



Community Planning
Aberdeen

Child Poverty Action Report 2022/23



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1. Introduction

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 set a clear agenda for tackling child poverty and this report satisfies the duty on Local Authorities and Health Boards to report annually on activity they are taking, and will take, to reduce child poverty. This report has been jointly produced by Aberdeen City Council and NHS Grampian and its contents reflect a deepening collaboration across the Community Planning Partnership.

We know that Cost of Living continues to have a substantial impact on the lives of our children, young people, and their families, and that the downturn in the local economy continues to impact negatively on family finances and wellbeing. We also know from a recent survey of over 8000 of our children and young people that our children and young people's perceptions of their own affluence are nearly twice as likely to directly impact on their health and wellbeing outcomes compared with the national mean. Levels of child poverty continue to vary considerably across communities as shown by the Percentage of children (under 16) living in relative low-income families across communities.

However, we also know that child poverty is not inevitable, and therefore, further to our commitment to work together to implement #ThePromise, we are now working to ensure that all our strategic planning and implementation is driven by a better understanding and monitoring of child poverty to ensure that we take an agile approach to changing needs and that all policy levers are used.

| Ward | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Aberdeen City | 11.1% | 13.3% | 15.2% | 15.0% | 15.1% | 13.2% |
| Airyhall/Broomhill/Garthdee | 5.5% | 6.2% | 9.0% | 8.1% | 8.5% | 7.5% |
| Bridge of Don | 5.0% | 7.2% | 7.4% | 7.2% | 7.7% | 8.8% |
| Dyce/Bucksburn/Danestone | 7.9% | 9.7% | 12.1% | 12.3% | 13.2% | 13.7% |
| George St/Harbour | 16.2% | 21.1% | 23.1% | 23.8% | 20.1% | 18.8% |
| Hazlehead/Queens Cross/Countesswells | 3.2% | 3.8% | 4.4% | 4.4% | 4.4% | 3.9% |
| Hilton/Woodside/Stockethill | 16.0% | 20.5% | 25.6% | 25.3% | 24.0% | 20.5% |
| Kincorth/Nigg/Cove | 10.2% | 11.4% | 11.7% | 12.9% | 12.8% | 12.8% |
| Kingswells/Sheddocksley/Summerhill | 10.6% | 12.0% | 14.2% | 13.5% | 13.6% | 10.8% |
| Lower Deeside | 4.1% | 4.3% | 4.5% | 4.9% | 5.4% | 5.5% |
| Midstocket/Rosemount | 8.3% | 9.6% | 11.0% | 10.5% | 9.9% | 8.6% |
| Northfield/Mastrick North | 17.7% | 22.1% | 26.1% | 25.0% | 26.0% | 21.6% |
| Tillydrone/Seaton/Old Aberdeen | 23.2% | 25.9% | 29.5% | 31.4% | 32.6% | 26.3% |
| Torry/Ferryhill | 16.9% | 22.0% | 22.9% | 21.7% | 22.3% | 17.5% |

Throughout the recent pandemic we showed that we are much stronger when we work together. We are now starting to deliver a range of shared services and are using opportunities for co-location, co-creation, and the pooling of resource to help accelerate progress. The Council continues to prepare for the impending incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into domestic law provides us with a further impetus to include children and their families in the design of rights-based services.

We have amended our governance and approach this year to mainstream our approaches to addressing child poverty and maximise all policy levers. We now look forward to linking our data more comprehensively and working with the Aberdeen Health Determinants Research Collaborative to enable us to take decisions informed by local research.



Angela Scott
Chief Executive
Aberdeen City Council



Caroline Hiscox
Chief Executive
NHS Grampian

2. Our approach to addressing child poverty

NHS Grampian's Regional Child Poverty Action Plan sits within the wider 'Tackling Inequalities' Action Plan. Governance and assurance for progress is through the NHS Health Inequalities Action Group (HIAG), which aligns to NHS Grampian's work as an anchor organisation. NHS Grampian has moved to a portfolio delivery model with child poverty a priority for both the Population Health and Integrated Families Portfolio, reporting on progress through the NHS Children's Board to the appropriate Health Board Committees.

Aberdeen City Council expresses its contribution to the Child Poverty agenda through the annual Council Delivery Plan. The wider context around actions to reduce poverty include economic regeneration, workforce development, and all of the structural areas that need to be addressed to create healthy, financially resilient families within a more economically secure community. Child poverty is part of a wider approach on action to reduce poverty and the inequalities that can lead into poverty and loss of health and wellbeing. Governance and assurance for the Council contribution to the child poverty agenda is predominantly through the Council Anti-Poverty Committee and Education and Children's Services Committee. The Anti-Poverty Committee is supported by a group of External Advisors, some of whom have lived experience. In real terms however, the social determinates of health result in all Committees considering business related to child poverty.



The social determinants of health support our shared belief that no single agency or partner can achieve the aspirations of Scottish Governments Child Poverty Action Plan, Best Start, Bright Futures alone. As a result, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP), which promotes prevention and early intervention, is our shared Strategic Plan to address poverty and inequality of outcomes across Aberdeen City. The Council Delivery Plan and NHS Grampian Regional Child Poverty Action Plan are fully aligned to this overarching Plan for the people and place of Aberdeen.

Over the last year, Strategic Partnership Plans for children have been more closely aligned to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan to ensure that all our work reflects the child poverty agenda. In March 2023, the Integrated Children's Services Board established six refreshed Stretch Outcomes for children:

- 95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27–30-month review by 2026
- 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026.
- By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026
- 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.
- 83.5% fewer young people (under 18) will be charged with an offence by 2026.
- 100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/disabilities will experience a positive destination.





The LOIP has been updated to reflect these refreshed Stretch Outcomes.

Work on each of the Stretch Outcomes is driven by a subgroup who report to the Children’s Services Board. Each multi-agency subgroup is responsible for delivery of associated child poverty actions and Improvement Project such as those in Appendix A. Taking this approach is helping to ensure that eliminating child poverty is central to all single and multi-agency work and that policies are aligned.

LOIP STRETCH OUTCOME 4, Best Start in Life Group (BSIL Group). Chair: Fiona Mitchelhill, Chief Nurse (ACHSCP)
95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27-30 month review by 2026 (Baseline 77.5% 2015-16)

| Key Local or National Drivers | Key Actions/Agreed Deliverables | | | Multi-agency Improvement Project Aim and baseline | Key Measures | Lead |
|---|--|---|--|---|--------------|------|
| | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | | | |
| <p>Ensuring that expectant and new parents claim all of the benefits they are entitled to and do not feel stigmatised when seeking support.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the relationship and linkages between maternity, early years practitioners and Financial Inclusion/Welfare Rights experts as an alternative model of enabling professionals to provide parents with access to up-to-date information and practical support to help with income maximisation Consider the provision of community support to make the best use of family income (to include shopping and cooking nutritious and low cost meals) | <p>Increase by 10% the no. of parents with children under 5 who are completing a full benefits check by 2024.</p> <p>Baseline No. 2022 – 152</p> | <p>No. of parents of children 0-5 who complete a full benefits check (new measure)</p> <p>No. of parents children 0-5 who access support from the Financial Inclusion service (Baseline 152 – 2022)</p> | <p>Best Start in Life (BSIL) Group</p> | | |
| <p>Families who need urgent supplies of first stage infant formula and nutritional support for the under 5s can access it quickly and easily.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pan-Grampian pathway for urgent access to first stage infant formula will be established and in use by health professionals by 2023. All pregnant women and families with children under the age of 5 have access to nutritional support by 2023. The extent of maternal and infant food insecurity will be better understood. | <p>100% of urgent requests for first stage infant formula and nutritional support for pre-school children are met by 2024.</p> <p>New measure: Baseline to be established as part of the project.</p> | <p>% of urgent requests for first stage infant formula met (new measure)</p> <p>% of urgent requests for nutritional support for under 5s met (new measure)</p> <p>No. of referrals to the Hardship fund by Family Learning (Baseline to be added)</p> | <p>BSIL Group</p> | | |

The Children’s Services Board has identified several system shifts required to support delivery of the child poverty agenda. This will see the Community Planning Partners work together to:

- simplify access to services.
- increase integration.
- reducing risks by understanding what actually makes a difference and decommissioning where appropriate.
- improving the alignment of our commissioning
- improving the alignment of our data
- building the capacity and capability of our workforce

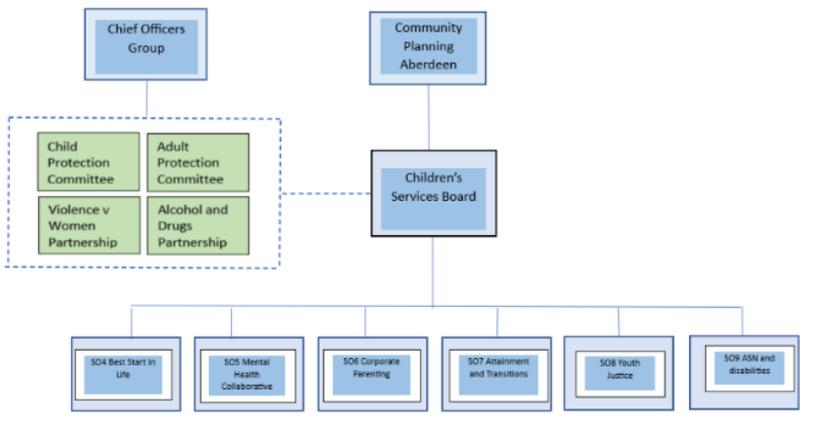
The elimination of child poverty requires the support of others beyond Children’s Services. As above, child poverty is part of a wider approach to action to reduce poverty and the inequalities that can lead into poverty and loss of health and wellbeing and tackling the structural areas that need to be addressed to create healthy, financially resilient families within more economically secure communities. Community Planning Aberdeen’s Anti-Poverty Outcome Improvement Group coordinates elements out with the direct control of Children’s Services. Membership of the Anti-Poverty Outcome Improvement Group includes Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations, third sector partners including Grampian Race Equality Council and Aberdeen Foyer, as well as Robert Gordon and Aberdeen Universities and there are linkages with the other Outcome Groups who report to Community Planning Aberdeen.

