

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

---

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education Operational Delivery Committee
<b>DATE</b>	8 September 2022
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Family Support Model
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	OPE/22/178
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Rob Polkinghorne
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Graeme Simpson
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Graeme Simpson; Aisling MacQuarrie.
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.1

---

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report provides an update to the Committee on the progress of the redesign of Family Support, underpinned by the ten principles set out in the Promise [Plan 21-24].
- 1.2 The report seeks to provide assurance that the development of a Family Support model, will not compromise existing Child Protection systems.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:-

- 2.1 note the approach to develop and redesign family support in line with the aspirations of the Promise [Plan 21-24].
- 2.2 note the Child Protection system will be unaffected by the redesign of the Family Support Model; and
- 2.3 instruct the Chief Officer of Integrated Children's and Family Services to report back on progress and learning from the tests of change.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.01 The challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, increased demand on services and changes in national policy, present an opportunity to rethink how we can best meet the needs of children and families.
- 3.02 The Independent Care Review (ICR) report, The Promise, published in February 2020, made a series of recommendations following an in-depth review of the care system. The Promise [Plan 21-24] is the first of three plans, which sets out the priorities for all corporate parents to deliver upon. The Promise [Plan 21-24] tasks agencies to work together and focus on delivering whole family support with an emphasis on early intervention and prevention. It

sets out ten principles for embedding family support into practice (planning, commissioning, and delivery) for all organisations that support children and their families by 2024. The ten key principles are as follows:

Community based	Holistic and relational
Responsive and timely	Therapeutic
Work with family assets	Non stigmatising
Empowerment and agency	Patient and persistent
Flexible	Underpinned by children's rights

- 3.03 Against this context and the rise in demand on services, there is a need for multi-agency partners to consider how a different delivery model could most effectively build on existing relationships and expertise to create a strong partnership model of Family Support. Moreover, refreshed Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) guidance and Child Protection guidance emphasises the continued need for all partners to work together to keep children safe from harm and neglect.
- 3.04 The redesign of Family Support seeks to strengthen the co-ordination of services to children and young people within Aberdeen and is aligned with the aspirations set out in the Promise [Plan 21-24]. The development of Family Support model also seeks to support and speak to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to ensure the offer to children and families is of value and shaped by the views of our young people. The redesign of Family Support is a key initiative that will help deliver the objectives of the Target Operating Model (TOM) for children and young people. The purpose of the TOM for children and young people is to transform how multi-agency partners work together to improve the delivery of services to children and young people within Aberdeen and maximise the impact of available resources.
- 3.05 Aberdeen City operates to an agreed three tier continuum of provision, which is designed around the Children and Young People Act, to ensure support is provided to children, young people and families.
- 3.06 As outlined in GIRFEC operational guidance, the three-tier support model is:
- **Primary Intervention (Tier 1)** - Universal Services of health and education work to support children and young people and their families, intervening early to address concerns before they escalate. A Named Person coordinates and monitors any support that the child or young person requires.
  - **Early Intervention (Tier 2)** - Universal Services continue to work to support the child or young person and/or their family. The Universal Services review their own approaches and put in place a higher level of support. Where supports are not generally available or are multi-agency in nature, a Child's Plan is required to coordinate support. A multi-agency meeting will confirm who is best placed to assume the Lead Professional responsibility.

At an early intervention level, the involvement of Tier 2 community-based supports will frame the support offer to families. The aim will always be to enable families to resolve the aspects of concern and revert back to being supported at Tier 1. It is however recognised that for some families due to a range of factors this support can be enduring or can escalate to require Tier 3 services.

- **Specialist intervention (Tier 3)** - the supports or concerns are such that the child or young person will require specialist support from at least two agencies to address their wellbeing and welfare needs. The Lead Professional in most cases will be a social worker, but there may be occasions when another professional is best placed to take on this role. Many of the children and young people will be “on the edge of care.” If there is a Child Protection Plan in place or a statutory order (child is Looked After) then Social Work will always be the Lead Professional. A comprehensive multi-agency assessment will be completed to inform the planning of supports to meet identified need. The expectation is that this intervention will be for a finite period of time.

