



Aberdeen City Integrated Children's Services Plan 2017-2020

Children are Our Future

Helping make Aberdeen a place where all children and young people will prosper



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Integrated Children's Services Plan 2017-2020

This Aberdeen Integrated Children's Services (ICS) Plan 2017-2020 forms the basis of our first 3 year cycle of our 10 year drivers as part of Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2016-2026.

The purpose of the plan is to provide partners and services with an overview of the work of the ICS across the city, showing how we will focus our resources towards the principle of prevention of need and early intervention around core wellbeing themes, in line with our vision.

It's also a standalone document that describes how we intend to meet our statutory responsibilities in line with the Children & Young People's Act 2014. It aligns with existing and developing strategies across our Community Planning Partnership, including but not limited to:

NHS Grampian Child Health 2020

Aberdeen City CPP Community Empowerment, Engagement and Participation Strategy

Aberdeen City Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan (In development)

Aberdeen City Council's Strategic Business Plan

Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee Improvement Programme



1. Our 10-Year Vision for Our Children and Young People

“Over the next ten years we want to make Aberdeen a place where all children and young people can prosper”

We will work towards a day when we can support every child, irrespective of their circumstances, to grow, develop, reach their full potential and strive to help make Aberdeen a city where there is equality of outcomes and opportunities for all our children.

To do this we will improve equity of access to health and education as well as supporting families to provide the best care they can for their children.

Investment in children is one of the most valuable long-term investments we can make. Investing shared resources towards services with a focus on prevention and early intervention methods to ensure that children's needs are met at the earliest opportunity is central to tackling inequality and improving life chances.

Throughout our strategic and multi-agency approaches, we will work towards the seamless delivery of children's services at all stages of child development and growth. The foundation of an individual's health and mental wellbeing is laid in early childhood. By supporting parents at pre and postnatal stages, reducing unplanned pregnancy and parenthood among young people, maternal smoking, and increasing breastfeeding rates, we aim to ensure that children have the best opportunity to reach their developmental milestones.

Aberdeen City offers rich opportunities for all children and young people to achieve and become responsible, confident and contributing adults. Through the implementation of future-focused engagement and participation strategies, we will continue to ensure that children and young people live as respected and included citizens in their city.

In delivering our vision, we will focus our energy and efforts on working together to achieve the following core priorities. These are the principal driving factors that our Integrated Children's Services Partnership will address to be successful in ensuring children are our future.

Primary Drivers

- 1 **Children have the best start in life** – children in Aberdeen city are healthy, happy and safe, and enjoy the best possible childhood
- 2 **Children are safe and responsible** – children and young people can become responsible citizens and safe from all forms of harm
- 3 **Children are respected, included and achieving** – children and young people are listened to, respected, valued and involved in the decision-making process and supported to achieve

2. Background

2.1 National Context: Getting It Right for Every Child

The Scottish Government's ambition is for Scotland to be 'the best place to grow up and bring up children'. In order to achieve this, all public bodies and areas of governance that work with, or for, children and young people are required to uphold and embed the Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at every level of service. These 54¹ articles, that outline the basic rights of every child, are summarised into 4 core principles:

- ★ Non-discrimination
- ★ Devotion to the best interests of the child
- ★ The right to life, survival and development
- ★ Respect for the views of the child

The Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach was developed by the Scottish Government to embed these principles into practice and to ensure that work related to children and their families fully embraces the UNCRC². GIRFEC outlines 8 key wellbeing indicators (referred to collectively as the SHANARRI indicators), which link directly with the UNCRC articles, and which are considered necessary to ensure that children and young people get the right help from the right people at the right time:

¹ **Articles of the UNCRC** <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>



² **GIRFEC Approach** <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0041/00417256.pdf>



The Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 now enshrines these responsibilities in law, outlining in detail how the GIRFEC principles will be implemented at both strategic and operational levels across all services for children and young people. As part of this legislation, each Local Authority and related Health Board (in this case Aberdeen City Council and NHS Grampian) has a statutory responsibility to develop a 3-year plan outlining the measures they will take to ensure that every child and young person gets the best possible start in life³. The act ensures that:

- (a) Children's Services in the area are provided in a way which:
 - i Best safeguards, supports and promotes the wellbeing of children in the area concerned
 - ii Ensures that any action to meet needs is taken at the earliest appropriate time and that, where appropriate, action is taken to prevent the need arising
 - iii Is the most integrated from the point of view of the recipients, and
 - iv Constitutes the best use of available resources.
- (b) The related services in the area are provided in a way which, so far is consistent with the objects and proper delivery of the service concerned, safeguards, supports and promotes the wellbeing of children.

2.2 Local Context: Community Planning Aberdeen

At a local authority level we also have some key drivers that influence the way we plan our children's services provision. Each Local Authority has what is referred to as a Community Planning Partnership (CPP). These partnerships are responsible for working with all key partner organisations in the area to deliver improved public services. Each CPP is required to produce a delivery plan outlining how they will do this referred to as a Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).

Community Planning Aberdeen's (CPA) LOIP 2016-2026 was released on 22 August 2016. This 10-year plan sets out how services within Aberdeen will work with communities across the city to improve the lives of all its residents and make it '...a place where all people can prosper'. The LOIP covers 4 key themes and 5 priority areas of work within which CPA intends to improve outcomes for those in the city, as detailed in the diagram below. Detailed information on each of these themes can be viewed here⁴.

³Children & Young Peoples Act 2014 Scotland Statutory Guidance (Section 3) www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00512307.pdf



⁴CPA Local Outcome Improvement Plan <http://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/aberdeen-city-local-outcome-improvement-plan-2016-26/>