Plans are currently underway to refresh the Local Outcome Improvement Plan from January 2024 in light of an updated population needs assessment in November 2023. The refresh will allow us to review our arrangements for supporting the place of Aberdeen. The refresh will also provide an ideal opportunity to link data across Outcome Groups, policies, and partners to enable more robust tracking of progress in real time by community. At present, 20% of our Stretch Outcomes have been achieved or exceeded, 60% are progressing and 20% have challenges.

| Strategic Stretch Outcomes | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| Increase the number of 0-5s who meet developmental milestones by 2026 | Improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and families by 2026 | Improve the health and wellbeing and positive destinations of our children and young people by 2026 | Improve the attainment, health and wellbeing and positive destinations of our children and young people by 2026 | Reduce the number of young people charged with an SCRPA by 2026 | Increase the number of children with ASN or disability who secure a positive destination by 2026 |
| Strategic Priorities | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the health outcomes of expectant and new mothers Improve uptake of benefits Improve access to emergency formula and food for infants Address early speech and language needs Increase the uptake of Childcare Improve the quality of ELC provision and maintain uptake | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on prevention and early intervention Provide access to joined up services and behavioural support Respond quickly in a stigma free, needs and rights led way Increase levels of physical activity Increase the provision of child friendly environments within local communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a Balms, Blossom, Delivery The Promise Increase the provision of health assessments for the care experienced Continue to close the gap between those who have care experience and their peers Increase the no. of foster carers available locally Keep brothers and sisters together Ensure adequate provision of legal advice and advocacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement refreshed guidance on the use of restraint Better track those who are in or on the edge of the care system Improve learning transitions from P7 to S1 Deliver ABZ Campus to widen the range of courses Deliver Aberdeen Computing Collaborative to ensure long term employability Delivery of Tier 2 services to close the gap through SAC funding Continue to address the cost of the school day and child poverty in schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce levels of anti-social behaviour Deliver Mentors in Violence Prevention across all care system Improve learning transitions from child to adult services Ensure that the voices of children (including those who use alternative communication systems) are central to processes and Plans Decrease the number of children not accessing full time education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of neurodevelopmental pathway Establish better assurance systems Increase the number of Young Carers receiving support Improve transition planning from child to adult services |
| Enabling Priorities | | | | | |
| Simplify access to services | Increase integration | Reduce risks | Commissioning | Data | Workforce |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a single Request for Assistance process Reduce the number of access points to information and services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on the integration models including that at ELC Links Establish an assurance system to test the strength of the system Improve alignment between children and adult services Develop a Target Operating Model for children. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understand why children are placed OCA Understand the long term impact of ELC on outcomes for families | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligned to the 10 principles of family support Jointly respond to the needs of those displaced | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve knowledge of the 6 groups by co-designing with service users and children Improve data matching | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase knowledge poverty agenda and of benefits Increase knowledge of trauma and risk |

3. Governance

The Children’s Services Board is governed by and accountable to the Community Planning Management Board, which in turn is accountable to Community Planning Aberdeen. The Children’s Services Board oversee the vast majority of child poverty activity.

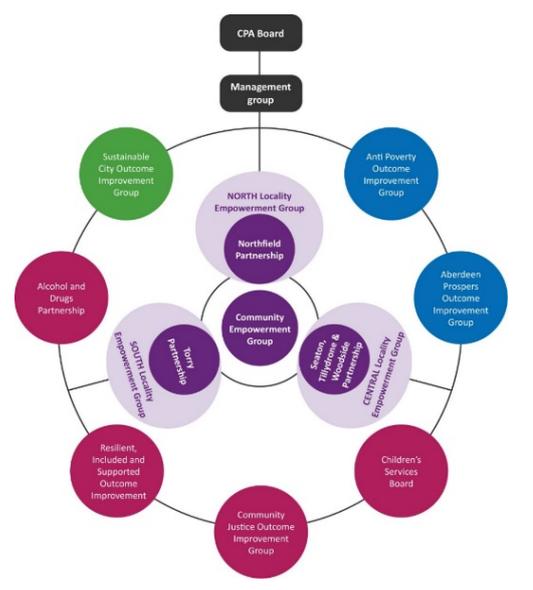


The Children’s Services Board ensures, on behalf of the relevant agencies, that the requirements of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 and associated statutory requirements in respect of reporting are met throughout the Local Authority area of Aberdeen City.

The Group has responsibility for:

- The delivery of the Children’s Services Plan and associated Stretch Outcomes 4-9 of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan
- Working together as a Community Planning Partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people within Aberdeen City
- Leading the implementation of national policy and legislation pertaining to children and young people including the child poverty agenda

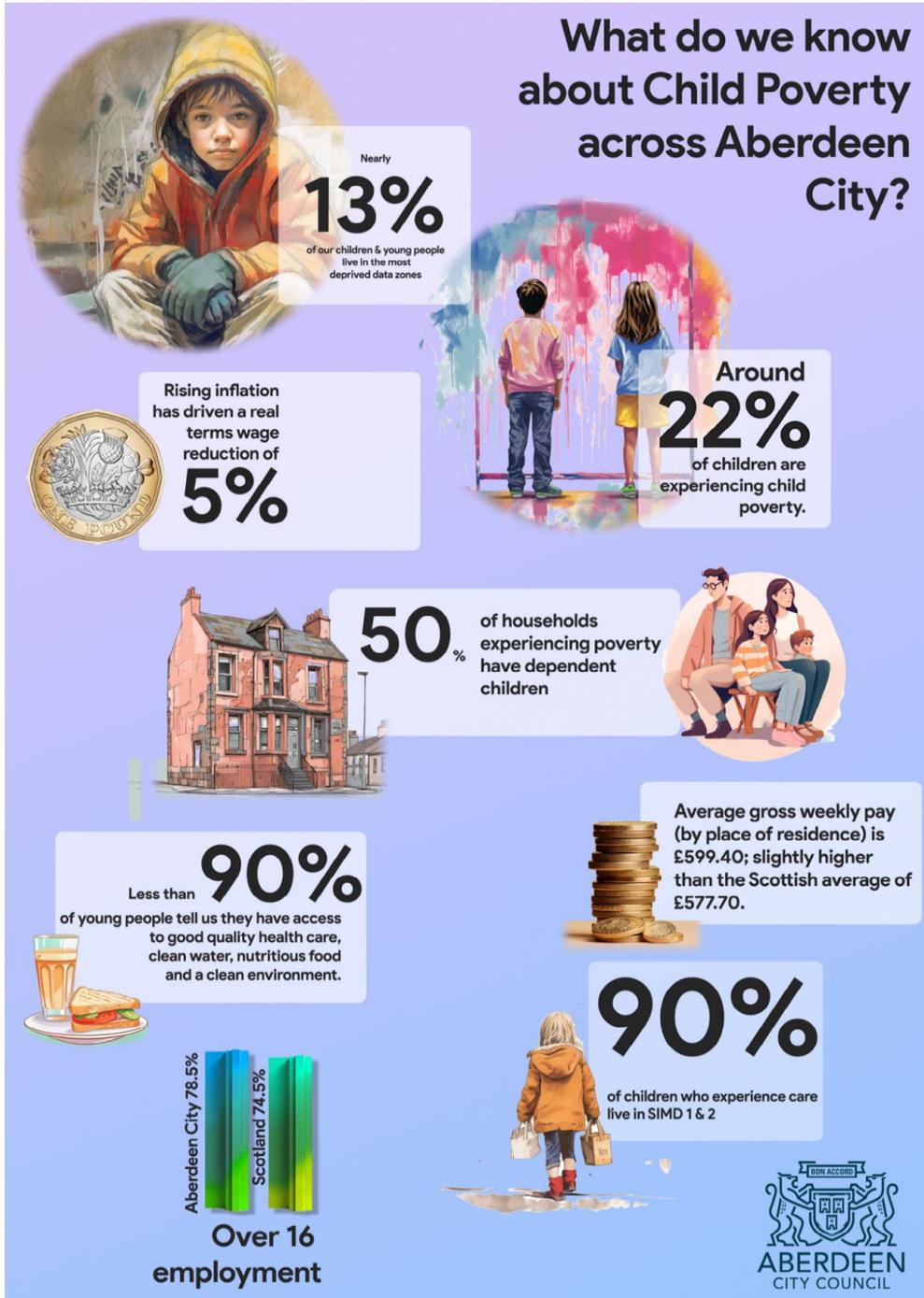
The Anti-Poverty Outcome Improvement Group is also governed by and accountable to the Community Planning Management Group, which in turn is accountable to Community Planning Aberdeen. It also acts as an outcome group of the LOIP and coordinates all multi-agency activity on the child poverty agenda which sits out with the control of Children’s Services. Given that the LOIP is our overarching Plan to address poverty, the work of all Outcome Improvement Groups impacts on the child poverty agenda.





4. What do we know about child poverty in Aberdeen?

A comprehensive analysis of child poverty was undertaken as the [Children's Services Plan](#) was developed in March 2023. Key findings included:

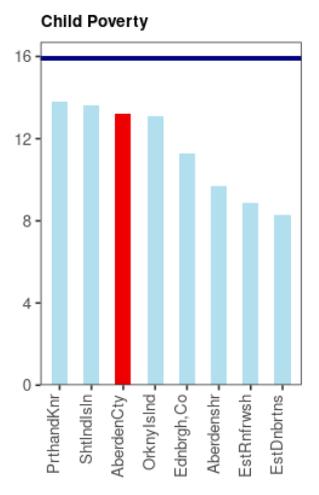


Provisional data for 2021/22 shows that 6,818 children in Aberdeen City were living in low income families (up from 5,405 in 2020/21 and 6,139 in 2019/20). Of these, 5,864 were under 16 years old - equivalent to 16.4% of children under 16 years.

Almost two thirds (62.7%) of children in low income families are in working households and over half (55.6%) are in lone parent families. Figures for the number of children in low income families are calibrated to the Households Below Average Income (HBAI) survey. As fieldwork operations for this survey were affected by the pandemic, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has advised that additional caution be exercised when making comparisons with previous years.

