

Appendix B – National Improvement Framework, November 2025 Progress Update

Improve Leadership of Change in Schools		RAG
Build leadership and capacity through:	Progress	
A coordinated professional learning programme focussing on strategic leadership responsibilities	<p>Our professional learning framework and professional learning calendar for session 25/26 have been updated and issued. All professional learning opportunities are focussed on improving learning and teaching and Leadership in our schools.</p> <p>Leadership programmes (Aspire2Lead and LeadWise) run throughout the session and are offered to those in the early phase of leadership and to more experienced middle leaders.</p>	Green
Involving all middle leaders in Quality Improvement Visits to other establishments	Quality improvement arrangements ensure middle leaders are part of improvement visits within their own school and at least one of the visits to schools in their trio. All staff have the opportunity to evaluate their experience, and the feedback is used to support individuals professional development and the annual review of the Quality Improvement Framework.	
Issuing and analysing surveys of staff, parents and learners to inform Quality Improvement Activity Increased professional learning and networking opportunities for all staff	<p>Surveys are being issued to parents, staff and pupils in schools within Category 3 during term 2. Feedback will be used to evidence progress against improvement priorities and support identification of next steps.</p> <p>One of our most experienced secondary head teachers has established learning and teaching and maths and numeracy networks to continue to develop shared resources in order to improve consistency of delivery across all schools.</p> <p>Working with Glasgow University this session, we have 17 primary schools taking part in a spatial reasoning numeracy research project using a spatialised maths programme, MathsBURST. 5 of these schools have also offered control classes. MathsBURST teaches typical mathematical concepts which are expected to be covered in the curriculum but does so using activities that also develop spatial reasoning.</p> <p>Concrete materials, assessments and lesson plans have been provided for the teachers implementing the project through the online STEM SPACE Project portal. Initial feedback is positive, with teachers reporting that pupils are enjoying the lessons and the materials are easy to use. The project commenced in September 2025 and will run through to February 2026.</p>	

Targeted programme of staff development for schools sitting in Category 3

Delivery of a middle leaders' programme which necessitates the application of strategic leadership skills in participant settings. Use of the Northern Alliance Toolkit to link with wider professional learning opportunities

Schools within Category 3 are working with central officers to create bespoke programmes of professional development to address their identified improvement priorities.

Officers and Headteachers are currently reviewing the middle leadership programme in order to improve the pipeline of future senior leaders from staff within our own local authority.



Education professionals engage in professional learning to stimulate thinking, deepen understanding and enhance practice. The National Model of Professional Learning supports this by outlining the key principles and features of effective professional learning, helping us build capacity and foster collaborative approaches across our settings. The model encourages us to be critically informed and responsive to current educational contexts, ensuring our practice remains relevant and impactful.

The ACC Northern Alliance (NA) Toolkit lead is guiding head teachers and school leaders in their use of the Toolkit when sourcing appropriate professional learning to support identified school improvements. The results of a recent audit of professional learning requirements is currently being collated and will inform next steps at the beginning of term 2.

Deliver newly appointed HT programme and review implementation whilst engaging with national partners to help address recruitment

The newly appointed programme continues to be delivered. A working group of headteachers and central officers is reviewing the content and looking to roll out the modules to DHTs to increase their operational knowledge of administration systems.

Review of the Quality Improvement Framework	Following each round of Quality Improvement visits feedback from central officers and headteachers is used to inform updates to processes and procedures .	
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Improve the Quality of Learning Teaching and Assessment

Continue to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment (pace and challenge) by:	Progress	RAG
Continuing to develop and use the Learning and Teaching Toolkit to support school and individual self-evaluation	<p>The Northern Alliance toolkit provides a collection of resources for educators. These toolkits are designed to support schools with aspects of learning, teaching, and assessment, as well as curriculum development and improvement planning.</p> <p>The funded ACC Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) officers have been using the toolkit with schools to support staff understanding of pace, challenge and differentiation. Currently a majority of primary schools and a few secondary schools have engaged with the toolkit. Individual self-evaluations are now providing Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) with valuable baseline data. Interest in the Toolkit continues to grow across the city and the LTA officers are engaging with head teachers to identify the most appropriate professional learning to address themes indicated by the data.</p>	
The phased deployment of additional digital tools and a new digital identity	<p>All Primary and Secondary Schools now have access to additional digital tools through the education identity. Standalone nursery sites, central staff and Orchard Brae School remain to be migrated late October and through November.</p> <p>Further work is planned to improve identity performance to meet learning and teaching needs. Enhancements are planned where there are currently some challenges for younger and ASN learners to access the identity. Further work is planned by IT colleagues to improve device performance and end-user experience.</p>	
Expand the P4 Writing programme to all schools	Cohort 6 schools have just completed training with spread and scale training commencing after the October break. Cohort 7 schools training is planned for term 3 25/26. All schools with P4 writing data under 85% will then have been offered the programme.	
Continuing to offer data training for all staff to ensure	Understanding Data – Tracking, Monitoring and Interventions: Responsibilities and Accountability guidance has been re-issued. Data Support Material Thinglink	

