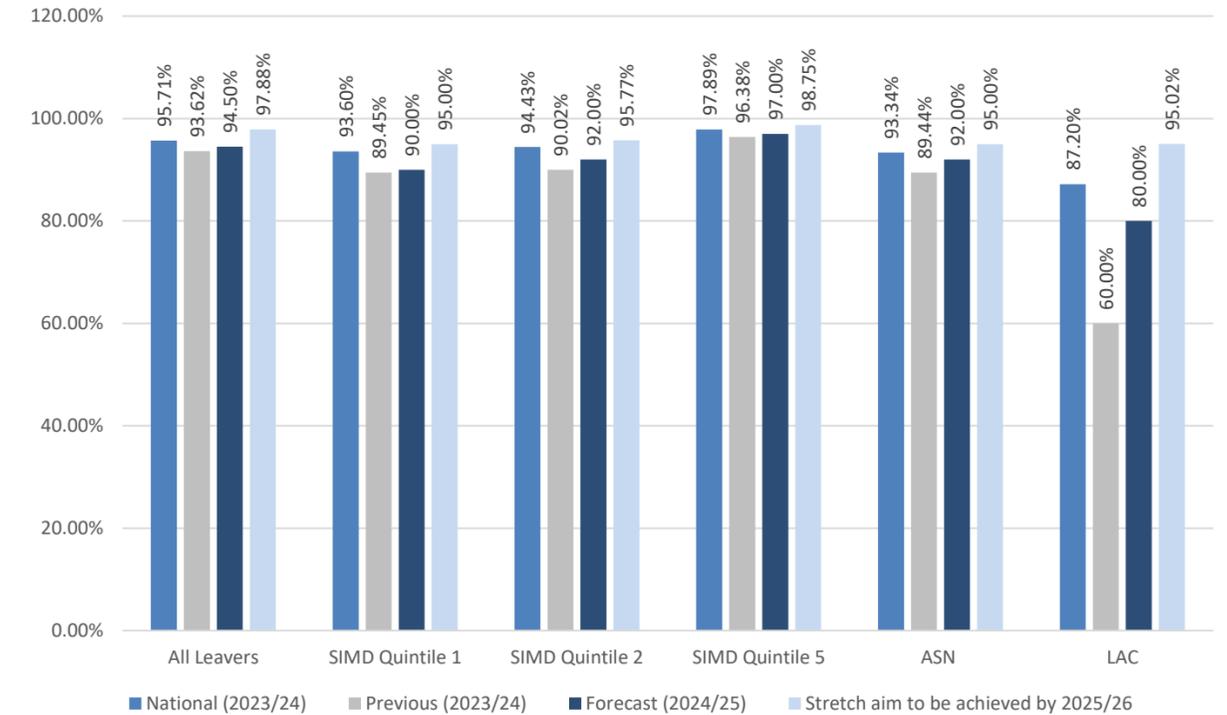
Stretch Aim – 97.88% of young people will be achieving a positive destination by 2026.

This is an important yet challenging stretch aim as we look to support all of our young people into a positive and sustained destination on leaving school. Our forecast for 2024/25 is predicting a small increase in the positive destination figures (94.50% from 93.62%), and modest gains across the Quintiles, and for young people with ASN.

We are forecasting a ‘bounce back’ for our LAC cohort having seen a dip in 2023/24, acknowledging that given this cohort is usually approximately twenty young people, fluctuation is to be expected. With strong partnership work with colleagues in Skills Development Scotland and work underway to support schools to improve pathway planning, there is growing confidence that further progress can be made by the end of the stretch aim period of 2026.

Target for 2025/26 – Between 94.83% and 97.88% of young people will enter an initial positive destination by the end of school session 25/26.

Proportion of school leavers leaving to a positive destination



Proportion of school leavers leaving to a Positive Destination

	All Leavers	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2023/24)	95.71%	93.60%	94.43%	97.89%	4.29pp	93.34%	87.20%
Previous (2023/24)	93.62%	89.45%	90.02%	96.38%	6.93pp	89.44%	60.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(94.83% - 96.17%)	(92.00% - 94.00%)	(92.50% - 94.52%)	(97.13% - 97.47%)	(5.13pp to 3.47pp)	(92.08% - 92.34%)	(81.83% - 86.00%)
Forecast (2023/24)	94.50%	90.00%	92.00%	97.00%	7.00pp	92.00%	80.00%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(94.83% - 97.88%)	(92.00% - 95.00%)	(92.50% - 95.77%)	(97.13% - 98.75%)	(5.13pp to 3.47pp)	(92.08% - 95.00%)	(81.83% - 95.02%)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(0.3pp - 3.38pp)	(2.0pp - 5.00pp)	(0.5pp - 3.77pp)	(0.1pp - 1.75pp)		(0.1pp - 3.00pp)	(1.8pp - 15.02pp)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	97.88%	95.00%	95.77%	98.75%	3.75%	95.00%	95.02%