Levels of child poverty in the city are below the national average. However, levels are relatively high when compared with our comparator authorities.

We know that nationally around 90% of those living in poverty identify as being a member of at least one of the 6 groups most likely to be impacted by poverty. It is imperative that we now better understand the unique needs of our citizens in the 6 groups to help shape our policies and practices.



Lone parent families 4,491 lone parent households were on some form of Housing Benefits in August 2022. This is up from 3,442 in January 2019 and an increase of 30%, compared with an increase of 20% Scotland wide. There were 4,435 lone parent households on Universal Credit in August 2022.

Minority Ethnic Families 63% of those who are ethnic minorities are employed compared to 72% of those who are white in Aberdeen City.

We can't say how many asylum seekers are included in these numbers. In terms of how much this impacts on the %'s, again we can't say, however, the largest group of refugees / asylum seekers is Ukrainian. They are most likely classified as white and thus represent less than 1% of the white adult population in Aberdeen (0.7%). On that basis, this is not likely to have a significant impact on overall employment rates.

Disability In August 2022, there were 3,148 households in Aberdeen City on Universal Credit due to them being Families with a disabled adult or child. Of these, 643 had children and of these households 439 are also single parent households. At the same time period there were 482 households in Aberdeen City on Universal Credit who are entitled to Disabled Child Entitlement and of these households 70% or 337 are lone parent households.

Younger mother As of January 2023 the Family Nurse Partnership had 68 mothers enrolled in Aberdeen City. 33% of those referrals required additional support for essential goods and equipment.

Youngest child less than one year old In August 2022, there were 476 households in Aberdeen City on Universal Credit with a child under 1, with more than half (292) being lone parent families. Around a third (34%) of families with a child under the age of 1 experience relative poverty (individuals living in households where equalised income is below 60% of the UK median income in the same year) compared to just less than a quarter (24%) of children overall.

Larger families (3+ children) There were 989 households with 3 or more children who were in receipt of some form^[1] of Housing Benefits in August 2022. This is an increase from 667 (48%) in January 2019 compared with an increase of 29% Scotland wide. There were 969 households with 3 or more children who were in receipt of Universal Credit.



19.4% of those over the age of 16 in Aberdeen City are ‘economically inactive’. This includes students, those with long- or short-term illness, retired people, people looking after family at home and those who may be discouraged from working. Of these, 24.6% want to be working and are actively seeking employment.

There are 13,900 workless households in Aberdeen City.

Locality data

The number of children living in low-income families varies across the city by intermediate zones, with a high of 443 in Heathryfold and Middlefield, 412 in Northfield, 409 in Tillydrone and 395 in Torry East, representing 24% of children living in low income families. 53% of children living in low income families stay in our priority localities.

Number of children in relative low income families, IZ in Priority Localities



In March 2023 there were 2,380 Claimants in priority localities (IZs) – up from 2,350 in February 2023. The claimant count rate varies across the city by intermediate zones, from a low rate of 0.5% seen in Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber East to a high of 8.9% seen in Tillydrone. In March 2023, priority localities represented 47% of claimants in Aberdeen, down from 53% in March 2020 as shown on the chart below. Non-priority areas such as Bucksburn North (6.6%) and City Centre East (6.2%) are now the 5th and 6th highest areas of claimant count rates in the city.

Claimant Count, IZs in Priority Localities



Data on child poverty sits across a number of organisations and isn't currently coordinated into one single data set to allow real time monitoring of child poverty given the changes in circumstances across our communities and localities.

A review of the Improvement Service Community Planning Outcomes Tool, shows that 78% of communities were performing better than expected as of 2020/21. This means however, that 22% were not.

Select Display
 Top/bottom 5
 Top/bottom 10
 All

78%
 Communities Performing Better than Expected

Select indicators
 Child Poverty
 Attainment

Participation Rate
 Out of Work Benefits
 Crime Rate
 Emergency Admissions
 Early Mortality
 Depopulation



There is now a need to establish a mechanism to better track our progress in addressing the child poverty agenda across our communities and localities in real time to ensure that our collective endeavours realise more equitable levels of improvement.

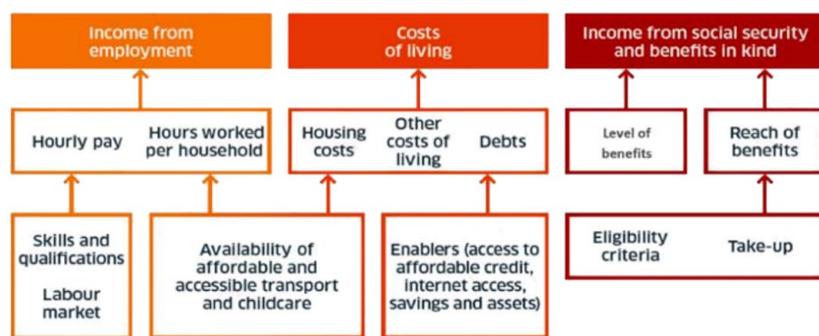
| Community | | Overall Outcomes | Child Poverty | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|--|---------------|---------|--|
| Vulnerability | Name | Improvement rate compared to the CPP average | 2014/15 | 2020/21 | Improvement rate compared to the CPP average |
| 1st Most Vulnerable | Heathryfold and Middlefield | Faster | 20.18 | 22.99 | Faster |
| 2 | Woodside | Faster | 20.84 | 32.18 | Slower |
| 3 | Torry East | Slower | 23.06 | 28.70 | Faster |
| 4 | Seaton | Faster | 15.76 | 20.00 | Faster |
| 5th Most Vulnerable | Northfield | Faster | 14.37 | 24.17 | Slower |
| | Aberdeen City Average | | 9.84 | 13.53 | |

There is also a need to improve qualitative and quantitative data on the 6 groups most likely to be impacted by poverty to inform our work.



5. Progress made over the last year

Best Start, Bright Futures tells us that the three drivers of poverty are income from employment, cost of living, and income from social security and benefits in kind. We know that impacting these drivers will positively impact levels of child poverty and so have structured our report under these three headings whilst recognising how interrelated they are.



Key achievements over the reporting period

- £1.9M allocated by Aberdeen City Council towards the Aberdeen Gift Card Scheme, resulting in 14,172 eligible citizens benefiting from £125 gift cards
- A 21% increase in the number of employers paying the real living wage in the last year, now covering 42,800 employees.
- Year on year increase in the uptake of Best Start Grants and Foods
- 992 pupils active in Duke of Edinburgh Award Schemes across the city
- 2074 young people (aged 10-18 years) and 689 children (aged 5-9 years) have engaged in youth work activity
- 2314 adults have been engaged in adult learning activity and the city-wide family learning offer provided 250 activities to 481 adults (and their 389 children/young people)
- Our ABZWorks Employability site has received 6000 hits since the start of 2023 and 691 people have received employability support from the team
- The enjoyability rating as provided by children and young people for the most recent programme (Easter in the City, 2023) was 9.7 out of 10
- 965 boxes of free sanitary products have been delivered to schools since January 2023
- The Fairer Aberdeen Programme funded 38 initiatives across community learning and development providers, tackling poverty and supporting 35,610 people.
- Allocated funding to support the distribution of 622 tonnes of free food (the equivalent of 1.72M meals)
- As of January 2023, over 22,500 young people have applied for and obtained a National Entitlement Card with free bus travel and are benefiting from this service
- Over the last year the Financial Inclusion Team have helped families achieve:
 - Financial Gains of £1,402,241
 - Assisted/Assisting 313 households with debt issues.
 - Helping with total debts of £2,038,137
 - 614 households given full benefit checks
 - Assisted 124 households to claim benefits and 35 to challenge their benefits

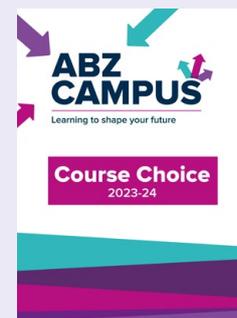
5.1 Income from employment

Ensuring that our young people and families gain the skills required to secure employment is central to our work. The Community Planning Partnership works on a range of long and short term projects to address this area of focus.

Long term interventions - ABZ Campus

What problem we were trying to solve? A review of attainment data identified 3 problems to be addressed through ABZ Campus. These included the need to:

- map and direct courses towards the growth and volume sector industries for the North-East of Scotland to improve longer-term employability.
- shift the shared focus away from the most academically minded and develop a more inclusive offer to support young people to access a range of courses across different Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels
- Address restrictive secondary timetables to enable closer collaboration.



What did we do? Secondary Head Teachers:

- Aligned secondary timetables so that young people can access courses in different schools easily in order to have access to a broader range.
- Reviewed courses available to ensure that new courses were aligned to the growth and volume sector industries of Construction, Digital & Entrepreneurship (incorporating Financial & Business Services), Early Learning & Childcare, Energy, Health & Social Care, Life Sciences, and Tourism & Hospitality.
- Convened Further and Higher Education and partners to consider how best to progress as a whole education system.
- Interviewed young people to learn from their lived experience. Young people told us that:
 - The quality of course information and publicity could be improved.
 - They would welcome a greater measure of consistency in the application process for courses.
 - that course and location induction was really important in giving them confidence.
 - that they are keen for greater consistency in the quality of feedback, tracking and reporting of progress

A set of cross-city working groups were created to develop citywide pathways across a large range of abilities and curricular areas. A set of Higher National Certificate (HNC) courses was agreed with partners North East Scotland College (NESCOL) at Level 7. These courses offer articulation into year 2 of local universities for those planning to progress into Higher Education. A broader set of Higher and Advanced Higher courses were mapped to be delivered across a number of 'host' schools.

A group of Foundation Apprenticeships with partners NESCOL, Bon Accord Care and Aberlour Futures were planned, as well as an Employability Course organised in partnership with the Council's City Growth and People and Organisational Development services to provide opportunities for work placements and a guaranteed job interview upon successful completion.



Family information as made available from February 2023 ([link here](#)). Promotional material is being housed in a new section of the ABZ Works website ([link here](#)) so that young people and adults have a one-stop shop solution to find out about and apply for ABZ Campus courses.