- 3.07 All agencies have a responsibility to recognise and actively consider potential risks to a child, irrespective of whether the child is the main focus of their involvement.
- 3.08 The aforementioned national policy drivers, post-pandemic impact and the shift to ‘family support’ necessitates an assessment of the extent to which the present continuum meets the current and future needs of the children, young people and families of Aberdeen. In January and February 2022, multi-agency partners participated in a series of workshops that adopted a whole system lens to consider how partners could design and deliver a more effective continuum of services and support at all tiers. A set of problem statements were developed and agreed by partners and approved by the Aberdeen City Executive Group for Public Protection. The problem statements attached in the appendix of this report set out a number of challenges and learning goals that the local authority in collaboration with multi-agency partners will seek to address in the redesign of Family Support.
- 3.09 In response to the challenges set out in the problem statements the Family Support model seeks to develop a more responsive and agile system. To improve our responsiveness to emerging risks by sharing responsibility for the leadership, delivery, and accountability of Family Support across Tiers 2 and 3 partners within a more coherent and strategic and operational framework for Tier 2 early intervention. Tier 1 universal services will be shaped and informed by demand with a focus on primary prevention.
- 3.10 The learning from the workshops highlighted the appetite from all partners to think differently about how services are delivered – how to develop a model that is responsive, encourages collective leadership and builds capacity. It is an opportunity to adopt a common approach to planning, commissioning, and evaluation of services across the three tiers. In turn, this will support a more

coherent approach to commissioned services and achieve better outcomes for children, young people and families. The workshops also highlighted the need to adopt a co-design approach with children and families and consider how to empower communities with the local model. Crucially, learning from the workshops demonstrated the need for the family support model to be agile – rather than overly centralised – and there is a clear interface with Locality Plans.

3.11 An analysis of demand data suggests there are four thematic / categories of risk for the redesign of family support model to focus upon:

- **Children on the edge of care**

Children and young people for whom there is significant professional concerns and elevated risk factors. Without social work intervention coordinating a multi-agency plan for the child and family there is a high likelihood these children/young people would either be placed on the child protection register and/or become looked after/ accommodated.

- **Children with disabilities**

This group of children/young people will have a medically assessed disability or enduring and complex health needs. The children will predominantly attend Orchard Brae School or the ASN provisions at Mile End Primary School or Bucksburn Academy. They will also be open to Community Child Health services. Most/all of the children will transition to adult services at 18 years of age recognising their needs are lifelong. Advances in medical science means this is a growing group of children.

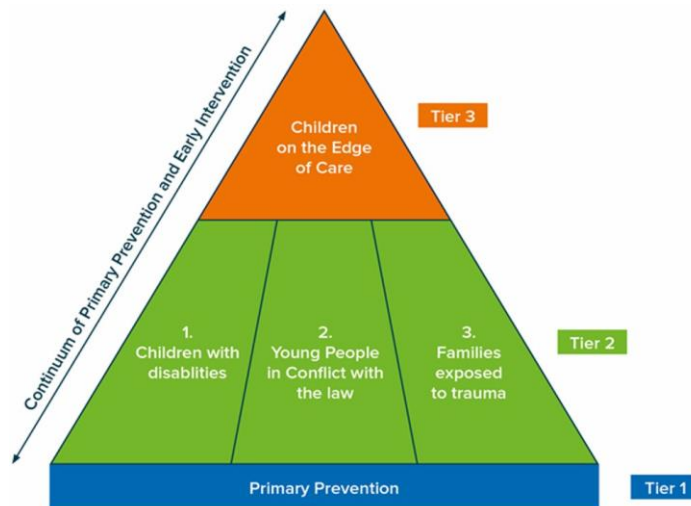
- **Children in conflict with the law**

Young people who as a result of their behaviours have brought them into contact with Police Scotland.