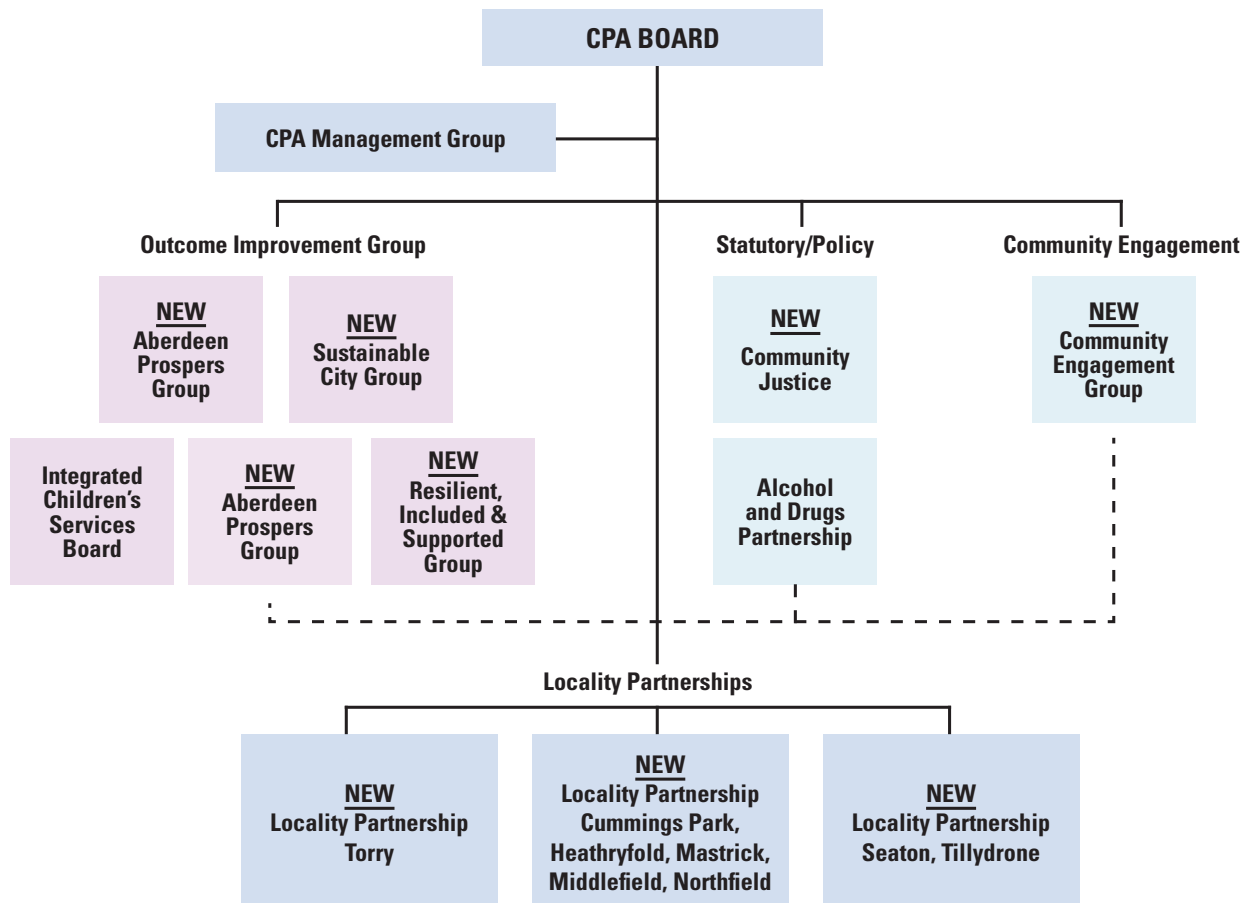
Themes	Priorities	Primary Drivers	Enablers
Prosperous Economy Aberdeen has a flourishing, thriving and successful local economy.	Aberdeen Prospers	Investment in infrastructure Inclusive Economic Growth Innovation Internationalisation	Locality Planning
Prosperous People People in Aberdeen are happy and healthy and enjoy positive life outcomes.	Children are our future People are resilient, included and supported when needed*	Best Start in life Safe and responsible Respected, included, achieving Protected from harm Supported to live as independently as possible	
Prosperous Place People experience Aberdeen as the best place to invest, live and visit.	Empowered, Resilient and Sustainable Communities	Safe and resilient communities People friendly cities	
Enabling Technology Innovative, integrated and transformed public services.	Creating a digital place.	Digital connectivity Data Digital innovation Digital skills and education	

We also work to drive improvement within local communities at a geographical level. The CPA has identified Locality areas as defined by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, these are communities which face socio economic disadvantage and have in place 10 year improvement plans. These Localities have local oversight in the form of Locality Partnerships and the ICS will support improvement projects relating to children and young people in these Localities alongside the other priorities identified. The Locality Partnerships report directly to our CPP working and are comprised of at least 50% community representation and local partners. If you live in these areas and want to find out more or get involved you can find more details on the CPA website⁵.

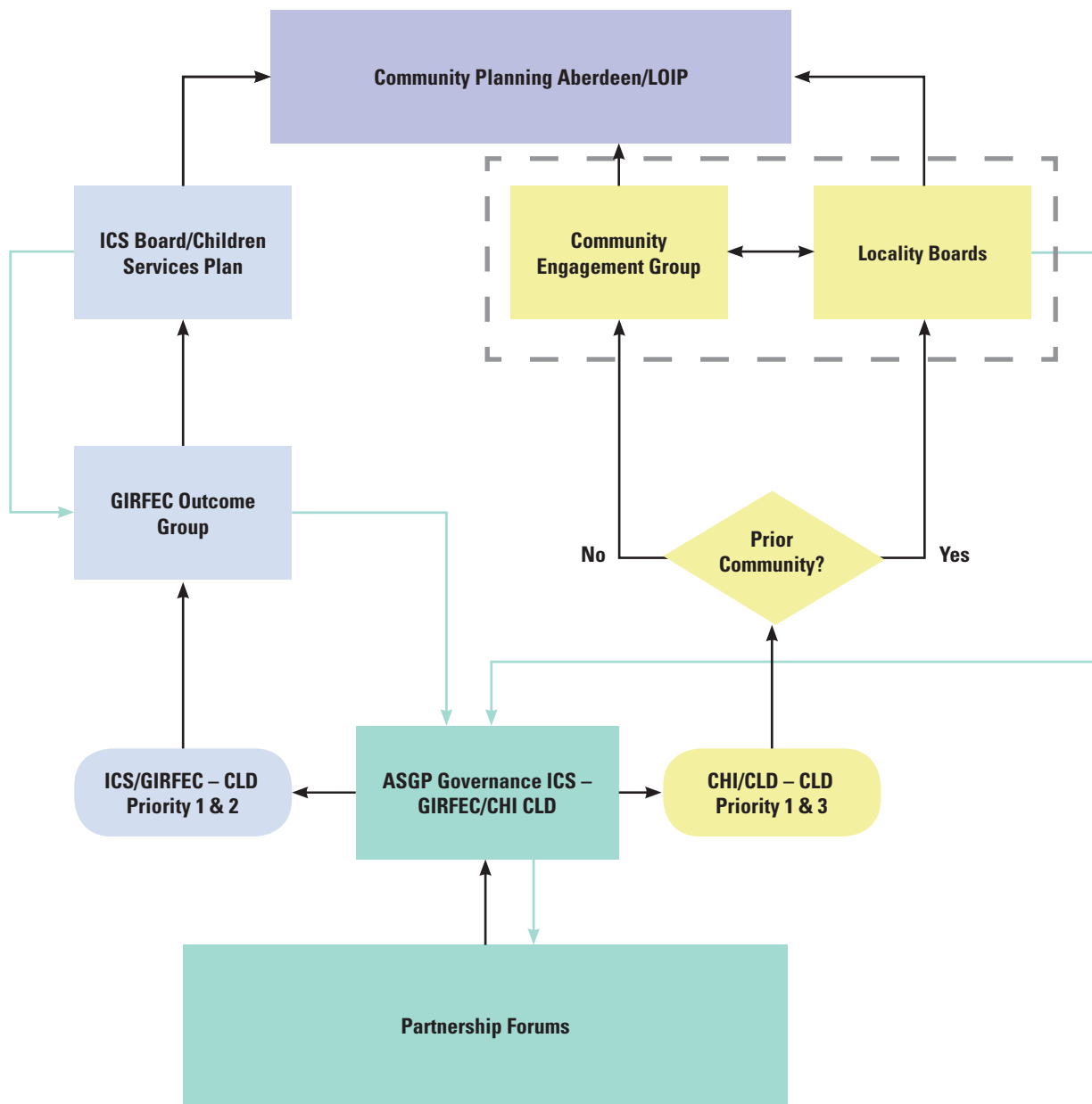
For our other communities across the city that are not part of one of the Locality Partnerships our Partnership Forums provide community based support for children and young people. These local groups cover the area of the local secondary school and its associated feeder primaries. Their initial focus has been to work with schools together with local partners to determine how the money provided by the Pupil Equity Fund can be used to improve educational outcomes for our children and young people and the local priorities of the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan. In the long term the ICS will assist these forums to develop and deliver improvement projects related to our ICS Plan key themes.