Participation

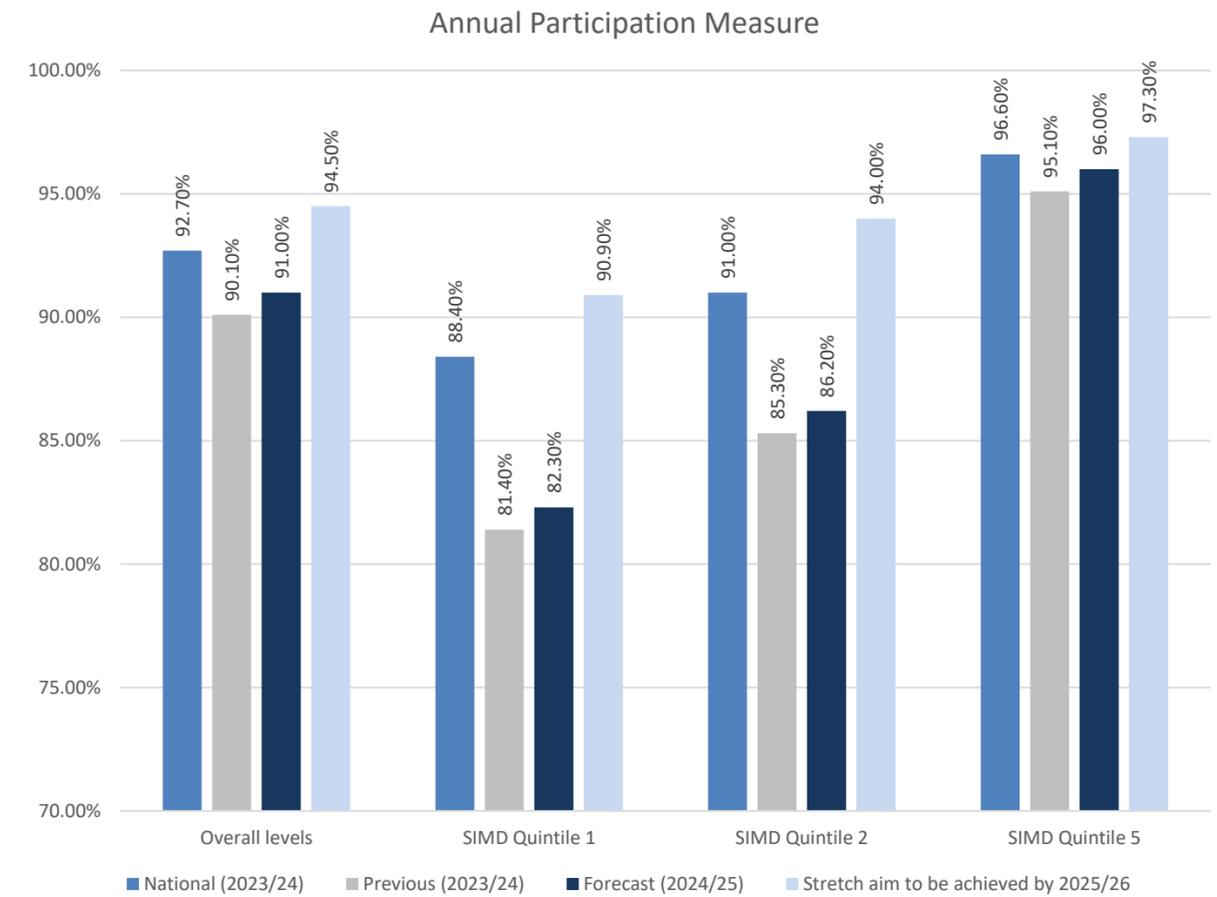
Stretch Aim – 94.5% of all young people will be participating in education, employment, or training by 2026.

This measure takes a slightly different perspective to the Positive Destination figure, and measures participation across the entirety of a year rather than at a single point in time (as is the case with Positive Destination data). Data identifies that 2023/24 saw a dip to 90.1 from 90.2 in 2022/23 with a forecast of an improvement in 2024/25 to 91.0%.

In session 25/26 the management of work experience will move over to Education and Lifelong Learning and this will allow us to increase the number of organisations who offer work experience to young people; work with partners to create an inclusive database for monitoring placements; and be more targeted in our offers to young people by creating an offer aligned to ABZ Campus. There is confidence that addressing improvements in the way work experience is managed and delivered will support improvements in the positive destination figure over time.

Continued work in partnership with Skills Development Scotland and in pathway planning will further spread good practice across schools and support a move towards the stretch aim by the end of the measuring period.