- **Children and young people exposed to the risk of trauma**

Young people who experience loving relationships with their parents but where their parents have needs which is affecting their parenting capacity. The children are not experiencing actual harm but there is vulnerability to their circumstances which without support could escalate to cause them harm.

3.12 The diagram below outlines the thematic areas in the Family Support model and the demonstrates the understanding that some families will move up and down this continuum.



3.13 The high-level deliverables of the Family Support model are the following:

- Develop and implement an agile and data informed continuum in keeping with the principles of The Promise
- Improve our collection and use of data to help manage demand
- Strengthened partnership governance by establishing a partnership system leadership approach to oversee development and delivery
- More specialist resource to the prevention agenda
- Exploit interdependences to maximise the use of resources and remove duplication
- Build capacity across the partnership workforce to help prevent risk from escalating and thereby reduce demand at Tier 3

## 3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

3.2.1 To facilitate the introduction of this new Family Support model within a more coherent approach to early intervention and prevention, a strategic group of senior officers from across the partnership provides governance. This group is the System Leadership Group (SLG). SLG has oversight of data and a quality assurance function to enable an agile approach to the design and development of the partnership Family Support model. This approach will contribute to embedding a culture of collective responsibility and continue to strengthen multi-agency partnership working.

3.2.2 A lead for each of the thematic areas will lead the development of the Family Support model for their designated group and will also participate in the SLG, to ensure a whole system approach is being adopted and interdependencies between the thematic areas identified. The thematic groups and leads are outlined below:

Thematic Group	Lead
Children on the edge of care	Chief Social Work Officer, Aberdeen City Council

Children with disabilities	Lead Allied Health Professional, Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital, NHS Grampian
Children in conflict with law	Superintendent, Partnerships, Prevention & Interventions, North East Division, Police Scotland;  Group Commander Aberdeen City, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Children at risk of being exposed to trauma	Lead Nurse, Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership

3.2.3 By enhancing and improving early intervention and prevention offer, the family support model seeks to prevent harm from occurring and concerns escalating to the level where child protection measures are required.

3.2.4 The SLG recognises that existing child protection measures are well embedded and evidenced. Case reviews and audits show that the partnership response well when harm is known to have occurred, and the appropriate care and protection measures are put in place. The redesign of Family Support does not seek to disrupt the current child protection systems in place.

3.2.5 The Family Support model programme governance arrangements that are in place are robust. The arrangements allow focus on the development of the new model, where decision making delegated to the SLG and reporting to, and oversight by, the Multi-Agency Transformation Management Group (MATMG) and the Aberdeen City Executive Group for Public Protection.–The assurance role played in the Child Protection system by the Child Protection Committee (CPC) and Aberdeen City Executive Group for Public Protection remains separate and unaffected by the development of the new model.

3.2.7 Continuity through all governance arrangements is provided by the independent Chair of the Child Protection Committee, who is a member of the SLG as well as the COG. The SLG is developing a strong understanding of the interdependencies across the current and developing Family Support model, building on the problem statements attached to the appendix of this report. This understanding is evidenced through a risk and issues log, which is reviewed on a fortnightly basis to ensure it remains current and risks of issues can be escalated as required.

### 3.3 Commissioning

3.3.1 There is a range of support services available across the whole system to children, young people and families. Identifying the services available and people working across and within the whole multi-agency system is complex for both professionals and families. Work has begun to identify all those services (160 services approximately) commissioned across the partnership. This work is being undertaken by the Task and Finish group to identify the following: the commissioning organisation; categorisation whether a service is targeted at Tier 1, 2,3 or spans multiple tiers; the data source; the referral route; the value, impact and effectiveness. The outcome of this analysis is to

establish a comprehensive understanding of the available services and whether there is the opportunity to start commissioning differently as part of the Family Support Model redesign.

