



Child's Rights Report 2023



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Introduction

Part 1 (section 2) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (“the Act”) places a duty on public authorities to report after the end of each 3 year period, on the steps they have taken to secure better or further effect the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This report covers the reporting period from March 2020 to March 2023.

Although the non-statutory guidance used to help structure this report only asks Local Authorities to report on the steps taken to secure children’s rights, consideration has also been given to how prepared The Local Authority is for the full incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots Law. Officers have made use of the Improvement Service document entitled, ‘Getting Ready for UNCRC Incorporation Framework’ and Theory of Change documentation to inform evaluations and next steps. The publication of Statutory Guidance (anticipated in 2023) will trigger a further review of proposed next steps to ensure that the Local Authority continues to remain well prepared.

Children and young people have been active participants in developing this Children’s Rights Report. In addition to a range of qualitative and quantitative data available to us, a specific children’s rights survey was issued to children and young people in September 2022 to help determine progress and identify further priorities for action. Taking this holistic approach has enabled us to triangulate evidence and more confidently report on our progress and next steps. A child friendly version of the report will be made available to children and young people as this report is published.

Over the last 3 years Aberdeen City Council has continued to work hard to uphold children’s rights at individual service level, in the wider transformation of the Council and through our work with Community Planning Partners. Work has extended well beyond services delivering ‘traditional’ children’s services.

Progress made over the last 3 years has been considerable and we continue to challenge ourselves to do more as we prepare for the incorporation of the UNCRC



Key achievements of the last three years

Despite the challenges experienced over the last three years, there are a number of achievements to celebrate. These include:

- Improved use of data to help us support the children and families most in need of our help.
- Establishment of our multi-agency Fit Like Family Wellbeing Hubs.
- Successful delivery of Holiday programmes in keeping with the self-reported needs of children, young people and families.
- Establishment of our first Wee Green Forest.
- Establishment of our Youth Network to improve youth engagement in strategic decision making and increase cohesion between pre-existing participatory groups for children and young people across the city.
- Improved Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to ensure that Officer recommendations which directly or indirectly affect children and young people take account of the UNCRC.
- The introduction of community walkabouts with children and young people working alongside officers and Elected Members to jointly identify and act on concerns in local communities
- The introduction of Youth Workers, Family Learning and Money Advisors in all schools
- 65840 free school meal vouchers delivered to eligible families
- The Provision of 14564 chrome books, 500 Wi-Fi connections with dongles and 210 data only SIMs during periods of school building closure
- Successful restructure of ASN Outreach services under a single head teacher and the establishment of associated Parent and Pupil Forums
- Updated child protection practices in keeping with updated national guidance
- Successful bid to develop a neurodevelopmental pathway with partners
- Commissioned Mental Health Aberdeen to offer year-round counselling for our children and young people
- Children and young people have directly influenced city master planning
- Further development of The Children's Rights Service
- Appointment of a Pupil Climate Change President



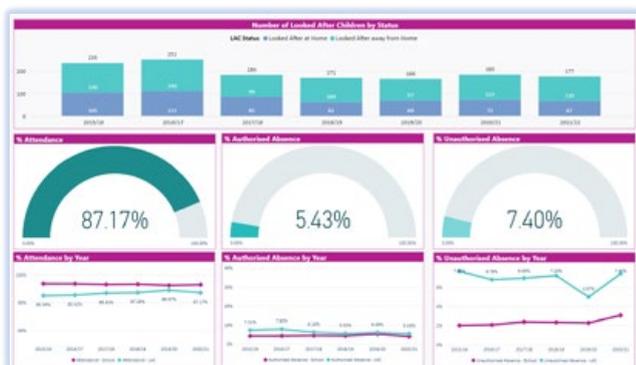
Changed working practices over the reporting period

The COVID-19 pandemic guided us to take a more agile approach to the delivery of services and accelerated the participation of children and young people in their design. The pandemic also triggered a review of the data we collect to ensure that we were able to respond to the changing needs of children and families, with greater agility. These developments have considerably changed working practices since the last Children's Rights Report was published in 2019.

Helping to ensure that the basic needs of families were met was a key priority over the periods of national lockdown and relied on effective multi-agency working. The Data and Insights Cluster coordinated partnership data sets to help identify families most in need. This use of technology has transformed partnership insight and service delivery.



The use of single agency data has also become more sophisticated and now enables some clusters to look at the extent to which some potentially vulnerable groups, such as those who are impacted by poverty, are able to claim their rights. Data dashboards allow more robust data analysis at school, community and city-wide level to improve our understanding of unmet need in children and young people and reshape services to address any gaps in provision. Access to live data is transforming service improvement planning and enabling services to make timely requests for assistance. This work should now be extended to support more robust monitoring of individual groups.



A central request for assistance process was established in early 2020 to enable professionals to quickly access support for children and families identified as in immediate need. This centralised approach continues to enable Council services to work with partners to address need and gain invaluable insight into emerging trends which may indicate that rights are compromised.

We now want to build on this success, expanding the single referral system to allow all agencies to utilise it. This will develop our understanding of need and vulnerability, supporting services to adapt their support offer in keeping with current need and allowing families to access the support they need at the right time. It will also allow us to develop a more comprehensive understanding of risk and vulnerability across the Tiers of Universal, Targeted and Specialist services.

Collaboration across the organisation and wider partnership has accelerated and this collaboration and integration has guided the pooling of resource to ensure that children are able to claim their rights. The universal services of health and education have collaborated to deliver services at our Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Links Hub, to families fleeing conflict through our Settle in the City programme and to children and young people in need of mental health and wellbeing supports. There is clear evidence that this more preventative and integrated approach is leading to a reduction in referrals to statutory and specialist agencies. The Local Authority will continue to drive integration and collaboration with partner agencies.

Our integrated Fit Like Hubs provide a helpful model to guide our work towards further integration. Education, Children’s Social Work, Community Learning, Health and third sector collaborated to establish our Fit Like Family Wellbeing Hubs in 2020. Fit Like Family wellbeing Hubs were established in order to ensure timely access to support for children and families when so many services were not able to deliver face to face support to those most vulnerable.

The Hubs Work to ensure that:

- Children and families receive the right support at the right time
- Children and families’ rights and individual wellbeing needs will be addressed
- Children and families receive accessible and practice support with their practical and emotional needs
- Children and families’ voices are heard

Delivery of these aims is underpinned by embracing a children’s rights approach, in line with the move to bring the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots Law. The Council is exceptionally grateful to young people at Northfield Academy who helped shape the development of the Hubs by sharing what was important to them and for proposing a welcoming name for the service.

Case Study: Fit Like Aberdeen

The Hubs have moved from co-existence to collaboration and co-production in order to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

Coexistence: In November 2020 the multi-agency practitioners clarified what practitioners from the different agencies could do and with whom. This helped develop an understanding of the uniqueness that each partner brings to the collective and helped individual agencies move from a single agency agenda to a shared one and developed an openness to doing things differently together.

Co-operation: By sharing information and recognising the mutual benefits and values of partnership working, practitioners pulled together collective knowledge and skills which enabled them to develop a shared understanding and ethos that is embedded within the framework of the promise.

Co-ordination: By planning together, shaping roles, responsibilities and pooling resource and being open to risk taking, practitioners accepted the need to adjust, to do things differently and make the necessary changes to avoid overlap. Taking a test, learn and develop approach helped increase the capacity of those attached to the Hubs.

Collaboration and Co-production has brought about cultural changes with shared leadership resulting in strong multi-agency partnership working to co-deliver effective and early intervention supports to children young people and families



COEXISTENCE



COOPERATION



COORDINATION



COLLABORATION

Summary evaluation

Considerable progress has been made in our use of partnership data to determine the extent to which some groups of young people (such as those with additional support needs, those Looked After or those living in areas of deprivation) are being empowered to claim their rights. This work greatly aided our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and enabled services and partners to identify the children and families most in need of our help. Our work around data must now develop even further to provide an oversight of all groups whose rights may be at risk.

More collaborative practices are aiding the development of a partnership Family Support Model in keeping with The Promise, an improved neurodevelopmental pathway as a pathfinder for the Children and Young People's Mental Health Delivery Board and will help shape the further Integration required to care for and protect children as we develop a Bairns' Hoose.

General Measures of implementation

This measure looks at the structures and resources required to implement the UNCRRC.

Aberdeen City Council, along with Community Planning Partners, is committed to keeping children, young people and communities safe, healthy and thriving. We are firmly committed to the implementation of the UNCRRC.

‘Our ambition is to support every child, irrespective of their circumstances, to grow, develop and reach their full potential. We want Aberdeen to be a city where there is equality of outcomes and opportunities for all our children and young people and this drives the partnership to collaborate to maximise the long-term outcomes of those who need extra care and protection’.

Local Outcome Improvement Plan

Children’s rights feature in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Children’s Services Plan. Multi-agency governance arrangements and resources are in place to support delivery. This demonstrates that Council and Community Planning leaders recognise the importance and value of incorporating children’s rights and views in decision making.

Partnership improvement work focussed on children and young people is overseen by the Children’s Services Board to ensure that the work of single agencies is harnessed as we work together to uphold the rights of our children and young people.

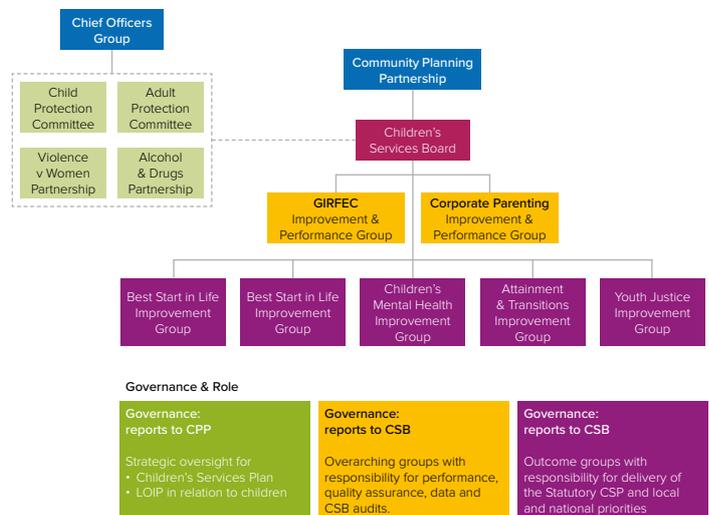
The Child Protection Committee and Chief Officers Group provide highly effective oversight of children and young people in need of care and protection and regularly review data and scrutinise performance.

Community Planning structures to support children’s rights

The Local Authority continues to play a significant role in the Community Planning Partnership.

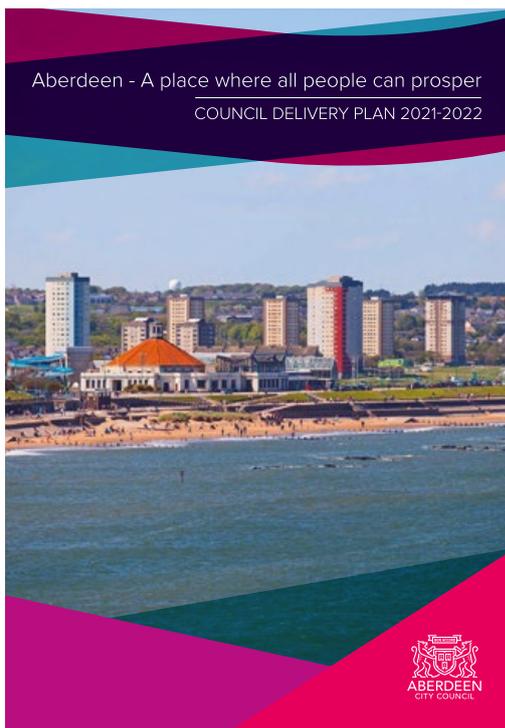
‘Our vision for 2026 is Aberdeen as a place where all people can prosper, regardless of their background or circumstances. This reflects our desire to help all people, families, businesses and communities to do well, succeed and flourish in every aspect. To achieve this vision we are committed to tackling the issues that exist in our society which prevent equal opportunity for all to lead a happy and fulfilling life’.

Local Outcome Improvement Plan



Local Authority governance arrangements focussed on children's rights

Terms of reference for Council, its committees and sub-committees include a commitment to hear the voices of children when taking decisions across the Council. The phrase, *'in accordance with UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities and Communities Programme, ensures that children are allowed a voice in decisions which affect both them and their city'* is included in all Committee Terms of Reference. This ensures that the decision-making forums of the Council take into account the voices of children and young people when making decisions which directly or indirectly affect them. As we move forwards, Committee effectiveness reports will review the extent to which these commitments have been realised.



On 7th March 2022, Council agreed the Council Delivery Plan which encompasses the Service Standards around the engagement and participation of young people. Performance against these standards will be monitored and reported to Council.

'All Elected Members have been given the opportunity to engage with UNICEF to explore the UNCRC in detail as part of their induction programme. Training has also been provided to all of those working directly with children and young people as well as to the Extended Corporate Management Team and our cross Council Leadership Forum. This has increased awareness of children's rights and is impacting positively on the recommendations being put forward to various Council Committees. Leaders now more confidently talk about the importance of children's rights.

A new 'Integrated Impact Assessment' forms part of our committee reporting process. All Council decisions which impact children and young people are now taken following consideration of the impact of such decisions on children and young people.



Integrated Impact Assessment Pre-screening Stage 1

The Integrated Impact Assessment (IA) supersedes the previous Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) form.

The pre-screening (Stage 1) will determine if your proposal requires a full impact assessment (Stage 2). Stage 2 will look at details of your proposals, the impact and any mitigations in place.

Note: This form should be completed using the guidance contained in the document: 'Guide to Completing an Integrated Impact Assessment'. Please read the guidance before completing this form.

This assessment and accompanying guidance use the term 'policy' for any activity within Aberdeen City Council. Therefore 'policy' should be understood broadly to embrace the full range of your policies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities including the delivery of services – essentially everything you do.

Purpose:

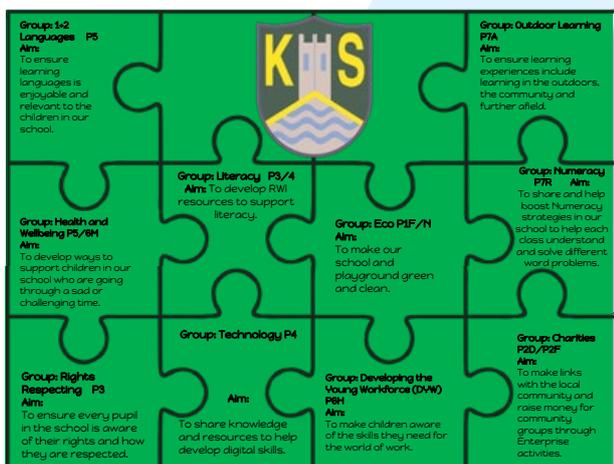
Aberdeen City Council wants Aberdeen to be a place where all people can prosper. We want everyone in Aberdeen to have fair opportunities regardless of their background and circumstances. The aim of this assessment is to allow you to critically assess:

- the impact of the policy / proposal on different communities.
- whether Aberdeen City Council is meeting its legal requirements in terms of [Public Sector Equality Duty](#), [Equality Outcomes](#) and [Human Rights](#);
- whether [children's Rights](#) have been impacted;
- whether [Socio-economic disadvantage](#) is reduced;
- whether any measures need to be put in place to ensure any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised which will be covered in Stage 2.

New and refreshed Council policies and strategies now explicitly reference children's rights and these extend beyond those traditionally impacting on children to include those on Net Zero and Master planning for example. The Council Strategy Board comprising members of the Corporate Management Team and Extended Corporate Management Team, check that children's rights are reflected in draft policies and strategies prior to them being presented to Council Committees for approval. The Strategy Board will continue to play a significant role in the Local Authorities preparation for the incorporation of the UNCRC and regularly reviews progress.

Officers report that both direct engagement with young people and consideration of their rights is helping them to be bolder in recommendations to Council and its Committees. There is a need to ensure that a participatory approach is consistently applied now and in doing so consider a wider variety of approaches to avoid the overuse of some mechanisms such as surveys.

All improvement plans within the Children and Families cluster, and associated school improvement plans, contain actions related to the incorporation of the UNCRC and many child friendly versions of these Plans are in place.



Getting it Right remains the foundation upon which we protect children's rights

In Aberdeen City the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) continue to form the foundations of inclusive planning to ensure that children and young people get the right help from the right people at the right time, however, we increasingly speak about Getting it Right for Every Child and Family. The establishment of the Aberdeen Protects site in 2021, which deliberately brings together policies and guidance relating to children and adults, will help drive more integrated whole family approaches in the future.



We will further develop this concept over the course of the next three years in light of updated GIRFEC practice guidance and the potential establishment of Getting it Right for Everyone (GIRFE) as the National Care Service is established. This will trigger the further joining up of children's and adult services to ensure seamless transitions. In addition, we are committed to continue developing services that reflect and respond positively to The Promise.

The universal provision of the Named Person Service continues to ensure that every child, young person and family knows who to contact when they need access to relevant support and that such universal support is non-stigmatising. Utilisation of the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators is well embedded across the Named Person Service.

Our work to become a Child Friendly City

Aberdeen City Council and Community Planning Partners continue to work to become a Child Friendly City.

Partners have worked to finalise the Log Frame which was approved by the Community Planning Aberdeen Board (CPA Board) in April 2022. This outlines all planned activity, the corresponding evaluation framework and marks the official conclusion of the planning phase.



Our Child Friendly Cities work, and that of partners, is shaped around 6 badges which are led by a team from across the Community Planning Partnership.

Culture - The 'vision of childhood', fundamental to a child rights-based approach (CRBA) is understood and promoted because staff know how to effectively practice and embed a child rights-based approach.

Cooperation & Leadership - Leaders within and beyond the local authority understand and value the importance of incorporating children's rights, needs and views in decision-making.

Communications - Communications staff and local media understand and value a child rights perspective and CFC status is regularly communicated to all members of the community (including children and young people) in a manner that is accessible and appropriate.

Child Friendly Services - All services, including health, justice, social services, and others are child friendly.

Participating - Children and young people's views are considered in decision making processes and there is clarity about how their participation has made an impact.

Place - Urban planning services apply a child rights-based approach (CRBA) to design, development, and provision, this will include participatory research.

The Child Friendly Cities programme has raised the profile of children's rights across the partnership. As all agencies prepare for the incorporation of the UNCRC, partners are currently focussed on the implications of this ground breaking legislation on their agency. It will be important to compare the content of the Child Friendly Cities Programme against Statutory Guidance anticipated in early 2023 to ensure that delivery of the programme helps partners realise their legal obligations.

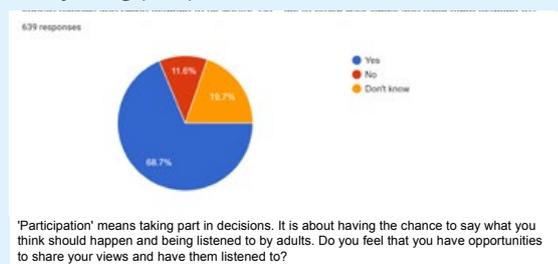
Young people involved in the recruitment of senior officers

Children and young people are directly involved in the recruitment of all Directors, Chief Officers and Head Teachers. Each appointment panel comprises a representative group of children and young people from across the city who are supported to consider the questions they are keen to ask of candidates. Feedback from the children and young people forms an important part of our assessment centre and directly influences decisions.

Candidates report that some of the most challenging questions asked of them are often asked by our young people.

Increasing participation in decision making

The COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity to reset how we engage with children and families. Approaches to participation are becoming more varied and dynamic and nearly 70% of our children and young people tell us that they more actively participate in decision making now. This is a 10% reduction from when the survey was last completed 3 years ago and this reduction is thought to reflect the increased expectation of participation by our children and young people.



A representative sample of our approaches to participation are outlined below.

Participation in the design of holiday programmes

Direct engagement with children, young people and families helped shape various school holiday programmes to ensure that they were most likely to support the positive health and wellbeing of children across Aberdeen City.

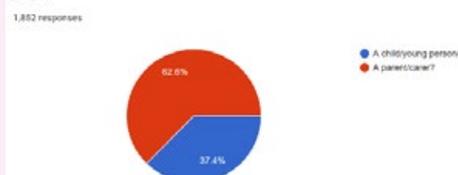
A digital survey was used to elicit the views of children, young people and families and responses rates have remained high over a series of programmes.