There is a commitment to equity contained within the plans for ABZ Campus. All courses offered will carry an opportunity based on merit rather than where the young person has their 'home' school. There was also a recognition of a 'gap' in support for young people who are care experienced or on the edge of care. It was agreed that identifying a key member of staff to provide signposting, tracking and support around future course choices to help realise a positive destination would help ensure that those who are care experienced are well positioned to take advantage of ABZ Campus and to achieve at the highest level possible. In order to address this a new role of *Pathways Advocate* was designed. Secondary schools began internal recruitment of *Pathways Advocates* in October 2022 and many schools now have these staff members in place, working on a 0.2FTE basis alongside partners in school.

An incredibly positive outcome of the work on timetable alignment is that there now exists an opportunity for schools to work together to provide even greater access to young people through a 'clearing' system. As young people make their choices during March 2023, schools will share where there is capacity in their schools and, if a course in one school is over-subscribed, it is possible that the same course will have spaces in another school and could be accessed by the young person. Clearing will take place after the usual choice process window closes in April, and will continue into May prior to courses starting in June.

As part of thinking towards how ABZ Campus could be further developed in phase 2, a pilot connection has been made with a school in Aberdeenshire to open up access to some of the courses on offer.

37 courses will be offered as part of ABZ Campus 23-24 with a total of **970 places** across this course offer. A set of quantitative and qualitative success measures have been set to determine progress and improvement. As of April 2023, **843** young people had registered for the courses.



What next? Successful implementation of Phase 1 will lay the foundations by establishing systems which enable measurement of impact and build confidence in the young people, parents and carers and staff. Further improvements are being developed for Phase 2 and beyond now that the foundations are in place.

Long term interventions - Aberdeen Computing Collaborative

What problem are we trying to solve? Professor Mark Logan's report, [Scottish Technology Ecosystem: Review](#), highlights how ill prepared local systems are to respond the need for the current and future workforce to have strong digital skills which will increasingly be a necessity for employers. Problems to be solved include:

- The lack of qualified computer science teachers
- The lack of clear digital skills progression
- The need to attract economic investment in Aberdeen City through the ready availability of those with advanced digital skills.



What did we do? The Aberdeen Computing Collaborative has been formed by Aberdeen City Council, in partnership with North East Scotland College, Robert Gordon University, the University of Aberdeen, and Opportunity North East. The collaborative's focus is on improving computing science education in the city, in line with the recommendations made by the [Scottish Technology Ecosystem: Review](#).

The collaborative aims to support a coherent, innovative, and skills-based computing science curriculum from early learning to senior phase and beyond. This includes creating multiple pathways for all learners to maximize access to computing science learning and qualifications in and out of school. Focussing on the development of computer science skills will ensure that pupils across Aberdeen City are well positioned to benefit from post school opportunities.

The collaborative plans to increase opportunities for young people, develop the skills of staff and promote the sector through engagement, curriculum support and professional learning. The collaborative held a successful launch event in September 2022, at ONE Tech Hub, which was attended by over 250 pupils and teaching staff. The event included practical computing science workshops and professional development discussions for teaching staff. Feedback indicates that almost all children and young people attending were more likely to consider a computing science career following the event.

North East Scotland College, Robert Gordon University and University of Aberdeen each have outreach programmes to promote computing science both in and outside of school. These partners are currently reviewing their outreach activities to reduce overlap and increase areas for collaboration, with a view to improving the experience for children and young people attending these programmes. It is hoped that a greater aligned offer will be available to schools from August 2023 onwards.

Esports is gaining popularity as a tool for education. We recognise the benefits of esports in education, including promoting teamwork, problem-solving, and strategic thinking. Esports can engage learners with technology and act as a gateway to interest in computing science and the tech sector. An Esports hub is being developed at St Machar Academy, which will deliver a new National Qualification in Esports at SCQF Level 4 and 5 from August 2023. Collaborative partner, North East Scotland College, will support this development in working with the central team and the staff of St Machar Academy.



To support professional development, ACC officers have created “grab and go” resources for staff supporting the youngest learners in our primary schools. A classroom teacher has been commissioned to continue production of these resources and will coordinate this development with partners.

Digital badges for professional learning

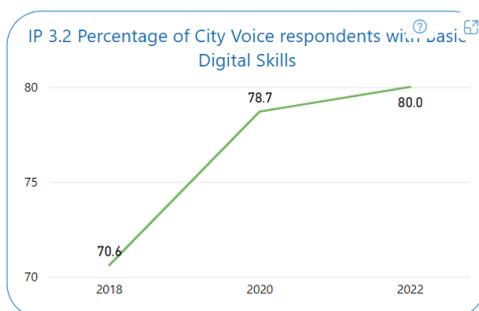


The collaborative has met with Professor Mark Logan, author of the Scottish Technology Ecosystem: Review, to welcome his reflections and on-going challenge of our work. Discussions have also considered any potential routes to funding to help address some of the national shortage in computer science teachers.

To address the local shortfall in computer science teachers, Aberdeen City has entered a separate partnership with University of Highlands and Islands (UHI), to provide a distance learning Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) to support those in the city with an interest in becoming a Computing Science teacher. Entrants to this course will be given placements in ACC schools to encourage them to seek employment locally when fully qualified.

What next? The Collaborative will take forward the following areas of work over the next 12 months:

- Align with ABZ Campus
- Develop and deliver extra-curricular Computing Science and Digital activities.
- Develop communications for parents/carers/young people to promote the opportunities in the sector and the range of pathways available.
- Continue the development of professional learning materials and an online delivery platform with the aim of increasing the number of young people completing courses aligned to support the digital and tech sector by 20% by 2026.
- Utilise opportunities to join this work with that being undertaken by Community Planning Partners on Stretch Outcome 3



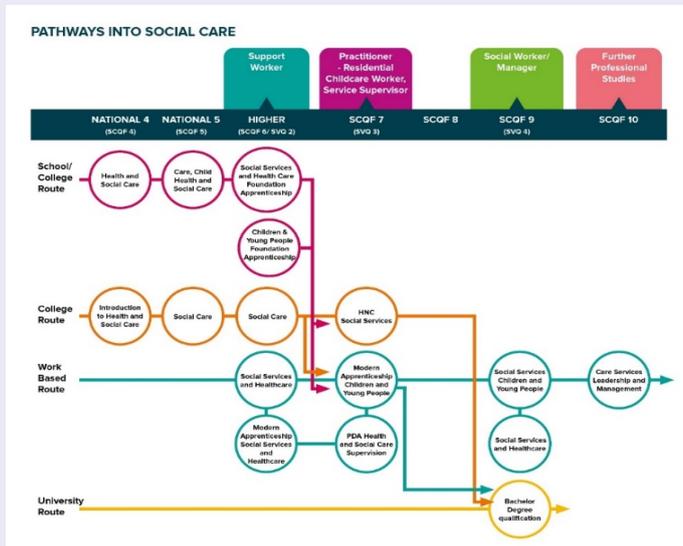
Long term interventions - ABZWorks

The ABZ Works **one-stop-shop** website launched in late 2021 and is designed to target young people and their parents, care experienced people and adult job-seekers has been highly effective at supporting these target groups to easily find information about career pathways and broader advice and support. [ABZ WORKS](#)

The ABZWorks website is providing an excellent mechanism to signpost target groups to a range of support and benefits, including housing, financial and mental and wellbeing advice. Aberdeen City Council has seen a significant increase in the number of care-experienced young people participating in employability activity thought to be partially attributable to the website. The blogs on the website show how some vulnerable and marginalised individuals have been supported into sustained outcomes. [Blog - ABZ WORKS](#)



The ABZ Works website is also a great way to showcase and promote career pathways into growth industry sectors, such as Health and Social Care.



ABZ Works continues to be a relevant and well-utilised resource. Since the beginning of 2023, it has had 6000 “website hits”.



Other achievements over the reporting period

Employability Programmes

Aberdeen City Council receives funding annually from Scottish Government to deliver a range of employability interventions through both the No One Left Behind and Parental Employability Support Fund streams.

The main purpose of employability funds is to pay for employability interventions and the vast majority of these monies goes towards covering training and engagement costs, delivered either in-house or via contracted provision.

Total employability funds for 22/23:

No One Left Behind - all-age, all-stage employability support: £675,202.58.

Seed funding to the value of £3,995.79 was provided to support the creation of one business.

Parental Employability Support Fund - for eligible parents with dependent children who are unemployed and experiencing poverty or who are experiencing in-work poverty: £263,197.73.

Seed funding of £6,418.39 was provided to support the creation of three businesses by eligible parents.

Young Person Guarantee - for 16-25-year-olds who are not in a positive destination: £515,770.14. Over the course of 2022/23, 69 young people aged 16-18 and not in receipt of unemployment benefits who engaged in 10 or more hours of employability activity weekly through ABZWorks received a training allowance of £55 per week, paid fortnightly. Total training allowance paid out for 22/23: £44,990.

Seed funding to the value of £9,293.68 was provided to support the creation of four businesses by young people. £480 of Aberdeen gift cards distributed, and £174.50 of bus tickets.

Long Term Unemployed Scheme - for people who are aged 25+ who have been unemployed for 12 months or more and have a barrier to employment: £661,389.18. This fund provided grants to third and public sector employers to cover Real Living Wage salary and on-costs for up to six months.

We anticipate on-going investment in this area from Scottish Government and, in line with the actions set out in the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) Delivery and Action Plan, have developed a package of activities which we intend to deliver, subject to availability of funding.

These include:

- the creation of a Child Poverty Coordinator post, with a focus on employability;
- Paid work experience programmes with guaranteed interviews for those who complete, aligned to sectors where we know there are skills shortages (we have one underway currently for care experienced young people, and another for eligible city residents of all ages in the health and social care sector);
- Ongoing employability keyworker support, providing a person-centred and whole-family offer to ensure activity meets the needs and aspirations of individuals receiving support;
- Employer Recruitment Incentive Scheme to provide up to £6,000 to employers to offset the costs of taking on new members of staff, and with a particular focus on eligible parents and young people;
- An ongoing programme of jobs fairs and training information events;
- A training fund which parents can access to meet the costs of training provision.
- In-work progression support to assist parents experiencing in-work poverty to upskill, secure more hours, or secure better paid employment.