- 3.3.2 There is evidence that the current system generates demand (excess or co-dependent), which needs to be addressed if we are seeking to build an efficient family model. Furthermore, there is a lack of cohesion across Tier 2 interventions and it is challenging to determine if there is adequate or over provision. A lack of shared governance and an overarching evaluation framework limits our ability to effectively evaluate the impact of individual services and our system as a whole against a range of contextual factors.
- 3.3.3 Despite the range of support operating at Tier 2, there is a lack of cohesion across all interventions and it is impossible to determine if there is adequate or over provision. A lack of shared governance and an overarching evaluation framework limits our ability to effectively evaluate the impact of individual services and our system as a whole against a range of contextual factors.
- 3.3.4 Some Tier 2 supports, due to the lack of coherent governance, can operate with limited regard to the role (and at times limitations) of the named person. This makes it challenging for named persons to retain a live awareness of vulnerability, knowing where to escalate concerns to or having an appreciation of the capacity of Tier 2 services to hold risk and vulnerability.
- 3.3.5 Many interventions independently set access criteria and have developed their own approach to evaluation and review. This makes it very difficult to gain a view on the suitability and sustainability of provision and supports a siloed approach to the provision of Family Support which is unhelpful to our collective responsibilities.
- 3.3.6 Moreover, system wide data does not currently inform the design and delivery of each of the supports and services available at Tier 2. As a result, services are not fully integrated and there is some silo working. Individual services do not adapt and amend their arrangements based on emerging demand. The analysis of the Task and Finish group will contribute to establishing a holistic view of services available across the partnership: what data is available, the quality of data and what are the decision points (e.g. data triggers). This will also assist in identifying duplication, overlap or gaps in provision. It is an opportunity for us to use data more effectively in monitoring demand and emerging trends.

#### **3.4 Engagement**

- 3.4.1 The SLG and the thematic groups seek to ensure there is engagement across the multi-agency partnership, and that all appropriate partners are aware of the development of the Family Support Model and have the opportunity to challenge and support. There are cross cutting links between the Family Support model and other local strategies from the Children's Services Plan to the Child Friendly City status. The Family Support model also links with and contributes to the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and the delivery of the refreshed Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (2016-2026). The work

carried forward by this redesign of Family Support seeks to add value and build on the collaboration already in place.

- 3.4.2 To this end, a communications strategy has been developed to raise awareness of the Family Support model and the aspirations of the Promise relative to whole family support. The intention is to highlight the work of the programme, the thematic areas and ensure there is an opportunity for all stakeholders to feedback and shape the development of that offer. This will be an iterative process as we gather views from all stakeholders such as CPP, the wider workforce, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector colleagues, community groups and crucially, children, young people and families.
- 3.4.3 The voice of children and families is integral to ensuring the redesign meets the needs of service users, and that the model is relational, accessible and ultimately effective in changing the patterns of risk. Meaningful engagement takes time and this is a potential challenge when set against the pace of the programme. The thematic groups are identifying tools that will facilitate the co-design of the model with young people and families. The groups will draw from the principles outlined in the Promise design school and Scottish Approach to Service Design to inform their engagement approach. We will also look to build on existing stakeholder networks and youth participation groups to ensure their needs and experiences are understood as we develop a Family Support model for and with services users.
- 3.4.4 Regular engagement sessions have been held with 3<sup>rd</sup> sector colleagues. The purpose of which is to share up to date information; the expectations of the Promise Plan 21-24 and address any questions colleagues may wish to discuss. It is the programme's intention to also meet with community groups as part of our engagement strategy. More recently, at the start of July 2022, a pre-mortem workshop was held with a range of colleagues from across the multi-agency partnership and the national Promise team. The workshop considered the risks and vulnerabilities of the model by imaging what might cause it to fail. The workshop produced valuable learning and feedback, which will be used as a frame of reference for test of change proposals developed by the thematic groups. The success of the workshop was founded on the willingness of partners to collaborate, connect and commit to the need to re-think how we can best meet the needs of children and families (post pandemic).