Analysis of data showed that our secondary aged young people were generally less likely to engage with this manner of consultation and so a number of focus groups were also used to more effectively gather their views and ensure meaningful consultation. From these focus groups we were better able to understand their lack of engagement and work directly with them to design visuals to generate interest from young people.

The programmes have been directly shaped by the reported needs of children and young people and our children and families tell us that the impact of the programmes is considerable.

Analysis of Summer of Play responses

Children, young people and families were invited to share their views on what a summer of play could comprise by electronic survey in May. The survey was open for one week and a total of 1852 responses were returned over the week. 1160 responses were returned by parents and carers and 692 by children and young people.



Participation in the design of a Peace Pledge

Representatives from each secondary school took on the role of Peace Ambassadors, writing a collaborative peace pledge for all of the children and young people in Aberdeen.

By participation in the Peace Fields Project and drawing up their Peace Pledge, young people from schools across the city have come together to speak with one voice. Through the Pledge they have highlighted the importance of having safe and welcoming spaces where young people from different communities and backgrounds can come together and enjoy physical activity in a peaceful way.

The Council intends to use this project as a catalyst to ensure other areas of the city are just as inclusive, safe and peaceful.



Participation through a simulator

Community Planning Aberdeen made use of a simulator to help children and young people have their say on the refresh of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

The outcome of this exercise helped determine which projects were prioritised for action.



Participation through the 'Youth Network'

The Youth Network provides an opportunity for people who work with children and young people across the city to come together and connect with each other. The purpose of this group is:

- Improved communication between services,
- Have a co-ordinated and joined-up approach to planning services,
- Ensure there is flexibility in approaches,
- Support a more a co-ordinated and joined-up approach to planning services,
- Continue to develop a better understanding of the range of services available for children and young people across the city,
- Develop good collegiate and partnership practice,
- Information sharing, and,
- Ensure that there is an effective and robust youth governance structure in place for the city.

The Youth Network has undertaken efforts to ensure that it is representative and inclusive, particularly with regards to representation of potentially marginalised groups of children and young people such as care experienced young people, young offenders and gypsy travellers.

The Youth Network, is currently engaged in jointly developing (alongside children and young people) some tips, solutions and guidance regarding youth engagement to support partners and professionals to deliver engaging and consistent participation experiences for children and young people.

Master planning with children and young people

A positive example of participation beyond traditional children's services is the work undertaken with city planners in the development and delivery of the Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan. This work began in 2021 and has included creative workshops designed to elicit views in an age appropriate way to enable young people to feel confident, valued and respected contributors to the master planning processes.

Starting with the question "should seagulls be granted freedom of the city centre and beach?" the workshops equipped young people with a lens to discuss openly topics concerning their futures. This creative approach enabled young people to critically assess ideas and to foster a deeper understanding of topics connected to climate change, environment, space and place.

During October 2022, 500 pupils from 6 primary schools and 2 secondary schools were visited by the Beach Campervan to ask them for their thoughts and ideas around the future of the Beach. Pupils designed, planned and built models to reimagine the space, and these models were presented to the public for discussion at a special event in the Beach Ballroom.

During the summer and October holidays in 2022, young people aged between 10-17 years from across the city also chose to engage with discussion about play, space and place within the city centre and beach areas. Short films were created by these young people which explored these geographic locations and depicted what these spaces could be transformed into in the future.

The views of children and young people in these sessions have gone on to directly inform the recommendations on the future of the City Centre and Beach areas being made to Elected Members at Full Council meetings.



Scan the QR code for more.....



Early engagement on the School Estate Plan example

Our children and young people have been encouraged to engage with a provisional school estate plan on a newly developed young people page of the city website.

This approach will help inform the shape of the proposals to be formally consulted upon and will also help us determine how we can best use the Council website to provide opportunities for young people to have their say.



Ensuring a strategic focus on prevention to uphold children's rights

The Council Target Operating Model prioritises prevention and a recently approved Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy is driving the shift to moving resource upstream.

Improved partnership data is helping the Council and wider partnership focus on prevention as we work together to Keep the Promise.

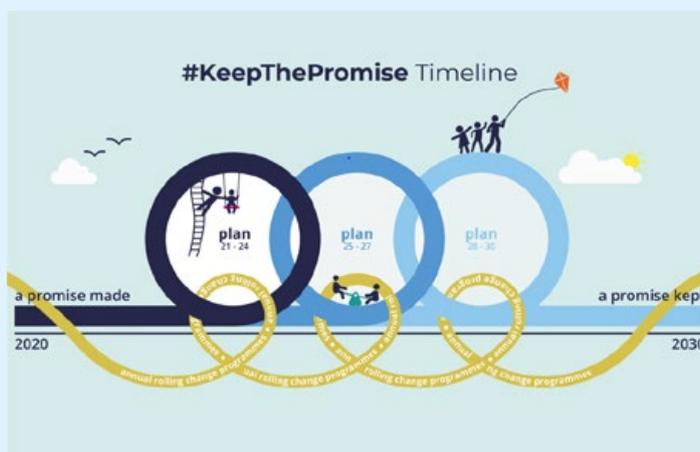
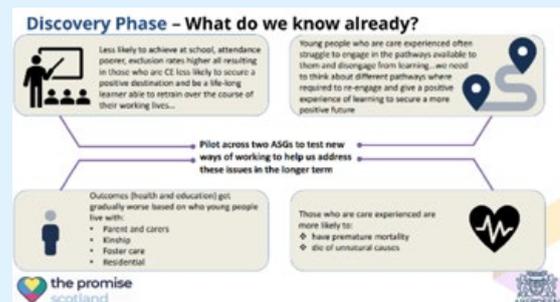
Clusters from across the Council came together to consider the impact of our current system on those who are care experienced or considered to be on the edge of care. This included workshop participants hearing of the lived experiences of children, young people and families.

A number of vulnerabilities were identified which were translated into a set of problem statements to be addressed through two Edge of Care pilots operating across our city.

This work is part of a partnership drive to shape a partnership Family Support Model around 4 groups of children and young people:

- Those in conflict with the law
- Those with disabilities
- Those impacted by trauma
- Those on the edge of care

This area will continue to be aligned with Plan 21-24 over the next reporting period.



Supporting young people to take action on issues of interest to them

The voices of children and young people inform the work of services across the Council. Our children and young people care passionately for their environment.

Over the last year children and young people have been fully engaged in a number of environmental campaigns including Clean Up Aberdeen, Aberdeen Communities Together (ACT) and Keep Scotland Beautiful Its Your Neighbourhood.



There has been over 1,108 school pupils attending workshops at Duthie Park, which have included learning about the benefits of plants and how they grow, the outdoor environment (bird and tree identification), tropical plants and as part of British Science Week, 77 pupils attended workshops on how trees grow. The Ranger Service has also provided a workshop on the theme of Rainforest Tribes to 436 pupils through Techfest.



The Summer of Play programme, which was shaped by the self-reported interests of young people, helped to fund some of the Holiday Workshops the Service ran. A total of 476 children attended the workshops, learning in a fun way about minibeast, Scottish animals, tracking and also had some fun with muddy play. Summer of Play also helped to fund an art project at the Duthie park, Parklife, where 200 primary age pupils helped create the mural using different collage techniques which will serve as a lasting legacy.



The Rangers also provided workshops for local charity organisations and uniformed organisations, including Barnardo's, National Children's Trust and Aberdeen Lads Club. Peep Little Rangers had 10 families attend each of their weekly sessions, where the children took part in storytelling, crafts, singing, all linked to the outdoors.

The Groovy Growits programme, our junior gardening workshops, have also restarted, with children being able to get involved in planting vegetables and flowers.



The first Wee Forest was planted in Aberdeen thanks to the joint efforts of Aberdeen City Council's Environmental Services team, NatureScot, and pupils and staff of Woodside Primary School. Led by NatureScot, the programme aims to give people the opportunity to help tackle the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss by creating and caring for their own forest in their own neighbourhood. The 600 plants, which include alder, cherry, Scots pine, crab apple, holly, juniper, elder, willow, oak, rowan, and hazel trees along with dog roses, broom, gorse, blaeberry, heather, hawthorn, and blackthorn, have been planted by staff and pupils in a grassy area across Clifton Road from the school with help from the City Council's Countryside Rangers. Woodside Primary School created a fantastic film to accompany the launch of the [Wee Forest](#).

Primary school children from across the city are involved in our bulb planting scheme each winter where we plant 140,000 spring bulbs in parks and open spaces.

We consulted with primary schools as we plan for our £450K play area refurbishment investment. The voice of young people is important to help decide on the design and build of the annual play area refurbishment programme and determine what play areas should include.

We received the 'Achievement' Award for our Craster project in the RHS Community Awards 2021, 'Nourishing Your Community' category. Craster is a project which involves the services working with schools to grow their own food.

Across the city our work on green spaces with community partnerships continue to grow. The service now has more than 150 collaborations in place including volunteers, communities, businesses, schools, third organisations and companies. Thousands of volunteer hours are spent in Aberdeen's parks and green spaces.

Thousands of trees have been planted in Aberdeen as part of a nation-wide initiative to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. The Queen's Green Canopy is a unique tree planting initiative which invites people from across the United Kingdom to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee' to create a legacy in honour of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee and Aberdeen has been selected as one of the initiative's Champion Cities. The Champion City programme has been launched to celebrate some of the nation's outstanding cities which have trees as a central part of their plans for green spaces.



Aberdeen launched the initiative at Fernielea open space with the planting of 8000 trees and shrubs. Primary children from Hazlehead, Countesswells and Airyhall all helped plant these trees. Over 70 oak trees were made available to our schools and community groups for planting and there are now Queen's Green Canopy trees in many schools across Aberdeen.



Clean Up Aberdeen continues to be a success. 2021 saw a record number of clean ups, 496, completed with over 2000 volunteers involved.

Since January 2021, 450 litter picking tongs have been distributed to our brilliant clean up champions. These have been given to individuals and their friends, families and small groups, exercise groups, community centres, child minders, schools, and businesses. We now have more individual volunteers and young people helping to keep the city clean than ever before.

Environmental Services continue to be heavily invested in our children and young people and recognise that this investment is most likely to realise positive environmental change.



Developing pathways for those transitioning to adulthood

As an employer, Aberdeen City Council is committed to employing young people and to developing employment pathways for young people. We view young people as key to our workforce for the future. In March 2020, the Council was awarded the Investors in Young People Gold Standard Award for its commitment to developing the young workforce and the initiatives undertaken to support this. In February 2022 the Council became a Young Person's Guarantee employer, which further highlights our commitment to supporting young people in the workplace.

The People and Organisational Development Cluster has developed a range of initiatives for young people to gain work experience or employment opportunities within the Council and this focus is reflected in the Council's Workforce Plan approved in 2019 and will form part of the Council's new Workforce Strategy currently being developed. The new Workforce Strategy will be informed by two focus groups of young people in city secondary schools.



The Council has an established modern apprenticeship programme in a range of areas across the Council including Early Years, Customer Service, Business Admin, Trades, Finance, Housing and Social Care. In addition, the Council supports Foundation Apprenticeship placements, where S5 and S6 pupils undertaking Foundation Apprenticeships as part of their timetable, spend a day per week in the workplace undertaking work experience. In session 2019/20, the Council supported 32 Foundation Apprenticeship placements across a range of functions/clusters, numbers have been less in subsequent years due to the covid pandemic.

The Council has a number of guaranteed interview schemes for applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the role, with a particular focus on young people as follows.

- All Council vacancies - care experienced young people aged 16-29.
- Modern Apprenticeship vacancies (except trade apprenticeships) - young people aged 16-24 who are resident in the Aberdeen City boundary or have attended a secondary school in Aberdeen City.
- Modern Apprenticeship vacancies – young people who have done a Foundation Apprenticeship with Aberdeen City Council and are applying for any apprenticeships relevant to the area in which they did their Foundation Apprenticeship.
- Modern Apprenticeship vacancies – New Scots aged 16-24 (defined as refugees and asylum seekers who are in Scottish communities)

We promote our apprenticeship opportunities and entry level vacancies to young people in the city across a range of social media channels and through our DYW contacts.

The Council supported the UK Government Kickstart Scheme and employed 79 young people aged 16-24 on 6 month Internships, under this scheme during 2021/22. A significant number of these Interns have secured extended or permanent roles within the Council, outwith the council or have moved on to study. The success of this scheme in having the opportunity to employ young people, with their fresh ideas and attitudes in what were a range of 'hard to fill' roles, in some cases, across the Council was viewed very positively by our recruiting managers and has paved the way for further development in future employability initiatives. All interns had support from a workplace mentor and an Employability Keyworker.



Work to support Care Experienced Young People into employment is strongly featured within our LOIP - SO2 – “Support 15 care experienced young people progress to employment through public sector funded employability programmes by 2023”. The success of this improvement project has resulted in changes to ‘business as usual’ practices ensuring that the impact of early life trauma of Care Experienced Young People is now continuously recognised in supporting them into positive destinations. This will provide a supportive approach for young people coming into the workplace and ensure that our ‘One Council’ approach maximises opportunity and positively discriminates on behalf of those for whom we have Corporate Parenting responsibility.

As a partnership we are considering the implications of the Children (Equal Protection) (Scotland) Act 2019 and the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019. Both Acts are significant landmarks in how we view and treat children. They will not only require a shift in practice for our workforce, but they will also require a wider engagement and conversation with the citizens of Aberdeen City to achieve a cultural shift in attitudes.

In the height of the pandemic concerns were raised by young people about their future prospects as a result of negative language being used to describe the situation. These concerns led to the development of ABZ Works.



The ABZ Works site was co-designed with care experienced young people and aimed to clarify all of the opportunities available to young people and the pathways into the many different growth sectors.

The ABZ Works employability website has an average of 430 hits per month. Providers and employers regularly reach out to ask how they can have representation on the website as they see the value of using it to promote their opportunities to young people.

Thanks to co-design approach taken with young people, the website is easy to navigate with a great user experience and a responsive chatbot. The success of the website led to the establishment of Lift Off, an event designed to help being young people to explore their options directly with industry partners.



Summary evaluation

Aberdeen City Council is thought to have effective structures, resources and working practices in place to implement the UNCRC with the Strategy Board overseeing preparations for the incorporation of the UNCRC.

There is now a need to ensure that staff across all Clusters feel confident when engaging with children and young people and use a range of different approaches to participation.

There is a need to monitor the Integrated Impact Assessments data as part of the Committee effectiveness reporting process to help determine the impact of the approach.

Officers will continue to integrate services as we work to deliver a partnership Family Support Model in keeping with The Promise given the very clear evidence that more integrated services help to reduce risks from escalating.



General Principles of the UNCRC

There are 4 general principles of the UNCRC which are considered in this section. They are:

- For rights to be applied without discrimination (Article 2);
- For the best interests of the child to be a primary consideration (Article 3);
- The right to life, survival and development (Article 6); and
- The right to express a view and have that view taken into account (Article 12)

Carefully considering our use of language

Some of the language used to describe incidents and near misses which can occur when a child or young person is dysregulated was known to be at odds with the language of the UNCRC and this has been addressed. It is hoped that more careful use of the language used to report near misses and incidents will help shift the narrative from ‘assault’ and ‘violence’ to trauma, dysregulation and compassion.

The Write Right about Me project (WRAM) is starting to drive a decisive shift in professional writing about children and young people. The Project has listened directly to those with care experience to understand the impact of poorly chosen language on those accessing their records and is driving a change in writing about children and young people across the partnership. Learning from WRAM is being embraced by our local universities who are supporting our teachers, social workers and health staff of tomorrow to be more conscious of how they frame their recordings.

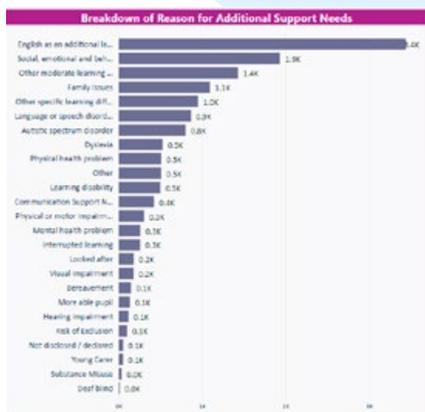
Improving our use of data

Considerable work has been undertaken to reshape universal supports for those with additional support needs (ASN) based on live data.

We now have better oversight of data to inform planning around emerging need. ASN and Outreach services have been reshaped to better reflect the children and young people being supported and the voices of children, young people and families have been central to the changes made.

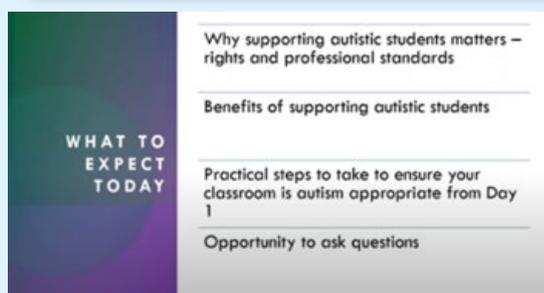
Despite these positive steps, qualitative and quantitative data evidences that the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted children who are neurodiverse and a new neurodevelopmental pathway is being developed with community planning partners to address this need. The identification of this need has informed our prioritisation of wrap around support over school holiday periods for those impacted by additional support needs and disability and families tell us how helpful this has been.

There is a need to further develop our data collection to enable more robust evaluation of the impact of our work on the rights of the 6 groups most likely to be impacted by poverty and those with protected characteristics. This work is complex and being driven by the Data and Insights Cluster. Working through some of the data challenges will help us establish a set of indicators to monitor our progress in the longer term.



Working to improve accessibility

We continue to develop and progress accessibility through the three areas of the schools' Accessibility Plan (access to the curriculum, accessibility of the physical environment and access to information).



Improved awareness of legislation has been led through professional learning for leaders regarding legislation, discrimination and equalities. Professional learning regarding disabilities has included partnership work with Autism Understanding Scotland, an Autistic led charity. Over 400 members of staff have participated in their training in the last year and further opportunities are being developed.

Continued development of provision through the Fit like hubs has enabled consideration of a personalised curriculum and there is evidence of an improvement in the quality of Child's Plans submitted. The quality of planning will be further developed through the production of a series of webinar type recordings to support staff.

The School Minimising Exclusion Policy was reviewed in 2020 with refreshed guidance produced in accordance with UNCRC and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNRPD). This helped realise a decrease in the number of children with disabilities being excluded and a reduction in the number of cases referred to the First Tier Tribunal from 5 in 2019 and 2020 to 2 in 2021.

Access to the curriculum has been supported through the increased provision of technological tools, training and devices. 14,564 chrome books and 500 Wi-Fi connections have been made available over the reporting period.

In keeping with the Accessibility Plan, an increased number of pupils are now declared disabled in our school Management Information System. In 2019 280 learners were declared disabled and the figure was relatively stable in 2020 (290 declared disabled), for 2021 those declared disabled has risen to 353, a rise of 22%. In 2022 the number of learners with a declared disability rose by a further 5% to 372.

Youth work supporting young people as we emerge from the pandemic

Education Recovery funding has enabled the provision of Youth Work and Family Learning resources to provide early and preventative support to children and families across the city. There is a growing body of evidence that supports the maintenance of this approach to help mitigate harms as we emerge from the pandemic.

The number of participants registered for a youth work Education Recovery activity between August 2021 and the end of August 2022 was 1018. The number of sessions attended during this period is 7318; this equates to 7513 learner hours.

The youth work team is licensed to deliver the Hi-5 and Dynamic Youth awards. These awards were included in the youth work Education Recovery offer, and during this period 29 children have achieved a Hi-5 award and 23 have achieved a Dynamic Youth Award.

Another Education Recovery youth work offer was targeted transition support for pupils moving from primary to secondary school. The intention is to prepare the young person for the move and lessen their anxiety. One parent gave this feedback

"The course really helped build up my son's confidence and excitement about going to the academy – he has very little nerves or worries at all now and is so excited to start! The course was excellent and covered so many good areas which helped to prepare him, and he loved being part of it and looked forward to Tuesdays! The course was excellent – can't praise it enough :-) hope it is continued next year for the next set of P7's "

Supporting young people who identify as being LGBTQ

Many city secondary schools make effective use of LGBTQ resources and operate Pride Groups in order to ensure that young people have access to all of the support they require to fully claim their rights. Wider Council services, such as the Library Service, also proactively support young people who identify as LGBTQ.