Referrals for employability support continue to rise. We have just awarded a contract to a third sector agency to provide employability support to parents at stage three of the employability pipeline and anticipate offering more tendering opportunities when we receive grant funding.

Supporting residents into Fair Work

Increasing training and reskilling opportunities as well as business creation is key to both developing new fair work employment opportunities; reducing the number of people in receipt of Universal Credit and to diversifying the economy. We are taking forward a number of initiatives to support people who will be coming off (or significantly reducing) their benefits. In the past year, 691 people have received employability support via ABZWorks.

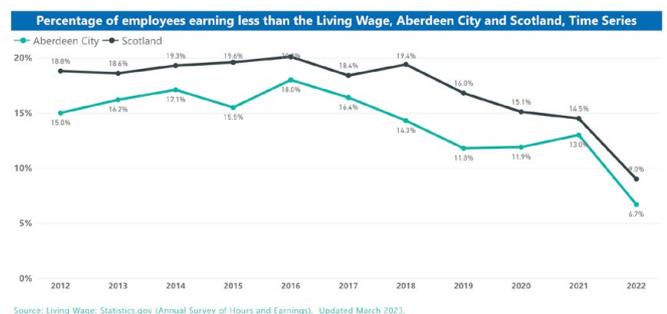
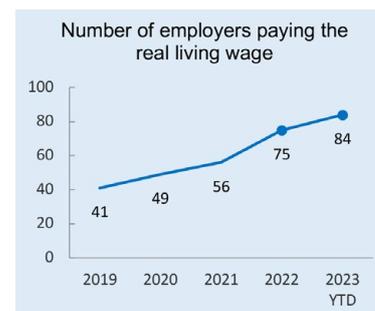
Employability Transition Grant

An employability transition grant, provided through the Council's Cost of Living Funding in 2022/23, providing £1,000 paid over three months to lone parents who meet eligibility criteria, is helping them transition into employment by removing the financial barriers to work. It is hoped that we will be able to continue to provide this through the Parental Employability Support Funds. The Local Employability Partnership has identified parents and young people as key target groups for employability support. United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Funds (UKSPF) will also be leveraged to provide a range of employability support to eligible individuals, including those who are economically inactive.

Increasing the number of employers paying the real living wage

We are committed to alleviating in-work poverty by increasing employer sign up to the Real Living Wage (RLW), meaning that low-income employees will benefit from a pay rise. The Aberdeen City Bid for the Real Living Wage (RLW) accreditation is a 3-year plan across partners to increase RLW uptake in the City. This helps tackle pockets of in-work poverty within the city, with the added effect of increasing average earnings, productivity and boosting the wider economy. Considerable progress has been made in increasing the number of employers paying the real living wage. Based on data from Living Wage Scotland, there are currently 84 employers headquartered in the city now Real Living Wage accredited – a 90% increase since we started our improvement work to increase employer sign up to the Real Living Wage and a 21% increase over the last 12 months. 1,695 workers have received an uplift in wages since the establishment of the real Living Wage movement in the city which now covers over 42,800 employees. The work includes advocating for income maximisation and support for unpaid carers in the workplace, helping retain in work through flexible work policies etc Promote the accreditation Carers Positive. NHSG are working with DWP to support 50 plus and young people to return to work and/or increasing hours to increase income opportunities. NHSG achieved the real Living Wage in 2022 to support our lower paid staff, and apprentices at 18 plus had an uplift, as well as ensuring appropriate contractors to NHSG to pay their staff the RLW now and into the future. Further accreditations are in the pipeline, along with initial conversations with employers interested in accreditation.

Latest data available as of end of 2022, showed that 93.3% of employees in the city were in living wage employment, an 11.3% increase since 2016 and 6.3% increase since 2021. 80% of all Living Wage employers believe it's enhanced the quality of the work of their staff.



"I spent years working for minimum wage and relying on Working Tax Credits. Financial worries were extremely stressful. Earning a real Living Wage has made a huge impact on my life."

Social care worker

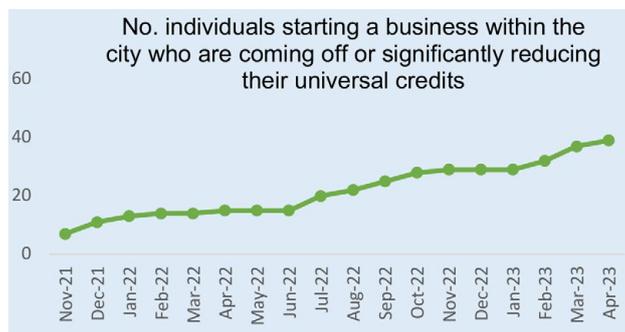
"As an events business, one of the main challenges is recruiting and by becoming accredited I was able to show that a small hospitality business like ours is able to pay a genuine living wage to everyone in the team. Ultimately, becoming an accredited Living Wage employer has helped us to find great talent and it shows we care about the team by paying a fair wage. It has also helped us win business from like-minded clients who understand what it means to be a Living Wage accredited employer. Plus, it shows to suppliers, contractors, and customers that we are an ethical business."

Hospitality Employer



Supporting citizens to start a business and reduce their universal credits

In order to take advantage of all policy levers, work has been undertaken to increase the number of people starting a business. Since November 2021, to support all to start a business we have set up a Young Persons Seed Fund to support young people to start up a business. The fund is also targeted at parents out of work or experiencing work poverty to support them to get back into work or increase their income through self-employment. We also now have dedicated Business Gateway Advisers per locality to help increase the number of direct referrals. As a result of these improvements, 104 referrals of individuals in receipt of universal credits who are investigating starting a business since the start of the programme with 39 individuals starting a business which either takes them off universal credits or significantly reduces their universal credits.



Case Study

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Carly Stewart, qualified beauty therapist, became unemployed. While relying on Universal Credit, she reached out for 'Expert Support' from Business Gateway in starting up a business of her own.

Through Business Gateway services, Carly was connected with Aberdeen City Council's ABZWorks employability service & successfully applied for seed funding through the Parental Employability Support Fund. This enabled her to purchase the commercial equipment needed to start & develop her skin specialist business, Karma Beauty.

Carly said, describing her 1-1 adviser support, "My adviser Gillian, was brilliant, and helped me throughout the whole process, advising me on how to plan and prepare my business, to supporting me with funding opportunities."

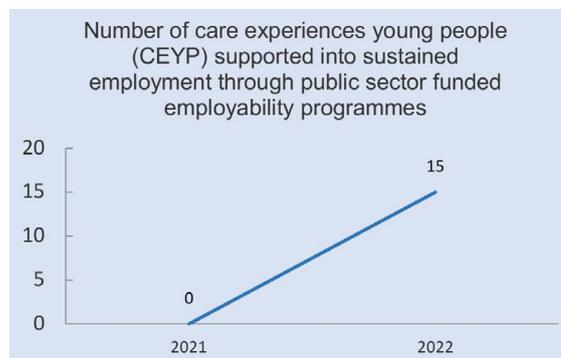
Over the past 6 months, Carly has continued to develop her business. Now working in the medical aesthetics field with a focus on non-surgical injectable procedures. With Gillian's encouragement Carly *"has worked incredibly hard to get to where she is, from being unemployed to launching a business in the height of the pandemic. It is fantastic to see how well Karma Beauty is doing and to have been able to support her."*

Supporting care experienced young people into sustained employment.

Many care experienced young people face significant barriers to employment and the majority will need additional support and mentoring to help them achieve and sustain employment. The range of barriers faced is broad and can seem overwhelming. Positive and early work experience or employment helps with a smoother transition to life beyond care and minimises the risk of homelessness and offending.

Through our employability support for care experienced young people project we've put in place a range of initiatives to help remove those barriers and provide support and opportunities to help them feel confident and ready for employment. Initiatives have included guaranteed interview scheme, RiteWorks and Kickstart to name a few.

Latest data available for 22/23 shows that our tailored employability support programmes have supported 63 care experienced young people, and 100% have achieved a positive destination with 15 securing employment, 37 continuing with the programme, 8 are in further training and enrolled at further or higher education. The programmes have been very successful to date across a number of outcomes, including: sustained engagement; achieving qualifications; engaging in work experience; progressing into a positive destination; sustaining that destination.



Case Study

Rebekah (Bekah) joined the Council as a Kickstart intern, blazing her way into the organisation, making a great impact with her bright blue hair, and really positive first impressions to everyone she met in the course of her six month post with the Talent team. She took a lead role in the development of our ABZWorks Instagram page and impressed everyone with her knowledge, determination to learn and succeed, honesty, and hard-work.

Bekah tells her own story here in her [LinkedIn post](#).

She left Aberdeen City Council at the end of her placement to move elsewhere in the country. She quickly secured work and is doing well.

Another young person, who has faced a number of challenges and lost an apprenticeship due to anger management, has been supported to set up his own business through seed funding we made available through Young Person Guarantee monies. We worked in partnership with Business Gateway to get a business plan and funding plan developed, provided funding in a staged way to gradually equip him for the challenges of business, provided a laptop and phone, driving lessons, other training, and he is now fully established in a self-employed role. This would not have been possible without steady and structured support.



Focus on Growth and Volume Sectors

We are working closely with partner agencies and have developed a working group with the Health and Social Care partnership to support parents and other employability participants into roles where the Partnership has gaps, and which suit the needs and aspirations of participants.

In-work support is provided for up to 26 weeks to ensure as far as possible that employment outcomes are sustained. It is standard procedure to refer employability participants, and particularly parents, to the Financial Inclusion Team for support, a benefits check, and advice.

Planning for the future

An Employer Skills Audit is to be issued to identify skills gaps across the city, which will help to not only inform employability services commissioning activity with a view to ensuring our participants are best placed to secure work, but also to identify employers paying Real Living Wage and those willing to offer work experience placements, and other avenues which could be explored to support participants into fair and sustained work.