⁵ CPA Website <http://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/>



Both the Partnership Forums and Locality Partnerships also support the delivery of our Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan. The below diagram outlines how these different streams report:



See abbreviation list on page 24

2.3 Aberdeen's Integrated Children's Services Plan 2017-2020

The information that follows, outlines how we will link our national and local legislation and priorities to work as part of CPA, through the LOIP to improve outcomes for children and young people by embedding the GIRFEC approach throughout the Partnership.

Our 3 primary drivers in our 10 year vision are underpinned by the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators and are embedded throughout our Partnership. We work to ensure that each key area of a child's wellbeing is addressed through a multi-agency approach and aim to ensure that children, young people and their families are provided with a comprehensive and coordinated suite of services around their core wellbeing needs.

This is based on a strong partnership of city-wide services including:



These are by no means our only partners; we are supported by numerous local and national organisations that work with us through our multi-agency working groups.

If you want to find out more about us, or get involved in supporting our work, you can visit our GIRFEC website⁶. This will include a schedule of meetings and their content, as well as examples of local work to improve outcomes for, and engage with, children and young people.



⁶ GIRFEC Website www.aberdeengettingitright.org.uk/

3. Developing the ICS Plan

From June 2016 to December 2016

We worked towards the development of our new plan. This was informed by the previous work across the partnership to deliver on the recommendations of our Children's Services Inspection towards the development of our plan.

August – October 2014

Children's Services Inspection

Our Partnership was inspected, receiving a positive report published in March 2015⁷.

March 2015 – June 2016

Joint Inspection Action Plan

We worked towards the completion of a Joint Inspection Action Plan, based on the recommendations of the inspection report.

June – July 2016

Our Local Outcome Improvement Plan

We began working towards the development of the new ICS Plan in June 2016. A range of metrics and actions (were developed through a review of the data provided as part of the CPA Strategic Assessment and in consultation with children's services across the Partnership.) Discussions on how the ICS Plan should be shaped to ensure full alignment with the LOIP⁸.

August 2016 and December 2016

Reviewing Our Priorities

We evaluated our current work and action plans to review actions for the next 3 years and to determine where we needed to focus our improvement work. This phase included:

- ★ reviewing any outstanding actions from the Joint Inspection Action Plan;
- ★ ensuring that work was under way to meet our legislative requirements and national and local policies;
- ★ reviewing of data and current priorities;
- ★ reviewing the membership of our partnership;
- ★ and developing our new actions around our 2017-2020 ICS 3 year priorities.

September-November

Engaging Our Stakeholders

We carried out extensive stakeholder engagement with children, young people, families, partners and practitioners as well as using our ICS Conference in November 2016 to allow everyone an opportunity to help us shape the priorities for the ICS over the period of the 2017-2020 plan.



⁷ Aberdeen City Joint Inspection 2015

www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/2370/Joint%20inspection%20for%20c%20and%20YP%20Aberdeen%20City%20February%202015%20v2.pdf

⁸ Community Planning Strategic Assessment 2016

<http://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/strategic-assessment-and-dashboard/>



4. Setting our 3-Year Priorities

4.1 What do we know about our children and young people in Aberdeen?

In May 2016 Community Planning Aberdeen published the Aberdeen City Strategic Assessment 2015/16. This document offers a comprehensive overview of statistics in a range of areas of interest across the city, reviewing the impact of historical trends and local context on the lives of all Aberdeen citizens. Considerable data was gathered on the status of children and young people across the city. Some of the information below has been further supplemented by new data where published.

⁹ Community Planning Aberdeen Strategic Assessment



Youth Population Overview

The population of Aberdeen City Children and Young People aged 0-25 is set to increase from 72,308 to 87,852 (21%), by the year 2037.

Birth rates in the city have increased considerably since 2005 where there was a recorded 2,061 births. This has since increased to 2,609, an increase of 21%. Despite a peak of 2,688 in 2012, and a dip to 2,500 in 2013.



Child Poverty

For the period October to December 2013, after housing costs were taken into account, an estimated 18% of Aberdeen's children were living in poverty. There was, however, substantial variation in levels of child poverty between different city wards, ranging from a low of 5.3% in Hazlehead/ Ashley/ Queen's Cross to a high of 32.2% in George Street/Harbour.



Free School Meals

In February 2016, 53.2% of primary school pupils in Aberdeen were entitled and registered for free school meals in mainstream local authority schools.



Parents and Early Years

- ★ The Scottish average rate of pregnancy among under-20s is 34.1 per 1,000
- ★ Aberdeen City has a higher rate of pregnancies among young people, 36.2 per 1,000.
- ★ Twenty three of the intermediate zones within Aberdeen City have higher than the Scottish average rate, and most of these contain the 20% most deprived areas.



Moreover, 21.2% of all young people under 20 who become pregnant will have experienced at least one previous pregnancy.

- ★ Amongst those living in deprived areas, the repeat pregnancy rate rises to 24% (in the least deprived it is 14%).

Attainment

Young people assessed as having Literacy and Numeracy at Scottish Qualification Framework (SQF) level 4 are considered to have the necessary basic levels of literacy and numeracy (L&N). In Aberdeen city as a whole this has increased from 2012 with 73.9% of young people achieving SQF level 4 L&N to 86.6 % our virtual comparator at 83.9%.



SQF Level 4 L&N among other cohorts in Aberdeen however is lower.

For those from the 30% most deprived communities there has been an increase from 52.7% in 2012 to 75.5% in 2015. Higher than our virtual comparator at 70.7%.

For looked after children SQF level 4 L&N was 28%. This has been a significant increase since a low of 2.63% in 2013.