The Youth Work team supports Zone Youth, a city-wide support group for young people who are LGBTQ. Zone Youth met online during lockdown and are now meeting up again in person.



Library based supports for those with the full range of additional support needs

Aberdeen City Libraries offer a wide range of resources to support children and young people with additional support needs, as well as to practitioners working with them. Resources including Bag books, talking books, picture books for older readers, high interest/low vocabulary, large print and braille books through to educational games, learning packs, DVDs and wallcharts are all available through the library service.



All libraries offer calming resources to help children and young people feel comfortable and welcome in libraries. Families can pre-arrange visits to libraries and a range of Familiarisation Storyboards and 360 walkthroughs are available to support a positive trip to the library.

All library staff delivering Bookbug sessions have received basic training in British Sign Language (BSL) and Makaton to support engagement of non-verbal children and young people.

Libraries provide visual communication aides where appropriate to support those with communication challenges.

An active library volunteering programme offers young people with additional support needs bespoke work experience placements with the aim of building employability skills, acknowledging volunteering through Saltire Awards. Aberdeen City Libraries were proud to participate in the “Umbrella Project” installation in collaboration with Aberdeen Inspired and the ADHD Foundation, sponsored by PwC, celebrating neurodiversity.

A number of Aberdeen schools participated in the Umbrella Project including pupils from Seaton Primary School who shared their 'super powers' and other children and young people by leaving messages and designs on the umbrellas for display in the Central Children's Library.

The Library service plans to launch Lego therapy sessions to support autistic children and young people soon and have sought support from Therapets to help young people with a range of needs engage with reading.

Aberdeen City Libraries' Early Years Librarian, Children & Young People's Librarian and Health & Wellbeing Librarian work with families, children, young people, schools, vulnerable groups and partners to ensure access to high quality needs-based information resources in a range of formats. As a result, information materials are available in an increasing range of formats in order to meet the needs of individual children and young people although we recognise there is always more to be done.



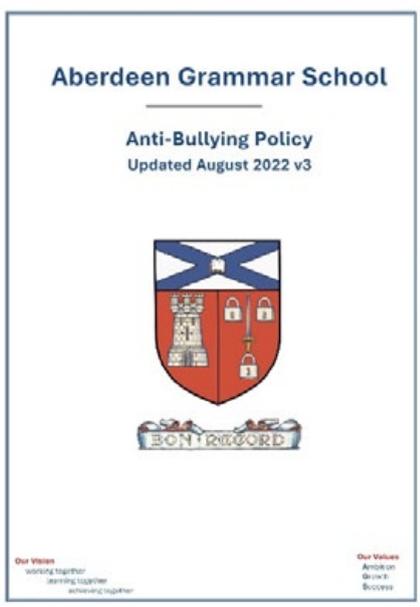
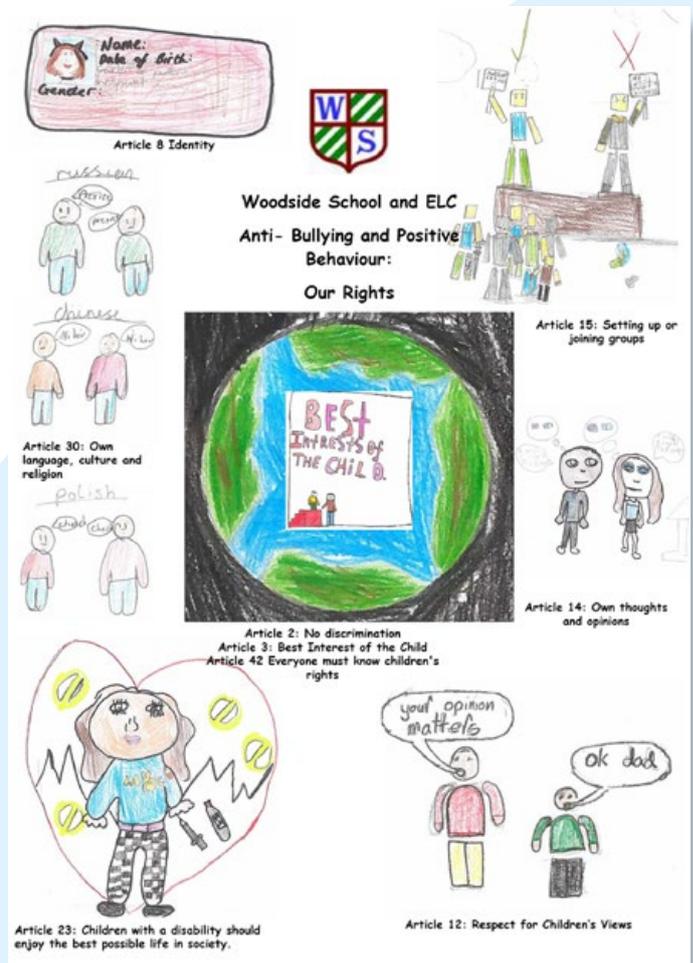
Monitoring bullying data to ensure non-discrimination

A key measure which indicates that children are thriving in inclusive schools is the level of bullying incidents reported.

The data identifies that data has been relatively static when you take account of school building closures. Bullying incidents where racism was recorded as the reason have reduced.

Further scrutiny of the data has identified changed trends in bullying incidents. For example, there has been a significant increase in the number of bullying incidents which refer to body image/physical appearance. Additionally, there is a gender aspect which is evident and identifies that 70% of bullying incidents are raised by girls. The impact of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown has witnessed a rise in the number of incidents recorded around mental health.

The data highlights that the nature of bullying has changed considerably and that there is a need to review the Anti-bullying policy to ensure that we proactively respond. This will be prioritised by the Education Service over session 22/23.

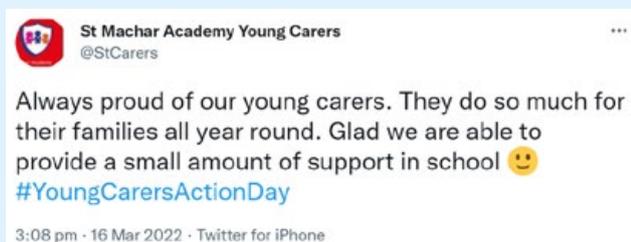


RECOGNISE TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR	STAFF ADVICE NOTE RECOGNISING, RECORDING AND MONITORING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR	REPORTING INCIDENTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR
<p>Physical – e.g. pushing, poking, kicking, hazing rituals, inappropriate touching.</p> <p>Verbal – e.g. name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, belittling, banter.</p> <p>Emotional – e.g. isolating others, tormenting, threatening gestures, manipulation, coercion.</p> <p>Prejudice-based - e.g. any comment or action intended to taunt because of difference, real or perceived, in race, religion, sexuality, gender, disability or any other matter.</p> <p>Online – e.g. abusive posts on social media, sharing photos without permission, offensive texts, sexting, impersonating another person online, patterning.</p>	<p>Responsibility of all staff:</p> <p>Understand and adhere to the anti-bullying policy.</p> <p>Challenge and report all bullying behaviour.</p> <p>Apply Anti-Bullying policy consistently.</p> <p>Demonstrate respect, tolerance and kindness.</p> <p>Recognise our cultural diversity has an influence on relationships and identity.</p> <p>Promote all young people's self-esteem and emotional wellbeing by helping them to maintain positive relationships and to achieve in their learning.</p> <p>Promote and foster responsible use of technology.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge, listen and reassure. 2. Inform the young person that information will be shared with their PTSP and they will be involved in next steps. 3. Complete a 'Bullying Behaviour Report': AGS Bullying Behaviour Report 4. If you feel the situation is a child protection matter report this to J Adams (Child Protection Co-ordinator).
RECOGNISE SIGNS OF THE IMPACT OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR	PROFESSIONAL LEARNING LINKS	
<p>Psychological – e.g. increased levels of depression and anxiety, loss of confidence and self-esteem.</p> <p>Social – e.g. self isolation, being ostracised or losing social relations.</p> <p>Physiological – e.g. increased stress levels, somatic complaints (headache or stomach ache), distress, bodily harm, loss of concentration, developing ticks or stammers.</p> <p>Academic – e.g. failing to achieve potential, school avoidance.</p> <p>Ultimately affects a young person's ability to learn and build healthy relationships.</p>	<p>respectme (Scotland's anti-bullying service)</p> <p>respectme online learning module - 'Bullying...it's never acceptable' https://respectme.org.uk/resources/online-learning/module/</p>	
<p>OUR VISION - working together, learning together, achieving together</p> <p>ABERDEEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL</p>		

Young Carers Service

Barnardo's Aberdeen Young Carers Service was commissioned in April 2019 by Aberdeen City Council and has been operational over the reporting period. It is the only dedicated Young Carers service in Aberdeen City, working with children and young people from age of 5 to 20 years old.

The Service continues to support young carers in Aberdeen City to live a happy and fulfilled life alongside caring. We provide a range of support including 1-to-1 interventions, family work, group work, short breaks, social activities, signposting/linking to other services and supports, and training for professionals.



The service aims to support schools, services, and the communities to have increased awareness of the needs of young carers by informing professionals of the challenges that young carers face and the potential risks associated with being a young carer. All Young Carers are offered a Young Carer Statement.



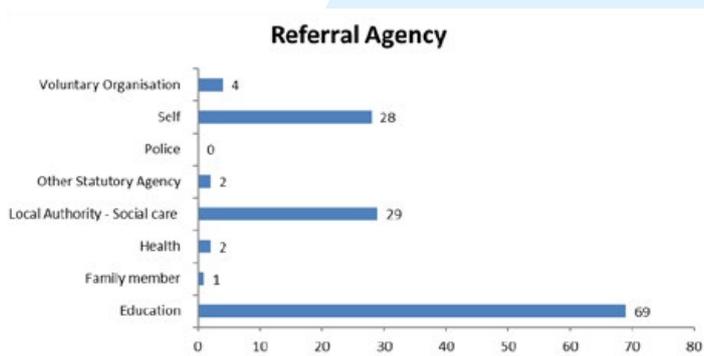
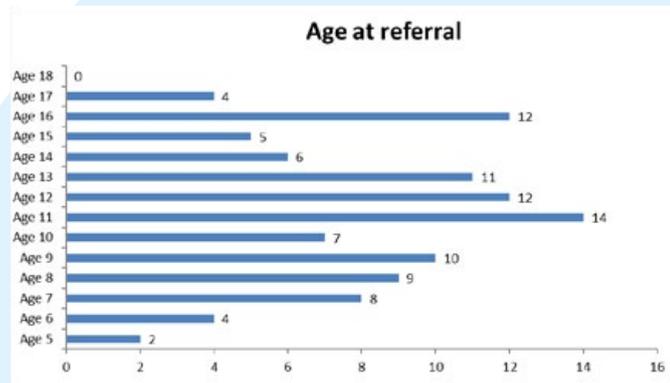
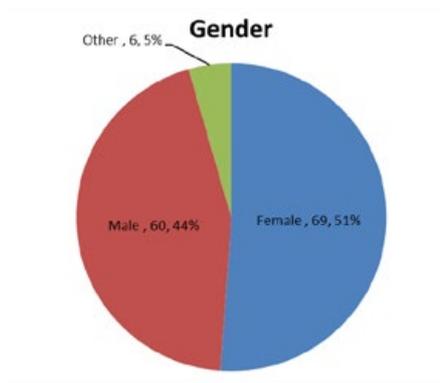
Support opportunities vary depending upon the needs of individual Young Carers, those available at present include:

- One-to-one support to reduce the impact of the caring role and improve the Young Carers health and wellbeing.
- Advocacy on behalf of the Young Carers or their families
- Volunteer Befriender's to support with social opportunities including accessing a break from their caring responsibilities.
- Monthly Saturday groups for Primary School and S1-S3 age groups
- Twice weekly evening groups for the S4+ age group
- Monthly LGBT+ groups for 11-14 and 15+ age groups
- Music Therapy Groups in partnership with ELM Music Therapy
- Sports Groups in partnership with Sport Aberdeen
- Weekly social groups for all age groups over school holiday periods
- Access to limited free places at Kings Camp over school holiday periods in partnership with Kings Camp
- Access to group programmes in partnership with Aberdeen Performing Arts
- Paid and PVG approved Coach Assistant placements for Young Carers over 16 in partnership with AAAC
- SVQ in Health and Social Care for Young Carers over 16 or Adult Carers in partnership with Bon Accord Care
- Weekly Adult Support Group for Adult Carers, Cared For's and other adult family members involved with the Young Carer to receive peer support and information
- Volunteering opportunities for Young Carers over 16 and adults involved with the service
- Support in accessing financial support

Breakdown of Referrals (1st April 2019 to 15th August 2022)

	TOTAL
No. New Referrals (1st April 2019 to 15th August 2022)	151
No. awaiting allocation as of 15th August 2022	3
No. of referral not progressed as of 15th August 2022	13
No. Closed (1st April 2021 to 31st July 2022)	19
Total Number of Young Carers supported (1st April 2019 to 15th August 2022)	135

Data is based on 135 Young Carers supported from (1st April 2019 to 15th August 2022)



Ensuring that children can express their views and have them taken into account

An increasing range of approaches are being taken to ensure that children and young people can have their say and have their views taken into account. A representative sample of approaches are included below.

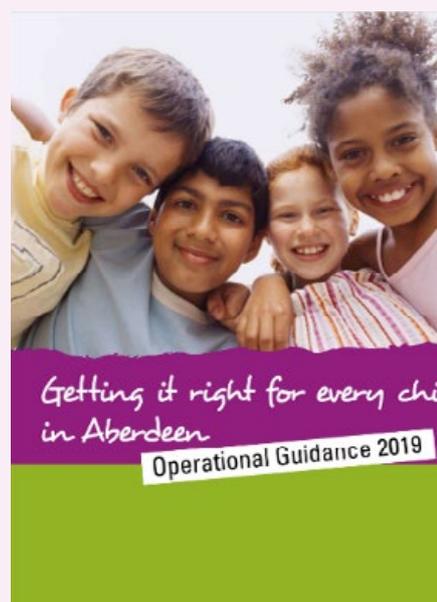
Planning in the best interests of children and young people

We take our statutory duty to seek and take account of the views of children and young people when we are planning how to appropriately support their wellbeing needs very seriously. This includes deciding who is best placed to gather the views of the child or young person, for example, school staff, social worker, health professional and how to harness this information. A range of partnership tools exist to facilitate this process.

Constant consideration is given to the needs of the child/young person in this planning process: who engages, which support tools, whole/part attendance at planning meetings.

If it is decided that a child/young person's needs should be supported by others, the child/young person will be included in discussing the benefits of sharing their information, including why share, with whom, potential consequences of not sharing.

Information sharing is proportionate and appropriate and complies with the Data Protection Act while recognising a child's right to privacy (Article 16).



School improvement planning

School staff have developed their use of Pupil Voice over the reporting period with Children's Rights featuring in all School Improvement Plans. There is evidence that some schools are analysing the experience of some groups, such as those with care experience, more rigorously than others and best practice in this area will be shared.

There are plans to evaluate the consistency of approaches through the education Quality Improvement Framework in session 2022/23 and share best practice around eliciting the voices of those who are Looked After or on the edge of care.



Young People taking the lead at Bucksburn Academy

Senior Pupils at Bucksburn Academy pulled together to produce a lockdown chronical to support young people and families within their school community.



Pupil Leadership Groups

All schools continue to have pupil led groups who drive improvement and inform practice at school and community level. In the majority of cases, children and young people set agendas and record decisions and many are now organising and hosting community events.



Pupil voice and technology

In addition to traditional planned opportunities for gathering the views and opinions of children and young people, an increasing number of schools are adopting innovative ways of engaging with their learners using technology.



An example of this can be seen in Ashley Road School who have recently introduced four digital 'Voice Box' kiosks within the school. These are located in central areas of the school which are passed by all children during break and lunch times. The display a concise survey of between 1 and 3 questions and provide for quick and engaging opportunities to gather the thoughts and opinions of learners. These questions change on a weekly basis and are used to inform planning, staff, pupil leaders and the parent council.

Climate Change Champions

As children and young people have been more able to claim their rights they are starting to hold the decision makers to account. Our Pupil Climate Change Group, presided over by a young person as Climate Change President, has a budget of £150,000 to help progress the areas identified by our children and young people. This power in the hands of our children and young people will help ensure that that our future leaders influence and inform our work in this critical area.



Complaints Process for Children and Young People

Children and young people are users of a wide range of services, including those such as schools, children and families social work. Many of these focus on their wellbeing, health and development. Children have the right to complain if they are unhappy with those services.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) are leading on a project to co-design and implement child friendly complaints approaches as part of the complaints handling procedure, to ensure children's right and needs are met. The SPSO are working in co-operation with children and young people, public bodies and wider stakeholders.

Engagement is underway and formal consultation to follow, with a view to laying the guidance before the Scottish Parliament and implementing the new guidance on 1 April 2023, aiming for compliance by 1 April 2024.

Evaluation

Aberdeen City Council is thought to have a range of effective arrangements in place to elicit the voice and meaningful participation of children and young people. An increasingly diverse range of approaches to participation are being used and there is now a need to share approaches more fully to build confidence in those who do not engage with children and young people on a daily basis.

There are many examples of clear feedback loops to children and young people but this doesn't appear to be consistent. There is a need to ensure that children and young people consistently know how their involvement has led to change.

It can be hard to ascertain the extent to which some groups are currently claiming their rights as our data collection and processing systems do not afford us the ability to easily extract this data. Officers are working to try to address this.

There is a need to review the school bullying policy and implement a child friendly complaints process when agreed.

Civil rights and freedoms

This cluster focusses on children's civil rights and freedoms including children's right to move freely in public space, to access information and to privacy.

The impact of Public Health measures on children's freedoms

March 2020 impacted on children's civil rights and freedoms as they were no longer able to move freely in public space and to meet with others. This impacted on all members of society and triggered the need to think differently about how best to support children and families.

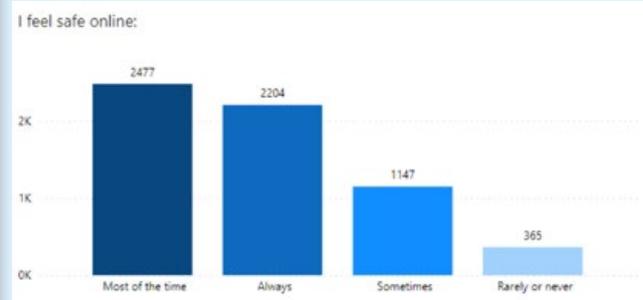
Schools quickly identified children and families who were thought to be more vulnerable due to a range of factors including a member of the family having a disability or being at risk of poverty for example.

School staff maintained regular contact with all children through Google Classroom but made a targeted offer to families in need through the periods of school building closure. This approach helped ensure that risks were quickly identified and addressed and that decisions around the allocation of resource were taken in the best interests of the child.

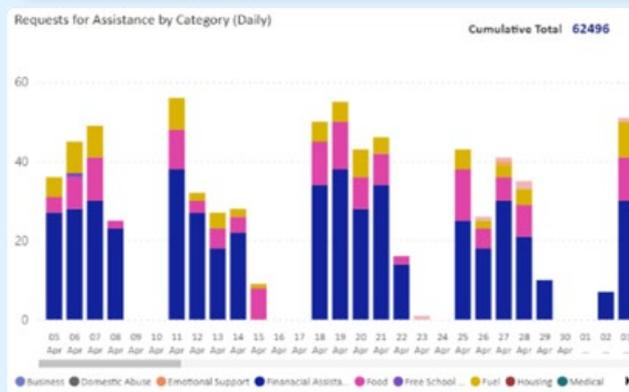
The move to different school operating models brought new risks to our children, particularly on-line risks.

A Health & Wellbeing survey of 6193 learners, 76% (4681) stated that they felt safe online with 36% stating they always feel safe and 40% feeling safe most of the time. At first glance this looks like a decrease in numbers of children feeling safe online from the Learning at a Distance survey of June 2021 where 92% stating they felt safe online, however, our most recent survey had a far higher uptake and a focus extending beyond the use of Google Classroom.