accountability throughout the system	created by QIOs will be shared with schools after the October break, a tool which contains helpful guides to support staff development.
City-wide moderation programme in Literacy and Numeracy starting with schools in the lower SIMD quintiles	A moderation package has been developed by the QIO team for schools to use to reinforce staff's understanding of the moderation cycle, which will lead to more effective planning and assessing of learning and teaching. The package consists of a detailed presentation and associated activities.
Ongoing evaluation of the Numeracy portal through Maths network meetings	<p>The Maths Network has been established and outcomes agreed in line with the ACC Learning, Teaching and Assessment Improvement Plan. The Multiply/Numeracy Portal has been populated with resources which all teachers can access when planning learning for our young people in the BGE and Senior Phase.</p> <p>All Maths teachers will take part in professional learning activities during the 10 February Inservice day. Workshops are being designed linked to national education reform such as sharing resources on the new Maths Curriculum Improvement Cycle. Also, on components within the National Qualifications where attainment gains can be made. For example, the assignment for Higher Applications. Any resources devised will be quality assured and added to the Portal.</p>
Launch of the Literacy Framework to support children, young people and adult learners and ongoing evaluation through the English Language networks	The Literacy Framework has been developed to support learning in schools and across CLD and the platform to host this currently being evaluated by stakeholders.
Link standards to the ELC framework to increase pedagogical understanding	To increase pedagogical understanding and improve outcomes and experiences for children across our ELC provisions, the Early Years Team have developed a set of ELC Standards. This document is underpinned by quality indicators from the new Quality Improvement Framework for ELC. The ELC Standards will be an additional tool to support settings in their continuous evaluation and drive for improvement, as well as increase their confidence with the refreshed framework being used by regulatory bodies.
Ensure a robust application of the new tracking system and use of digital data tools	Following its pilot last year, Pupil Tracking is now being used across 11 secondary schools, tracking progress in the BGE and Senior Phase. Excel tools have been developed to support schools with analysis. Regular meetings have been held with colleagues in Edinburgh who have

	developed a range of Excel tools to support schools with the data exported from Pupil Tracking.	
Implement and evaluate tracker for care experienced children and young people	Fields have been created within Pupil Tracking to support the Virtual HT and school Pathway Advocates on the status of young people who have been identified in SEEMIS as either Care Experience, a Young Carer, living within SIMD 1 or have simply been identified for closer monitoring. In-person training was given to Pathway Advocates at Harlaw Academy in September 2025 and will be reviewed throughout the year. The development has been tested and the export file for authority data will appear on the authority dashboard once completed by the developer of Pupil Tracking.	

Deliver a broader range of senior phase pathways aligned to growth areas Deliver a broader range of learning pathways through:		RAG
Delivery of Phase 3 ABZ Campus	Phase 3 courses have commenced, with first round of tracking due to take place in November 2025. Analysis of the performance of young people for ABZ Campus courses is now underway. Officers now intend to engage the Link HMIE inspector to support a robust attainment review of ABZ Campus.	
Continuing to develop pathways to support those with a range of additional support needs	A revised ASN Pathway is being delivered through Bucksburn ASN Wing for a second session. The pathways helps realise greater connection between ASN Wing staff and the emerging new Work Experience System.	
Increased pathways to meet needs of all learners, particularly in the context of Excelerate withdrawal	Discussions are underway with neighbouring local authorities (contact made again with Argyll & Bute, Aberdeenshire, Moray & Highland) to identify possible ways to increase pathways for Phase 4 (2026-27). This is in addition to schools continuing to review the local offer to ensure the breadth of the curriculum matches the needs of young people in the school.	
Increased opportunities for CLPL for Computing Science Secondary Staff and staff across BGE	Officers continue to work in partnership with Scottish Teachers Advancing Computing Science (STACS) at Glasgow University. This has realised delivery of a day of professional learning. STACS offer also includes access to the wider "Upskilling" STACS training for Higher, Advanced Higher and BGE Computing Science which will be promoted to schools. Officers are currently promoting Education Scotland opportunities and Computing Science week.	