Young People over the Age of 16

Positive Destinations Overview

Overall initial positive destinations across Aberdeen City schools have increased from 85.6% in 2010/11 to 90.1% in 2014/15. Figures peaked in 2012/13 at 91.1% but have declined by 1% since then. These figures have remained fairly stable over the past three years. These very closely align with the Scottish average which in 2014/15 was slightly higher at 93.0%.

Positive Destinations by Category

City wide, Higher Education has been the highest leaver destination across the past 5 years and has shared a converse relationship to Further Education which has been the second highest leaver destination each year except 2013/14 where it was briefly taken over by Employment (26.2% compared to 25.5%). In 2014/15 both Higher and Further Education increased together at the same time as Employment decreased.



Positive Destinations in Deprived Communities

In 2014/15 Positive Destinations among those young people in the 30% most deprived communities was considerably lower than among their peers, 82.6% compared to the Aberdeen average of 90.1% in the same year. It was also lower than the Scottish average for young people in the 30% most deprived communities at 89.2%.

Positive Destinations among Looked After Children

Positive Destinations among Looked After Children have increased between 2011/12 to 2014/15 from 54.4% to 72%. It should be noted that these figures are greatly affected by the small numbers within the cohort but even at its highest in 2014/15 this is close to the national average of 74.6%

4.2 What Do Our Stakeholders Say?

Imagining Aberdeen¹⁰

Over the course of 2016, the Children's Parliament worked with young people in four Aberdeen schools, with twenty young people (the 'Imagineers') becoming representatives of the children and young people of Aberdeen. The Imagineers have worked with their peers to imagine a future Aberdeen where all children and young people can be healthy, happy, safe and supported to do their best. They have developed a mural of Aberdeen which depicts the city as the best possible place for them to live, produced a film and community reports, spoken to political representatives and public bodies, and presented a keynote address at the ICS Conference in November 2016. These are the 13 priorities that they challenged us to support them with in order to achieve their vision for Aberdeen.

Engaging with Children, Young People and Adults

In addition to taking on board the views of our Imagineers we carried out extensive stakeholder engagement activities with children and young people including: focus groups, interviews, the ICS Conference and other events such as attendance at locality planning events.

We also engaged with adults to identify priority areas for service development. This included parents (through parents' councils and play sessions conducted throughout the city), as well as partners and practitioners (through the ICS Conference). In many respects, their views mirrored those of children and young people.

¹⁰ **Imagining Aberdeen** www.childrensparliament.org.uk/our-work/imaginingaberdeen/



Collectively, the following themes emerged from our stakeholder engagements

1. Health and wellbeing

Mental health, bullying, healthy eating, smoking, e-cigarettes, and drug and alcohol use were identified as key areas of concern by children and young people. Issues discussed included: feeling unable to get mental health support when needed and not knowing where to get information; a need to increase awareness of, and decrease stigma around mental health issues and additional support needs (ASN); and a need for better information and education around healthy eating and provision of more healthy eating options in schools. These concerns were also shared by adults, with parents expressing uncertainty about where they could get help to support their children.

"I think there's less help with diet than there is about exercise... I think there's quite a lot of things about exercising, within the school there's lots of clubs you can join and stuff, but I'm not sure a healthy diet is promoted quite as much"

"I don't think a lot of people are comfortable talking about it as much... I know a few people who do have depression and anxiety, and they feel like they're quite isolated, don't really have anyone to talk to, apart from me and a couple of other friends who they met either online or through a group or something like that, so I don't really think there's that much help"

2. Participation in leisure, play and cultural activities

Key areas discussed by children and young people included: providing more and improving existing outdoor spaces; increasing provision of youth clubs and groups and increasing participation in such clubs and groups; and addressing the specific needs of children and young people of different ages (e.g. providing affordable or free activities for older young people). Similarly, adults felt that the cost of existing activities was high and that travel costs were prohibitive for children and young people.

"Children should get better parks, because down my street we've had the same park for years and it's getting really old and unstable"

"There's not too much in Aberdeen for teens to actually do that's free. Everything costs money nowadays so for like young teens from 13-14 straight up to 18-19, there's really not that much to do. When we have nowhere to go to, that's when people kind of turn to the groups and sort of smoking and drinking, because they're bored, they're just like, sitting, just twiddling their thumbs and stuck in the house"

3. Community safety

Key themes identified by children and young people included: Improving safety in play areas and parks addressing exposure to alcohol and drug use and violent and antisocial behaviour in the community; improving road safety and lighting; and promoting online safety. Adults expressed a need for safer community spaces (noting that they wished to feel more comfortable with letting their children go out to play) and more information about online safety and cyberbullying.

"There is somewhere for me to go but older people go there and my mum's afraid I might get hurt"

"Near where I live, at night, like at the weekends say, there's like a lot of drunk people walking around and it doesn't make me feel safe, because there are children around there"



4. Ensuring that the voices of children and young people are heard

Important issues highlighted by children and young people included promoting channels for engagement, using different methods to engage and maintaining communication around key issues with children and young people; increasing representation of different groups of children and young people; and encouraging and enabling children and young people to take on active roles in community development. Many felt that mechanisms to be heard in the wider community (when compared to schools) were especially lacking. They also felt that they rarely saw the impact (in terms of changes to services) of expressing their views.

"She [the head teacher] gives us like our own leadership, like last year me and some people we just went and asked if we could do a talent show for the little ones and they really, really enjoyed it...we just went and asked the head teacher and she said, 'Oh, what a good idea', and we organised it ourselves"

"No one has asked me before if I feel healthy or safe...so it shows that [adults] are beginning to listen to young people."

5. Putting it All Together: Our 3-Year Children's Services Priorities

Through the analysis of data on children and young people, together with the issues highlighted by means of the stakeholder engagement activities, it is possible to see how we can begin to achieve the 3 primary drivers outlined in our vision. Although the data shows a picture of Aberdeen that has seen improvements in health, early years, education and leaver destinations, there remain core areas for improvement:

1. Closing the Gap

The National Improvement Framework outlines the need for local authority areas to improve educational outcomes for all children and young people, by closing the gap between those who are in most and least need of support. It also reflects the need to improve health and economic outcomes for children and their families. This can only be achieved through multi-agency working. The statistics outlined earlier clearly show that we can do better to support children and young people and their families in these areas, particularly in communities of need.

2. Youth Engagement and Inclusion

Children and young people have clearly expressed their desire to be included in the decision making processes around issues that affect them. Opportunities to impact on decision making in schools (e.g. pupil councils and the Imagineers initiative) have been positively received, but we need to increase their influence in supporting

Aberdeen's ICS Partnership. We also need to improve opportunities for more vulnerable young people to feedback their views and ensure that they can see more clearly how these views help to shape their community and the services provided for them.

3. Health and wellbeing

Mental wellbeing impacts across a child's or young person's lifespan, even into adulthood, affecting various areas of their lives, including social and academic development and confidence in their own independence on leaving school. Children and young people expressed concern about bullying, anxiety and depression. They described feelings of isolation, as well as difficulties in accessing help.