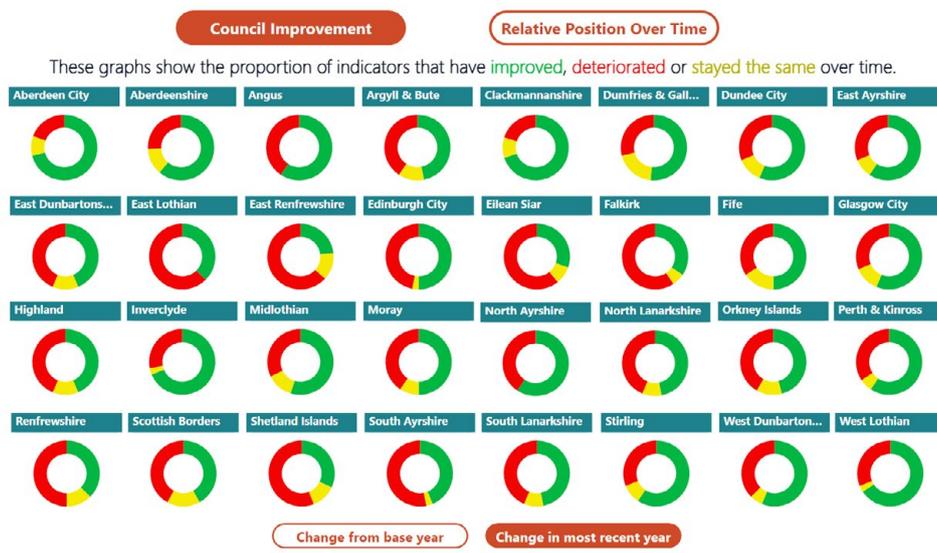
Of the 220 parents registered for support with ABZWorks since April 2022:

- 72 have secured employment, 49 of whom we know are being paid Real Living Wage, though we believe the actual number to be higher;
- Three have accessed seed funds to set up their own business and are now self-employed, with a further four in the business development stage;
- Mother-of-two Hanna Brock is one of the parents supported, and has agreed that we can share her success story.

Focusing on an improvement in the quality of services to young people

As a Community Planning Partnership, we recognise that the delivery of high-quality services directly impacts positive outcomes for children and families.

The refreshed Children’s Services Plan encourages senior leaders from across the Community Planning Partnership to hold each other to account for the quality of services being delivered. Local Government Benchmarking data shows that Aberdeen City’s children’s services have the most improved over the last year. This focus on improvement will be maintained through the delivery of the Children’s Services Plan.



Case Study - This is Northfield

Young people at Northfield Academy have told us through a Focus Group that they feel branded by postcode. We want to shift the narrative around Northfield and give young people a sense of achievement. We also know that enjoyment is a key component of learning. An important outcome for this project is to make learning more enjoyable for our young people by using creative interventions. In response, we have partnered with the Creative Learning Team to shape four residencies.

The four residencies aim to use creative arts to develop skills, such as creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. The Northfield Academy learners will participate in a range of creative activities and develop their creative arts skills and their confidence while they are working towards an SQA qualification by achieving units from the National Certificate in Personal and Vocational Skills. The project will also feed the creativity of our staff by offering them the opportunity to engage with the creative arts, through our artists, as well as mindfulness meditation and other activities.

Residency 1 – What’s Your Treasure?

Northfield Academy learners have been invited to offer new perspectives on artworks and objects in the city’s art gallery and museum collection and work towards an exhibition at Aberdeen Treasure Hub. The young people will have an exhibition on the 17th of June 2023 at the Aberdeen Treasure Hub.

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/AAGM/learn/northfield>

Residency 2 – Princes Trust Collaboration

The Awesome Tech project will invite Northfield Academy learners to build robots and interactive sculptures in small teams. Young people will be using the creative arts to develop their team working and leadership skills.

Residency 3 – Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Working across the whole school, this residency will explore creative interventions to improve the health and wellbeing of teachers, support staff and learners within the school.

Residency 4 – Resilient Northfield

This residency will focus on improving the perception of Northfield by inviting learners to create a sensory map and lead a community arts project.

The evaluation framework will measure several outcomes, including:

Young people will have more confidence.

Young people will feel listened to.

Young people will feel valued.

Young people will learn new skills.

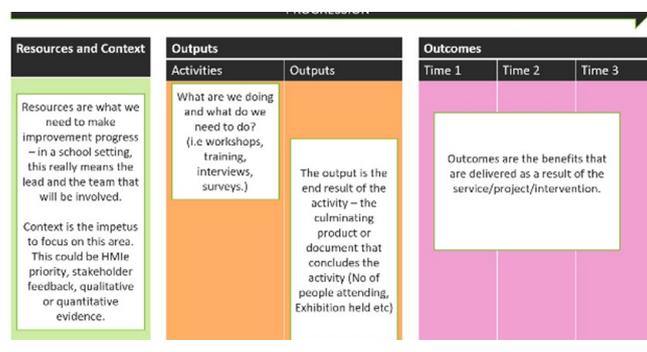
Young people will feel more positive about learning.



Improvement in the quality of learning, teaching and assessment

High quality learning, teaching and assessment directly improves attainment and therefore employability. To improve attainment levels in some schools, a Lead Teacher has been appointed and is working with secondary colleagues to provide targeted support to a small number of schools. All schools access the city make use of an agreed Learning, teaching and assessment framework and use it to support Improvement locally. This remains a focus in the city and is now being focussed on regionally.

Local Government benchmarking data evidences that improvement is being realised but that our focus on this area should continue. A logic model for creating improvement/action plans with measurable outcomes has been piloted with one of our secondary schools. This logic model starts with the context for change, describes activities and products before tying these into measurable outcomes that will demonstrate progress and improvement. It is intended that this logic model process will form part of the school improvement process for all secondary schools for session 2023-24.



Development of retrieval practice at Aberdeen Grammar School

What problem were we trying to solve? Under the existing examination structure, young people where poverty is a barrier, can find it challenging to prepare for 1 high stakes examination. This is particularly the case for young people with additional support needs (ASN). Our aim was to provide all young people with the skills and resources to support them with preparation for SQA examinations at National 5 and Higher level.

What did we do? We introduced Retrieval Practice sitting alongside staff evaluating their physical learning environment against the CIRCLE framework. The supports we put in place, originally for a targeted group are supporting all young people on a universal level. Resources sitting behind this (flashcards, targeted twilight revision sessions, materials for parents – Planning for Success events, construction of a learning and teaching website) have received positive feedback from staff, pupils, and parents.

What happened? Analysis of S4 SCQF level 5 data points to an uplift within the Working Grade for the current S4 cohort. This is looking like a 5% uplift on a universal level. Young people in focus groups report increased confidence in the use of retrieval practice to support retention of information. Dyslexia can be a real barrier for young people with the chunking and retention of information. This group of young people in S4 and S5 were very positive about the “teaching” of strategies to support retention for SQA examinations. As we began to unpick this issue, we felt that a fuller review of our provision for ASN learners was required. We invited colleagues from across ACC with specialist knowledge to support us with this task. We have now interviewed all young people across S1-S3 to populate the ASN Tab with specific strategies which we will share with teaching staff to aid their planning.

What next? Following study leave, meet with all young people in the new S4-S6 with ASN and review the information held for them and adapt with strategies they feel will support them.

Measurable outcomes within the L&T aspect of the new SIP linked to application of learning and feedback Embedding retrieval strategies/CIRCLE framework/UDL across every classroom to ensure consistency.

Delivering services in partnership

Case Study Links Hub

The partnership between health and (early) education sits at the heart of the work undertaken at Links Nursery and Hub. The setting prides themselves on building trusting, therapeutic relationships, which give families the opportunity to voice their needs and the challenges they face. The focus being to reduce referrals to other services out with the Hub and to increase and improve engagement of families within our service.

There is a weekly children's meeting held within the Links Nursery and Hub to promote information sharing and multiagency working. Speech and Language Therapy, Health Visitor, Centre Manager and Excellence and Equity Practitioners are represented. Robust planning support takes place for children and their families who are facing adversity, with Child A providing an example of how this approach is improving outcomes:

Child A's parent was recently diagnosed with a health condition impacting their capacity to parent. The parent was also struggling with Child A's behaviour, which had deteriorated since the onset of their own ill health. Nursery noted this behaviour change, a change of pattern in attendance, and other family member doing almost all pick-ups and drop-offs. These changes prompted a discussion with health visitor, which resulted in a home visit where parent shared her challenges. This information was conveyed at our meeting, which led to structured support from health and education. Parent was offered one-to-one PEEP (Parents as Early Education Partners) sessions with our Excellence and Equity Practitioner (within the hub) alongside behavioural support within the home. Travel support was also offered to increase the child's attendance. The parent disclosed that they felt a support network now surrounded them.

The logo for PEEP (Parents as Early Education Partners) consists of the lowercase letters 'peep' in a light blue, rounded, sans-serif font.

Outcomes: there has been an increase in engagement with both health visitor and hub centre manager and an improvement in child A's attendance at nursery and at health-related appointments.

It is important to note that families are involved at all levels of future planning support for their children. This new, collaborative way of working at the Links Nursery and Hub involves children at the heart of decisions made to improve their positive future health and education outcomes.

The centre opened in 2021 with 40 registered children and now has around 110 children supported on a daily basis evidencing the desire of parents to access joined up services.

Co-location and Co-delivery

Building on a model of co-delivered Early Learning and Childcare at our Links Hub, the education service and Lead Nurses have agreed to develop a collaborative learning opportunity to develop consistent understanding of service roles and responsibilities for those working across a locality. Planning for this will begin in late April to provide a platform for stronger partnership working between school nurses, health visitors and education staff.

Work is also progressing to co-deliver a provision for the Northfield Academy community. This unique collaboration will help develop employability skills in young people whilst helping to address the health needs of target groups in the school community. The full project charter for this initiative is available in Appendix A.

Place2Be, an intervention delivered to support family wellbeing through schools, is now funded by NHS within 2 local primary schools and the impact of this work will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.



Case Study Fit Like Aberdeen to address family wellbeing

The multi-agency and multi-disciplinary 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 have 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.