Improve the quality of environments/supports for those with additional support needs		
Improve the quality of environments and supports by:	Progress	RAG
Continuing to implement the accessibility plan	Communication for parents and carers is being facilitated through the development of the ACC website to ensure information is easy to find and accessible. A group of parents have provided feedback on the draft format, and these points are being addressed by the media team. This includes utilising tools for example the ReciteMe accessibility toolbar and access to interpretation, BSL, translation and transcription services.	
Ongoing roll out of the implementation of the CIRCLE framework	The CIRCLE framework continues to make a significant impact across Aberdeen City. Its consistent use has fostered a shared language, vision, and mindset around inclusive practice, helping staff to better meet the needs of all learners. The framework's impact was formally recognised by HMle and is evident in professional development reviews, classroom, year group and school wide planning. It has become a cornerstone of our approach to inclusion, supporting staff in creating environments where every child can thrive. A highlight of this term was the CIRCLE training delivered to probationer teachers in September. These workshops were enthusiastically attended, sparking rich and reflective discussions around supporting learners and ensuring we get it right for all. The sessions introduced probationers to the framework and will help embed a consistent approach from the outset of their careers. The CIRCLE framework has proven to be a powerful vehicle for upskilling staff city-wide. By promoting a unified approach to inclusive education, it continues to strengthen collective capacity to support diverse learning needs and foster equity in learning environments.	
Implement the Bridge and evaluate to support creation of Secondary Provision	The Bridge has now opened, and the first group of learners and families are attending. Ongoing evaluation of the service is being undertaken with collaboration from home schools and the Educational Psychology Service. A full report will be taken to committee in February. Initial feedback is positive from both families and home schools. A working group, including representation from the third sector, has been established to explore options for the secondary version of the Bridge including the provision of employability and skills pathways.	

Ongoing delivery of the behaviour plan

Good progress continues to be made on delivering against our shared Behaviour Plan. There is considerable evidence that engagement with the E-learning Module and shared messaging with Trade Unions is leading to more consistent reporting. As a result, and as anticipated, this has led to a slight increase in reporting.

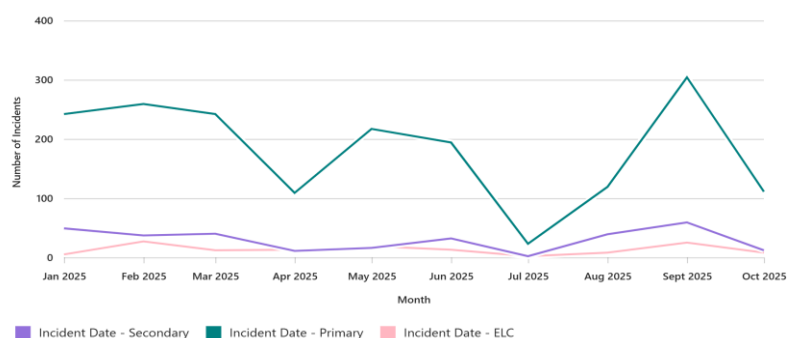
The Data Group, comprising officers and Trade Union representatives, convenes monthly to review the data in detail. This includes drilling down to individual schools where an increase in reporting has been identified, thereby facilitating the consideration of targeted interventions or support from officers or outreach services for those schools. The outcomes of any interventions are subsequently reported to the Safeguarding Group for consideration of appropriate next steps. This process ensures that all stakeholders are afforded a voice and that best practices are shared across the city. It also ensures that professional learning opportunities aimed at supporting learners can be strategically targeted to address the trends identified within the data.

The developed Module on how to report an incident is now part of the mandatory training requirements for all staff. A bespoke professional learning offer to support secondary SFL teams is currently being piloted at Aberdeen Grammar School with a plan to deliver Associated School Group specific training to all SFL/ASN PTs/DHTs over the course of this session.