In addition to this, our stakeholders clearly felt a need for more opportunities for outdoor activities and play spaces, together with more information on improving their health.

4. Community Safety and Environment

Parents and young people expressed a desire to feel safer in their community. Issues such as anti-social behaviour and dirty environments restrict young people's desire to engage in activities in their local communities and create anxiety on the part of parents or carers in allowing or encouraging them to do so. We also need to ensure we meet our responsibilities to ensure the safety of all children at home.

6. Delivering on Our Primary Drivers

What follows is an overview of the key work we will undertake to meet our priorities. This by no means represents the totality of our provision (additional information can be found in our Action Plan (Page 39)). Further details can be found through our GIRFEC Website, and as the plan unfolds we will continue to update and improve the information on the site to ensure that it remains an up to date reference guide to the work of the Partnership.

6.1 Children have the Best Start in Life

Supporting Children, Young People and Parents to be Healthy, Happy and Active

Being healthy and having a sense of wellbeing underpins the abilities, choices and decisions that our children, young people and their families make. We recognise the need for all services to work together to improve the health and wellbeing of our whole population of children and young people. We also recognise that there are differences in health and wellbeing experienced by them that are also reflected in the differences in educational attainment, achievement and factors impacting on the quality of our neighbourhoods.

Through our key partners such as: NHS Grampian, Community Learning, Schools, the Third Sector, Early Years, Sport Aberdeen and other local health partners through the Aberdeen Health & Social Care Partnership we will continue to work towards closing the gap where there are inequalities that impact on health and wellbeing outcomes.

We will continue to improve how we create the conditions for children, young people and families to take control of their own lives, find ways of doing things differently that meet their needs and continue to improve our efforts for all our children and young people.

A key priority for us is to help improve the mental health and wellbeing of our children, young people and their parents as this impacts on all aspects of their health. It is important that there is a common understanding of what is meant by “**mental health**” and we have adopted the World Health Organisation (2014) definition of “**mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community**”. We will therefore continue to focus on supporting positive mental health and wellbeing from the earliest stages of life, through

the early years, primary and secondary years and beyond as well as focusing on the learning needs of staff and services to increase capacity and understanding of how they can and are contributing towards improving mental health and wellbeing and the delivery of specialist services to meet need.

In line with and linked to the NHS Grampian Child Health 2020 Strategy and Action Plan, the city's Sport, Physical Activity and Transport/Active Travel Strategies and the city's open space action plan, we will also build on the work of our services (separately and collectively) to improve physical and mental health from the earliest stages including:

1. Maternal and infant health e.g. breastfeeding/ infant feeding and weaning
2. Oral health
3. Healthy eating and active living (including walking, cycling, accessing and making best use of outdoor open/play spaces
4. Making informed choices about sexual health, parenthood and pregnancy, substance use (including tobacco, alcohol and drugs.)

Key Action Areas include:

- ★ Building on and expanding the capacity of all services (including mental health services) to improve children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. We will also develop and implement a framework to share and use existing data/information on the milestones that contribute towards creating positive physical and mental health and wellbeing among our children and young people
- ★ Making better use of data and local information to work effectively with local communities in response to their identified needs
- ★ Developing, implementing and reviewing relevant activity relating to pregnancy parenting and young people in Aberdeen in line with the national Pregnancy Parenting and Young People Strategy and an audit undertaken in Aberdeen city during 2016-17
- ★ Taking forward action to promote and encourage breastfeeding and infant/feeding and weaning in line with the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative
- ★ Overcoming barriers to making changes that will improve health outcomes for our children and young people by improving access to and availability of services and facilities and provide opportunities to improve health and wellbeing, especially those experiencing disadvantage and inequality.

Supporting a Nurturing Environment for Our Children and Their Parents in the Early Years

Through our multi-agency Nurtured Outcome Group, we will coordinate the development and delivery of the annual local Nurtured Outcome Group Action Plan. This represents a coordinated, inclusive, comprehensive and democratic governance system for early learning and childcare (ELCC), out of school care, and play in Aberdeen. Implementation and delivery will be focused on universal services, including a priority emphasis on early intervention and prevention and improving health, economic and educational outcomes for all children and their families. Our high level priorities will be to:

1. Ensure that consistently high quality, affordable, accessible ELCC services are available to meet the changing needs of families in the city
2. Identify gaps in provision
3. Expand, develop and support the childcare workforce
4. Continue to promote equality and inclusion across all services
5. Promote better outcomes for children, young people and families
6. Promote cross-sector investment in learning through play
7. Ensure that accessible, comprehensive, up-to-date information on all services for children and young people is available to parents and professionals.

Early Learning and Childcare Provision

All Scottish Local Authorities have a duty to secure ELCC places for all children in the nursery term following their third birthday, until they start primary school. There is also a duty to provide ELCC for 2-year-old children who are looked after (supported through the Children Social Care team) or whose parents are on specified benefits. Aberdeen City Council provides free places in nursery classes in local authority primary schools. It also commissions early learning and childcare from the private, independent and third sectors.

The Scottish Government has committed to a major expansion of ELCC provision to 1140 hours whilst also seeking to provide for the flexibility and choice needed by parents. This will be a major change project for all partners. From May 2016, the Government expansion programme has been set out in three stages:

- ★ **Stage 1** – in the first budget: provide **600 hours** of childcare per year to around **half of Scotland's two year olds** (those whose parents receive working tax credit or child tax credit)
- ★ **Stage 2** – by the end of the first Parliament (assumed to be 2020): provide 1,140 hours of childcare per year to all **three and four year olds and vulnerable two year olds**
- ★ **Stage 3** – by the end of the second Parliament (assumed to be 2024): provide **1,140 hours** of childcare per year to **all children from one to school age**.

Play for All

Aberdeen City's vision for play is to develop high quality, innovative, and inclusive services in partnership with the community, children and young people and all agencies involved in the delivery of play. We will make a commitment to see, hear, listen and respond to children who play in our communities and to encourage healthy community activity with active and positive contributions from all generations. We recognise that play is central to the health and wellbeing of our children. Access to high quality play opportunities leads to the development of confident young people who are better able to lead their own learning, participate in their communities and make a full and active contribution to society.

6.2 Children are Safe and Responsible

Empowering Children & Young People through Responsible Citizenship

Our previous work to support the youth justice agenda has seen considerable effort allocated to the reduction in crime and offences committed by young people. While this has continued to drop for some years, there is an appreciation that it will plateau, so there is a need for us to take a wider focus. To this end our priority over the next 3 years will be to move to support early intervention and preventative measures that will promote active citizenship and supported risk taking. These will be focused around 4 key aims:

1. To reduce youth crime by reducing the involvement of young people in the commission of crime and encouraging responsible behaviour
2. To increase active citizenship by developing opportunities for meaningful engagement and participation for young people within their communities
3. To ensure children and young people have the information and support they need to make safer choices and manage risk
4. To develop and use an effective communications strategy to ensure young people's views inform the community supports we put in place.