Target for 2025/26 – Between 91.38% - 94.5% of young people will be participating in education, employment, or training by the end of school session 25/26.



Percentage participation of 16-19 olds participating in education, employment or training based on the Annual Participation Measure produced by Skills Development Scotland by 2026

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5
National (2023/24)	92.70%	88.40%	91.00%	96.60%	8.20%
Previous (2023/24)	90.10%	81.40%	85.30%	95.10%	13.70%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2024/25	(91.38% - 91.77%)	(83.28% - 85.00%)	(87.37% - 90.20%)	(96.00% - 96.00%)	(12.72pp to 11.00pp)
Forecast (2024/25)	91.00%	82.30%	86.20%	96.00%	13.70%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(91.38% - 94.50%)	(83.28% - 90.90%)	(87.37% - 94.00%)	(96.00% - 97.30%)	(11.73pp to 3.70pp)
Improvement (percentage point) for 25/26	(0.4pp - 3.50pp)	(1.0pp - 8.60pp)	(1.2pp - 7.80pp)	(0.0pp - 1.30pp)	
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	94.50%	90.90%	94.00%	97.30%	6.40%

Attendance

Stretch Aim – 95% of all children and young people will attend school regularly by 2026

Schools across Aberdeen City have continued to prioritise attendance as a key area. Unvalidated data for session 2024/25 indicates a further positive shift, with overall attendance reaching 92%, moving us firmly along the trajectory towards our stretch aim of 95% by 2026.

This improvement reflects the sustained commitment of school teams to remove barriers to attendance. Targeted support has been particularly effective in our most deprived communities, with SIMD Quintile 1 attendance rising from 87% in 2023/24 to 89% in 2024/25. Attendance for children in SIMD Quintile 2 also increased by 1% to 90%. These gains are helping to maintain the poverty-related attendance gap at -6 percentage points, demonstrating consistent progress since 2022/23.

In our most affluent communities (SIMD Quintile 5), attendance rose to 94%, and this high performance provides a strong benchmark for equity across the system. Pupils with ASN maintained strong levels of attendance at 90%, matching the city-wide average, while we recognise a need to refocus support for care-experienced young people, with LAC attendance sitting at 85% — a small decline on last year.

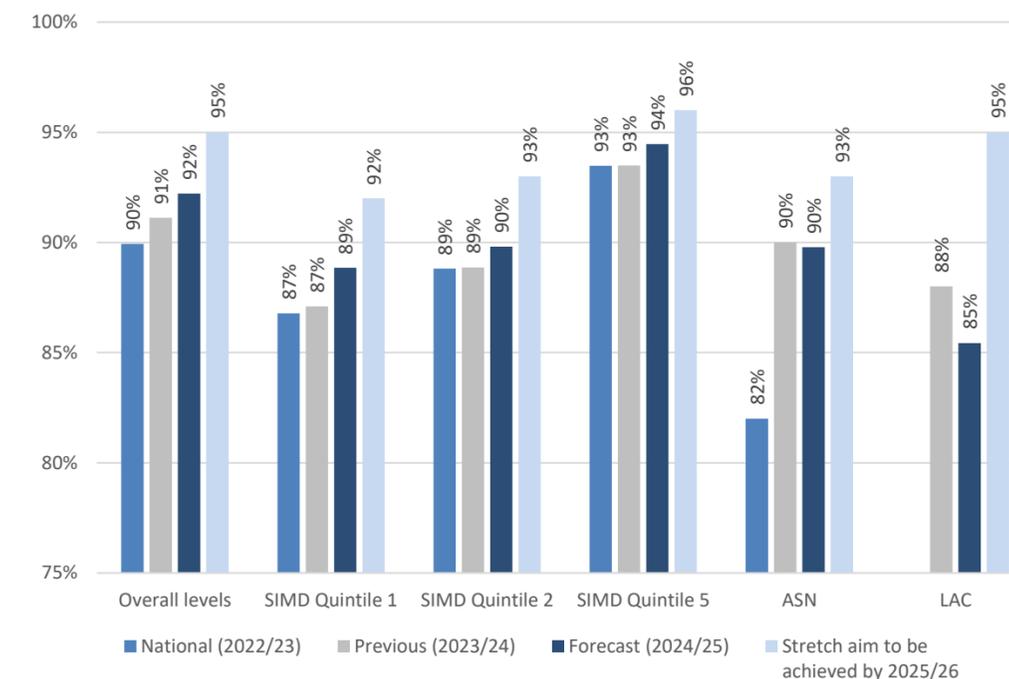
Throughout 2024/25, schools have embedded and expanded upon strategies set out in the revised Guidance on Managing and Promoting Pupil Attendance, aligned with national policy updates. Our information for parents has been updated to make it clear to parents the negative impact of non-attendance on their child’s learning. This leaflet has been shared each term with parents to emphasise the importance of attendance.

