

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	21 March 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Integrated Children's Services Plan 2023-2026
REPORT NUMBER	CFS/23/077
DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne and Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR	Eleanor Sheppard
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report aims to outline the progress made in developing the statutory Integrated Children's Services Plan and seek approval to finalise, submit and then deliver against the Plan from April 2023 to March 2026.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 note the progress made in developing the draft Aberdeen City Integrated Children's Services Plan for 2023-26;
- 2.2 delegate authority to the Interim Director Children's and Family Services to submit the Plan to the Community Planning Management Board for approval and thereafter submit the Plan to Scottish Government;
- 2.3 note the refreshed Getting it Right for Every Child Operational Guidance which sits at the heart of all planning for children and families; and
- 2.4 instruct the Interim Director Children's and Family Services to ensure that yearly progress reports are presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee and thereafter for approval by the Community Planning Management Board over the lifetime of the Plan.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1. Part 3 (Children's Services Planning) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires every local authority and its relevant health board to jointly prepare a Children's Services Plan in respect of a three-year period.
- 3.2. This Children's Services Planning process aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland by ensuring that local planning and

delivery of services is integrated, focussed on quality and prevention, and dedicated to safeguarding and the promotion of child wellbeing to prevent need from escalating.

- 3.3 While overall responsibility for children’s services planning rests with a Local Authority and its relevant Health Board, it is expected that the Local Authority and health board will work collaboratively with other members of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), as well as with children, young people and their families to develop Plans.

Identifying the priorities

- 3.4 In November 2022, the Children’s Services Board (an Outcome Improvement Group of Community Planning Aberdeen) started to gather, analyse and update performance management information drawn from across all services for children and families. Undertaking this population needs assessment helped Board members identify current and future need for the child population as a whole, for more vulnerable groups within this and also by age and stage.

- 3.5 In parallel, the Children’s Services Board considered and mapped all anticipated legislation to ensure that the need to prepare for and implement legislation could also be reflected in the Plan.

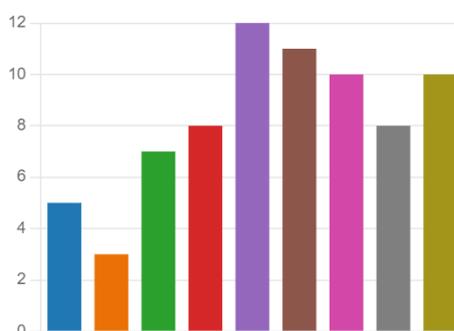
- 3.6 The Children’s Services Board agreed a suite of key data that was felt to highlight where improvements or changes were required. A two week period of engagement was undertaken in late January to help provide the Board with some assurance that the emerging priorities were those most in need of our focus. A range of stakeholders engaged with the key data identified including those delivering services to children and families, those receiving services and those responsible for commissioning services.

- 3.7 In total, 463 stakeholders considered the key data and emerging themes and fed back their views through 28 engagement sessions. Some of the data surprised stakeholders.

4. Did any of the data surprise you? Please select any sections where you were surprised by the data

[More Details](#)

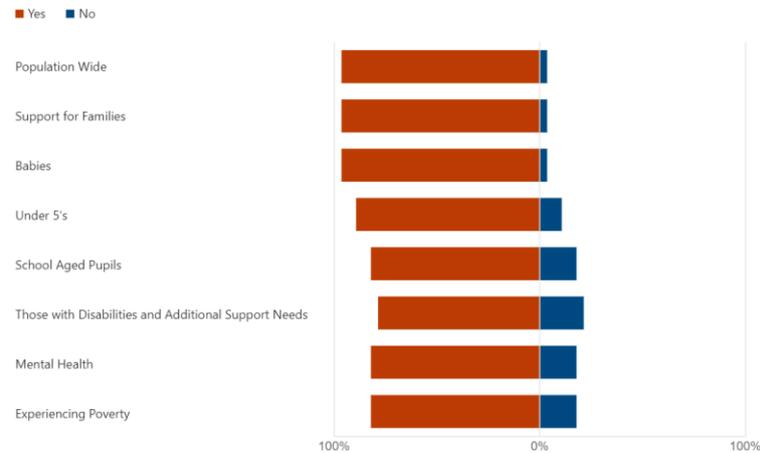
● Population Wide	5
● Support For Families	3
● Babies	7
● Under 5's	8
● School Aged Pupils	12
● Those with Disabilities and Addi...	11
● Mental Health	10
● Experiencing Poverty	8
● None	10



- 3.8 There was broad agreement on the key areas for development and improvement.