These aims are intended to support our children's services priorities around the areas of improving community safety and youth engagement. They also contribute to improving wellbeing and supporting young people who might otherwise become adults who slip into the poverty gap. This will see a wide range of organisations working together, incorporating the traditional Police, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) and other local partners. It will also combine with the innovative practices and developments brought about by the revised Social Work structures, as well as the opportunities provided by the Community Justice programme and its Community and Victim focus, the LOIP and Locality Planning structures, and the introduction of Priority Families.

Through the continuously developing work of specialist service partners such as The Foyer, Barnardo's and SACRO as well as through access to the dedicated police officer running the programme at Polmont Young Offenders Institution, there is a real opportunity to support those who are in the Justice

System and help them out of it. The work of the Youth Teams, Criminal Justice Social Work (CJSW), the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) and the Problem Solving Courts demonstrate that there are still solutions which we need to capture, develop and realise. With technological advances, a refreshed plan and children at the heart of our decision making, we need to move forward, capture learning and use it positively.



Reclaiming Social Work – Helping To Keep our Young People and Children Safe

The Reclaiming Social Work (RSW) model is a whole system redesign of the Social Work Services delivered to families in need within Aberdeen City. Aberdeen City Council is the first local authority in Scotland to adopt the model. Together we want to change Children's Social Work in Aberdeen, focusing on the way we work with each other, our partners and most importantly our families in need.

Social workers play a vital role in assessing risk to children and helping and supporting families in need. The redesign of our services will enable staff to work systemically and collaboratively in small social work units, ensuring that they are free to focus on this work, rather than unnecessary bureaucracy. These will be multidisciplinary groups of five practitioners who co-work a caseload. Allocation of cases to units rather than individuals ensures that practitioners are well supported in their analysis of risk and implementation of interventions. Although the Consultant Social Worker is ultimately responsible for each case, all unit members collaborate on casework, offering a variety of different skills and perspectives to their work with children and families. By doing this we are helping our workers to have the confidence and expertise to work as effectively as possible with Aberdeen's families. These measures will also ensure best possible value by reducing the costs of our services whilst improving the supports for children, young people and families taken into the care system and increasing the availability of support to our staff. The clear message from RSW is that together we are providing high quality services for children and families in need.

We will continue to work with partners to ensure that as far as possible, those children who are assessed as being at risk are identified, and that plans are put in place to try and reduce the risk. Where risk cannot be safely managed we will actively support extended family members to provide care to enable the child or young person to remain with their families. We also want to ensure that Looked After Children (LAC) and young people can remain in Aberdeen by reducing out of authority places.

Corporate Parenting – Engaging with Young People to Improve our Services for Looked After Children

Corporate Parenting is the formal approach adopted by all local authority CPPs and all the associated partner organisations which have a responsibility for working together to meet the needs of LAC, young people and care leavers. The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 imposed duties, powers and responsibilities on the local authority in relation to this cohort of children and young people. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 now extends these duties and increases the number of public bodies that are considered to be corporate parents.

Aberdeen City's Champions Board held its inaugural meeting in January 2014. Based on what has become known as the 'Dundee model', this provides a forum where care experienced young people can have direct access to Chief Officers in their area. Champions Boards, which are relatively new in Scotland, are proving to be an extremely effective opportunity for young people to articulate the challenges of being looked after and how these can be faced and overcome with the right support.

Our 3-year Champions Board Action Plan details the strategy for our local corporate parents to build on young people's participation and to ensure that we are making a meaningful contribution to improving outcomes for care experienced children and young people. The action plan includes the appointment of an Advocacy and Participation Worker in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland; the development of a participation group; the appointment of care experienced Development Assistants; the introduction of individual grants for young people; and the development of a website for LAC and care experienced young people.

The Champions Board, which is scheduled to meet quarterly, is currently comprised of care experienced young people, elected members and Chief Officers from Aberdeen City Council, Police Scotland, NHS Grampian and the Third Sector and several new organisations. Following the announcement of funding from the Life Changes Trust there is a renewed enthusiasm to take forward the Champions Board work. Members fully understand that they can make effective and meaningful change to the services that affect our care experienced young people. Going forward, membership will need to be expanded to include representatives of those groups to which the corporate parenting duty was extended in the 2014 legislation, for example, Higher Education and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

6.3 Children are Respected, Included and Achieving

The National Improvement Framework: Helping Our Children and Young People to Achieve by Embedding the GIRFEC Approach in Our Local Community Services

We are currently working to develop a series of locality based partnership forums across our Associated School Groups (ASGs) (the Secondary School catchment and their feeder Primaries) to support multi-agency delivery of the National Improvement Framework (NIF). Jointly governed through the ICS and the CPP Community Engagement Group, these forums will help develop our GIRFEC practices by promoting primary prevention and early intervention at a local operational level. We will work to a shared agenda to improve the impact of our partnership working and contribute to improved outcomes for our children, young people and families and ultimately our communities.

The forums will support the delivery the LOIP, the associated ICS Plan and Community Learning and Development Plan at a local level. They will also enable practitioners from each locality to work in partnership to address needs in keeping with the 4 priority areas outlined in the National Improvement Framework:

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

It is expected that each partnership forum will consider how these areas can be addressed through direct intervention with families and members of the local community and report on progress through the ICS Partnership.

Post School Destinations- Ensuring Our Young People have the best Opportunities to Achieve and Thrive as Adults

Aberdeen Guarantees was developed in September 2014 as a new commitment to providing learning, training and work for 14-25 year olds. Positive Destinations Engagement with businesses to enhanced learning and training opportunities and better promoted local opportunities through the Aberdeen Guarantees website and social media.

Their weekly newsletter has also been developed and is distributed to over 650 mailing list subscribers from a range of education establishments, youth work and training providers, social work services, businesses and more. The audience reach of posts via Aberdeen Guarantees has been evaluated, with the YEAR 2 end of year report published in December 2016.

Over the next 3 years, in support of post-school destinations, we intend to work with communities and local partnerships. There will be a particular focus on communities most in need and the provision of more targeted support among those with ASN. This will include:

1. Working with our local universities and the North East of Scotland College to expand wider access programmes
2. Making better use of data to support individual young people
3. Expanding the development of achievement awards across the partnership and linking with businesses to promote their value
4. Working with both primary and secondary schools to pilot programmes to develop the young workforce and providing age appropriate employment skills for all ages
5. Surveying the aspirations of our young secondary school pupils to adapt our pre- and post-school supports to meet their needs and aspirations.