Evidence of improved mental health and wellbeing

We know that financial concerns can be a significant factor in determining the mental health of parents and carers and know that children and young people are impacted by parental mental health.

Two surveys are completed on a yearly basis to help determine the impact of our work on the mental health and wellbeing on our children and young people and more than 8000 young people respond to each survey. The most recent results indicate that children and young people across Aberdeen City are 5% more likely to report positive health compared with the national mean and that all outcomes were improved from the last survey point. Children and young people also reported notably better outcomes when asked about emotional symptoms, conduct, hyperactivity, and peer relationships than their peers nationally.

Whilst the survey outcomes are positive and indicative that the interventions put in place have realised improvement, perceptions of affluence impact young people almost twice as much as their peers nationally and there is a need to address this through the Mental Health Collaborative associated with the Children's Services Board.

Scottish Attainment Challenge funding supporting pupil and family wellbeing.

Scottish Government Scottish Attainment Challenge funding of £473,825 is used to provide youth workers, family learning workers and Financial Inclusion Team support to each Associated Schools group. This resource has a clear remit for early intervention and to target those children, young people and families most at risk of disengaging from education and is helping provide a more responsive, universal offer for more vulnerable learners and their families and prevent escalation of need.



A focus on standards at Skene Square Primary School

What problem were we trying to solve? Commitment to raising the standard of learning, teaching and assessment by facilitating our 3rd cohort of teaching staff to participate in yearlong professional learning.

What did we do? Our aim was to ensure consistently high standards across all classes to ensure equity of delivery. The focus of the professional learning was to embed high quality feedback, engagement, challenge, and autonomy and included video analysis and coaching sessions for staff participating.

What happened? As a result on the intervention, our evaluation of QI 2.3 is now consistently at a minimum of 'good' with increasing frequency of 'very good'.

What next? We are now working collectively with previous cohorts to create a Learning and Teaching 'strategy'/'standard' in line with ACC Standards but provides more specific detail as to the expectations in all classes at Skene Square.

Youth Work achievements

2074 young people (aged 10-18 years) and 689 children (aged 5-9 years) have engaged in youth work activity with 1648 of those young people reporting improved mental health and wellbeing as a result of their engagement with the service.

2,459 young people have engaged with the Saltire Awards in Aberdeen. These awards, which are for volunteers aged 12-25 and co-ordinated by ACVO, continue to contribute positively to employability skills. 56 children and 16 young people were support to complete nationally recognised awards.

Over 100 young people identified as unlikely to secure a positive destination benefited from youth work programmes. Children and young people in the majority of primary and secondary schools in the City continue to benefit from youth work support through Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding.



Targeting the writing attainment gap at Woodside Primary School

What problem were we trying to solve? We wanted to close the writing attainment gap in P4 and P5.

What did we do? We used Pupil Equity Funding to secure supply teaching staff to enable three teachers to attend two whole day CYPIC National Improving Writing Collaborative training sessions and additional development days. This is a sustainable use of PEF as these members of staff will share their learning with the wider team.

What happened? The approach has positively impacted upon the attainment gap in writing within P4 and P5. Within Primary 4 of the 55% of children who have achieved 1st level, 12% of them were 'behind track' at the start of P4. Of the 55% of children who have achieved 1st level, 35% of them are now predicated to achieve 2nd Level earlier than the end of P7. Six children had not achieved Early level at the start of P4 and now have. Of these children, who had been significantly behind track, current predictions for achieving 1st Level show that 71% have closed the gap by at least 1 year.

What next? The next step for the school is to embed this approach to writing and introduce it via the trained staff to two other stages. This will support wider attainment and sustainability, benefiting children in receipt of PEF and FSM.

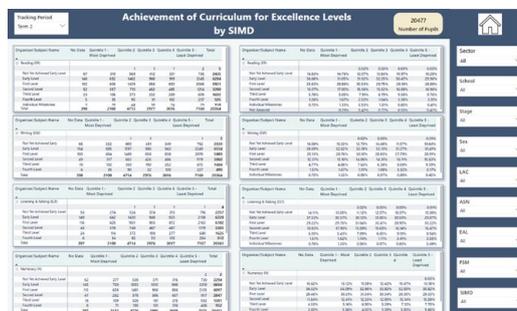
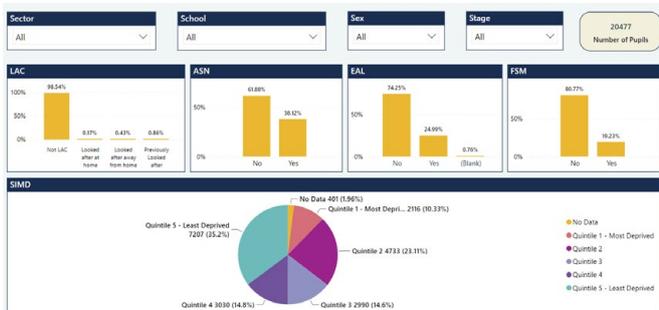
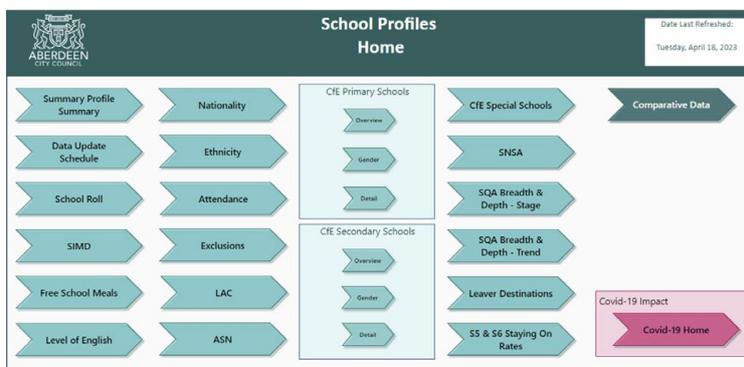


Improved school tracking systems

Significant work has been undertaken to ensure that schools are better able to identify and support families who are impacted by poverty. School profiles have been overhauled to allow schools to drill down into data sets based on both SIMD quintiles and into groups such as those who are Looked After in order to establish the improvements required as part of school improvement planning.

During session 22/23 profiles were further updated to include live data and this will enable school leaders to see the impact of changes in real time. This is critical given that some data sets (such as exclusion) are only validated every two years and will enable us to focus more forensically on understanding the needs of our Looked After children, those on the edge of care in 2023/24 and other groups identified to be at greatest risk. This will help schools plan based on more robust data for session 2023/24.

The visuals below show the range of data availability and how it can be drilled down into.



Early work to develop One Good Adult to support vulnerable young people

We know that young people make better progress when they have ready access to a trusted adult in school.

The One Good Adult pilot is being further developed by the Education Service in partnership with Education Scotland and People & Organisation colleagues and we are amending job profiles to reflect the changes. This will be shared further with Community Planning Partners to provide an opportunity for colleagues beyond education to benefit from this approach. A group of young people are working with Education Support Officers to develop a bank of questions related to this job profile and support the recruitment of staff going forward.



Targeted literacy support at Braehead School

What problem were we trying to solve? Whilst our achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) is higher than last year in P4 and P7 for Reading and P7 for Writing (with P4 not changing), internally we are recognising that a number of children are being referred to Support for Learning based on low reading fluency, phonological awareness and spelling.

What did we do? To tackle this, we have implemented two interventions, both of which work alongside each other. Firstly, regular reading opportunities are organised for identified learners through discussion between class teacher and support for learning staff. Learners attend reading sessions up to 4x per week, focusing on a range of skills including phonological awareness, reading fluency and comprehension, word recognition and sentence structure. Alongside these reading opportunities, children have been engaging in Nessy, an online learning platform designed to support the development of literacy. Originally designed to support those with dyslexia, it can benefit all pupil through its approach.

Children engage with Nessy for 20 minutes a day, 4 times per week under supervision of the support for learning team, usually before or after any group work.

The PEF funding has been allocated not only towards paying for the Nessy subscription for identified individuals, but towards providing PSA time to facilitate support for learning sessions, guided reading and time for Nessy. This has been invaluable.

What happened? Baseline data in August 2022 demonstrates an average reading baseline of 46% and an average spelling baseline of 36% across 35 pupils. Data from March 2023 demonstrates a reading average of 65% (19% increase) and a spelling average of 43% (7% increase).

Amongst those pupils who attended additional reading sessions, 48% were marked at Early Level, 39% at First Developing and 14% at First Secure in August 2022. By March 2023, we no longer had any learners working at Early level, with 87% working at First Developing and 13% at Second Developing.

What next? Next session, above and beyond continuing to provide the opportunities that we are this session, we plan to build in the capacity for the SfL group by providing additional PSA time. This will allow us to target more children. Additionally, we will be investigating what resources, time, and interventions we can put in place in Nursery, P1 and P2 to strengthen children's phonological awareness and reading fluency in order to move upstream.

Removal of the costs of the school day is positively impacting choices

Curriculum costs can restrict the choices that young people make in schools and limit their access to the courses best suited to their aptitudes and interests.

Schools have removed all curriculum costs to families. There is clear evidence that this has resulted in children taking decisions on courses which are not influenced by the associated costs.

There is evidence that increasing numbers of young people from areas of deprivation are now accessing free instrumental music instruction from The Aberdeen City Music Service. Uptake across Associated Schools Groups previously varied from 1% (in areas of deprivation) to 25% (in more affluent areas). The range currently sits at between 5 and 9%. Data will continue to be closely monitored as we continue to address the equity agenda.



Barnardo's Northern Star at Cornhill Primary School

What problem were we trying to solve? Pupil readiness to learn, parental engagement, emotional/nurture support, behaviour regulation, P7 transition support – all with the underlying aim of reducing the attainment gap.

What did we do? We have a full-time Barnardo's worker who is fully integrated into school life. Continuity and consistency have been key to the quality and effectiveness of the intervention where relationships are fundamental – we have been working with Barnardo's for over 5 years and have had the same worker for 3 years.