8. Do you agree with the initial thoughts for improvement priorities? Please select yes or no for each section.

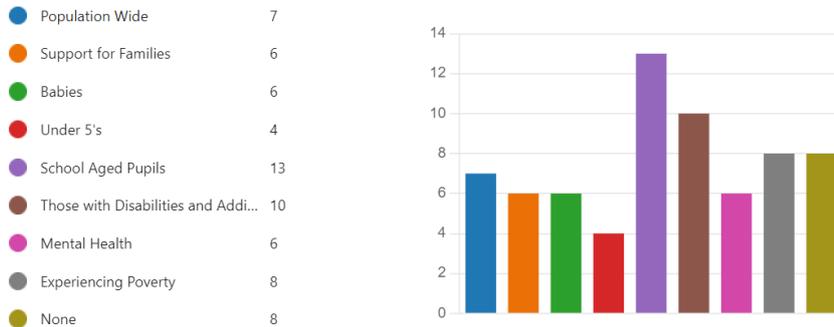
[More Details](#)



3.9 There were requests for more analysis in some areas and requests for further data sets to be considered. This invaluable feedback was taken into account in preparing the draft Children’s Services Plan for consultation.

6. Has any data been missed? Please select any sections where you think data may have been missed from.

[More Details](#)

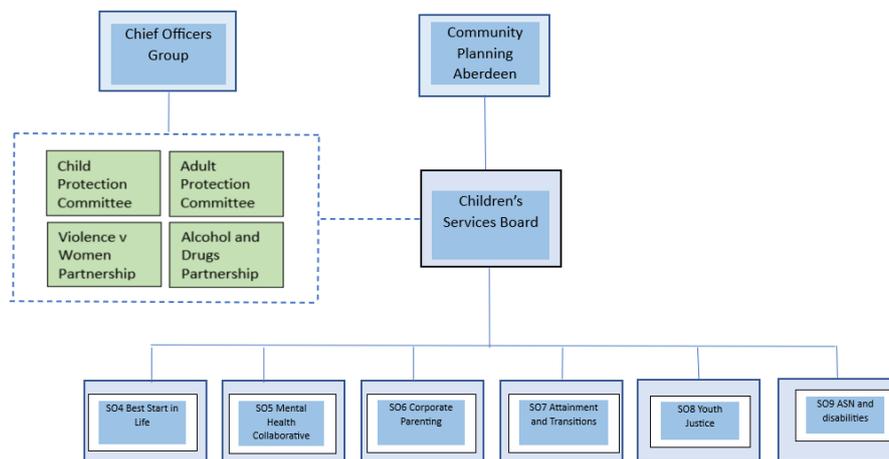


3.10 Feedback from the engagement process has enabled the Children’s Services Board to draft the Action Plans and structure the Plan with far greater confidence.

The draft Children’s Services Plan

3.11 The Children’s Services Plan is one of a suite of Statutory Plans which support delivery of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. Strategic plans for children include our Corporate Parenting Plan, Child Protection Improvement Plan, Children’s Rights Report, Aberdeen City’s Health & Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan, the education National Improvement Framework Plan, Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan and Accessibility Plan, our Community Learning and Development Plan, Community Justice Plan, Locality Plans and our Child Poverty Plan.

