

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	8 September 2022
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Edge of Care Pilot
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/22/156
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Eleanor Sheppard
REPORT AUTHOR	Eleanor Sheppard
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks to update Members on work being undertaken to strengthen our approach to improving the attainment and achievement of Looked After Children and those known or thought to be on the edge of care.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 notes the proposed approach to develop a more robust approach to supporting children and young people who are Looked After or on the edge of care; and
- 2.2 instructs the Chief Education Officer and Chief Social Work Officer to report back on the learning from the pilot and any plans to scale up approaches before the end of the 2022/23 school session.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 In February 2020 The Independent Care Review published The Promise. The Promise lays out 80 calls to action which are presented as an ambitious set of promises for children and young people who have experience of the care system. The Promise aims to help re-set services around prevention and early intervention and avoid the deficit model currently in operation nationally. This wide ranging policy has considerable implications for the Council and other key partners as we work together to improve the long term outcomes of those who are Care Experienced and reduce the number of children who are subject to statutory measures.
- 3.2 Given the transformation required to fully deliver on The Promise, a series of shorter Plans are being published to help the system make the necessary changes. The current Plan is called Plan 21-24 (Appendix A).
- 3.3 The Promise is organised across 5 priority areas. The priority areas are:
- A good childhood

- Whole family support
- Planning
- Supporting the workforce
- Building capacity

3.4 These priority areas are supported by 5 fundamentals. The fundamentals are:

- What matters to children and young people
- Listening
- Poverty
- Children's rights
- Language

3.5 Consideration of the 5 priority areas and the 5 fundamentals are critical in helping partners shape services for children and families. These key areas were central to the design and delivery of workshops held in June 2022.

Re-design workshops

3.6 Colleagues from across Integrated Children and Family Services, Early Intervention & Community Empowerment and City Growth came together to explore the art of the possible over two workshops in June 2022 (slides available in Appendix B).

3.7 The workshop participants explored key national and local data and heard the voices of children, young people and parents and carers during the discovery phase of the workshops.

3.8 The 40 attendees then followed a series of incremental steps to collectively define the issues they thought the pilots could seek to address. The output from the first workshop was a set of 5 agreed problem statements to be addressed through pilots at both Northfield and Lochside Associated Schools Groups (ASGs). The two ASGs were chosen due to the proportionately high number of children and young people who require statutory measures of protection. The 5 agreed problem statements are:

1. How do we organise ourselves differently to build stronger relationships with each other?
2. How can we improve our shared use of data to identify and track those at greatest risk to inform decision making and this pilot?
3. How can we remove rigid thresholds and have a clearer understanding of the needs of children and families and swifter access to available resources?
4. How do we ensure greater continuity of staffing and support the wellbeing of those consistent staff more effectively?
5. How do we improve our collective ability to hear the voices of children, young people and families more clearly and share information more effectively with each other?

3.9 The second of the two workshops encouraged attendees to explore potential solutions to the problem statements defined at the earlier workshop. Attendees were encouraged to candidly explore all options in order to develop their prototype, weigh the potential impact and gain consensus on a direction

of travel. Attendees all engaged positively and appreciated the time to explore new approaches together and all made a valuable contribution.

Guiding principles agreed

- 3.10 A number of strong and clear messages were relayed by attendees and it was agreed that these guiding principles should drive the two pilots.
- Multi-disciplinary teams should be established and based in both ASGs (based at the Academies) who are trusted and empowered to test and refine the operating model over the lifetime of the pilot.
 - That the focus of the pilot should be on children, young people and families and not narrowly focus on children and young people.
 - That families should be empowered to tell their stories and their voices should strongly guide the development and evaluation of the operating models.
 - That the pilots should progress independently of each other but with regular opportunities to share and learn from each other
 - That all members of the team are equal partners and any attempt to constrain should be challenged by any member of the team
 - That direct support for children and families should be available at the location that best meets the needs of the child or family
 - That the model should be year round and not impacted by school holiday periods