Senior officers continue to monitor absence data closely, supporting schools to analyse trends, identify root causes, and take targeted action. This intelligence-led approach and community-based collaboration, is ensuring that improvement activity remains tailored and effective.

Aberdeen City continues to perform strongly in comparison with other Scottish cities, and this year’s data confirms that we remain on track to achieve our stretch aim.

Target for 2025/26 – Achieve between 90% and 95% attendance overall, with continued narrowing of the SIMD Q1–Q5 gap and targeted support to improve outcomes for care-experienced learners.

%Attendance All Schools



Attendance in Schools

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	90%	87%	89%	93%	-7pp	82%	
Previous (2023/24)	91%	87%	89%	93%	-6pp	90%	88%
Trajectory (2024/25)	(92% - 93%)	(89% - 91%)	(90% - 91%)	(94% - 96%)	(-5pp to -5pp)	(89% - 90%)	(90% - 91%)
Forecast (2024/25)	92%	89%	90%	94%	-6pp	90%	85%
Trajectory to be achieved over 2025/26	(90% - 95%)	(89% - 92%)	(90% - 93%)	(96% - 96%)	(-7pp to -4pp)	(89% - 93%)	(88% - 95%)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	95%	92%	93%	96%	-4pp	93%	95%

Exclusion

Stretch Aim – 95% of all children and young people will attend school regularly by 2026.

Exclusion rates continue on a downward trend, with an overall forecast of 15.01 exclusions per 1000 pupils for 2024/25. This reflects a further reduction from 15.7 in the previous year (2023/24), and places us below the national level recorded in 2022/23 (16.6). The trajectory range of 12.1 to 14.1 for this year provides a positive benchmark for continued improvement.

Encouraging progress has been made in reducing exclusions among pupils in SIMD Quintiles 1 and 2. Forecast values of 26.7 and 27.4 show improvement when compared to previous levels of 33.4 and 29.9 respectively. These reductions indicate that targeted interventions are beginning to take effect, although further progress is required to move within our target ranges.

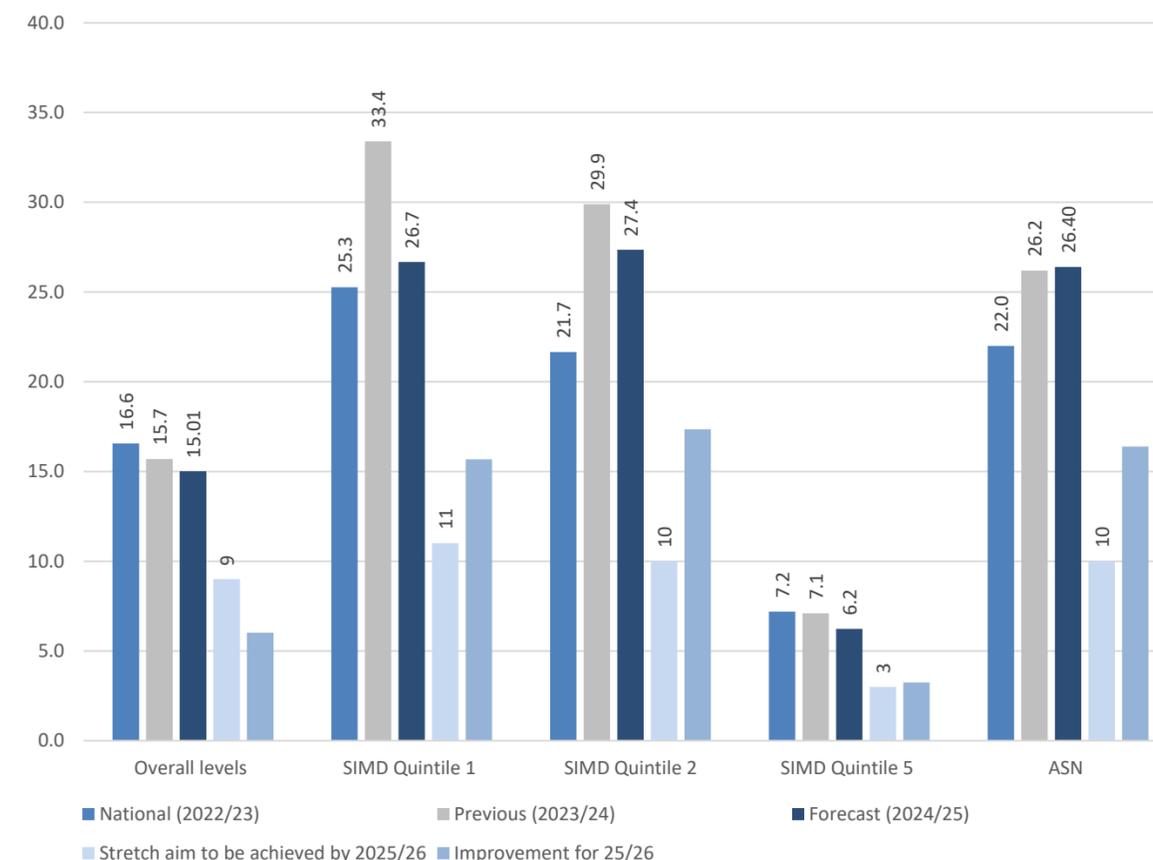
Exclusion levels for pupils in SIMD Quintile 5 have also decreased slightly, from 7.1 to 6.2, aligning more closely with national levels and our planned trajectory. As a result, the overall Q1–Q5 gap has narrowed from 26.3 to 20.4.

For pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN), exclusions are forecast to remain steady at 26.4, similar to last year’s figure. The trajectory range of 20 to 10 provides a clear focus for future efforts.

Exclusions for Looked After Children (LAC) remain high at 225 per 1000, showing minimal change from 226.8 the previous year. Although this is consistent with forecast levels, substantial progress will be needed to approach the stretch aim of 30 by 2025/26.

Target for 2025/26 – Maintain downward pressure on exclusion rates across all measures.

Exclusions per 1000 (lower is better)



Exclusions Per 1000

	Overall levels	SIMD Quintile 1	SIMD Quintile 2	SIMD Quintile 5	GAP Q1 - Q5	ASN	LAC
National (2022/23)	16.6	25.3	21.7	7.2	-18.1	22.0	78.0
Previous (2023/24)	15.7	33.4	29.9	7.1	26.3	26.2	226.8
Trajectory (2024/25)	(14.1 - 12.1)	(20.7 - 25.4)	(20.0 - 24.0)	(6.3 - 5.6)		(24.9 - 23.6)	(77.7 - 59.4)
Forecast (2024/25)	15.01	26.7	27.4	6.2	20.4	26.40	225
Trajectory (2025/26)	(14.1 - 9)	(20.7 - 11)	(20.0 - 10)	(6.2 - 3)		(20 - 10)	(77.7 - 59.4)
Stretch aim to be achieved by 2025/26	9	11	10	3	8	10	30
Improvement for 25/26	6.0	15.7	17.4	3.2		16.4	195.0

QI: Leadership of Change

Stretch Aim - 85% of all schools will self-evaluate QI1.3 Leadership of Change at good or better by 2026.

We continue to see changes in our leadership teams across the city with 17% of our Head Teachers either new to the role of Head Teacher or new to the school this session. Quality Indicator 1.3 Leadership of Change has increased slightly by 2%) with 56% of evaluations rated Good or above in 24/25. This is a positive increase and we will look to increase further for session 25/26 as new head teachers and leadership teams increase in confidence.

Work with our middle leadership group will be developed further during session 25/26 with an increased involvement from associate assessors supporting a greater understanding of this core QI and of the national standard. This work will realise an increase in evaluations in this area in session 25/26.

Target for 2025/26 – We are unlikely to achieve our stretch aim, however we predict a continued increase in the number of schools self evaluating this indicator as good or above in session 25/26.

QI: Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Stretch Aim - 80% of our schools will self-evaluate QI2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment at good or better by 2026.

The quality of learning, teaching and assessment continues to be an area of focus for all schools. Revised quality improvement activity and continued targeted professional learning and work with the Northern Alliance on the learning and teaching toolkit has supported improvement in this area and moves us towards our aspirational stretch aim.

Work on the toolkit has helped schools to target areas for professional learning and offer a range of resources both national and local to support schools in delivering consistent messages. Narrowing the focus of professional learning and increasing the opportunities for moderation in schools and across the local authority will support an increase in the number of schools self evaluating as good or better.

Target for 2025/26 – we will continue to see an increase as we move towards our aspirational aim of 80% of schools self evaluating as good or better.

QI: Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion

Stretch Aim - 100% of schools will evaluate QI 3.1 at good or better by 2026.

Although there has historically been a positive trend in self evaluation of 3.1, over the last 4 years there has been a strong focus on changes in leadership in schools and external validation from HMLe has identified that some evaluations were not in line with national standards in one area of the city in particular.

School evaluations align with our quality improvement categories and we are confident that through targeted professional learning and moderation across schools, we will continue to move towards our aspirational stretch aim of 100% of schools self-evaluating good or better by June 2026.