- 3.12 The Children’s Services Board agreed the need to better integrate the full range of statutory Plans into the Children’s Services Plan 2023-2026. The Board also expressed a desire to link the Plan to work being coordinated through the local Autism and Carers’ Strategy in order to provide clarity around our improvement priorities for both those who support children and families and those who receive services. Better integration of Plans will support our delivery of more integrated services and help the workforce make the best use of time and resource to better support those we collectively serve with a focus on prevention.
- 3.13 In early February, a Draft Children’s Services Plan was developed based on the strategic needs assessment undertaken from November, the feedback from the two week engagement period and the need for better alignment of all statutory Plans. The draft Plan was shared with Children’s Services Board members to allow partners to consider the scale of the plan holistically and collate baseline data. This allowed Board members to consider the structures required to deliver the Plan and establish refreshed Terms of Reference to support the delivery of the Children’s Services Plan.



- 3.14 The draft Plan (Appendix A), an easy read version (Appendix B) and a Child Friendly version (Appendix C) were formally consulted upon through Citizen space from 20th February to 12th March 2023. 31 adults and 342 children and young people gave their views on the draft Plan.
- 3.15 There was overwhelming support for the addition of a stretch outcome related to those with additional support needs and disabilities and a consistent theme regarding the need for regular updates on progress in this area and across other areas of the Plan. A majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all six of the Stretch Outcomes, and similarly a majority believed we had the right multi-agency improvement projects and key actions to achieve our Stretch Outcomes by 2026. The need for close collaboration and alignment with community assets and the Third sector came through the responses and has been better reflected in the Plan. The Plan is perceived to be suitably ambitious with several references made to the need to ensure effective delivery.

- 3.16 Some respondents questioned the phrasing of some improvement projects and some asked that targets be increased in some areas. Others noted that missing baseline data should be included where ever possible. Almost all of the suggestions are either already reflected in the Plan or have now been taken into account in finalising the draft Plan for approval. This formal consultation process has provided invaluable feedback.
- 3.17 Feedback from children and young people was also highly supportive of the Plan but also gave a clear steer on how to take some of the improvement projects forward. Comments from young people will be shared with project leads to ensure that the voices of those who responded are taken into account. Several young people noted their appreciation for the opportunity to share their views on the Plan. The following quotes are taken directly from the consultation responses:
- ‘Young people aren't bad and shouldn't be treated like criminals’*
- ‘It's great to have the opportunity to give our opinions’*
- ‘There should be more in-person/video call support options for those with additional needs/disabilities/experience of trauma, etc. Online doesn't work for everyone’.*
- ‘We need better mental health support that's quick and easy to access’.*
- ‘A journey to a thousand miles begins in one step, so it is very reassuring to have Aberdeen go through many upgrades. But as long as the level of quality of these new policies, projects and frameworks are maintained to the letter, things will definitely take an efficient turn for Aberdeen. Thank you!’*
- 3.18 The Children’s Services Plan will be presented to Community Planning Aberdeen in April 2023 for formal approval and be submitted to the Scottish Government thereafter. At that time, as well as recommending approval of the Plan, it also recommends that the Children and Young People section of the current LOIP be amended to reflect the multi-agency improvement aims within the Children’s Services Plan 2023-26.
- 3.19 Members will note that children’s rights sit at the heart of this Children’s Services Plan. There is a clear expectation that all areas of improvement will be directly influenced by the participation of children and young people. Work in this area will now be monitored and reported through Stretch Outcome 16 (100% increase in the proportion of citizens who feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026). As a result, the Children’s Services Board are proposing to seek an amendment to Stretch Outcome 8 to reflect the needs of our children and families with additional support needs and disability.
- 3.20 Delivery of the Plan will be overseen by the Children’s Services Board with progress against improvement projects and preparations for legislation being reported to Community Planning Aberdeen. An annual review of progress will be developed over the lifetime of the Plan and it is proposed that this yearly

update be shared with the Education and Children's Services Committee for noting prior to being submitted to Community Planning Aberdeen or to the Scottish Government.