Crisis Line Food Requests



In real terms 4681 pupils have reported they feel safe online compared to 2909 in 2021. School staff continue to address on-line safety issues.



In June 2021, the Safer Schools app was launched for pupils, parents/carers and staff and to provide relevant and current information on a wide range of safeguarding, wellbeing, and online safety subjects. The app was well received by our Parent Forum members and our Child Protection Committee as proving a useful resource for all. All schools have signed up to the app, which was shared with all parents via a range of communication channels – direct email, text message and social media. 85% of children and young people who participated in a children’s rights survey tell us that they are supported to stay safe online. The percentage of respondents stating that they are supported to stay safe online is lower compared to our previous survey in 2020. This may be the result of an increased number of responses (up from 450 in 2020 to 640 in 2022) but may also be related to the significantly increased time spent online as a direct result of the pandemic. This increased exposure and the everchanging social media landscape means that we must ensure that the support we offer our children and young people is responsive and appropriate.

Supporting those fleeing from conflict

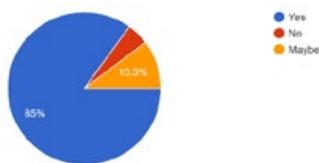
The Council has continued to support a number of children and families fleeing conflict from Syria, Afghanistan and most recently from Ukraine.

In September 2021, given the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, the Home Office airlifted over 7000 individuals from Kabul airport as part of the Locally Engaged Staff (LES) Scheme. To meet the temporary needs of families before they find permanent accommodation the Home Office procured hotels across the UK including 3 hotels in central Aberdeen to provide bridging accommodation to a sizeable community. Overnight around 30 families with a total of 79 children and young people arrived in the city. Initial contact with families in the hotels was made by education staff shortly after their arrival and two enhanced EAL provisions were established in local schools, one primary and one secondary, offering a bespoke introduction to the English language and to the school system for these young people. Following this transitional support, around 80 primary children and young people from Afghanistan are now attending city schools.

The conflict in Ukraine has seen the city welcome around 1200 Ukrainians to the city. As children and young people are welcomed into the city they are quickly allocated a school and provided with school uniform to ensure that they feel a sense of belonging.

In order to ensure a smooth transition into school, school enrollments were reviewed with direct support provided by the Customer Cluster to ensure that children were registered and attending school as quickly as possible.

Are you supported to know about staying safe online?
640 responses



The number of young people entering the city over summer 2022 triggered the design and delivery of a Settle in the City Programme.



The Settle in the city programme offered a daily provision for children fleeing conflict and was delivered as a collaboration across the universal services of health and education. This approach enabled professionals to accurately assess the wellbeing needs of children and young people and secure support for children and families where required. The activities available to children were driven by the ideas of the children.

One young person was keen to bake a cake to celebrate his Mums birthday and was supported to do so, whilst many of the children shared their feelings of loss having left pets behind in Ukraine which triggered a partnership with Therapets.

Officers took account of the very unique circumstances of those living in hotels and provided games and toys to ensure that children continued to enjoy their right to play in the hotel accommodation.

A senior phase event was held with Further Education partners to support 50 young people to ensure that they get on the right pathway.

Collaborating with children and young people to ensure high quality public spaces

We support children and young people's freedom of association through the provision of many award winning public spaces where they can meet safely. Our city benefits from a high proportion of public parks and gardens, many of which enjoy an association with local schools.



Hazlehead Primary School – Case Study

Hazlehead Primary School have been working closely with a range of council services to raise awareness of environmental concerns and to make improvements within their local community.

The school's Community and Eco Groups participated in the council's 'Scoop Watch' initiative which aims to highlight the problem of dog fouling and change the behaviours of some dog owners.

The group created a range of eye-catching posters to illustrate their concerns about this issue and attached these beside dog poo dispensers that they had created. Since these were created and put up, the groups have been monitoring their use and have been pleased to discover that these are being used and are starting to make a difference within the local area.

In addition to this, the school have been wonderful ambassadors for the 'Clean-Up Aberdeen' campaign. Working alongside the council's Environmental Manager, some of the school's children visited the local recycling centre to find out about the council's recycling efforts and met with council staff who maintain the city's green spaces and who have a responsibility for ensuring that our city and communities are clean and free of litter.

Over 100 of the school's pupils, staff and parents/carers then took part in a litter pick around the city's Hazlehead area. Their efforts saw them collecting around 40 bins worth of litter in just 2 hours.

Their incredible commitment to improving the area and ensuring that children and young people are able to enjoy a clean environment did not go unnoticed with a range of positive comments and feedback given by local residents.



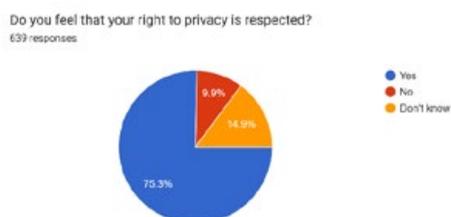
Master planning

As part of the City Centre and Beach Masterplan proposals, children and young people have been involved in developing proposals for new public spaces and parks in the central core of the city. This has meant engaging with children and young people as current participants who use spaces in their own unique ways, rather than asking them how they would use these spaces in the future as adults. This is an important part of ensuring children's rights to be heard and for children to feel respected as children. As well as parks and playgrounds, this has also included opportunities for incidental play as part of more general public realm proposals – for example by encouraging playful interactions when different groups might use these spaces in different ways. Sustainability and inclusivity have been important themes within these exercises.



Protecting a child's right to privacy

Children and young people have the right to know how their information is being used and who it is being shared with, and we're committed to being open. We have a range of Privacy Notices for Children and Young People which clearly state why and how their information is used, managed and shared. We make use of the ICO Children's Code in our Information Governance procedures and ask that our suppliers do likewise. 75% of children and young people who responded to a recent survey agree that their right to privacy is respected. This represents a reduction of 11% compared to when the survey was last undertaken three years ago. This will be explored more fully to understand the change.



We carefully consider changes to the way we process children's data using our data protection impact assessment process. We have recently led the development and agreement of an Information Sharing Protocol for Children and Young People with key partners in the Grampian region. This sets a shared standard for partners in the way we assess, agree and give effect to sharing in relation to children and young people. A key aim of this protocol is to build confidence and trust in why, how and when we share data, to the benefit of children and young people.

We endorse the 5Rights, which takes the existing rights of our children and young people, under the UNCRC, and articulates them for the digital world.

Evaluation

Aberdeen City Council is thought to have highly effective approaches to mitigating the risks associated with the Public Health restrictions and provided high quality support for those fleeing conflict.

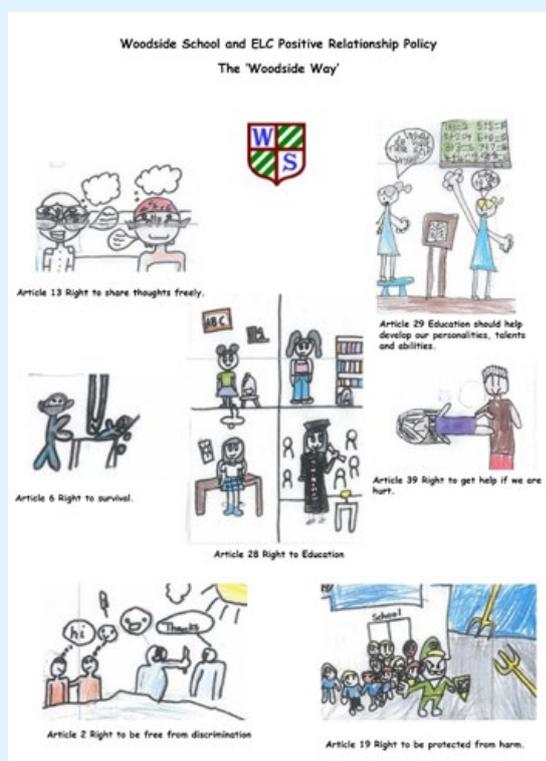
Very good arrangements are in place to ensure that our children and young people are able to influence the future design of our Public spaces. Our young people continue to enjoy wonderful green space freely.

There is a need to understand why some of our young people feel that their right to privacy is not respected to determine next steps.

Violence against children

This cluster focusses on violence against children including abuse and neglect and the right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

We recognise that we need high quality relationships with children and young people to protect them from harm. All schools have positive relationships policies that take account of the UNCRC. 74% of pupils surveyed in 2022 report feeling safe in their community, this represents a reduction from the 89% who reported feeling safe when the survey was last undertaken. There is a need to understand this more fully to inform next steps.

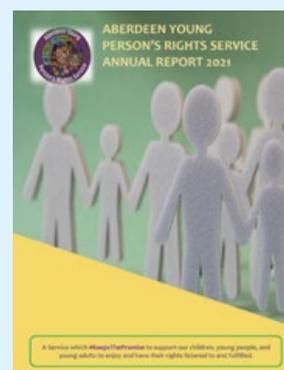


Plan 21 – 24 recognises the need for “care experienced children to be protected from violence and experience the safeguard of equal protection legislation”. Aberdeen City’s residential care staff and foster carers have for a number of years not utilised physical restraint as a means of managing the behaviour of children. This aligns to the ‘equal protection’ legislative change which removed the use of ‘reasonable chastisement’ as a defence against an assault charge.

The education service has refreshed its policy and guidance on physical intervention and is currently rolling out a comprehensive training package to support school staff to implement the best practice outlined in Included, Engaged and Involved Part 3.

Well understood GIRFEC and child protection arrangements are in place across the Community Planning Partnership. There is clear evidence that the partnership work well to keep children safe from violence, abuse, maltreatment and exploitation. A quality assurance framework has been developed to enable careful tracking of trends to inform decision making of The Child Protection Committee, Education and Children’s Services Committee and the Chief Officers Group.

We seek and take account of children and young people’s views prior to making decisions in child protection and other processes (Article 12). The Aberdeen Young Person’s Rights Service continues to provide advocacy, guidance and support to Aberdeen’s children, young people, and young adults, aged 0-26 years old, who are care experienced or who are or have been involved in child protection processes.



Many children, young people and young adults will not need or wish to access the Service and those professionals with whom they have relationships are usually best placed to advocate for and support them. Specific services such as the Aberdeen Young Person’s Rights Services can bring an additional focus onto these fundamental aspects of care and protection.

Independent advocacy in the Children's Hearings System remains a growing demand. The service continues to work closely with the local primary and secondary independent Advocacy Service providers who are aligned to the National Practice Model - Who Cares? Scotland and Advocacy Services Aberdeen - to provide independent advocacy for those who want it at their Hearing. All three Services sustained a commitment to ensuring that children and young people could express and make informed choices about who they wanted to advocate for them. This collaboration remains important, from a trauma-informed perspective, to also safeguarding children and young people from not being asked to tell their story more often than necessary.

During 2021, the Children's Rights Service saw a marginal referral rise related to child protection or care and right management processes and in them providing consequent support to children, young people, and young adults in relation to, for example, child protection case conferencing, either their own or their child's.

Connecting with children and young people being looked after in kinship, foster, residential and secure care outside of the city, often at distance geographically, presented challenges across 2021 given the fluctuating effects of Covid restrictions. The impact of the pandemic on children's health and wellbeing and on how social work staff were able to safeguard, supervise and support children and their families safely and ethically made this connection even more important.

The Children's Rights Service continues to champion children and young people's access to and use of the Mind Of My Own App.



Social workers and other professionals refer those children, young people, and young adults to the Children's Rights Service where there were participation and rights-related concerns related to their care experience, for example:

- at times of transition, be that a disrupted or planned move to a new care arrangement or return to family or another living arrangement back in the city.

- where there was a safeguarding concern such as a child or young person having been physically restrained, either by care or school staff or Police.

The Children's Rights Service proactively reaches out to children and young people, when made aware of their circumstances through other systems such as the Children's Services Specialist Forum, to offer them additional opportunity and safeguard through having their voice, views and rights heard and upheld.

Several children and young people sought support to exercise their voice and right to be heard through the process of formal complaint. These complaints generally related to their experiences of care, either current or historical. Some historical complaints were seen to exceed the timeframe of the Customer Feedback Service remit. Through discussion with the Chief Social Work Officer, it was agreed that there would be no barrier to responding to such complaints with the onus being on the children's social work service to provide children and young people with a sensitive and trauma-informed response. The Service has undertaken discussion with the Customer Feedback Team around taking forward improvement work linked to reframing the language used in written findings and letters

Community Planning Partners are currently working to plan the implementation of a Bairns Hoose in keeping with national guidance in support of our work to Keep the Promise. This development will support our work around the UNCRC and improve how children and young people access support when recovering from harm.

Evaluation

Aberdeen City Council is thought to have effective approaches to mitigating the risk of violence, abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation. Community Planning partners are benefiting from improved access to data to support on-going assessment of the strength of our local system with on-going scrutiny provided by both the Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee and the Chief Officers Group.

The establishment of a Bairn's Hoose will support more integrated approaches to delivering services over the next three years. There is a need to better understand why some children and young people do not feel safe in their communities.

Family environment and alternative care

This cluster focusses on the family environment, the right of children to be well cared for if they live apart from parents, and the right to be protected from all forms of violence and abuse.



we are maximising and highlighting the services and resources available to all families through schools. The health and wellbeing quadrant of the plan has been given most focus to date given the impact of the pandemic.

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) digital hub has a section aimed specifically at parents and carers. It includes information relating to anxiety, self-regulation, parental wellbeing, as well as key education transitions and the Emotion Coaching programme. The EPS created, and posted on the EPS Digital Hub, an introductory Emotion Coaching video for parents. Following positive feedback from schools and families a more in-depth guided training video has been developed which all parents will be able to access from the EPS Digital Hub.

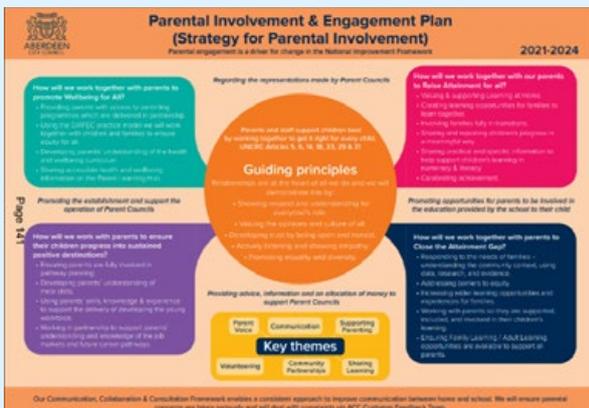
Work to support parents and carers universally

The Parent Learning Hub website was refreshed using a parent focus group to ensure pages were useful and family friendly. We continue to develop and add accessible new pages as the needs of families change and use website analytics to monitor demand.



The ACC citywide Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan (PIE) was approved by Committee in June 2021 and focuses on developing and strengthening relationships between parents and schools over reporting period 2021 to 2024.

The EPS has recently embedded a link onto each page of the digital hub, which takes users to a very brief Microsoft Form with questions designed to gather information about the type of visitor, (parent, teacher etc) what they were looking for and if they found it, the aim being to automate gathering evaluation data to enable the Service to plan and review content and ensure it remains relevant to parents and education staff.



The restrictions in place have limited opportunities for face-to-face engagement but the service has continued to develop practice in keeping with the Plan. Work has involved establishing positive working relationships with multiple new partners to ensure

Working in Partnership to provide targeted support for families

In partnership with community groups, The Excellence and Equity Practitioners have been involved in initiatives such as 'Healthy Family Fun Day' which showcases a variety of services across the community that are available to support and advise families. Through the delivery of PEEP (Parents as Early Educators) groups, outdoor learning and Book Bug sessions they have supported the positive engagement of families in their children's learning.



Twelve practitioners were trained to support delivery of a toolkit produced by Parent Network Scotland. Training focussed on key areas: selfcare, confidence, new research and developing new online delivery skills. The training was well received by the 12 practitioners:

“Very positive experience. It pushed me out of my comfort zone and stretched me. It increased my confidence in what I could do online and helped me to master new skills with the IT. It reaffirmed to me how important it is to challenge myself to do things out of my comfort zone so I can grow and develop personally and professionally”

“Whilst I was anxious about facilitating the session online, I really enjoyed preparing and delivering the content. Receiving the feedback from everyone really helped my confidence and I’m now feeling more prepared for delivering the course. I felt the whole course has helped me both professionally and personally.”

The Wellbeing Toolkit uses evidence-based interventions to support family wellbeing and has been effectively used over school session 21/22. Four courses were completed with 20 parents and 32 children involved. The Pilot evaluation showed an increase in all parent's understanding of their child's emotions, with 85% parents feeling more able to identify their feelings, and 80% more aware of how to support their child with emotions as shown by this feedback from parents:

“I now have more understanding of how my children think and see things from their side”

“I learned about the importance of filling my cup, self-compassion”

“My awareness is much higher; it did open my eyes in many parenting areas I had no idea of”

Following the successful completion of the Wellbeing Toolkit two parents are currently completing Parenting Matters SCQF Level 5 in Supporting Family Relationships and will be offered a place on Personal and Social Development to continue their Parent Academy Journey. Our engagement with the Wellbeing Toolkit will continue into session 22/23 as we continue to deliver against our PIE Plan

The Stronger Families Series (SFS) launched in August 2021 and provides focused learning to support the wellbeing needs of all. The Series has been shaped in collaboration with parents, head teachers, family practitioners and third sector partners. Key sessions already delivered, or planned for the coming term, include:

- **Penumbra** – Self Harm
- **NHS** – Stress, Worry & Loneliness
- **Sleep Scotland** – Sleep for teenagers
- **ACIS** – Teenage Brain Development
- **4 Pillars** – Supporting Grampian's LGBT+ community
- **Emotion Coaching** – an introductory session
- **ACIS** – Working through our worries together
- **Priority Families** – Peer Relationships/ Peer Pressure



619 parents and carers signed up to five virtual events although rates of attendance have not exceeded one third of those signed up. Feedback shows that 96% of parents who attended the workshop and completed the evaluation believed that their knowledge had increased in the subject area. When asked to score their confidence levels in applying their newfound knowledge the average score was 6.42 across the whole series. (1 = not confident, 8 = extremely confident). When asked how they rated the practical suggestions and advice given during each live event to support their child the average rating was 6.98 across the series. (1 = poor, 8 = excellent). Parents reflected a wide range of personal ‘take aways’ from the sessions:

“My normal is not my son’s normal. Great advice.”



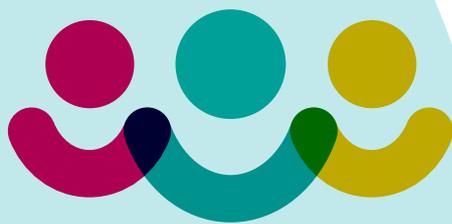
A new partnership has been developed with Save the Children in three Aberdeen schools using proven, evidence-based activities to support and develop parental confidence in learning at home. Families Connect focuses on supporting parents and children to learn together and eight members of staff have been trained to deliver the project. Parents benefit from opportunities to co-design workshops of interest with topics to date covering child development, outdoor learning, and cultural food sessions.

The eight-week programme provides a series of activities, techniques, and games that parents can try with their children at home. This co-design approach



aims to help parents to support their children’s learning in three key areas: literacy and language development, numeracy, and emotional development. The second phase of the project will see each school increase opportunities for parents to engage in children’s learning and be more involved in school life. Learning from the three schools will inform next steps.





FAMILY LEARNING

Family Learning Service

The Family Learning team is part of the Community Learning and Development service with Aberdeen City Council. CLD is a value-based practice and, as such, we are committed to working to the values of self-determination, inclusion, empowerment, collaborative working and the promotion of learning as a lifelong activity.

Family learning is a city-wide provision in Aberdeen, offering a holistic, family-led approach with the primary focus of encouraging families to learn together. We specifically design activities to enable parents to understand how best to support their children's learning. Working with this method of engagement and learning fosters positive attitudes towards life-long learning, promotes socio-economic resilience, and challenges educational disadvantage.

Being family-centred allows the team to create bespoke packages of support, working to meet the needs and priorities identified by the family and any partner agencies who may be involved. We provide one-to-one support for families identified as vulnerable or with a higher level of need, and families who have been referred to the service by other agencies. We provide group offerings that cover a broad range of learning, such as parenting techniques, emotional literacy, and digital skills.