### **3.5 Tests of Change**

- 3.5.1 Thematic workgroups are mapping out existing services and current change activity in the development of tests of change. To this end, thematic workgroups have held exploratory workshops relative to their thematic area as part of the design and development stage. The first challenge for the groups is to ensure that the interdependencies between each thematic area are captured; data arrangements are also progressed (as described above) and cognisance is taken of work occurring elsewhere across the partnership. The SLG will have a holistic view of the programme to ensure that data needs, commissioning intentions, interdependencies and any negative unintended consequences are captured. At the same time, groups will work with service



users and feed in qualitative data from stakeholders into their proposals and planning. A plan-study-do-act methodology will be applied to tests of change and will inform the redesign of our offer to young people and families.

- 3.5.2 A workforce development subgroup has been established by the SLG to support workforce involvement in the design of the Family Support model. This subgroup will focus on engagement, building capacity within the workforce and crucially, the skills required to enable the upstream of early intervention and prevention across the multi-agency workforce. This is in recognition of the significant transformation and cultural shift the Promise heralds.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Scottish Government has committing to investing £500m of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF) to support to scale innovative family practice and build capacity across the system. The central aspiration of the fund is to ensure that the aims of the Promise are met to ensure that families receive the right help, at the right time and in the right place.
- 4.2 In 2022/23 £50m will be distributed. This includes £32m to support local Children Service Planning Partnerships (CSPPs) to build capacity for whole system change and to scale up and drive holistic whole family support services.
- 4.3 The Scottish Government have confirmed that the £32m is a multi-year commitment up to 2025/26. Aberdeen City Council's share of this funding is £1.025m per year. The funding is to be spent and delivered according to the collective agreement and direction of the local CSPP with accountability resting with the Children's Services Board.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.
- 5.2 However, while the Promise is not currently legislated for, it is beneficial that we are aligned to and deliver on the aspirations of the Promise [Plan 21-24] and subsequent Promise plans, to enable the local authority is in a position to keep the Promise.

#### **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Not improving outcomes for children, young people and families:	<p>Robust governance arrangements are in place in the form of the Systems Leadership Group and oversight provided by the Multi-Agency Transformation Management Group - monitoring risks and issues.</p> <p>Holistic approach adopted from across the multi-agency partnership to enable us to deliver a more joined up approach to early intervention and prevention. This will prevent the escalation of need.</p> <p>Programme will make better use of data to develop a system that is agile and responsive.</p>	L	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	Non compliance with The Promise would place the local authority in a vulnerable position with potential further legislation.	<p>Mitigated by the Family Support Model programme. The changes to service delivery will strengthen our approach to early intervention and prevention and whole family support.</p> <p>The redesign of family support will be codesigned with</p>	L	Yes

		children, young people and families to ensure we are meeting the needs of families and aspirations of the Promise.		
<b>Operational</b>	Continued impact of Covid on capacity to deliver Family Support Model	<p>A workforce development group, with representation from across the multi-agency group, is to be established to support the necessary cultural shift to greater collaborative working; build capacity amongst the workforce and share good practice.</p> <p>Robust governance arrangements are in place in the form of the Systems Leadership Group and oversight provided by the Multi-Agency Transformation Management Group - monitoring risks and issues.</p> <p>An effective communications strategy has been developed to engage the workforce and ensure the aims and rationale of the Family Support Model are clearly articulated and championed.</p>	L	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	Long term outcomes are not realised: early intervention and prevention approaches (strengthening Tier 1	<p>Mitigated by redesign being informed by tests of change and new ways of working to de-escalate risks from expensive specialist services.</p> <p>Moreover, robust governance</p>	M	Yes

	universal services and 2 early intervention and prevention) does not impact on reducing demand at Tier 3 (specialist service)	programme arrangements in place: System Leadership Group level, fortnightly reporting and monitoring of progress, issues and risks. The Multi-Agency Transformation Management Group (MATMG) has oversight of the programme with programme highlight reports submitted regularly.		
<b>Reputational</b>	Failure to meet the aspirations and expectations of the Promise in the delivery of whole family support.	<p>Communications strategy developed to ensure all stakeholders have the opportunity to shape the redesign of Family Support and ensure that services meet the needs of children and families.</p> <p>Robust governance arrangements in place: System Leadership Group level, fortnightly reporting and monitoring of progress, issues and risks. The Multi-Agency Transformation Management Group (MATMG) has oversight of the programme with programme highlight reports submitted regularly.</p>	L	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	N/A	No significant risks identified.	N/A	N/A