Target for 2025/26 – continue to increase evaluations as we move towards our aspirational aim of 100% of schools self evaluating as good or better in quality indicator 3.1.

Risks to children

A comprehensive review of data has highlighted the risks most likely to impact our children and young people over the coming year. Mitigation strategies to address the risks will be included in this NIF Plan

Individual Level Risks

- Poor behavioural control and emotional regulation
- Mental health issues and prior trauma
- Substance misuse
- Low educational attainment

Mitigation Strategies:

- Early childhood interventions
- Trauma-informed interventions
- On-going provision of counselling
- Clear focus on closing the gap
- Close partnership working to support families in keeping with GIRFEC principles

Community-Level Risks

- High-crime neighbourhoods and unsafe public spaces
- Digital environments and online harm

Mitigation Strategies:

- The commissioning of youth work
- Schools are safe and trauma aware spaces
- Investment in Digital literacy, with a focus on keeping ourselves safe on-line
- Prevent focus

Relationship-Level Risks

- Family conflict, neglect, and domestic violence
- Poor parental supervision/knowledge
- Peer pressure and gang affiliation

Mitigation Strategies:

- Parenting programmes
- Commissioning of CLD Services to offer support to families
- Focus on our Corporate Parenting duties
- Review of the curriculum available to our young people
- On-going sharing of information with partners

Societal-Level Risks

- Poverty and inequality
- Inadequate multi-agency data sharing
- Workforce capacity issues

Mitigation Strategies:

- Focus on poverty and inequality
- On-going sharing of information with partners
- Improved service access for those most in need and identified as being particularly vulnerable
- Monitoring of workforce capacity and capability

Logic Model

Situation

The significant increase in pupils over the last three years has put pressure on the system. As a local authority, due to our geographical location we experience challenges when recruiting quality teaching and promoted staff. Teaching staff tend to be younger and inexperienced, often moving away once they have experience.

Inputs

- Improve Leadership of Change in schools
- Improve the quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment 3-18
- Increase curriculum pathways and improve attainment
- Improve the quality of supports for young people
- Close the poverty related attainment gap
- Prevent families from experiencing poverty where possible and provide support in keeping with The Promise

Activities What we do

- Review and deliver middle leadership training
- Provide high quality profession learning
- Developing literacy and numeracy frameworks and resource portals for all stages
- Professional learning for staff in strategies to support additional needs
- Linking with partners to support young people living in poverty
- Head Teacher working parties
- Engaging with National training opportunities

Who we reach

All children and young people Aged 3 – 18

Outcomes

Short

- Interventions will be more targeted at those who face the greatest disadvantage in SIMD 1 and 2
- Central staff and Head Teachers will work together to implement our quality improvement Framework
- QIMs and AA will create professional learning for practitioners and middle leaders

Medium

- Improved attainment for young people in SIMD 1 and 2
- Clear impact of professional learning on practice in the classroom and leadership of our schools
- Families are able to access financial support and benefits when eligible

Long

- All schools meet the national standards in all Quality Indicators and the curriculum offer meets the needs of all learners
- Sustained improved attainment and positive destinations
- Improved outcomes across the determinants of health in our priority neighbourhoods

Assumptions and Influences

- There will continue to be high levels of poverty
- Resources will continue to be constrained

Measures

- Attainment at BGE and senior phase
- Number of families accessing support
- Evaluation of external bodies such as HMIE and Care Inspectorate



Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan 2025-26



Excellence		Equity	
Strategic Priorities			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Leadership of Change in schools • Improve the quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment • Increase the range of Senior Phase learner pathways and improve achievement in Literacy and Numeracy 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of environments/supports to meet the needs of every child and young person • Close the poverty related attainment gap • Work in partnership with others to prevent families from experiencing poverty where possible and provide support in keeping with The Promise 	
Strategic Enablers			
Workforce	Data	Standards	Partnership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality professional learning for all • Senior and middle leadership development • Continue to support staff health and wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor use of improved tracking and reporting • Review data discussion formats to ensure robust support and challenge • Continue to develop Power BI data dashboards to support improved analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear expectations around standards and quality indicators • Continually review approaches to quality improvement • Maintain approaches to collaborative improvement across the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the Behaviour Plan • Delivery of the Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan • Continue to align delivery across all services as part of Fairer Futures Partnership