Respecting and Including Children and Young People's Views in How We Deliver their Services

In the next few years we aim to improve the coordination of youth engagement work across the partnership. We want to ensure that young people are able to express their views and that these views are used to inform Partnership decisions. In order to do this we will:

1. Ensure that we have a comprehensive overview of youth engagement work across the partnership by mapping existing and planned youth engagement
2. Assist in the development of further mechanisms to engage with young people
3. Implement a youth engagement charter outlining the responsibilities of partners to ensure that engaging with young people becomes part of normal working practice
4. Report on work to expand the youth engagement and Children's Rights agenda to the Partnership. This work includes: expansion of the rights respecting schools agenda across the city; expansion of the Youth Work team to increase local youth groups; continuation and expansion of the Imagineers Programme; and development of the Ideas Hub, an online survey facility available to all school pupils throughout the city.

In addition to the above, Aberdeen City has recently been successful in a bid to be supported by Unicef. With their support over the next 3-5 years we want to be awarded the status of 'Child Friendly City'. This will involve working across the partnership with all of our stakeholders to ensure that we embed the UNCRC throughout the work that we do.



Supporting Children with Additional Support Needs (ASN) to be Fully Included

We are working to ensure that young people with ASN receive timely and effective interventions. We strive to ensure that children and young people can access the educational services and facilities they need to fully participate in school life and their community in order to achieve their full potential. As far as possible we want to ensure that we can support children with ASN to remain in their local mainstream schools, so that they can grow up among their peers and are better equipped to be independent on leaving school. This also plays an important role in destigmatising children and young people with ASN, while also enabling their peers to be better equipped to support them in their adult life. Further details of the range of supports can be found via our Aberdeen City Guide to Education & Children's Services¹¹.

¹¹ **Aberdeen City Guide to Education & Children's Services** www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/web/files/SchoolsColleges/Guide_to_ECS.pdf



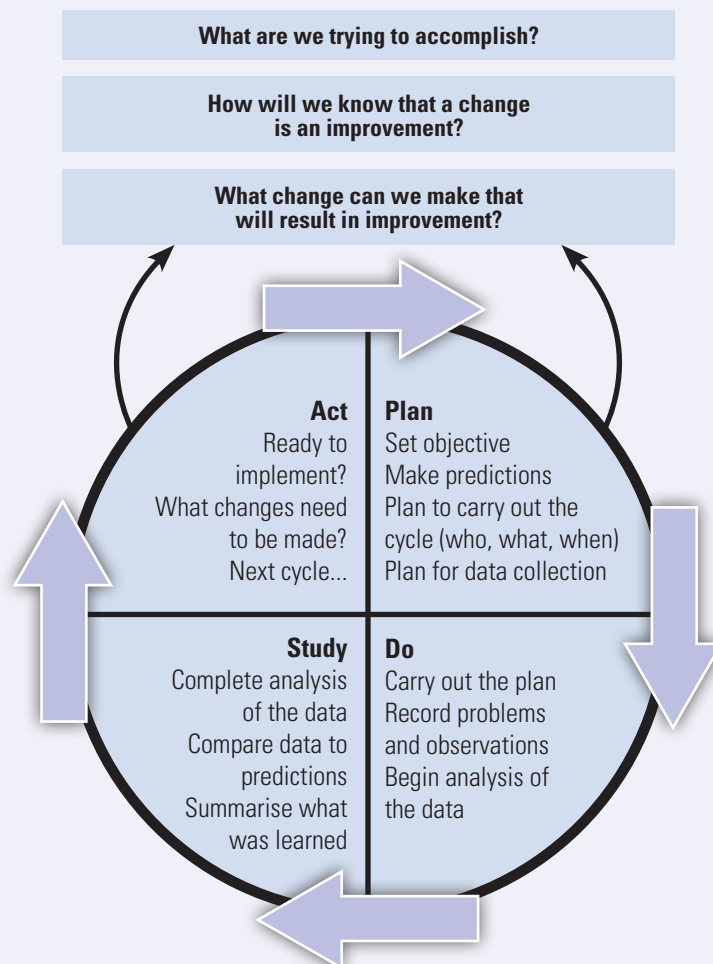
7. How will we know if we've made a change?

We will work with our Locality and Partnership Forums to provide a strategic support link to our national and local agendas as well as deliver improvement projects and interventions within our communities. We will do this by ensuring that we can evidence how we are improving against our 10 year drivers through a clear focus on our 4 children's services theme areas. This will allow us for instance to show how our interventions and supports for mental health and well-being can positively impact on attainment or how engaging our young people to participate in their community's development can improve community safety.

Taking this approach will allow us to increasingly recognise and act on local examples of good practice, directing and redirecting resources to support what works in a quicker and more responsive way.

In order to do this we are adopting the Quality Improvement Methodology set out in the 3-Step Improvement Framework for Scotland's Public Services. This Framework was designed to allow services to channel collective knowledge through self-assessment and debate and to assist services and partners to develop mechanisms that empower and engage local leaders to deliver (in this instance) outcomes for and with children, young people and families in Aberdeen.

This is a simple and effective methodology that can be used in operational projects as well as in wider strategic planning. This involves assessing impact and need through 3 key self-evaluation questions and a 4 stage review process known as a PDSA Cycle:



We will embed the use of this Model for Improvement to provide a clear change method which is understood by everyone across children's services. This will be achieved by building capacity and capability in Quality Improvement (QI) through a comprehensive programme of learning opportunities for ICS, as follows:

1. Delivery of two QI Learning Programmes during 2017 to support development of knowledge and skills to progress improvement efforts across children's services
2. Development of a QI Learning Network to offer continued professional development opportunities to practitioners who have already had some QI learning experiences and who may be able to support future learning programmes or provide QI support within their own teams
3. Development of local partnerships to make best use of resources, expertise and learning from across the Community Planning Partnership
4. Development of the Improvement Coach capacity
5. Engagement with national partners (e.g. Scottish Government, NHS Education for Scotland) to test other approaches to develop capacity across the whole system

In addition to this our wider CPA has also adopted the model for improvement as its methodology for change. In the long term this will ensure that we can expand training and knowledge of the method at all levels of service.

8. Glossary

Acronym	Description
ACVO	Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations
ADP	Alcohol and Drugs Partnership
ASG	Associated School Group (a Secondary School catchment and its associated feeder Primary Schools)
ASN	Additional Support Needs
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence
CJSW	Criminal Justice Social Work
CLD	Community Learning and Development
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CPP; CPA	Community Planning Partnership; Community Planning Aberdeen
GIRFEC	Getting it Right for Every Child
ICS/P	Integrated Children's Services/Partnership
LAC	Looked After Children
LOIP	Local Outcome Improvement Plan
NHS	National Health Service
NIF	National Improvement Framework
RSW	Reclaiming Social Work
SACRO	Safeguarding Communities and Reducing Offending
SCRA	Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
SHANARRI	Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

9. ICS Action Plan

This section outlines some of the key actions we will carry out to improve against our priorities. The high level metrics by which we will assess our impact are outlined in the Aberdeen City LOIP. Further and more detailed information about the specific improvement projects and how they are being assessed will be added to our GIRFEC Website as they progress.