In addition to the established arrangements outlined above, officers are currently working to identify and analyse trends across the three sectors (Early Learning and Childcare, primary and secondary).

Early analysis shows that:

- there is a rise in reporting across Early Learning and Childcare when new children are enrolled in settings and that incidents are most likely to happen on a Monday
- the highest number of school incidents are reported in September as young people are settling into new classes and routines



Encouragingly, the language used to report incidents is becoming more consistent—enabling officers to provide more targeted advice and guidance, however the quality of reporting remains variable and will continue to be an area of focus for the Safeguarding Group who are developing clear guidance for staff to ensure that essential information is captured, thereby allowing for a greater understanding of antecedents.

PCRA Guidance has been developed and will be shared with schools this term. Relationships guidance, taking account of the consequences guidance issued by Scottish Government, has also been updated and is to be presented to the safeguarding group prior to being issued to schools.

Review the provision for supporting learner's needs

Review of the spaces available was undertaken by the Corporate Landlord team and this will be shared as a separate Service Update. Good practice was shared in a range of areas, and all schools had spaces where sensory diet activities could occur.

Continue to shape and deliver a whole system approach to healthy weight of children and young people

Following the summit over 60 potential priorities or actions have been identified, the next steps for the group are to further prioritise these to ensure that any actions are manageable and achievable. A commonplace survey will be issued to stakeholders to gather information to allow for a top 10 to be developed and actioned.

Close the poverty related attainment gap

Help address the gap and Progress

RAG

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

Schools continue to use the Equity Tracker to plan, monitor and evaluate the impact of PEF funded interventions across the school year. This is discussed with central officers as part of the QI process and ongoing support and challenge meetings. Best practice and success stories are shared through the ACC Equity Network.

	<p>Two representatives from six schools across the city and two central officers are taking part in the pilot of a national professional learning focusing on mitigating the impact of poverty on our children and young people as well as equity within schools and communities. The programme, supported by Education Scotland is in line with the National Improvement Framework and the Scottish Attainment Challenge and designed for use by local authority leads and senior or middle establishment leaders, to facilitate professional learning across their whole authority, cluster, school or setting. The programme is being introduced in an initial pilot phase throughout session 2025/26 to 4 local authorities.</p>
<p>Reviewing Cost of the School Day statements with the school community</p>	<p>We have taken steps to remove all costs relating to participation in core curriculum subjects for all learners in our schools. Schools monitor other costs to ensure that any parental contributions are manageable and that parents are given prior notice of any costs. All schools have Cost of the School Day statements which have been shared with their school communities. During session 2025/26 all schools will review these with stakeholders to ensure they continue to reflect the needs of the wider school community.</p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance training and materials remain available for all school staff. Updates to this programme are taking place over the next term, alongside work with wider Education & Lifelong Learning partners such as Family Learning. Work is being developed currently with some schools post their professional learning and leadership in this area, to develop bespoke resources for their families.</p> <p>The Educational Psychology Service has newly produced materials for parents and carers. <u>Educational Psychology Service - Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance</u></p>
<p>Sharing clear expectations around standards across all quality indicators</p>	<p>Care Inspectorate/Education Scotland published the final Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare Sector in September 2025. The Early Years team have developed a new QI Framework to support this. As part of the Framework the team have developed a set of standards which are underpinned by quality indicators from the new Quality Improvement Framework. These standards set out clear expectations of staff and outcomes for children.</p>
<p>Targeting families most in need of our help by sharing data</p>	<p>The service continues to use data effectively to identify vulnerable young people and ensure they have access to the most impactful interventions. Schools continue to</p>

	signpost vulnerable families to universally available supports.	
The provision of Money Advisors, working with the third sector to support foodbanks and uniform swaps and targeting families in need of assistance	<p>Schools provide support for items such as school trips, uniforms, and learning materials for use at home. Families are regularly informed about Free School Meals and School Clothing Grants, with information sent out through the Support for Families booklet produced by Financial Inclusion Team three times per year to ensure no eligible family misses out.</p> <p>We continue to monitor the cost of the school day and share best practice through our established Equity Network. The Education Service will continue to share targeted information with parents and carers to help them access their full entitlements by helping fund access to Money Advisors.</p>	