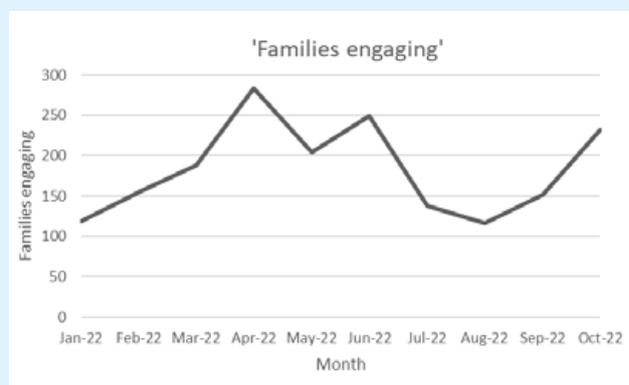
Targeted support using family learning resources we aim to:

- Build relationships/reduce isolation
- Increase confidence and build on existing parenting skills
- Support parents to support their children in numeracy, literacy and emotional literacy
- Access a range of learning workshops including sleep, emotion coaching and drop-ins as required by level of need

Family Learning works in partnership with various teams across Aberdeen City, for example supporting the Refugee / Asylum work when issues with different cultural parenting techniques have been identified. We educate around Scottish Law and work according to the principles of GIRFEC. Recently this has expanded, the service is now developing accessible guides to various policies that impact a child's life in Scotland.

Using April 2021 as a baseline we had 12 families on our PIE (Performance Indicator Evaluation) System. This number is prior to the appointment of any Education Recovery Funded staff. As you can see the number of families grow until September before reducing towards the winter months. In the month of April 21, we were working with 3 PT and 1 FT staff. 12 was our lowest number of open families, growing to a peak of 61 in September.

By January 2022, all Education Recovery posts were filled and as a result, our open families increased to a peak of 249 family engagements in April - a 2258.33% increase on April 2021. Again, the numbers dip at holiday times although never below 100 families and they again climb as the schools go back.



On average in 2021 there was 113.3hrs per month dedicated to 121 support for families, in 2022 this has increased by 63% to 184.7 hours per month.

Evaluations returned by 94% of our families reported showing an improvement in confidence, knowledge, and skills around parenting.

"Most importantly, thank you for giving me breathing space and allowing me to focus on the main thing that matters, my son. Now that I don't have to worry so much, I can have fun, smile more and be more myself."

"I can go on and on talking about how comfortable you have made us to be, you have always put smiles on our faces, thanks for being good to us, thanks for checking up on us all the time and thanks for being a friend to my family even in a strange land like this. My family and I can never forget the impact and support of Family Learning in our home."

"Yeah, when I say... but I think I told you before because their dad isn't in their life much. Yeah. Yeah, he's not the best parent figure Yeah. So, the fact we see you and Michael there and you're such a positive influence, even if it's just a little bit per week. They see you; you know, you pick them up, you hold their hands, you help them cross the road. I think that's very important as well."

"Also thank you so much to Emma for making me feel at ease. I was so reluctant and embarrassed to reach out and ask for help but I'm so relieved that I plucked up the courage. She was so friendly, understanding and calm towards me. Not in any way did I feel awkward or embarrassed. For so long I haven't laughed because I've been under so much stress and worry. Today I laughed so much and hard, for me it meant so much. Thank you for your kindness, Emma it's something I'll never forget."

"This course has massively impacted my mental health being able to use the techniques I have learned at home has improved my life with my kids especially my oldest who is very challenging and being tested for autism. I have gone from automatically screaming and shouting to stepping away using the relaxing voice recordings and coming back to the situation calmer and more able to deal with it."

"Thank you so much for this opportunity to meet lovely parents and kids! My child is thanking you for his chance to meet great new friends! We all had an amazing time. The best experience I've had since becoming a mother of a special need kid! Thanks again!"

Partnership delivery models to support children and families

Our Fit Like Hubs now offer us greater insight into what our families need. By shaping our services around the self-reported needs of families, we are building more effective services and supports to prevent the risk of significant harm.

A range of qualitative data informs the work of the Hubs.



"I was relieved to hear that my daughter is doing fine at school, she has the reading and writing skills of a 13 year old. She said that her behaviour improved and she is back to her old self, with good relationships in class. Things look really better. Thanks!" (Parent)

"We really appreciate the great work you do with L. Now, when I talk to her on the phone, I hear a happy, wise and caring girl. She is much safer now. Thanks"

"Thanks for being there for me and believing in me Jenny. Going to college is something I've aimed for despite school saying I'd never cope with that environment."

"The work we did on self-belief and confidence has really helped me, and I now feel I can achieve all that I dream to do." Rebecca aged 16"

"It was also nice to have someone who I felt listened to me, believed me and took action. I am so glad you have been on this journey for a while with us, your help and input really has been invaluable"



"We can make our own luck"



A range of preventative services, such as the Priority Families team and Youth Justice Management Unit wrap around vulnerable families to help protect children and ensure they are safe. The Priority Families Team have had a major impact on the families supported. Care Inspectorate feedback shows this is already a strong service.

During **July 2021 – September 2022** the service worked with 40 families comprising 178 individuals, 78 adults and 100 children. Over **50%** of families were female single parent households, with the average number of children in a family being **2**. School aged children made up the significant majority (**91%**), with only **9%** of children being pre-school. Most families were in receipt of benefits, and there were several blended families.

The seven functions below indicate the main areas that Priority Families service supported families with over this period:

- Parenting skills
- Routines & boundaries
- Problem solving
- Home conditions
- Financial position
- Child health & wellbeing
- Adult health & wellbeing

The work of the team in supporting these families has resulted in significantly improved outcomes including a **71%** reduction in vulnerable persons database and **72%** reduction in criminal charges, contributing to an overall reduction of **70%** in crime and antisocial behaviour linked to the families. Parents being supported reported a **69%** increase in their own parenting skills and a **64%** improvement in their home environment.

There has also been positive impact on school attendance and achievement – a couple of notable examples of joint working with education have resulted in a young person who had 13% attendance rate at point of referral was achieving a 95% rate by the time the case was closing, he went onto sit Nat 4's and is now in college doing a Pathways to Uniformed Services Course and is sustaining a part time job. A second young man wasn't engaging with school or the Home Liaison Officer and with support went to college and has now moved onto an apprenticeship in Mechanical Engineering. The overall impact of this programme of work on children, young people and adults is testament to our commitment to improving the life chances of everyone in our city.

Priority Families has also been able to support families financially through funding received through the Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund and various Action for Children funds to the sum of £50K in the reporting period, this has eased some of the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and has enabled families to buy food and essentials and contribute towards utility costs.



Supporting families experiencing financial hardship

The downturn in Oil and Gas and COVID-19 pandemic has seen a significant increase in the number of free school meal registrations over the past year and is an indication of the changed economic circumstances facing families across the city. In collaboration with the customer function, the service has made over 32,000 Scottish Child Payment's Bridging Payments (previously COVID Hardship Grants) to families since December 2020. A total of 14,564 chromebooks and 500 MFi connections have also been allocated to children and young people.

The Council has attached Money Advisors to schools to help support families within their own communities. As the Advisors have become established they have become more familiar with the scenarios facing families and as awareness of the service has grown the added value has increased. For March 2022 alone (which costs the education service around £13,000 a month to deliver) the Financial Inclusion Money Advisors can evidence:

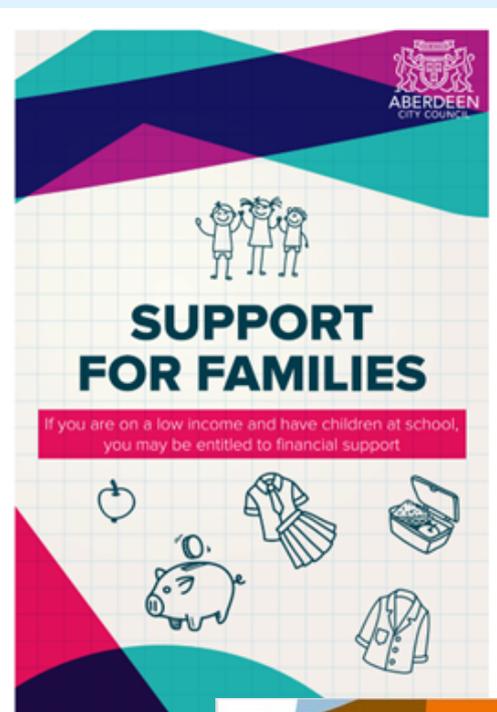
- Financial Gains of £44,319.42
- Assisted/Assisting 30 households with debt issues
- Helping with total debts of £95,724.44
- 49 households given full benefit checks
- Assisted 10 households to claim benefits
- Assisting 2 households to challenge being turned down for benefits

The Council provided supermarket vouchers to parents/carers on low incomes when their children or young people were required to self-isolate. Vouchers were also provided during holiday periods for all families in receipt of free school meals due to low income and this is continuing. In the year to date, vouchers provided were equivalent to the value of 300,570 school meals. We estimate that a further 62,400 meal equivalent vouchers will be issued in the year, bringing the total to 362,970. Over 4500 children benefit and families tell us this is making a difference.

8807 Requests for Food Support		0 Adults		8807 Children	
Academy Catchment	Requests	Primary School Catchment	Requests	Stoneywood School	154
St Machar Academy	1994	Tallos Primary School	677	Brathel Primary School	105
Northfield Academy	1904	Riverbank School	551	Airyhill School	76
Lochside Academy	1559	Manor Park School	452	Lennox Primary School	76
Harlaw Academy	723	Kainhill School	431	Scottiston Primary School	65
Hazlehead Academy	513	Heathyburn School	374	Mill End School	65
Aberdeen Grammar	383	Quarryhill School	343	Hazlehead Primary School	71
Buckburn Academy	351	Citywest School	343	Ferryhill Primary School	73
Cults Academy	325	Abbottswell School	325	Cults Primary School	75
Oldrucker Academy	299	Woodhale Primary School	320	Middleton Park School	71
Dyce Academy	288	Seaton Primary School	294	Greenbrae Primary School	63
Bridge Of Don Academy	285	Westpark School	280	Ashley Road School	63
		Bramble Brae Primary School	250	Darvelton Primary School	51
		Sunnybank School	245	Broomhill Primary School	61
		Walker Road School	227	Glasbeurn Primary School	61
		Kirkhill Primary School	224	Charleston School	65
		Cornehill Primary School	200	Ringswell School	65
		Brimmond School	195	Farehill Primary School	65
		Kingsford School	193	Millbank Primary School	65
		Gilcomston Primary School	188	Cordyce School	65
		Culter School	187	Hazlewood School	65
		Muirfield School	186	Holy Family RC Primary School	71
		Dyce Primary School	183	Orchard Brae School	65
		Ferrieside School	175	School for the Deaf	65
		Manover Street Primary School	168	St Josephs School	65
		Slieve Square School	163	St Peter's RC Primary	65
				Woodlands School	65

Our data tells us that more children are living in families experiencing financial hardship. Considerable work has been undertaken to ensure that families were not hungry with a range of internal clusters and external partners responding to requests for help in a coordinated way.

Given the increase in need and vulnerability, work has been undertaken across the universal services to improve knowledge of the impact of poverty on families.



Evaluation

Considerable work has been undertaken to increase supports and signposting for parents and carers. There is now a need to bring these supports together into a single location and consider the interface between supports for children and adults.

There is a need to continue to be very alert to the cost of living crisis and continue to do all we can to mitigate risks to children and families. In recognition of this an Incident Management Team structure has been established to ensure that all council clusters continue to be proactive in their response to the financial challenges facing families.

Basic care and welfare

This cluster focusses on the health and welfare of all children and the consideration of disabled children's rights.

The pandemic has impacted on the number of children and young people recorded as having additional support needs and this will be carefully monitored in the months ahead. There is considerable qualitative evidence that families impacted by additional support needs and disability have been disproportionately impacted by periods of lockdown and we will need to proactively address this risk as we move forwards.



Around 38% of children and young people are now identified as having an additional support need, this represents an increase of c.7% compared to levels recorded in 18/19. Given the broad definition of additional support needs, this rise is unsurprising after the last two years, Some groups of children and young people with additional support needs or disability have been more acutely impacted and a survey of children and young people found that only 55% of those who responded felt that those registered as disabled were treated with respect and provided with the opportunities they require. These

include those who have neurodevelopmental needs and those with life limiting conditions. This will be a focus of attention over the coming years as we work as a Community Planning Partnership to develop a new neurodevelopmental pathway which is more responsive to the needs of children, young people, and families.

In partnership with Allied Health professionals, all settings have been recently introduced to the Circle Framework. CIRCLE has been developed through a ten-year research and implementation process by a collaborative partnership consisting of teachers, therapists and academics from City of Edinburgh Council, NHS Lothian and Queen Margaret University. CIRCLE stands for Child Inclusion Research into Curriculum Learning and Education. The CIRCLE Framework has been created to support the development of inclusive practice as best practice in all schools and early years settings. It brings together and shares good practice and ideas from education staff, focusing on advice and strategies for improving the participation and achievement of learners with additional support needs. Implementation of this will ensure a consistent use of language across agencies, provide clear and accessible guidance and supports and help settings to respond quickly to the needs of individuals.



Do you feel that children and young people with disabilities who live in the city are treated with respect and provided with the same opportunities to live their lives independently?
840 responses



An increase in the mental health needs of children, young people and families

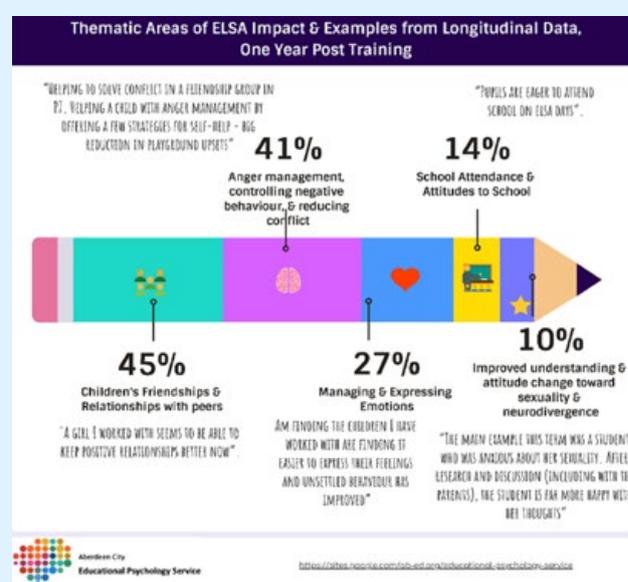
The mental health needs of children and families have also come to the fore following periods of isolation and financial hardship and guided a clear focus on supporting positive mental wellbeing in our schools. Work has accelerated to increase the provision of targeted supports for pupils. Across city schools we have a number of staff, including school nurses who are trained in LIAM (Let's Introduce Anxiety Management) which is delivered by CAMHS staff. There are clear indications that this approach supports positive wellbeing in pupils and reduces risk.

Centrally commissioned school counselling services now provide targeted one to one support across all Secondary Schools compared to only 27% of secondary schools previously. The impact of the expanded counselling services will be carefully tracked to inform next steps. There is also an offer of support for all children aged 10+ in Primary Schools with one counsellor available across each Primary locality.

DBI (Distress Brief Intervention) is currently being piloted in 4 of our Secondary Schools in partnership with CAMHS and Penumbra which is beyond our initial plan to roll out the programme across two secondary schools only. These programmes offer more targeted support for young people who have been identified or self-identify the need for support and helps support some of our most vulnerable learners, allowing for trained staff to provide support and a pathway to support through Penumbra and CAMHS if required. Evaluations of the impact of these pilots are ongoing and will inform longer term service delivery.

Our Educational Psychology Service (EPS) deliver several programmes to build staff capacity and capability, including professional development in Emotion Coaching and Emotional Literacy Support Assistant training. Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) is a unique training programme for Pupil Support Assistants and Early Year Practitioner. Evaluations of each training session remain high with increases in both knowledge and understanding; and confidence in applying each topic reported. Data gathered gives positive examples of impact on pupils, including connection to adults, improved attendance, better peer relationships, and pupils internalising and using strategies independently.

The EPS continue to support schools across the city at the universal level through Early Intervention Consultations (EIC), using solution focused approaches to help education staff to meet the needs of all learners, including those with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC). So far, this academic session 32% of EICs have been related to ASC. This is a new method of data collection but the Service hope to consider annual comparisons and fluctuations in this data as we move forward. The EPS collaborates with the Autism Outreach Service when appropriate to support individual children and families.



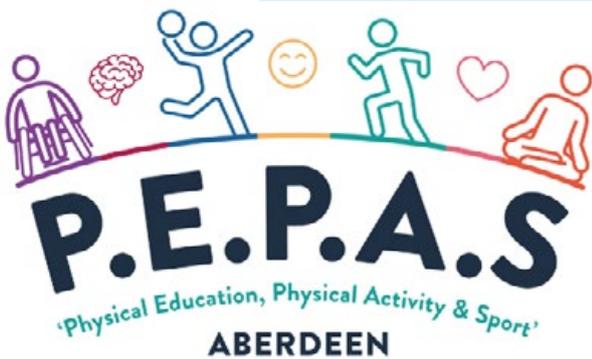
Webinars and practice exemplification have been developed to support staff in the creation of IEPs and Child's Plans, with a focus on meeting learners' needs through appropriate and clear SMART targets. As part of the Quality Improvement calendar (QI 3.1), a sample of plans is shared with QIO/QIM teams. Good practice is captured and cascaded. A baseline is being established to inform where additional support is required to ensure greater consistency in this area.

Supporting the physical health and wellbeing of our people

In our recent Health and Wellbeing Survey out of the 6193 learners who completed it, 1419 learners (22.91%) said their physical health was fair or poor with 507 (8.19%) of learners stating that they did less than 30 mins physical activity on their most active school day and 101 (1.63%) stating that they did none. 1401 (22.62%) of learners undertook 2 hours or more.



We have built closer partnership working with our colleagues across multiple organisations to develop Aberdeen PEPAS (Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport) Group. This has provided a platform for colleagues to review and share data in relation to the physical wellbeing of learners within Aberdeen and working collaboratively to identify how to meet the physical needs identified.



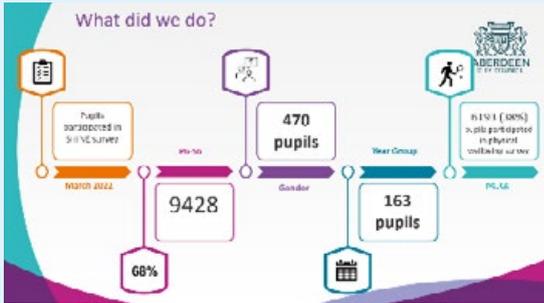
This joined up approach was established in April 2021 with joint leadership of the group being supported by ACC and Sport Aberdeen representative. The PEPAS group have a clear focus on encouraging schools and families to incorporate physical activity into their everyday routines, developing a shared understanding of needs across the city, considering and developing appropriate professional learning, developing a supportive, clear PE progression, building outdoor, community based physical activities for families to engage with and offering where possible free activity to children and young people. This group will play a key role in helping support the delivery of the Free Bikes initiative over the lifetime of the Scottish Parliament.

Active Schools offered an increased level of support to provide both level 1 and level 2 Bikeability training allowing us to increase the number of P6 and P7 pupils participating in and completing Bikeability certification. We have updated school travel plan guidance and Active travel to school has risen over the last 2 years. This will be maintained with cross organisation work to make travel to school safer, more child-friendly and to reduce vehicle congestion at school gates.



Improving our use of data

Our new partnership with the Scottish Health Improvement Research Network (SHINE) is helping us better understand the needs of 9428 children and young people who participated in the survey so that we can be more targeted in our approach.



We look forward to comprehensively reviewing the totality of the offer across our schools to support longer term planning over 22/23 although there are clear indications that we need to address perceptions of self-image. The data has also been reviewed by multi-agency partners who have established a Mental Health and Wellbeing Collaborative to support our work in this area.



Following a Mental Health and Wellbeing summit where children spoke directly to decision makers, there is a commitment to work as a community planning partnership to address these concerns.