Improvement Outcome 1: Children have the best start in life Children in Aberdeen City are healthy, happy and safe, and enjoy the best possible childhood				
ICS PRIORITY 1-4	PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVE	CHANGE ACTIVITIES	MEASURES OF IMPROVEMENT	BY WHOM
1	Expansion of early learning and childcare and out of school care	Enable flexible access to early learning and childcare for all eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds by 2018 Carry out extensive programme of consultation with stakeholders including parents of the future to assess and predict demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of available early learning and childcare places (double current levels of provision by 2020) • Improve access and availability to community based early learning and childcare • Increased access to the Me2 'Stay and Play' to support Looked After 2 year olds 	Early Learning and Childcare Partners
	Ensure continued quality of childcare provision	Target and review areas for improved service provision against the Care Inspectorate Quality Indicators Seek and review feedback from stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain positive early learning and childcare inspections at 100% • Increase proportion of positive evaluations across all quality indicators inspected • Increase satisfaction levels of early learning and childcare services 	Early Learning and Childcare Partners
	Workforce development and expansion within early learning and childcare services	Development of Early Learning and Childcare Academy promoting a partnership approach to early learning and childcare as a positive career opportunity Undertake annual training needs analysis to inform training and development and workforce planning Annual review and allocation of Workforce Development and Expansion Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of staff entering the early learning and childcare sector • Increase % staff undertaking training and development opportunities 	Early Learning and Childcare Partners

Improvement Outcome 1: Children have the best start in life Children in Aberdeen City are healthy, happy and safe, and enjoy the best possible childhood				
ICS PRIORITY 1-4	PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVE	CHANGE ACTIVITIES	MEASURES OF IMPROVEMENT	BY WHOM
3	Alignment of policy and planning and developments in line with Healthfit 2020, ChildHealth 2020 and health and wellbeing local delivery plans	Facilitate delivery of Family Nurse Partnership Model supporting and enabling first time teenage mothers pre-birth through to child's 2nd birthday Unicef accreditation/revalidation of health visiting staff within community settings Maternity Service to deliver and review breast feeding peer support programme Improve provision of mental health services and support Development of 'Child Healthy Weight' Projects Work across partners to advance Aberdeen City Play Policy as a commitment to UNCRC Article 31 To support CEL 13 SG directive to improve the capacity of school nurses to focus on the health and wellbeing needs of children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase % of babies exclusively breastfed at 6-8 week review • Decrease % of smoking during pregnancy • Increase breastfeeding rates in targeted areas • Increase proportion of children and young people with average or above mental wellbeing • Decrease in obesity rates in P1 	NHS Grampian Community Learning Schools ACVO Early Years Sport Aberdeen Aberdeen Health & Social Care Partnership

Improvement Outcome 2: Children are safe and responsible

Children and young people can become responsible citizens and safe from all forms of harm

ICS PRIORITY 1-4	PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVE	CHANGE ACTIVITIES	MEASURES OF IMPROVEMENT	BY WHOM
4	Ensure that young people are safe at home	Implementation of the Reclaiming Social Work model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce number of children and young people in out of authority placements • Child protection re-registration rates in line with national average • Improved support for Children's Social Work Staff 	ACC Children Social Work Supported in Partnership to Protect Children by: Child Protection Committee Police Scotland NHS ACVO SCRA SACRO
4	Improve multiagency support for vulnerable children and young people	Undertake audit of current chronologies and assessment practices along with level of practitioner confidence Develop multidisciplinary training programmes (online/face to face) to address outcomes of audit Establish focus group to provide feedback on approaches and inform next steps, engaging with parental groups across the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase % of children's plans assessed as good • Monthly review of children's plans • Reduce number of children at risk 	GIRFEC Partnership Outcome Group

Improvement Outcome 2: Children are safe and responsible Children and young people can become responsible citizens and safe from all forms of harm				
ICS PRIORITY 1-4	PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVE	CHANGE ACTIVITIES	MEASURES OF IMPROVEMENT	BY WHOM
4	Improvements in early intervention supports for offenders, victims and parents	Develop opportunities for meaningful support and engagement within communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce number of young people charged with crime or offence • Reduce number of young people charged with multiple crimes or offences • Reduce number of antisocial behaviour reports involving young people • Increase number of young people engaged in diversionary activity programmes • Reduce pupil exclusion rate 	Police Scotland; ADP; CJSW; ACVO; Foyer; SACRO; ACC
		Develop intelligence led processes to maximise allocation of resources Develop a communications strategy for children and young people		

Improvement Outcome 3: Children are respected, included and achieving Children and young people are listened to, respected, valued and involved in the decision making process and supported to achieve				
ICS PRIORITY 1-4	PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVE	CHANGE ACTIVITIES	MEASURES OF IMPROVEMENT	BY WHOM
2	Embed youth engagement and the UNCRC Rights agenda throughout the partnership	Improve mapping of youth engagement Develop an ICS engagement charter Expand rights respecting school agenda Increase capacity of youth work Expand the Imagineers Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of children and young people using the Ideas Hub • Increase awareness among children, young people and professionals of the UNCRC • Achieve Unicef 'Child Friendly City' accreditation • Increase number of youth democracy opportunities • Increase in partners demonstrably supporting young people to be involved in planning and development 	ACVO ACC Education Children's Parliament ACC Community Learning Police Scotland Aberdeen Foyer VSA NHS
	Ensure children and young people with additional support needs as far as possible are supported to live and be educated in their local community		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase % of pupils identified as having an additional support need in education within their local community • Reduce number of pupils with additional support needs receiving transport • Reduce number of looked after children educated out with the local authority 	ACC Inclusion Team Supported by the GIREC Outcome Group
1	At the time of writing this document Aberdeen City Council's Education and Children's Services is currently drafting its National Improvement Framework Action Plan. This will outline in detail the various key pieces of work that ACC in partnership with members of the ASG forums will carry out to improve educational outcomes for all children in the city. Once the National Improvement Action Plan has been completed a link will be provided on our GIRFEC Website			ACC; NHS; Police Scotland; ACVO; SDS

Improvement Outcome 3: Children are respected, included and achieving Children and young people are listened to, respected, valued and involved in the decision making process and supported to achieve				
ICS PRIORITY 1-4	PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVE	CHANGE ACTIVITIES	MEASURES OF IMPROVEMENT	BY WHOM
1	Engage partners to expand and improve provision of post school learning and employment opportunities for young people	Improve promotion of Aberdeen Guarantees to increase the number of young people engaging with career support services Expand partner provision of Activity Agreements Increase Employability Fund provision Expand Keen4Work programme Improve and expand achievement award uptake Support young people from regeneration areas to have more opportunities to enter higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase % school leavers entering a positive destination • Increase % school leavers entering a positive destination from 20% most and least deprived areas • Increase % of young people progressing into a positive destination on completion of an activity agreement • Increase number of young people completing achievement awards 	ACC ACVO SDS The Foyer RGU North East College