Excellence Evaluation Framework

Stretch Aims and targets for 25/26

- 85% of all schools will self-evaluate Quality Indicator 1.3 (leadership of change) at good or better by 2026 (current baseline 56%)
- 80% of all schools will self-evaluate Quality Indicator 2.3 (learning teaching and assessment) at good or better by 2026 (current baseline 46%)
- 85% of pupils will achieve Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (ACEL) reading (P1,4 and 7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 78%)
- 82% of pupils will achieve ACEL writing (P1, 4 and 7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 75%)
- 90% of pupils will achieve ACEL Listening and Talking (P1, 4 and 7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 88%)
- 84% of pupils will achieve ACEL Numeracy (P1, 4 and 7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 79%)
- 78% of pupils will achieve ACEL Literacy (P1, P4 and P7 combined) by 2026 (forecast baseline 71%)
- Increase the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 to 90.5% by 2026. Current baseline 88.5% and target for 25/26 set at 88.5%-89.7%
- Increase the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more at SCQF Level 6 to 74% by 2026. Current baseline 67.5 and target for 25/26 is between 68.5% and 72.5%.
- Increase the proportion of school leavers attaining a minimum of SCQF L3 in literacy and numeracy to 95% by 2026. Current baseline 92% and target for 25/26 is 94%-95.14%
- Increase the proportion of school leavers entering an initial positive destination to 97.88% by 2026. Current baseline 94.5% and target for 25/26 set at 94.83% - 97.88%
- Increase the participation of 16-19 year olds in education, employment or training based on Annual Participation Measure to 94.5% by 2026. Current baseline 91% and target for 25/26 set at (91.38%-94.5%)

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Improve the leadership of change in schools			
Build leadership capacity and capability through:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a co-ordinated professional learning programme focussing on strategic leadership responsibilities 	All QIMs, supporting Associate Assessors and ESO Professional Learning	August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in QI 1.3 by June 2026 (Baseline 54% and Target 70%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> involving all middle leaders in quality improvement visits to other establishments 	QIM team		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of Senior Leaders have opportunity to be part of QI visit in another school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issuing and analysing surveys of staff, parents and learners to inform Quality Improvement activity 	QIM team	August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in inspection outcomes in schools to 70% good or better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased professional learning and networking opportunities for all staff 	QI Team and AAs	August 2025 - ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in learning Teaching by June 2026 and Assessment QI 2.3 (Baseline 56% and Target 80%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a targeted programme of staff development for schools sitting in Category 3 	QI team	August 2025 - ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in the number of schools in Category 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivery of a middle leaders programme which necessitates the application of strategic leadership skills in participant settings 	QI team and AAs	March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the average number of applications which meet the criteria for HT posts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of the Northern Alliance Toolkit to link with wider professional learning opportunities 	QI team and AAs	August 2025 - ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in learning Teaching and Assessment QI 2.3 (Baseline 56% and Target 80%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> deliver newly appointed HT programme and review implementation whilst engaging with national partners to help address recruitment 	QI team and other central officers	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of new Head Teachers engage and reduction in the number of asks to central officers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review of the Quality Improvement Framework 	QI team and AAs	April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement Framework is adapted to take account of current quality improvement activity

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment and curriculum in schools			
Continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment (pace and challenge) by:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuing to develop and use the Learning and Teaching Toolkit to support school and individual self-evaluation 	Quality Improvement team and Seconded SLT	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of core QI 2.3 by June 2026 (baseline 43% and target 65%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the phased deployment of additional digital tools and a new digital identity 	QIO Digital and Quality Improvement Team	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of staff confident in the use of the new system by June 2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> expand the P4 Writing programme to all schools 	CYPIC lead	August 2025 – ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in CYPIC and ACEL writing data by June 2026 (baseline 70.3% and target 72%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuing to offer data training for all staff to ensure accountability throughout the system 	QIM (BGE)	November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All SLT report they are confident in analysing attainment data. Evident through data discussions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> city-wide moderation programme in Literacy and Numeracy starting with schools in the lower SIMD quintiles 	QIMs and AAs	November 2025 and February 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved attainment and increased confidence in teacher judgements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ongoing evaluation of the Numeracy portal through Maths network meetings 	QIMs and AAs	August 2025 ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in numeracy ACEL data by June 2026, particularly at transition points. Maths network reestablished.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> launch of the Literacy Framework to support children, young people and adult learners and ongoing evaluation through the English Language networks 	QIM (BGE) QIO literacy	August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy portal being accessed by staff across the cluster with at least 2000 hits in the first year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> link standards to new ELC framework to increase pedagogical understanding 	Service Manager Early years and locality Leads	August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the levels awarded for quality of play and learning in inspections (baseline 86.2% and target 90%). All staff are able to discuss the new framework and implications for their setting during QI visits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure a robust application of the new tracking system and use of the digital data tools 	QIM Senior Phase and Lead teacher Curriculum		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools using tracker to inform data discussions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement and evaluate tracker for care experienced children and young people 	Looked after Head Teacher	August 2025 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase attainment and positive destinations for all care experienced children and young people. (baseline 80% positive destinations target 100%)