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><b>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</b></u>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to make Aberdeen a UNICEF Child Friendly City</li> <li>Ensure the Council follows best practice as a corporate parent to get the best outcomes for looked after young people, those in kinship care and those with additional support needs.</li> </ul>
<u><b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b></u>	
<p><b>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes</b></p> <p>Prosperous People - 95% of all our children, including those living in our priority neighbourhoods, will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026</p> <p>Mitigating the causes of immediate and acute poverty</p> <p>Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and group</p> <p>Poverty affecting those with protected characteristics and in specific communities</p> <p>90% of Children and young people will report that their experiences of mental health and wellbeing have been listened to by 2026. This is reflected in interactions, activities, supports and services</p> <p>Improving health and reducing inequalities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The detail within this report supports the delivery of Children &amp; Young People Stretch Outcomes 4 to 9 in the refreshed LOIP. This includes the following projects:</li> <li>• Increase to 80%, the number of staff who feel confident about how to directly support, or refer a child for support, and signpost to appropriate services by 2022.</li> <li>• Increase the number of care experienced young people accessing a positive and sustained destination by 25% by 2022.</li> <li>• Increase the number of vulnerable learners entering a positive and sustained destination by 7% by 2023.</li> <li>• Increase the number of young people who leave school with a minimum of SVQ 3 in literacy and numeracy and 4 other qualifications to 93% by 2023.</li> <li>• Increase number of young people who need support in relation to trauma and bereavement having access to such support by 50% by 2023</li> <li>• Supporting attainment of balance of care where children are able to remain more often at home and or with kin.</li> <li>• Ensuring that children and young people receive accessible information and opportunities to engage and participate in decision making.</li> <li>• Increase by 50% the number of communications which are accessible to children and young people by 2023.</li> <li>• By 2023 increase to 100% the number of multiagency governance arrangements which</li> </ul>

Increasing children’s knowledge and understanding of their own physical and mental wellbeing and take an early intervention and prevention approach.

Child friendly city where all decisions which impact on children and young people are informed by them by 2026.

The voice of children and young people is central to shaping the re-design of family support. The programme will provide opportunities to build and draw from existing participation networks and also open up new areas of engagement.

30% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.

The children in conflict in the law group will bring together multi-agency expertise to understand how as a partnership we can reduce the number of children coming into contact with the Police.

impact on children on young people that include their participation and engagement.

- Increase number of young people who need support in relation to trauma and bereavement having access to such support by 50% by 2023.

<p><b>Regional and City Strategies</b></p> <p>Regional Cultural Strategy</p> <p>Prevention Strategy</p> <p>Children’s Services Plan</p> <p>National Improvement Framework Plan</p>	<p>The development of the Family Support Model outlined in this report is fully aligned the Prevention Strategy and will form a critical part of the Children’s Services Plan.</p>
--	--

The development of the Family Support Model outlined in this report is fully aligned the Prevention Strategy and will form a critical part of the Children’s Services Plan.

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Required.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	N/A

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 The Promise [Plan 21-24]  
Weblink: <https://thepromise.scot/plan-21-24-pdf-spread.pdf>

## 11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1: Problem statements

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Name</b>	Graeme Simpson
<b>Title</b>	Chief Officer Integrated Children's and Family Services and Chief Social Work Officer
<b>Email Address</b>	gsimpson@aberdeencity.gov.uk
<b>Tel</b>	01224 523496

<b>Name</b>	Aisling MacQuarrie
<b>Title</b>	Programme Manager
<b>Email Address</b>	amacquarrie@aberdeencity.gov.uk
<b>Tel</b>	01224 523204