Supporting those with a declared disability

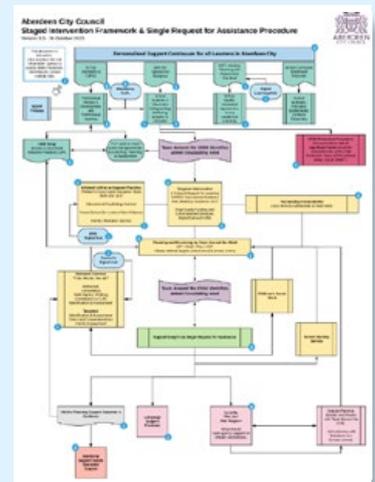
A staged intervention process is in place to support best practice in meeting the needs of disabled children and young people and those with additional support needs.

The Local Authority has a number of specialist provisions for children and young people and work is ongoing to ensure integrated service delivery in response to requests from parents and carers. Colleagues across the integrated service are working



collaboratively to ensure appropriate and necessary support can be accessed timeously by children/ young people and their families as part of our work to develop a partnership Family Support Model. An audit of supports currently in place is being undertaken in order to determine next steps.

Analysis of data from session 2020/2021 and session 2021/2022 shows a 23% rise in the number of learners with a declared disability, this increase manifests as a 66% increase in declared disabilities across Primary settings and an 11% increase across Secondary settings. There is no significant change to the percentage of learners declared disabled in Aberdeen City's Special Schools. Further breakdown shows 25 schools currently have no learners declared disabled, 15 settings unchanged, 18 with an increase and 3 with a lower number of learners with a declared disability.



The Children with Disability, Children's Social Work Team is co-located and integrated within one of Aberdeen City's Special Schools. This arrangement has been welcomed by parents and has enhanced integrated planning arrangements. It has also enabled more natural and positive relationships to be established with families. As a local authority area, we recognise the importance of transitions for all children but particularly those who are disabled. We are working with ARC – Association for Real Change to embed the "Principles of Good Transitions" for our young people aged between 14 – 25 years.



Outcome data is being closely tracked and monitored to inform how resource should be shaped to best meet needs across the city although there is a need to continue to improve our use of data.



Protecting children who are impacted by alcohol and drugs

Following a large spike in Drug Related Deaths in 2018, Scotland entered a National Emergency in response of the thousands of our fellow citizens who were/are losing their lives. Within Aberdeen, an agreed protocol was developed to ensure that there was a clear multiagency response to the early identification of those in need of support with access to Naloxone (an opioid overdose preventative) and agreed distribution of this life saving resource. Where children are known to be living in families/households with opioid substance use, this alongside our multiagency approaches, provide an opportunity for checking if those who need Naloxone have access to it.

The development of a curriculum resource website was undertaken with a clear focus on Substance Misuse. This provides clear access to relevant and supportive lessons for staff. Work continues through LOIP project 12.2 in supporting the reduction of children and young people who report using substances within Aberdeen through continual review of the curriculum, through increasing opportunities which promote diversionary opportunities, building self-confidence, increased feeling of self-worth and decreases choices which may negatively impact on the health of young people.

To deliver early and preventative support in a non-stigmatising manner youth workers with experience of addiction work are embedded in our 'Fit Like' service. Adopting a whole family approach this approach enables young people to be empowered to make healthier choices and have a greater awareness of the risks associated with drug and alcohol use. Additionally, an Assertive Outreach drugs worker is embedded in the Youth Team providing support to care experience young people, whom it is known are at an increased vulnerability and data would suggest dying prematurely from drug addictions.

Evaluation

Considerable progress has been made in improving the data we have available to support decision making and we now have a helpful insight into the extent to which some groups are able to claim their rights. We now need to extend this work to ensure that we have a clear oversight of all groups.

Work to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and families is required and this work will be a key areas of focus in the Children's Services Plan.

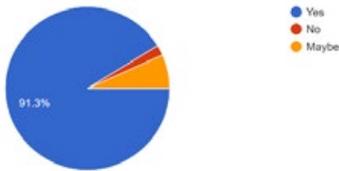
On-going work to develop a partnership model of family support to ensure that rights based services shaped by the needs of families are in place.

Education leisure and culture

This cluster focusses on the rights of all children to education and leisure.

A significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is a considerable increase in the number of young people choosing to remain in school and enrolling in our schools. This significant change will continue to require proactive planning to ensure that a range of pathways are available to improve outcomes for all our young people and this is being driven in collaboration with further and higher education partners. There were 23,156 pupils in our schools over school session 19/20 compared to 24,260 in 21/22 and nearly 25,500 in 2022.

Do you feel that you are able to access your right to an education?
640 responses



The education service continues to be proactive in ensuring that children and young people can access school placements in our schools when families arrive in the city.

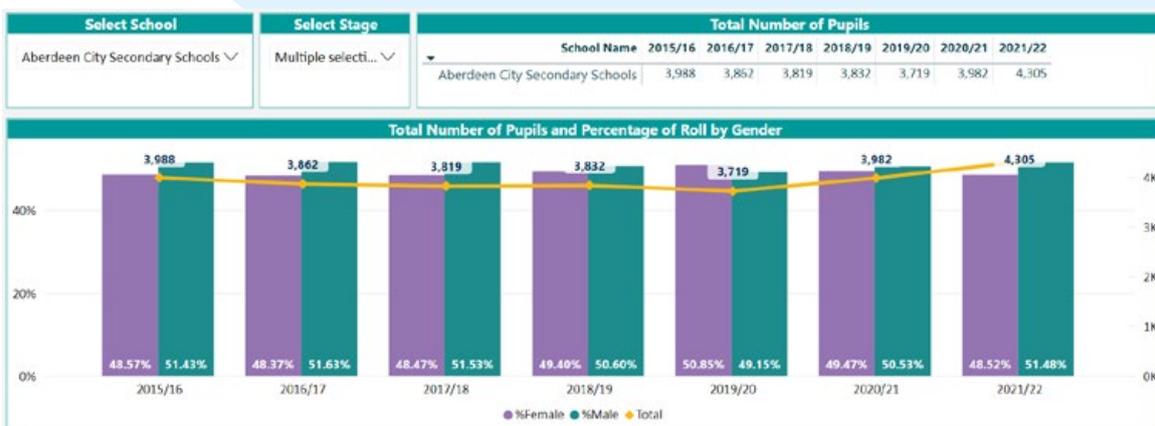
Operating models during the periods of school building closure

Throughout the period of school building closure, we saw positive levels of engagement with digital, with over 92% of our children and young people active within the platform across the city. Our school leaders had access to analytics which allowed them to identify children and young people not engaging in the offer and this was followed up through phone calls and messaging.

Our initial digital response resulted in over 3500 Chromebook being provided to families across the city between April and August. In October 2020, we provided a Chromebook to every senior phase pupil to support those preparing for National Qualifications. We followed this with a similar distribution of devices to P6/P7 pupils. We also provided 300 data connections to those families who either had no connectivity or struggled to stay connected due to the high cost of mobile data.



In addition, supported by Scottish Government funding, we distributed 1777 devices to children and young people in SIMD vintiles 1,2 and 3. We also provided 200 data connections using 4G MiFi devices through this funding.



Every child or young person, who needs a device for learning but does not have access to one at home, has been supported with a Chromebook. We have invested in over 14,000 devices for children and young people.

The flexibility of the staff and robust control measures, ensured that all schools remained open when public health restrictions permitted it.



The Education Service works to ensure that all children and young people access educational provision that develops their abilities to their fullest potential (Article 29). The service is gaining increasing levels of assurance due to improved data collection but there is more work to do.

We recognise that some of our care experienced young people would benefit from a more joined up approach to supporting their long term outcomes and this is being progressed through our 2 Edge of Care pilots currently underway. There is also a need to continue to work with partners to improve the design and delivery of supports for children and families as we develop a Partnership Family Support Model more fully informed by the lived experiences of children and families.



Ensuring the workforce promote and respect children's rights

The workforce has displayed incredible agility and responsiveness to the considerable changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The workforce has sought opportunities to understand the lives and needs of our children and families better in order to better support a rights based approach.

All school staff have engaged in Compassionate and Connected Communities training and similar trauma informed professional learning has extended across all front line services for children and families. Being trauma responsive remains a key tenet of the Children and Family Services..

Around 90 school staff have undertaken accredited basic counselling training to support young people during the recovery phase and beyond. All school staff have also undertaken mandatory training in children's rights, The Promise and the Morgan Review. As a result of this we have a more skilled and competent workforce committed to upholding children's rights.



The workforce has actively sought opportunities for professional learning in order to respond positively to the different operating environments in place over the last 3 years due to Public Health restrictions. The response of the education service to the need to operate in a digital environment is to be commended.



Ensuring that children and young people understand their rights

Our children and young people are all guided to understand their rights with promotion of the UNCRC at school level aiding parents and carers to understand the UNCRC.

Our schools undertake a range of approaches to raise awareness and understanding of children's rights. A considerable proportion of our schools are actively engaged in Unicef's Rights Respecting Schools Award with others raising awareness and understanding through curriculum delivery, planned inter-disciplinary learning (IDL) on topics such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), focussed work around SHANARRI, linked fundraising activities and pupil leadership opportunities such as pupil led committees.

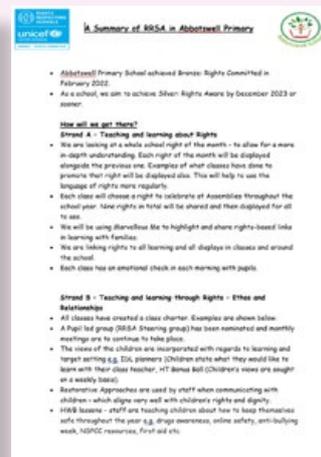
An example of some of the approaches in place are detailed below.

Rights Respecting Schools Programme

We recognise that positive wellbeing is most likely when children and young people have a sense of 'agency'. 33 of our schools already have a Rights Respecting Schools Award and 11 have registered (72% of schools).

"My name is Holly and I am part of the Rights Reps. You may wonder what rights reps are? We make sure that people have their rights. We talk about what we could do to improve people talking about their rights and knowing what they are. There are 42 rights a child should have. We want to try and improve how our whole school knows about these so we will be presenting these at an assembly and take turns telling you all about them."

Quote from a learner at Scotstown School about RRSA.



Hearing the voices of children and young people

The move to different operating models over the course of the pandemic triggered a need to think carefully about how schools and the education service sought and acted upon the voices of children and young people.

Learning at a distance example

In the lead up to Covid-19 school closures on the 30th March, the Education Service made swift arrangements to deliver the curriculum digitally. Focus was put on ensuring that children & young people, staff and families were familiar with the Google Classroom tools, had suitable devices and felt reasonably confident with the platform. Engagement with the platform was monitored through Google Analytics over the three weeks leading to the Easter break.

A Learning at a Distance questionnaire was issued to parents and carers, pupils and staff at the start of the new term to enable the Local Authority and individual schools to have a sense of how effective the first three weeks had been. This coincided with the release of the Aberdeen City Council Digital Standard which sought to address some of the issues emerging through review of Google Analytics. 5615 children and young people from across both primary and secondary schools gave us their views, a return rate of around a half of those who could independently complete the survey

Learning from the survey helped inform a further tightening of guidance issued, improve the quality of educational provision and inform service planning.

Summary of Learner Views	I feel safe online	I know how to contact someone at school to speak to if I am upset or worried	Other learners are kind to me online	I am confident in learning just now, out of school.	Staff are encouraging me to be healthy whilst not at school	Staff are encouraging me to take regular exercise in my garden or in my home	I am able to ask staff questions and make suggestions online	Staff give me helpful feedback on the work I submit	I am able to make choices about what I learn	I am enjoying learning at home	I know how to get help if my work is too difficult	I have enough contact with my teacher(s)
(Strongly) Agree - %	92.24	86.95	88.19	76.71	83.79	84.08	91.45	87.68	68.76	61.37	91.75	86.61
(Strongly) Disagree - %	2.07	5.66	1.82	14.67	7.41	8.50	3.22	6.70	17.97	28.44	4.61	8.46
Don't Know - %	5.70	7.39	9.99	8.62	8.80	7.43	5.33	5.63	13.27	10.19	3.63	4.93

A second Learning at a Distance survey was undertaken in February 2021 to check the impact of the changes made on provision during the second period of school building closure. Positive changes were noted, the responses also highlighted a need to continue to invest in chromebooks.

Monitoring wellbeing during periods of lockdown example

Considerable concerns were relayed around the wellbeing of children and young people during the periods of lockdown and again a survey was posted in google classrooms to help partners better understand needs.

5374 children and young people completed the wellbeing survey (a return rate of just under a quarter), with responses from pupils in

Nursery through to S6. All stages were represented although limited responses from P1 were noted. Learners were asked to respond to a range of scaling questions linked to the SHANARRI indicators. Generally, responses were positive across all the indicators with most ratings given at 4 or higher.

Almost all learners felt very safe learning at home with 75% selecting the highest response and over 97% scoring 4 or above.

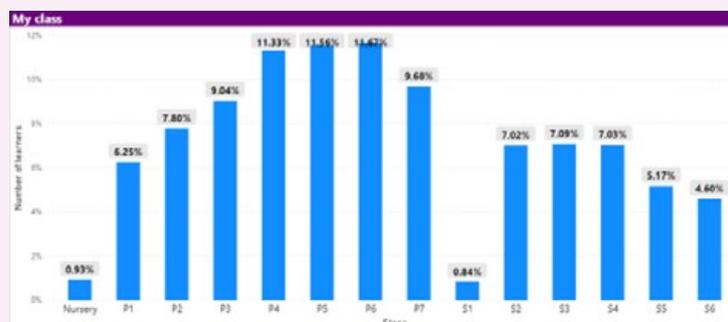
This extremely high percentage dipped a little when children and young people were asked how safe they felt about a return to school, with only 80% reporting confidence. Concerns highlighted most frequently included concerns around the sufficiency of COVID-19 controls such as regular hand hygiene, cleaning arrangements and provision of PPE. Concerns around social distancing arrangements were also noted in 754 returns from learners.

To address these concerns significant time was invested in highlighting the changed procedures in schools in advance of children and young people returning to school buildings. The impact of work to reassure and build confidence was monitored in schools and through Local Authority monitoring of attendance.

28% of children and young people reported that they found it difficult to manage homework and schoolwork easily. Further analysis suggested that those in the senior phase of secondary experienced the most acute challenges in this area. Provision of ICT was thought to be a factor and available resource was used to ensure adequate provision of chrome books across the senior phase to help reduce levels of anxiety.

640 (12%) of children and young people reported having been unable to take part in regular daily exercise. Closer scrutiny of the data highlighted how the number unable to take part in regular exercise increases gradually through the primary and secondary stages. This learning enabled the service to establish additional active schools coordinators in schools to support an increase in physical activity and priority access to clubs for those identified as being most at risk, such as those who were looked after.

Almost all learners reported that they were eating well with only 6% scaling from 1-3. The suggested that the assistance provided to families through ACC's Crisis Line supported families well. However, we also knew that 360 children were hungry during the lockdown period and bolstered our linkages with food banks and partnership supports to address this. The surveys were well used to support our response to the pandemic.



Promoting the Rights of those who use Alternative Communication Systems

Special schools have policies in place to uphold children's rights and consider their rights in accordance with the UNCRC. The Local Authority continue to commission Speech and Language support for those who need access to specialist communication support either through our Language Units or in our schools.

Staff at Orchard Brae have undertaken training from CALL Scotland regarding use of accessible technology for learners with complex communication needs. This has included: understanding the principles of access methods and how a learner might progress, learning how to adapt resources for different needs, exploring practical strategies for using accessible digital tools with a range of learners in curricular areas and activities. The professional learning explored technology access methods, in relation to individual learners. Staff also explored a range of techniques that support or replace spoken communication, for example: gestures, signing, symbols, word boards, communication boards and books, as well as Voice Output Communication Aids.

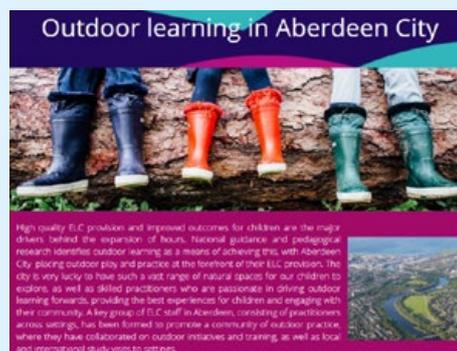


An increasing number of mainstream schools are now teaching pupils either British Sign Language or Makaton. Stoneywood School shared their BSL on the national stage at the Scottish Learning Festival.

Provision of expanded Early learning and childcare provision from August 2021

The expansion of Early Learning and Childcare was delivered in August 2021. The programme expanded the range of delivery models available for families to choose from and saw the opening of 2 outdoor ELC provisions in the city.

Two of the intended benefits of the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) were to narrow the poverty related attainment gap; and to give more parents and carers the opportunity to be in work,



training or study. During our recent ELC consultation (November 2021) we asked parents and carers what impact the expansion of ELC has had on them and their families. 38.7% of respondents suggested more money/disposable income as a positive impact on their family and 28.5% are now considering a return to work or study.

At the heart of the ELC Expansion is increasing family resilience through improved health and wellbeing of children and parents, so as a Local Authority we took the opportunity to put significant resources into the Parents as Early Education Partners (PEEP) 'Learning Together' Programme for ELC staff in both our school nurseries and funded provider settings. The programme is designed for practitioners who work with parents and babies/ young children, to contribute to:

- strong parent-child relationships
- increased parental knowledge and confidence in how to support their child's learning and play in day-to-day life
- children's personal, social and emotional development, communication and language, early literacy and maths, and health and physical development



Sessions were delivered online via Microsoft Teams over four half day sessions and are ongoing. The practitioners engaged with a small group during the training in order to develop confidence using the PEEP resources and are then introduced to the PEEP Team Network. 106 practitioners from ELC settings in Aberdeen City have completed the programme and are qualified to deliver PEEP as part of our universal family support offer. The delivery of the programme to parents and carers was hampered by the Covid-19 restrictions, although settings used remote delivery where possible. We now enjoy welcoming families to face to face sessions.

Proactive planning and the targeting of families by multi-agency partners has helped realise an increase in the percentage of vulnerable 2–4-year-olds accessing early years provision from 12.3% to 16.5%. There have been 2 care experienced parents who have applied for an Eligible 2's place since this became a new eligibility criterion. Both children are placed and engaging positively. The service will continue to work to identify and place those deemed to be more vulnerable as a priority by working in collaboration with key partners.



Continued investment in school and ELC buildings

The Local Authority has continued to invest in new modern school buildings and opened the new Miltimber Primary School in 2022. New Primary Schools at Countesswells and Torry will open soon with plans to progress a replacement Hazlehead Academy. This work will be driven through a refreshed school estate plan which was endorsed by Committee in September 2022.



Continuing to focus on quality in our schools

Staffing disruption over recent years has impacted on the quality of provision for children and young people as senior leaders prioritised business continuity. It also impacted on time for some school processes such as tracking and monitoring periods which will have impacted on the quality of tracking data. Live data suggests that tracking data is now largely in line with 18/19 levels.



Building the capacity of education staff

Our Educational Psychology team have developed and offered Emotional Literacy for Support Assistants (ELSA).

ELSA provides knowledge, practice and coaching on an incremental learning model for Pupil Support Assistants and mid-year evaluations are positive. The approach will be fully evaluated to inform next steps.



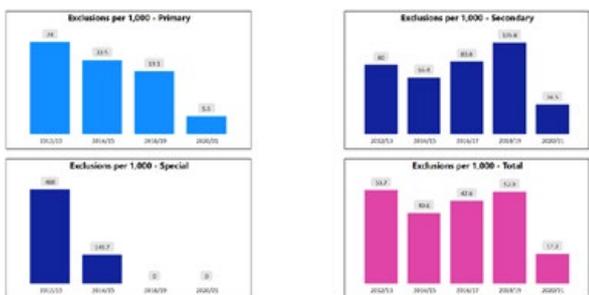
A wide range of professional learning continues to be available to school staff. On-going review of the impact of the professional learning programme informs planning.

Considerable work continues to be undertaken to ensure quality learning, teaching and assessment. This work is supported through our Learning, teaching and assessment standard with a growing evidence base around the positive impact the standard is making.

Reduction in the rate of exclusion

We recognise that all children have a right to access education and have been working to address levels of exclusion over the last 3 years.

Exclusion rates have considerably reduced from 52.9 per 1000 children in 18/19 to 17.9 per 1000 children in 20/21. There is evidence that these have reduced further over session 21/22. Exclusion rates for LAC and those living in areas of deprivation are higher than the city average and require to be focussed upon. This is thought to be partially due to a lack of flexibility in the curriculum.