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Deliver a broader range of senior phase learner pathways aligned to growth areas			
Deliver a broader range of learning pathways through:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivery of Phase 3 of ABZ Campus 	QIM senior phase Lead Teacher Curriculum	August 2025 – June 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the range of courses available (baseline 54 and target 66)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuing to develop pathways to support those with a range of additional support needs 	ESO ASN and Lead teacher curriculum	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in options available for young people with additional support needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased pathways to meet needs of all learners, particularly in the context of Excelerate withdrawal 	QIM senior phase	August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in destinations (Baseline 94.5% target 96.5%) and participation (Baseline 93% target 93.77%) data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased opportunities for CLPL for Computing Science Secondary Staff and staff across BGE 	QIO Digital	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased use of the computing collaborative one Hub to deliver staff development sessions.

Equity Evaluation Framework
<p>Stretch Aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of schools will evaluate QI3.1 at good or better by 2026. (current baseline 64% and target for 2025/26 90%) 95% of all children will attend school regularly by 2026. Current baseline 92% and target for session 2025/26 (92%-95%) Reduce levels of exclusion to 9 per 1000 pupils by 2026. Current baseline 15.01 per 1000 and target for 2025/26 (14.1 -9 per 1000)

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Improve the quality of environments/supports for those with additional support needs			
Improve the quality of environments and supports by:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to implement our accessibility plan 	QIO Accessibility	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All areas of the plan implemented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going roll out and implementation of the CIRCLE Framework 	ESO ASN	August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased attendance at CIRCLE training sessions (baseline 70% target 80%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement The Bridge and evaluate to support creation of a Secondary provision 	QIM ASN	August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of young people working with The Bridge experience success in the most appropriate setting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing delivery of the Behaviour Plan 	QIM ASN	August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in the number of incidents reported in schools by 10% (baseline 1133) 100% of staff trained in reporting incidents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the provision for supporting learners' needs 	Principal EP and Team	October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff in schools trained to Trauma Level 1 All staff trained in de-escalation techniques Increase number of settings providing bespoke nurture support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to shape and deliver a whole system approach to healthy weight of children and young people 	ESO Health and Wellbeing	August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced number of children and young people reported as not being of healthy weight

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Close the poverty related attainment gap			
Help address the gap and gradient by:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> working with HTs to monitor the impact of Pupil Equity Fund interventions and offer schools the opportunity to participate in the Leadership in Equity programme pilot supported by Education Scotland 	QIM (CtG)	September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased attainment as a result of interventions 60% of schools participate in the Leadership in Equity Programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviewing Cost of the School Day statements with the school community 	QIM (CtG)	August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools have a Cost of the School Day position statement in school handbook
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintaining our focus on attendance levels and termly communication to parents and carers working with the Educational Psychology Service to address EBSNA (Emotionally Based School Non Attendance) 	Educational Psychology Service and QIMs	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in attendance from baseline (92%to 93%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharing clear expectations around standards across all quality indicators 	Quality Improvement Team and HTs	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools making reference to the standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> targeting families most in need of our help by sharing data 	Quality Improvement Team QIO digital	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All data sharing agreements in place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the provision of Money Advisors, working with the third sector to support foodbanks and uniform swaps and targeting families in need of assistance 	QIM (CtG)	August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of benefits claimed through Money Advisors etc baseline (benefit checks 163 benefit claims 54)

Programme/projects	Lead	From when	Measures
Addressing inequality			
Continue to address inequality by:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring all secondary schools are employing Equally Safe at School strategies and all key staff have completed the e-module 	QIO (Equity)	August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Secondary schools engaging in the equally safe at school modules
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> using the SHINE data to identify areas of vulnerability and targeting support from the Educational Psychology service to ensure improved outcomes 	EPS service	August 2025 – ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction by 5% in number of children and young people reporting low mood (baseline P6/7 -22% baseline S1-6 – 32%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> secondary schools having agility in their PSE and RSHP curriculum to be able to respond to local issues as they arise 	ESO Health and Wellbeing	August 2025 – June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All secondary school PSE and RSHP curriculum plans are agile and take account of local issues and context
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain the Mentors Against Violence training to ensure all secondary schools have trained staff and implement the primary version when available 	ESO operations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in the number of incidents between young people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to amplify the voice of children and young people across the organisation 	QIO - pupil voice	August - June 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil voice is evident across the organisation through creation of easy access versions of policies and guidance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of The Promise through: reviewing data trends and interventions as part of the Promise Board continuing to review arrangements for those who are cared for out of authority evaluating the impact of the expansion of Edge of Care pilots 	Looked After Head Teacher	August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing the number of young people cared for out of authority by 5% Improved attendance, attainment and positive destinations for those supported by the Edge of Care pilots