Addressing inequality		
Continue to address inequality by:	Progress	RAG
Ensuring all secondary schools are employing Equally Safe at School strategies and all key staff have completed the e-module	All Secondary Schools have registered with ESAS and key lead staff have been identified. The ESAS School Coordinator has been in contact with several of the leads to support our approaches to preventing and responding to gender-based violence. The UN Women (For All Women and Girls) resource has been shared with all Schools to ensure that conversations around gender equality take place at an early stage so stereotypes and gender attitudes can be challenged.	
Using the SHINE data to identify areas of vulnerability and targeting support from the Educational Psychology service to ensure improved outcomes	<p>Improvement continues to be seen in the Mental Health and Wellbeing of learners across Aberdeen. A recent input at Head Teacher's meeting highlighted the many areas of improvement (such as improvements in reporting around appearance and liking school, and a decrease in feelings of loneliness and risk of depression) but also the areas for us to continue to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Differences in outcomes by Family Affluence -Differences in outcomes by Gender, including poorest outcomes for learners who did not disclose their gender. <p>Schools can request Early Intervention Consultations with the Educational Psychology Service for support with their own SHINE data, as well as supporting these areas more generally, using their own local data. To date this year 123 Early Intervention Consultations have taken place from the Educational Psychology Service with Education staff.</p>	

	<p>There is currently no discernible difference, after one term, in the rate of request of provision based on the family affluence of their school communities. Most discussed support areas – emotional regulation, Trauma, Sensory presentations, and Learning Progress & Achievement.</p> <p>Most requested universal training offers relate to Emotion Coaching – a relational approach to communication and behaviour, and Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance – designed to address and support emotional factors that can affect attendance.</p> <p>The Educational Psychology Service relaunched their Digital Resource Hub, to offer support on a wide array of topics in relation to supporting the mental health and wellbeing including anxiety, emotional regulation and supporting school attendance: Educational Psychology Service - Topics Universal supports remain available to all settings covering a range of wellbeing areas.</p>
Secondary schools having agility in their PSE and RSHP curriculum to be able to respond to local issues as they arise	<p>Schools continue to ensure that PSE and RSHP are delivered within the Curriculum for Excellence, allowing schools flexibility to tailor content to their learners and communities and adapt to local and societal issues. This enables schools to address topics like domestic abuse, gender-based violence, and online safety in ways that reflect local concerns. Schools co-design and deliver PSE and RSHP, incorporating input from pupils, parents, and community stakeholders to ensure relevance and responsiveness. SHINE and Physical Health annual surveys carried out in term 2 provide school level data to further inform curriculum content.</p>
Maintain the Mentors Against Violence training to ensure all secondary schools have trained staff and implement the primary version when available	<p>No definitive release date is currently available for a formal, official Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) primary school version, although it is expected in session 25/26. The secondary programme continues to be supported in Secondary schools with update training being provided where necessary.</p>
Continue to amplify the voice of children and young people across the organisation	<p>The commencement of a new school session sees the relaunch of a range of pupil participation groups in schools across the city. These include the “traditional” pupil council structures of pupil voices but also extend to cover a range of themes and areas, including community action groups, health, eco, LGBTQ+ groups and more.</p> <p>Aberdeen City Council remains firmly committed to embedding the rights of children and young people, in-line</p>

	<p>with The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024. Securing significant discount due to our ability to self-sustain the Rights Respecting Schools Award. At present, we have 49 schools in the city actively engaged in the award with further interest shown by a number of schools.</p> <p>Our UNCRC plan continues to be implemented across all services with advice and support being provided, as necessary.</p>	
Delivery of the promise through:		
Reviewing data trends and interventions as part of the Promise Board.	The Promise Board meets on a monthly basis. Evaluations for all intensive support services have been submitted for review by the Board. A Power BI dashboard is under development to provide the Board with data to support review and analysis of trends.	
Continuing to review arrangements for those who are cared for out of authority.	Multiagency meetings continue to review young people cared for out of authority. Systems ensure rigorous evaluation to consider how to bring young people back into the local authority when appropriate.	
Evaluating the impact of the expansion of Edge of Care pilots.	A service update was provided for 2024-25 which evaluated the impact to date. A termly evaluation will be undertaken and made available for term 1 2025-26 and will be available early November 2026.	

RAG Status

On track to complete	
Started not likely to complete on time	
Not yet started	