The number of children identified as being at risk of exclusion on SEEMiS has dropped from 99 on the census of last year to 90 this year. This represents a reduction of 9% from last year and suggests that the reduction in levels of exclusion will be maintained.

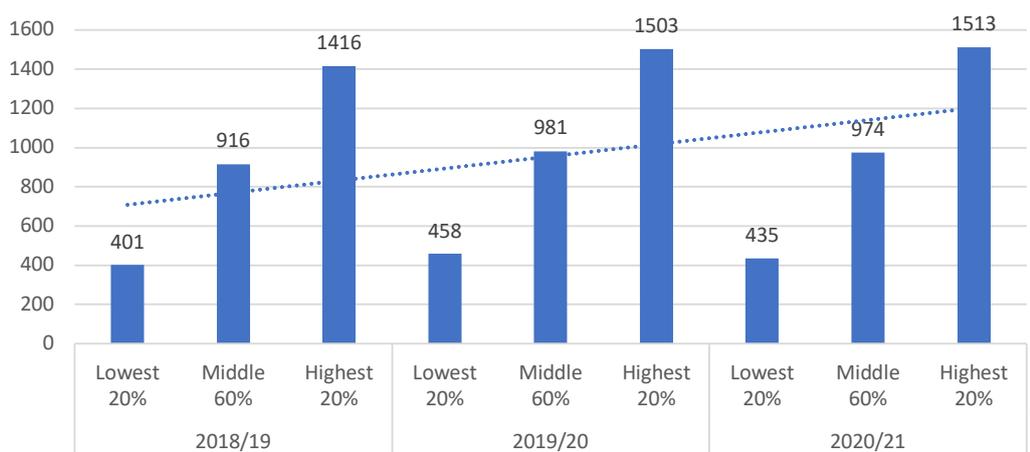
Attainment and curricular design

A review of secondary attainment data shows that the quality of grades awarded across the senior phase has significantly improved and there is evidence of steady improvement.



However, there continues to be evidence of narrow curriculum pathways as shown by the number of Average Tariff Points against the national and virtual comparator.

Average Complementary Tariff Points



Attainment data triggered a review of the City Campus provision in place and further work on the curriculum. City Campus had been in operation for around 11 years and aimed to provide a range of courses for senior phase pupils. It was recognised that there was a need to reimagine our senior phase curriculum in order to ensure that it provided the range of opportunities for young people to thrive in the longer term. Colleagues from all secondary schools and a range of partners worked together to design and deliver an approach more in keeping with our current context.

As part of our commitment to ensure young people in Aberdeen City Council have equitable access to pathways towards a positive and sustained destination, an initiative ABZ Campus will be introduced from June 2023. This includes: a commitment that ACC secondary schools will work together to provide an aligned curriculum; a drive to work with partner providers to create a set of broad growth-sector aligned courses; a greater diversity of pathways such as Foundation Apprenticeships and Employability Courses, and a commitment to equity of access for young people with care experience or complex need. Built in with the ABZ Campus initiative will be a framework of opportunities for young people to evaluate their learning experiences.

In parallel with our development of ABZ Campus, consideration has been given to how we should support our young people to have the skills required to secure positive long term outcomes in digital and technology sectors. The Aberdeen Computing Collaborative has been established in collaboration with Further and Higher Education partners to address this national skills gap.

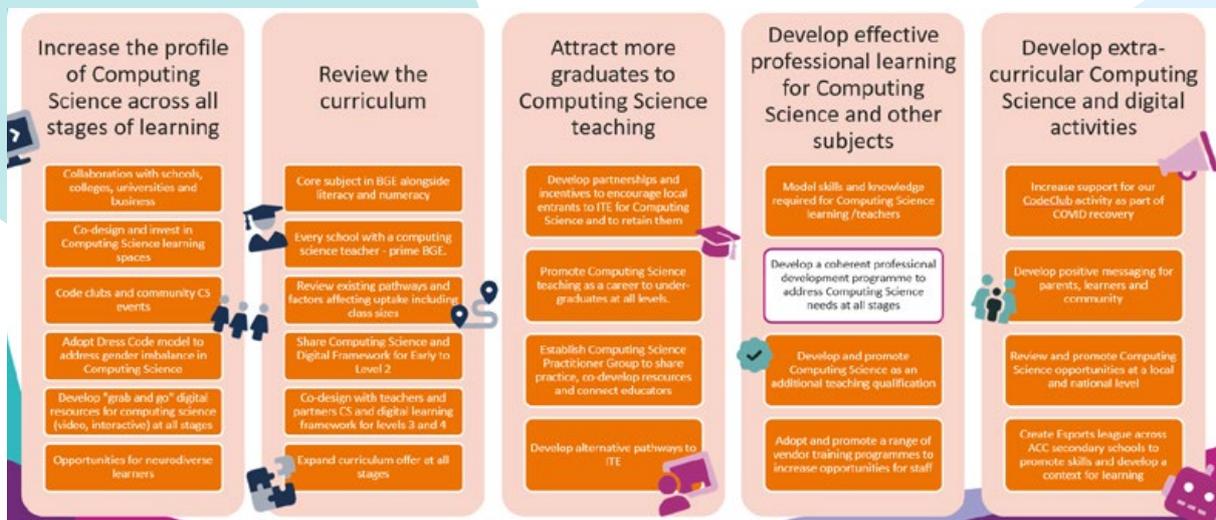


After a successful launch event in September 2022 with around 100 young people in attendance, we are now working to progress our ambitious plans.



A key priority for session 22/23 will be the establishment of curriculum alignment through the introduction of ABZ Campus for session 2023/24. A key priority for session 22/23 will be the establishment of curriculum alignment through the introduction of ABZ Campus for session 2023/24. This will result in a Senior Phase for Aberdeen City Secondary Schools where vocational and academic pathways are co-created with key partners with a focus on local growth sector industries and available across the city.

Positive destinations for learners with ASN and disability continues to be a focus. Over the least three years their positive destinations have remained stable. Aberdeen has significantly fewer learners entering employment than the national average (10% compared to 17% across Scotland). In comparison 39% of our learners enter further education, where the average for Scotland is 33%. This work is being partially taken forwards as we develop and implement ABZ Campus.



Transition planning for those with disabilities continues to improve as learners are identified as early as possible and benefiting from enhanced transition now that COVID-19 restrictions are lifting. There is a need to establish greater alignment between children and adult services.

Accessibility of information

A Digital Hub has been established to enable all children and young people to access information readily and in accordance with best practice. There will be a need to consider the location of resources as we develop our Council website pages for children and young people



Good work has been undertaken to improve the accessibility of information, a positive example of this being the development of different versions of return to school plans as schools were able to open their doors again after the period of school building closure. Many schools now have accessible versions of Improvement Plans and school policies.

We will maintain a focus on accessibility as we develop pages for children and young people on the city website.



Support from Trade Unions

The EIS provides Professional Learning (PL) for teachers and associated professionals on a wide range of areas in an annual programme.

EIS has developed professional learning partnerships extending opportunities for members on contemporary developments in Scottish educational practice and policy. This includes collaborations with statutory and third sector partners across topics including learning for sustainability, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Putting Learners at the Centre of Education; Additional Support for Learning ; Mental Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People, and neurodiversity. Existing partnerships with specialist organisations for topic-based professional learning continue to be strengthened, including with Dyslexia Scotland, and the Development Education Centres.

The EIS PACT project is a professional learning programme which educates teachers and wider staff, on issues and attitudes to poverty.

EIS provides support to migrants and refugees in the form of the EIS welcome packs. The packs are specific to three age ranges -with an early-years pack almost ready to be added. The packs are designed to inform young people and their families of their rights as pupils/students in Scottish education and to convey a positive welcoming message to the young people. Packs are booklets translated into several languages.

There are various publications produced by EIS Equalities department which can be used in school to support staff. Examples of these include the “Myths of Immigration” booklets which are differentiated across primary and secondary levels; the EIS poverty booklets- currently being updated- have been widely used in schools across Scotland to support in poverty-proofing schools for the benefit of all children.



Provision of library services

The library service offers support to children, young people, families and those who work with them to understand the UNCRC through a range of activities, resources and parenting support initiatives, alongside signposting to appropriate partners. Initiatives which promote bonding between parent and child are supported with, for example, the Bookbug programme is delivered across the library network. These sessions effectively support the development of language and literacy skills and of secure attachment, providing a network of peer support for families. Work is ongoing to increase parental involvement and engagement with content through sharing favourites rhymes and stories at sessions.



During lockdown library staff worked hard to continue to provide Bookbug sessions, fully embracing the digital pilot to produce online sessions via Facebook and YouTube, while in person sessions were not available. These were so successful that they have continued even though in person sessions have restarted. Other online activities were also introduced and continue including story trails, online escape rooms and numeracy events. In 2022 a trial of library-based PEEP groups started to further support parenting skills. Libraries also work with partners in community planning, health and social care to support various projects. All libraries are part of the Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland network helping to increasing rates of breastfeeding. To help address and reduce dental decay there is provision of free toothbrushes/paste in all libraries via a partnership with Childsmile. Period products are available free to those who need them in partnership with CFINE. Outdoor activity sessions have been introduced and will continue for Bookbug and other storytelling sessions and activities.

Libraries have been working with Care Experienced Young People and Young Carers to devise a new Supported Membership helping remove barriers to library membership. Targeted support for Young Carers has provided opportunities to have a break from their caring responsibilities e.g. animations, illustrator events. These activities have also

supported Young Carers to share their story and advocate for Young Carers through comics. Across all children and young people's library services the voice of the child is encouraged, e.g. input from young people into the Aberdeen Reads Challenge and encouraging children and young people to recommend resources for purchase.

Support for our refugee and New Scots communities is available including Bookbug sessions at Family days, access to dual and home language publications and learning materials, help for families to access online services and signposting to other services where appropriate. Libraries provide a neutral safe meeting space for families and key workers supporting families, offering library tours/visits and support with library membership.



Schools are supported with literacy initiatives and termly newsletters. Support with school library development and whole school reading initiatives is offered, including ensuring children and families are involved in decision making processes.

Curriculum Resources and Information Service (CRIS) is a specialist curricular resource and information service providing support to ACC staff working to meet the educational and social developmental needs of children and young people aged 3-16. CRIS provides a wide variety of book and non-book resources including artefacts, learning packs, educational games and programmable devices/robotics. Resources support topics across the curriculum including literacy, numeracy, STEM, health and wellbeing, outdoor education and PSHE and are available in a range of formats to support different needs and abilities.

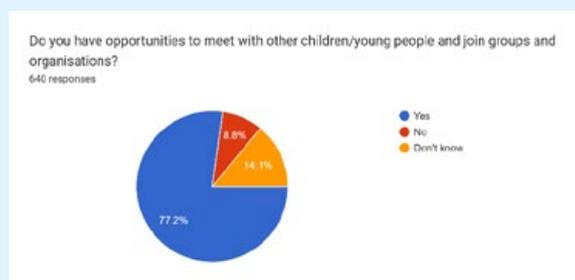
Children and young people borrowed over 364,000 items over the last 3 years. During lockdown periods e-book and e-audio provision was vastly improved with over 18,000 items borrowed via the online platform. 35,000 children and young people participated in events and activities, in person and online, in 2021/22.

Involving children in the design of future schools

In order to better understand preferences and perceptions about key spaces within the learning environment, the School Estates Team liaise and engage with end users to ensure that new school designs meet our children's requirements both now and in the future. This was key in developing the Community Campus Model in 2021, pupil survey responses were used to validate and guide the emerging designs ensuring they took into account the experiences, aspirations and requirements of those who used the spaces on a daily basis. The surveys were completed by 259 pupils from seven primary and secondary schools across Aberdeen. The high response rate from a wide variety of schools gave a robust base from which to draw findings. Primary pupils particularly like outside spaces - 90% like to learn outside. When choosing their favourite pictures of key spaces, the primary driver was places with a sense of openness. Senior pupils also chose outside spaces as their favourite, placing high importance on shelter and place.

Youth Work Provision

The Youth Work team has been working in partnership with schools to support children and young people who have been particularly affected by Covid and lockdown. It builds on the work the Youth Work in Schools team has already been doing in some ASGs. The Education Recovery Fund allowed the Youth Work team to now work in every ASG and with many more children and young people than it has before.



The team's community-based youth work programme has restarted since lockdown restrictions ended. This has increased the number of groups and activities for children and young people in their communities. All groups and activities are free and accessible for anyone who wants to take part. Community-based youth groups allows children and young

people to socialise and take part in a programme of activities *they have chosen* without having to leave their communities or face prohibitive cost barriers. Community-based youth work activities meets children and young people's right to meet with other children and young people and join groups.



The Kincorth group exploring "The Gramps". The piece of paper says "you get to meet your friends"

Examples of some of the community-based youth groups that started up in 2022 includes a group for Primary 6 and 7's in the Kincorth area of the city, a drop-in for teenagers in the Northfield area and the multi-agency Hub project in and around Mastrick. The Hub provides a place for young people to come to once a week and where they can engage with adults and take part in a variety of activities such as those provided by Street Sports and Youth Work.

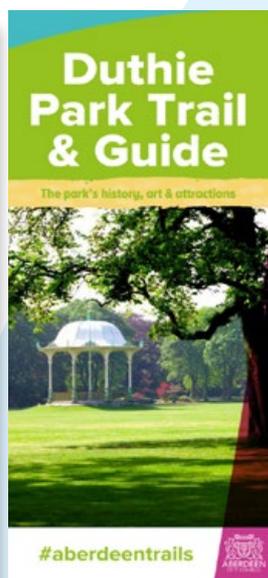
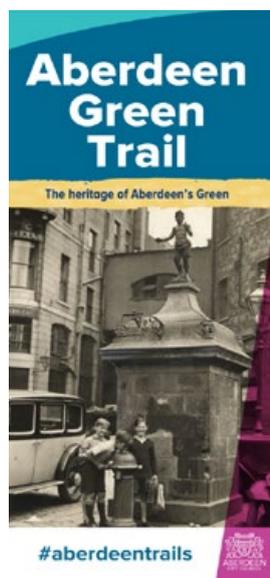
The Youth Work team has responsibility for managing Scottish Youth Parliament elections for Aberdeen city and providing support to elected SYP members. Elections were held at the start of 2022 and this resulted in 5 SYP members being elected.



Our 5 Scottish Youth Parliament members are continuing to represent the views of young people across the city on a national platform. Currently our SYP members sit on several committees including Justice and Sports and Leisure. One of the MSPs is also a board member. The SYP members have debated items from neurodiversity to bus stop safety at national sittings and are currently looking at ways to engage fully with their constituents in a more Child Friendly and engaging manner.

The Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) tasked Community Learning and Development with setting up a Youth Advisory Group (YAG) for young people from the local authorities covered by the RIC. Each local authority is allowed a maximum of 2 young people to be on the YAG. A youth worker supports the 2 young people from the city who sit on the YAG.

Provision of cultural programmes

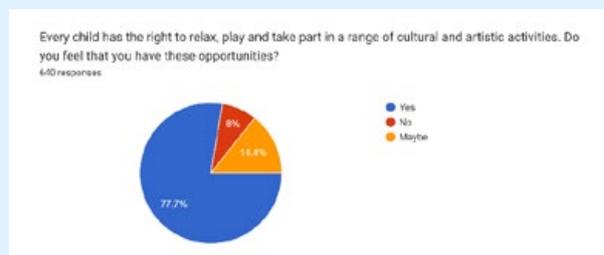


Building on the work and programming that took place during the early months of the redeveloped Art Gallery, the provision for families and early years has increased and diversified. A monthly series supporting 0-5 years olds and their adults to explore the collections through crafts, movement, music and play has been very popular. The gallery has now extended this programme to Aberdeen City Council partners including PEEP Learning



Together programme (Social Care and Health) and the Geronimo project (Creative Learning). Regular social event Baby Boogie encourages families with young children to enjoy a live DJ set in the Cowdray Hall, taking part in dancing, movement and group activities. We host a weekly Breastfeed Welcome café in Aberdeen Art Gallery for nursing mothers. We have continued our Family Ceilidh series, recently welcoming a group of New Scots with children to this event, via our partnership with Grampian Regional Equality Council. Our family programme continues in the holiday periods, offering accessible arts and crafts, and gallery trails for young people to explore the collections, which has been a part of the Easter in the City and Summer in the City programmes. We also offer children's workshops in arts, crafts movement and dance linked to our Special Exhibitions.

We are working with Soundplay projects, a Scottish based organisation that develops interactive, accessible and inclusive installations and events. Our work with Soundplay includes visits from pupils with complex conditions and disabilities who attend Orchard Brae school and a weekend of public workshops.



The formal learning provision includes a range of Teachers Packs aimed at primary, ASN and Secondary pupils covering a wide variety of themes alongside google classrooms with resources, activities and information about our Collections and Special Exhibitions programme. Recent programmes have included substantial school class visits to the British Art Show 9, Zandra Rhodes: 50 years of Fabulous, The Book of Deer and Galloway Hoard: Viking Age Treasure. Our programme for the Galloway Hoard included 15 school bursaries contributing towards the costs of transport for class visits to the gallery. This was funded via the National Museum of Scotland and sessions involved handling sessions using replica items from the hoard, explorations of exhibitions using our resources and discussions with staff during visits.

We developed a second iteration of our interpretation programme for school pupils - Art Chat – which supports learners to explore and then share their interpretations of key works on display at Aberdeen Art Gallery. The content is featured on our website and on the app Bloomberg Connects.

We worked with a range of senior phase secondary pupils from across the city to look at the exhibition Sculpture Court by Scottish artist Kenny Hunter. This one-day workshop was designed to support learners interested in further education in the creative sector and included discussion, hands-on creativity all led by local artist, teacher and Gray's School of Art course leader David Blyth.

During 2020-21 we supported the work of the Children's Parliament and in 2022 supported the Grampian regional Equality Council's Anne Frank Award programme

Play Area Investment

Aberdeen City Council recognises that play is an essential part of a child's development and important to the future of Aberdeen. This can be clearly seen in the Council's Children's Strategy statement:

"Play is an essential part of everyone's life and is fundamental to human development and is freely chosen and self-directed. Children engage in play as a mechanism to explore the world around them, for enjoyment and creative expression and as the medium through which skills are learned and developed. Play is the stimulus for physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development."

Well maintained play areas give an area a community, family feel that helps make people feel safe. They provide the local community with a local destination / meeting point for all ages and a place where the community and visitors to the area come together to play. They are spaces where friends are made, and the outdoors is celebrated.



At present there are 146 play areas within the city. The estimated asset value of all the city play areas is £10 million.

Every year a number of play areas are identified for investment and refurbishment. The play areas are prioritised and listed based on site condition, play value and proximity to other play areas. Alongside this, a separate list of individual items requiring renewal, removal or immediate repair is compiled using recommendations from an Annual Independent Play Inspection Report.

This is the 12th year of the Council's rolling programme of Play Area Refurbishment, and our programme is resulting in improved play value and condition across all play areas.

2022/23 will see £400,000 of Council funding invested in play.

The Scottish Government have also identified the refurbishment of play areas as a priority and 2022/23 is the second year of a five-year programme of funding for all local authorities to improve play area provision within their area. Aberdeen City Council has been provided £180,000 of funding for this financial year to spend on play area refurbishment.

In total £580,000 will be invested in Aberdeen's play areas in 2022/23.

The 2022/23 Play Area Refurbishment Programme provides the opportunity for communities and children to become involved in the decision-making process to help to create the improvements to the Greenspaces around them.

Ensuring the right of all to play

In response to the number of Ukrainian children arriving in Aberdeen over the the summer of 2022, two hubs were established in Dyce Primary and Stoneywood Primary which were the nearest schools to the hotels families were staying in. The hubs ran for 2 hours each day for 5 weeks of the school holidays and were staffed by volunteers from across the education service.

The main aim of the hubs was to provide a safe space where children could play as this was not available at the hotels where families were staying. Children from 3-18 years old attended and staff provided organised and free play opportunities both indoors and outdoors. With staff teams changing weekly children experienced a wide range of activities from cooking and baking to shelter building and facepainting.

Evaluation

Despite the challenges of the last 3 years, the provision of education, leisure and cultural programmes continue to benefit children and young people.