The Prototype

- 3.11 Bases have been established at Northfield and Lochside Academies. The base will not be viewed as an education space but one that welcomes the multi-disciplinary team as equal partners. Attendance of the full team will be expected at core times in order to plan for children and families and evaluate progress but attendees felt strongly that the support should be afforded to children and families in a location that works best for children, young people and families.
- 3.12 The core staff team will be drawn from across the Council with Scottish Attainment Challenge Care Experienced funding being used to recruit additional staff where required. The teams will include:
- Education (Virtual School staff as a minimum with one based in each school). Schools may choose to supplement the core team through the use of Pupil Equity Funding.
 - Children's social work (children's practitioner as a minimum)
 - Family Learning staff
 - Youth Workers (2 in each ASG)
 - Health representation
 - Employability
- 3.13 A teams site has been established with Child's Plans being collated to inform the work of the new teams from August 2022. The staff will be afforded time to meet and understand the needs of the children and families they will be supporting. This understanding of the baseline will enable a clear set of measures to be identified and proposed to the Chief Social Work Officer and Chief Education Officer in order to measure the impact of the pilot over time.

Agility will be encouraged, there was a strong feeling that if approaches are not having the desired effect they should be changed.

- 3.14 Fortnightly half hour meetings are to be established to help remove blocks and barriers to the pilots and provide general support and guidance to the core staff teams.
- 3.15 It is proposed that an evaluation of the impact of the pilots be reported back to the Education and Children’s Services Committee before the end of the school session. This approach will enable the learning from the pilots to be shared and support timely decision making in advance of school session 2023/24.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The costs of all improvement actions will be undertaken within existing budgets and from the use of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Although The Promise is currently not statutory, it is advantageous for children, young people and families that we keep pace with the series of Plans to ensure that we are strongly placed to keep The Promise.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No environmental implications identified.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Risk of not improving outcomes for learners	Changes to our provision and service delivery will enable primary prevention and early intervention thereby reducing potential risk.	L	Yes
Compliance	Non-compliance with The Promise would place us in a	Mitigated by services being	L	Yes

	vulnerable position with potential further legislation	re-designed to prevent escalation of need.		
Operational	Staff feel unable to access the support required by some children and young people.	Mitigated by basing a multi-disciplinary team around the child and the family	L	Yes
Financial	Risk of not having sufficient resource.	Mitigated by re-designing to test new ways of working to de-escalate risks from expensive specialist services.	L	yes
Reputational	Risk that poor quality of provision will present a reputational risk to the Council	Will be mitigated through the establishment of a set of measures to track impact over the lifetime of the pilot.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	None			

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
Impact of Report	
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p>UNICEF Child Friendly accreditation.</p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of Child Friendly City accreditation as children and young people will be directly involved in shaping the service.</p>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
<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>The detail within this report supports the delivery of Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes 4 to 9 in the refreshed Local Outcome Improvement Plan. This includes the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

<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> <p>Increasing children’s knowledge and understanding of their own physical and mental wellbeing and take an early intervention and prevention approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of care experienced young people accessing a positive and sustained destination by 25% by 2022. • Increase the number of vulnerable learners entering a positive and sustained destination by 7% by 2023. • Increase the number of young people who leave school with a minimum of Scottish Vocational Qualification 3 in literacy and numeracy and 4 other qualifications to 93% by 2023. • Increase number of young people who need support in relation to trauma and bereavement having access to such support by 50% by 2023
<p>Regional and City Strategies</p> <p>Regional Cultural Strategy</p> <p>Prevention Strategy</p> <p>Children’s Services Plan</p> <p>National Improvement Framework Plan</p>	<p>The pilots will be aligned fully with the Prevention Strategy and will form a critical part of the Children’s Services Plan.</p> <p>This pilot features in the Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan for 2022/23</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Plan 2021-24

Appendix B – Workshop slides

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Eleanor Sheppard
Title	Chief Education Officer
Email Address	esheppard@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Tel	01224 522707