- 3.21 The Plan highlights the central role that Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) plays in our multi-agency processes. Aberdeen City GIRFEC Operational Guidance has been refreshed in keeping with updated national guidance and will be launched to coincide with the launch and delivery of this Plan (Appendix D).
- 3.22 The proposed improvement projects have been reviewed to ascertain the proportion focussed on prevention and early intervention in keeping with national and local policy. Around 40% of the proposed work within the Plan is focussed on prevention with a further 50% focussed on early intervention. Given the multi-agency nature of the Plan this balance is thought to be appropriate.
- 3.23 Given that the Plan also needs to support the safeguarding of children and young people, the Chief Social Work Officer reviewed for Plan for alignment against the Aberdeen City Child Protection Improvement Programme. 30% of proposed activity is aligned with the Child Protection Improvement Programme. Given that this Plan is designed to support all children across Aberdeen City this is thought to be appropriate.
- 3.24 Members will appreciate the complexity in developing an integrated Plan across all Community Planning Partners. It will be important to reflect on the approach taken to inform the approach to be taken in 2026. An evaluation of the process taken will be undertaken prior to the summer holiday period to ensure that learning is captured to help inform our on-going work.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Closer alignment of services could help realise efficiency in the longer term.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The preparation of this Children's Services Plan satisfies the duty placed upon the Council under section 8 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No negative environmental impacts have been identified.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Risk of not changing our local system to reflect changes in national policy.	Delivery of the Children's Services Plan.	L	Yes
Compliance	Risk of not complying with legislation	The Plan complies with the Statutory Guidance	L	Yes
Operational	Risk that we make a lesser impact by working to a high number of strategic plans	The Plan pulls all strategic Plans together to help maximise impact	L	Yes
Financial	Risk that we don't have sufficient resource to meet the needs of priority groups	The Plan will help us make best use of available resource by ensuring partners work to a common purpose.	L	Yes
Reputational	Risk that we don't prioritise those in greatest need.	Mitigated by undertaking a detailed strategic needs assessment and extensive consultation process to support the development of this Plan	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No risks identified			

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement Work with the city's universities, North East Scotland College and businesses to increase educational and	

<p>training options and the number of care experienced young people and young people from deprived communities, going onto positive destinations, including further and higher education, vocational training and apprenticeships.</p> <p>Ensure local education services identify young people with mental health problems and help them get early support and help, where appropriate, to transfer to adult services.</p> <p>Ensure the Council follows best practice as a corporate parent to get the best outcomes for looked-after young people, those in kinship care and those with additional support needs such as autism, developmental disorders or mental health problems</p> <p>Commit to realising the potential of each individual, by seeking to widen curriculum choice and implement progressive choices.</p>	<p>The needs of children and young people most often require a strong multi-agency response. This Plan will support the further integration and collaboration across services supporting children and families to help realise improved outcomes.</p>
<p><u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u></p>	
<p>LOIP stretch outcome 4: <i>95% of children (0-5 years) will reach their expected developmental milestones by the time of their child health reviews by 2026</i></p> <p>LOIP stretch outcome 5: 90% of children and young people will report that their experiences of mental health and wellbeing have been listened to by 2026</p> <p>LOIP stretch outcome 6: As corporate parents we will ensure 95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education, health and emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.</p> <p>LOIP stretch outcome 7: 95% of all our children, including those living in our priority neighbourhoods, will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026</p> <p>LOIP stretch outcome 8: 30% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026</p> <p>LOIP stretch outcome 9: 95% of our children with disabilities will experience a positive transition to adult services by 2026</p>	<p>This Plan details how Stretch Outcomes 4 – 9 will be realised over the next 3 years and will help to coordinate our work across the Community Planning Partnership.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Regional and City Strategies</p> <p>Regional Cultural Strategy</p> <p>Prevention Strategy</p>	<p>The Children's Services Plan prioritises prevention</p>

Children's Services Plan National Improvement Framework Plan	and is closely aligned with the National Improvement Framework. The Plan is designed to bring all statutory Plans for children into one Plan to improve service delivery.
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9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Yes
Data Protection Impact Assessment	No
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1	Appendix A	Children's Services Plan 2023-26
11.2	Appendix B	Easy Read Children's Services Plan 2023-26
11.3	Appendix C	Child Friendly Version of the Children's Services Plan
11.4	Appendix D	GIRFEC Operational Guidance 2023

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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