The education service will continue to focus on the quality of provision and will continue to adapt working practices in keeping with The Promise and the UNCRC. The service should also continue to invest in an Education Support Officer to help build capacity in others.

Special protection measures

This cluster focusses on vulnerable and marginalised children and young people who require special protection.

Aberdeen's Champions Board brings together Corporate Parents and young people with care experience 4 times a year. It is a powerful space for young people, service leads and key decision makers to come together, focusing on young people's participation and leadership, and influencing positive change in the local care system and the experiences of Aberdeen's care experienced. The work of the group is driven through the Champions Board Plan 2021-2023.

The vision of our Champions Board Plan 2021-2023 is that:

'Our care experienced children, young people and care leavers have a right to participate in decision-making about their own lives and have their voices heard'.

To achieve this, we have identified the following priorities:

- Champions will listen to and learn from the voice and experience of our children and young people,
- Champions will seek and promote opportunities to enable our children and young people to have the same life opportunities as their peers,
- Embedding a children's and young person's rights approach into services, focusing on embedding participation, protection and provision of children and young people's rights,

Despite the continued challenges of the pandemic, the Champions Board continued to meet regularly during the pandemic by utilising an online platform. Where possible, in-person activities bringing together our care experienced children, young people and Champions have taken place, including an Innoflate session, Halloween Disco and regular Supper Clubs, to name but a few.

Young People through the Champions Board requested that information was available for schools to support both staff and pupils to have a greater understanding of 'What it means to be Care Experienced'. The Virtual School Education Support Officer is working in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland and a group of Care Experienced young people to create a programme for schools

that will deliver on their ask. The programme is being developed to take cognisance of The Promise Change Plan, UNCRC and Angela Morgan's Review. A group of Principal Teachers of Guidance are being consulted throughout the development to ensure the programme will be deliverable in schools.

Aberdeen City Council's Repairs and Maintenance Team also responded to a request from our care experienced young people through the Champions Board and produced video tutorials focusing on basic property maintenance tasks for first-time tenancy holders. Based on feedback from young people, a Housing Support Officer became co-located with the Youth Team in April 2021. This post supports our care experienced young people to navigate Housing systems taking a relational approach and aims to make sure that transitions from care into their first tenancy are as coordinated and transparent as possible. An evaluation on the impact of this role is to be undertaken in 2023.

We continue to see a positive trend in care experienced young people accessing and sustaining tenancies (with a decrease in the use of temporary accommodation arrangements) and of those that did terminate their tenancy within 365 days of securing a property, went on to secure other forms of accommodation.



As a result of the pandemic, our annual Celebration of Success for those with Care Experience had been hosted on an online platform in September 2020 in order to ensure that the efforts of our young people were recognised. The children and young people were delighted that the event managed to see some in person attendance as well as a live stream from the September 2021 event. Some of the positive feedback received included:

"I was so emotional hearing what she has achieved. I think this was a great event to have as she felt she belonged, hearing what others had done," grandmother

"This was great to be part of and I am so proud. We all tell them how great they are but they don't always listen to us or school. Being here today in such a special place and being told how proud everyone is was just lovely," Foster Carer

"It made me feel worthwhile and it was good to hear what I had achieved and for others to hear it," Young Person

"Being here today and talking to people has given me the opportunity to get involved in helping other care experienced young people," young person



The Virtual School

The Virtual School has been in place for many years now. It effectively ensures that robust education protocols are in place for Looked After Children (Individual Education Plans, CSPs, timely enrolment in appropriate education provision and attendance thereafter and that any trends are identified and addressed). Support for parents, foster carers and kinship carers includes help to navigate the educational landscape, including understanding

qualifications, supports and pathways. Having worked to increase the number of Looked After Children considered for a Coordinated Support Plan (CSP) last session, training has been delivered to social work colleagues to support the consideration of a CSP for all Looked After Children in other local authorities. The voice of the child or young person is captured as part of this consideration.

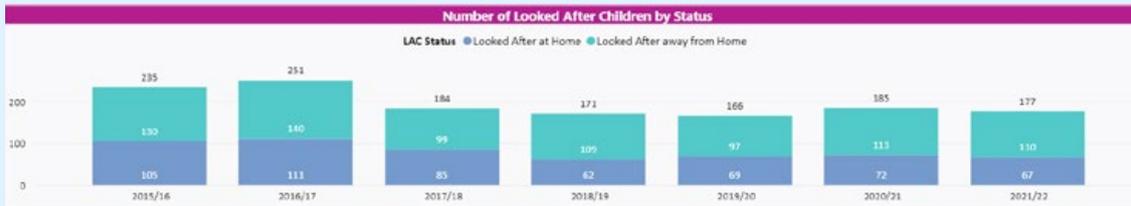
We would want all of our children to make use of key staff in school for support and guidance and these positive relationships are evident in most cases. However, we recognise that there are times when young people may need access to an impartial Officer and our Virtual School undertakes this function. Our Virtual School acts as an advocate for children and young people and enjoys close collaboration with the Children's Rights Service. All children and young people supported by the Right's Service are made aware of the role of the Virtual School so that they know that support is available to them if required. This ensures that the child or young person's views are heard and responded to consistently.

The Virtual School (a Tier 2 service) is central to supporting the multi-agency teams around each child with regard to their education, ensuring effective child centred planning wherever the child or young person attends school. There is evidence that the involvement of the Virtual School reduces the time spent out of education for a number of Looked After Children this year who have transitioned between local authorities and schools. As 222 of our Looked After children are educated in another local authority, this supports their journey into a positive destination. Given this high number we have begun more rigorous quality assurance of Residential Schools, which has been enhanced through the establishment of a Quality Improvement Officer (ASN), and proactive planning to welcome children and young people back to the city where appropriate to do so.

As we work to return many children and young people to the city, we recognise the need to diversify and amend ways of working to support children who are already looked after or on the edge of care. Two workshops held in June 2022 have helped develop two pilots to be implemented over school session 22/23. These two pilots will inform longer term planning and be closely aligned to our developing Family Support Model.

What does the data tell us about our Looked After Children?

The number of Looked after children attending city schools currently sits at 177. The number has been fairly consistent over the last 5 years.



Our schools and The Virtual School support personalised planning for individuals. As a result of this personalised approach, we have seen an increase in school attendance and reduction in unauthorised absence from school.

Validated data for 2020/21 shows that children and young people who are care experienced have a mean attendance of 87.17%. This is 5% lower than the average attendance of 92.97%.

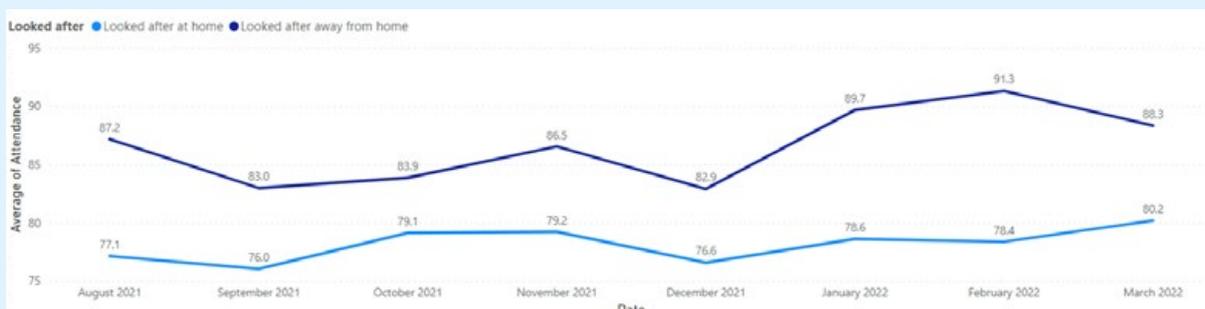
Exploring the data by group, however, highlights a contrasting picture for those who are looked after away from home compared to those who are looked after at home.



Children and young people who are Looked after away from home enjoy school attendance only one percentage point lower than their peers (91%). The attendance of those looked after at home is significantly lower at 81%.

Attendance is tracked monthly and there has been an increased focus on supporting accurate recording of attendance of our Looked After Children, some of whom have a personalised curriculum that involves support by 3rd sector partners and commissioned services. With the return to in school learning, there has been an increased drive to engage young people in the MCR Pathways programme to support attendance in school and this has helped realise an improved trend despite the general reduction in school attendance due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Live data validates the need to focus on the attendance and achievements of those who are Looked After or in kinship care arrangements over the coming year and ensure that personalised pathways are appropriately meeting individual needs. This learning has informed the establishment of our two pilot projects across Northfield and Lochside Associated Schools Groups.



Exclusions have reduced steadily over the past 5 years. This is thought to be as a result of a greater focus on wellbeing in schools and of clarifying expectations and legal obligations. A small-scale audit across Education and Children's Social Work explored in greater detail the circumstances and needs of a small group of young people who had been excluded on multiple occasions, some of whom were on the edge of care. This reinforced the close correlation between adverse childhood experiences and the emotional presentation/wellbeing of the young people in school and has informed the professional learning offer delivered across the service. Considerable work has been undertaken to support wellbeing in schools but the delivery of some interventions for individuals was compromised due to the staffing shortages due to the need to self-isolate. This is likely to have compromised the impact of some personalised pathways.

The exclusion pattern for those Looked after at home now aligns with that for those who are looked after away from home. When explored further, it is evident that the children and young people had become dysregulated resulting in them presenting with distressed behaviours that can be challenging for adults around them. It is likely that the staffing shortages in schools as a result of self-isolation have impacted on the supports available for children and young people in schools who become dysregulated.

15 Looked After children have been excluded to date this academic year with 7 of those having repeat exclusions and accounting for 16 of the 27 total incidents. 7 of the children are Looked After away from home and 8 are Looked After at home. Secondary pupils account for 78% of the exclusions. The development of ABZ Campus should help address this.

It was also noted that 11 of the 27 incidents from across the year occurred in March. The build up to the holiday months can be particularly challenging for Looked After Children, there is a need to take proactive action to address this obvious rise in anxiety in future and this will be considered and planned for as we reshape the approach taken by the Virtual School and run two pilots across two Associated Schools Groups to explore new delivery models of the Virtual School. It is hoped that a year round model of delivery will help prevent peaks of dysregulation.

Curriculum for Excellence levels shows a continued gap in attainment between those with care experience and their peers in keeping with the national picture. The challenge in analysing data

for Looked After children remains that there are small numbers in each cohort which means that a single child can have a significant impact on the percentages calculated. To give a sense of the variation in numbers, the number of P1,4 and 7 pupils for whom ACEL data would be collected, has ranged from 29 to 42 over the last two years. Given the small numbers in the cohort, accurate 'value added' can only be effectively calculated every 4 years by looking at the progress of individual children.

In general terms, ACEL data for those with care experience mirrors the wider city trend and saw a decrease over session 2020/21. Levels for 2021/22 looks set to exceed pre-pandemic levels in writing and numeracy. Reading and listening & talking look to be recovering to within <5% of the baseline percentage.

It is well documented that looked after and care experienced young people have a range of needs, strengths and vulnerabilities. Whilst their circumstances vary, most have experienced some form of difficulty in their lives. Many of these young people have experienced multiple, serious adversities, which may include socio-economic disadvantage, parental drug and alcohol misuse, and domestic violence. They can live in chaotic households and may experience more uncertainty about where and who they live with which may make it difficult to study at home, complete assignments or homework. They are significantly more likely to have physical health conditions, poorer mental health (even when poverty and disadvantage are accounted for), emotional difficulties, and face multiple barriers when it comes to addressing such difficulties, all of which may have an impact on school attendance. Much of this was further impacted upon during the pandemic and it can be seen from the data that for each ACEL area, the trend across the 3 years for Looked After Children reflects the pattern for both those in SIMD 1 and for those with ASN.

Of those who were Looked After at the point of census whose data is captured here, 9% are no longer Looked after and there is recognition that there needs to be an increased focus on our care experienced learners as their needs are enduring beyond their time in care. Moving forward into 2022/23, there will be a broadened focus on supporting those who are previously Looked After to ensure interventions continue to be in place to meet their needs and on those at risk of being accommodated or 'on the edge of care'.

74% of the learners in the cohort attend schools in 3 of the city's ASG's (Northfield, Lochside and St Machar). This data has informed the location of our two pilots which will see changed working practices for our Virtual School and other colleagues across the Council and wider Community Planning Partnership.

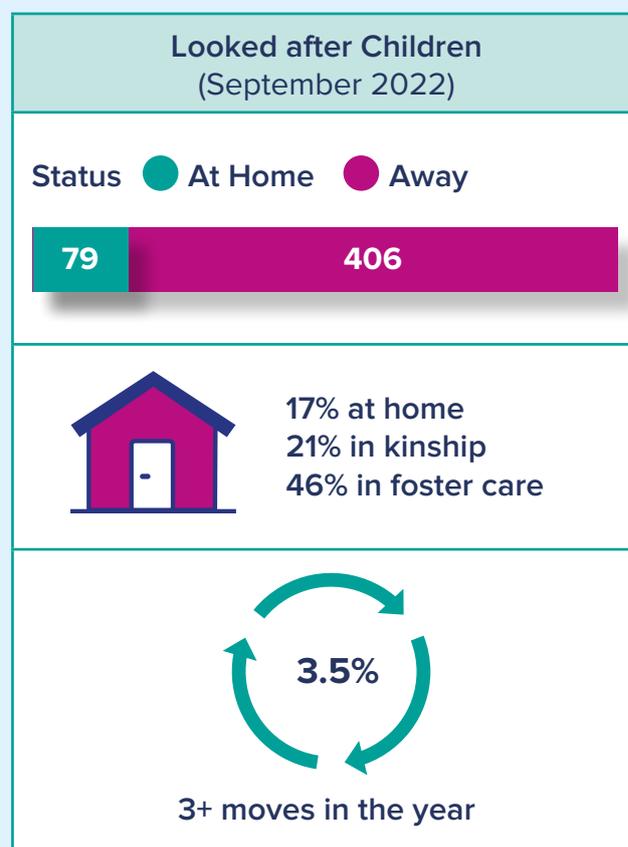
Despite city wide initial leaver destinations data for 20/21 being the highest ever recorded in the city, those who are Looked After achieved below the virtual comparator. Although there remains a gap between the percentage of Looked after Children achieving a positive destination in Aberdeen City and the Virtual Comparator, this is the highest percentage achieved over the past 7 years and there is evidence of sustained improvement. There is a need to continue to focus on this area with a range of partners including Further and Higher Education in order to ensure that our looked after children consistently achieve a positive destination.

Planning for children in need of care and protection

Strong relationships exist with Lead Professionals to ensure a coordinated planning approach to meet the needs of those children with elevated levels of need or vulnerability and who need a multi-agency plan to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Our data highlights that of those children assessed as requiring the involvement of a lead professional from Children's Social Work, circa 80% are cared for within their family and supported by a community based multi-agency plan appropriate to their needs. Over the initial months of COVID there was noticeable rise in "social/family" concerns being recorded as the reason for referral to Children's Social Work. While this reflected an understandable concern as to the vulnerability of children and families many of these referrals did not merit the statutory intervention of children's social work. They did however reflect a need to ensure we have appropriate community based early intervention resources responsive to the needs of children, young people and their families. The partnership will look to review the accessibility and responsiveness of these services to ensure they continue to provide the right support to families at the right time as part of our partnership model of Family Support.

Feedback from many children and young people placed out with the city clearly highlights that they would want to be cared for closer to Aberdeen. Encouragingly the number of looked after children has reduced by approximately 12% over the past two years. We however recognise that our 'balance of care' is not as aligned to the national position as we would want with higher-than-average numbers of children placed in foster care and lower than average numbers of children looked after at home or in kinship care. Building the capacity of community-based services to support children and families remain together is a priority of the Family Support Model and the pilot's in ASG's of Northfield and Lochside.



The increased emphasis on keeping brothers and sisters together where it is safe for them to be so is welcomed. The lack of resources equipped to do so further reinforces our continuing attempts to be creative in how we support families overcome adversities. However the safety and wellbeing of children and young people will remain our overriding focus.

The Council has responded positively to national policy changes including the implementation of updated child protection guidance and refreshed GIRFEC Practice Guidance. The Children and Family Service cluster would anticipate the need for consideration of how the implementation of the National Care Service (NCS) will impact on current arrangements to ensure that children and families continue to receive a consistent offer during any period of transition.

The City's Chief Officers Group (COG) has started early consideration of the implications of the NCS to ensure continued close collaboration between the universal service of education and the specialist service of Children's Social Work.

An established system is in place for parents to gain permission for children to work. Applications are considered by the Chief Education Officer.

Evaluation

The partnership has continued to make definite progress to improve the outcomes for our care experienced and looked after children and young people. We however recognise that their outcomes continue to lag behind that of their peers.

Embedding the learning highlighted in The Promise/ Plan 21-24 is a partnership priority. Included in this is our commitment to engage and work collaboratively with children, young people and their families to ensure their voice informs the design of services and supports.

The aim will be to support children and young people to remain within their family where such is safe for them. It is envisaged this will see a continuing reduction of the number of looked after children. Such will require all partners to think differently about how they provide preventative intervention to support children in a trauma informed approach to remain within their family and the city.

Action Plan

The following Plan has been developed to shape preparations for the incorporation of the UNCRC. The plan has been informed by a review of the Improvement Service Documentation and the Theory of Change documentation commissioned by Scottish Government which identified 4 key change mechanisms.

The current assumption is that the Statutory guidance will be influenced by both documents. The Plan will be reviewed when Statutory Guidance is published in 2023.



Policy - This includes policy adaptation, coordination, administrative integration and budgetary consideration.



Capacity - This includes building cross-sector capacity and capability to integrate rights-based ways of working.



Culture - This includes changing attitudes, norms, values and everyday actions.



Empowerment - This includes ensuring a system of information, advocacy, complaints, redress and effective remedy for children and young people.

Key: On track for completion by June 2023
 Likely to be in the final stages of development by June 2023 or require on-going work
 Not likely to be realised by June 2023

Improvement Service proposed priorities	Theory of change	RAG Rating	Actions required
Leadership and Corporate commitment	Policy		Align improvements identified as necessary within current statutory plans to ensure children's rights are fully embedded in the work of the Council and wider partnership.
Participation	Policy		Share best practice and build the confidence of those working out with children's services. Ensure a consistent feedback loop to children and young people.
Empowerment of children and young people	Empowerment		Ensure that all children and young people have access to accessible advice to support them to understand their rights.
Child friendly complaints procedure	Empowerment		Implement a child friendly complaints process compliant with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) guidance when known.
Training and awareness raising	Capacity and culture		Evaluate parent/carer/community understanding of the UNCRC and plan next steps Maintain the delivery of training for all Council staff and establish a mandatory module for all employees.
Improving practice – tools and resources to support your work	Capacity and culture		Maintain the provision of an Education Support Officer to support Council services to engage with children and young people.
Publishing child friendly information	Empowerment		Develop child friendly webpages on ACC site
Measuring progress	Capacity		Collect data on a wider range of groups including those with disabilities and those most at risk of being impacted by poverty. Establish a multi-agency request for assistance process Establish a mechanism to draw data from the Integrated Impact Assessments
Children's rights budgeting	Policy		Continue to consider the UNCRC when taking decisions around budget.
Accountability and reporting	Capacity		Identify indicators to be used to measure and report progress to help inform the next version of the Children's Rights Report.

Key: On track for completion by June 2023
 Likely to be in the final stages of development by June 2023 or require on-going work
 Not likely to be realised by June 2023

Improvement Service proposed priorities	Theory of change	RAG Rating	Actions required
Non-discrimination/ Rights at risk	Culture		<p>Develop a Family Support Model. Continue to drive integration as we develop a model of support for those who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the edge of care • Impacted by trauma • At risk of conflict with the law • Impacted by disability <p>Develop a neurodevelopmental pathway with partners</p> <p>Prepare to establish a local Bairn’s Hoose with partners</p> <p>Continue to develop and deliver ABZ Campus</p> <p>Review Anti-bullying policy</p> <p>Understand further why some children feel unsafe and don’t feel their privacy is being respected</p> <p>Implement Edge of Care pilots</p> <p>Improve alignment between children’s and adult services</p> <p>Bring supports for parents together in one accessible place.</p> <p>Work with Community Planning Partners to support the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and families</p>