What happened? Over the last year our worker has worked closely with 18 individual pupils and their families, 49 pupils in groups plus several pupils informally. Individual attainment has improved in most cases, with wider attainment improving in almost all supported classes. The majority of the work is carefully planned and targeted but the worker has also been invaluable supporting with ad hoc behaviour and 'crisis management'

What next? We aim to further develop pupil and parental relationships to the benefit of individual pupils and the school more widely.



Aberdeen School for the Deaf: Emotional Literacy Curriculum

What problem were we trying to solve? Self-evaluation in session 2021-22 highlighted that there were significant gaps (school wide) in emotional literacy. Whilst tracking data highlighted that **almost all** learners were on track for individual milestones, **most** were behind track for national expectations in health and wellbeing. Discussions at tracking meetings indicated that most gaps linked to emotional literacy.

What did we do? We commissioned a bespoke Emotional Literacy intervention with our BSL tutor from the National Deaf Children's Society aimed at increasing learner's emotional literacy and developing their understanding of emotions, feelings and strategies for self-regulation.

What happened? Each class received 1 x 45 minute session per week for a 12 week block. By the end of this block, data has highlighted that:

- all learners display increased confidence when talking about their emotions
- All learners have an increased bank of emotion words/signs that they are now using when talking about their emotions
- **most** learners are now working in line with national expectations in HWB
- instances of dis-regulation have reduced with most staff reporting learners are accessing self-regulation strategies more successfully

What next? Extend this programme by using Emotion Works resources to:

- supplement the work with NDCS in order to embed emotional literacy work into the curriculum
- develop staff confidence in delivery of emotional literacy curriculum
- consolidate learning and application of knowledge to encourage self-regulation and communication around emotional wellbeing.

Positive early roll out of the CIRCLE framework

In almost all schools we have identified a lead to support the implementation of Inclusion in Practice, The CIRCLE Framework. Following the launch of the Framework in September training sessions and surgeries have been led by Education Support Officers, Educational Psychologists and Health professionals to support the roll out of the resources and associated training. These partnerships are providing rich expertise to ensure the CIRCLE training and resources are impactful and consistent across our settings.

The online CIRCLE Toolkits have been accessed almost 1000 times by school staff. We are beginning to see the shared vision and language of the CIRCLE Framework at school and ELC Quality Improvement Visits, where some schools are utilising the resource to consider the environments they are providing, to encourage and help learners and to support the delivery of learning and teaching.

Some schools are beginning to use this to inform improvement planning. Examples of this include Aberdeen Grammar School which has considered this in line with Universal Design for Learning. They are using this alongside capturing information and learner voice to review and update Accessibility tools and identify Professional Learning for staff; Milltimber School and Braehead School using the framework to audit environments and professional learning opportunities.



Developing skills at St Joseph's Primary School

What problem were we trying to solve? We were trying to create extra in-school activity sessions to meet the needs of learners who are bussed to and from school and therefore not always able to engage in immediate after-school activities on site.

Most of our children living in SIMD 1 – 3 are children who arrive by bus and although attainment in literacy and numeracy remains consistent within this group, for the most part, the children need access to a greater range of team and leadership activities with their school peers.

What did we do? We engaged 2 skills-based partners in our work: AFCCT and Ace Voices

What happened? Interim feedback from both the children and the leaders indicates a high level of engagement and participation in the activities.

Each partner is working to develop a different set of skills in children, but both have resilience in unfamiliar territory at their core. The wellbeing assessments and anecdotal data from the children is very positive (currently being updated).

Relationships at the school are very positive and restoration is very successful in the almost all cases where the learners are participating in the activities.

What next? Make the interventions available to younger children to ensure a broader reach and development of skills and tie this work into the development of a skills framework within the school. Explore the potential to Look engage partners in expressive arts to broaden access to a wider range of skills.





Closing the poverty related attainment gap

Quality Improvement Officers continue to monitor the impact of PEF interventions during school visits and during data discussions. Significant consideration and progress has been made to systematically review and develop PEF planning and reporting. The process has included working with the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor and looking beyond the local authority for good practice. Working alongside a group of headteachers and the attainment advisor, the central leadership team have developed a bespoke equity tracker that aligns with updated school improvement planning. The impact of this development will be evident once the final format is shared and implemented with school leaders.

The local authority has strengthened systems and processes for data improvement. A bespoke data dashboard has been created for use within the broad general education stages. This is a highly effective tool that builds upon the existing school profiles, pulling through progress and achievement tracking information. Benefits include current and live data being accessible for the central leadership team as well as school leaders. Accurate statistics can be filtered to pinpoint where the poverty-related gaps are in each SIMD quintile, school, stage and at an individual level. Professional dialogue between quality improvement officers, headteachers and practitioners is based on precise school and class profiles that allow informed decisions to be made and support to be identified.

The poverty-related attainment gap, which is measured by comparing the outcomes of learners in quintile one (Q1) and quintile five (Q5), has reduced from 2020-21. The gap decreased from 28 percentage points (pp) to 21 pp in 2021-22. This demonstrates a 7-percentage point improvement and is the local authority's best performance in this measure since comparisons between Q1 and Q5 learners were introduced. This latest figure is lower than the national attainment gap by 10.8 percentage points which outlines the considerable improvements which have been made when compared to 2020-21 data.



Hanover Street School working to address the attainment gap

What problem were we trying to solve? Data analysis and ongoing assessment highlighted gaps for the majority of our children in SIMD bands 1 and 2. We focused on core subject areas Literacy, Numeracy and Health and wellbeing. For Health and wellbeing, our aim was to provide further nurture support to give children the platform and supporting strategies to fully access their learning.

What did we do? Invested PEF money into 0.6fte teaching staff and 1.0 PSA to increase our offer of support for learning and nurture to identified groups of learners. SfL focused on Literacy and Numeracy using baseline assessment data to measure against to determine progress.

In Literacy, we have used benchmarking and writing criterion scale data as a tool to establish gaps in children's learning. We then focused support on Reading and aspects of writing (spelling, grammar) using a range of resources such as Nessy (online tool to support reading and writing). Children's progress is assessed on a termly basis for example (Benchmarking for reading, comprehension assessments, individualised teacher made assessments for targeted areas)

What happened? Most targeted learners (including our children attending school due to their families fleeing conflict) showed evidence of improved attainment with a few learners making significant progress.

What next? As we approach June, identified learners will be reassessed to determine the level of progress made across the year. The increase in teacher salary means that it will be challenging to continue with our current approach and our plans for next session are currently under review.

Participation in the National Improving Writing Programme

The Education Scotland Attainment Adviser has worked with an Education Support Officer to support 11 city schools' involvement with the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC) National Improving Writing Programme which aims to:

- Improve children's writing attainment.
- Spread a successful QI writing programme.
- Equip class teachers with QI knowledge so they can understand and apply tools and techniques that have been rigorously tested and work

Phase 1 schools began the process in October 2022, with Phase 2 commencing in February 2023. Phase 1 schools are already reporting encouraging progress with their first cohort.



Improving attainment at Quarryhill School

What problem were we trying to solve? 72% of our school population is within the first two SIMD quintiles and in P1 a third of the year group are being supported within our PEF plan. Our aim is to improve attainment generally but also for the pupils within the lower quintiles for reading, writing, listening & talking, numeracy.

What did we do? We embarked on a journey to improve our P1 experience moving towards a play-based approach, considering current research with the aim to raise attainment.

Our journey included:

- Professional learning for both teachers, including visits to other settings, collegiate working, professional reading, and online learning to support the development of our vision, as well as improve staff confidence.
- We resourced both classrooms, changed the physical environment in partnership with nursery staff, and experimented with free-flow learning between classes to increase varied play opportunities, share resources and support differentiated learning.
- An EYP transitioned with the children from nursery to P1 and supported the development of the play-based approach. A PSA then took over from November onwards working with both classes, focusing also on small group interventions. (Our plan was to have the EYP stay the full session but she left post)

What happened? Attainment in listening and talking increased by 1%, reading improved by 24%, writing by 17% and numeracy by 14% over the year.

What next? Our approach needs to further embed in P1 with further opportunities for outdoor learning. Staff will continue to engage with professional learning and network with other settings.

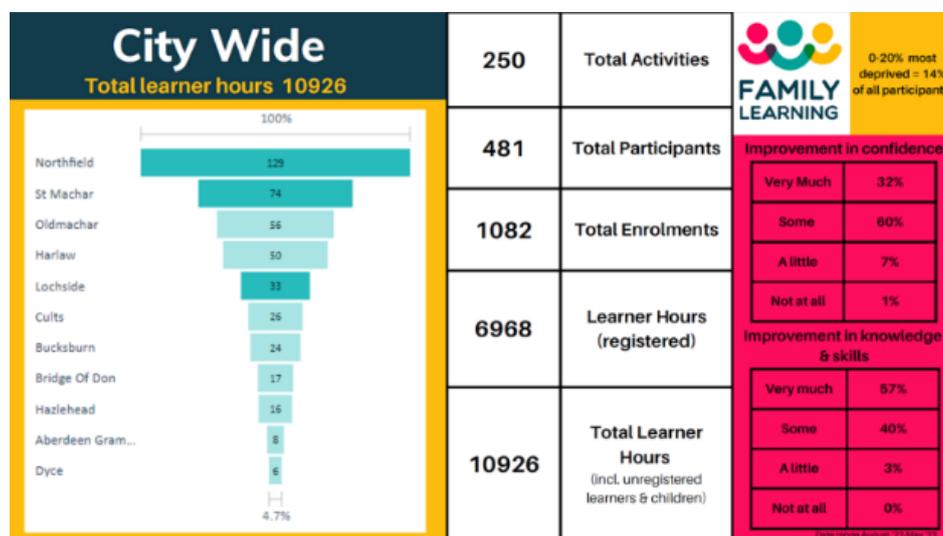




Family Learning

The primary reason for most of the referrals to the Family Learning service is for support with behaviour, low attendance at school or ASN support. When work begins with families and a trusted rapport is built, other areas in need of support are often discovered, such as poverty, poor mental health, and the breakdown of family relationships.

Families being referred for 1:1 support generally present with a higher level of need, with 16% of families currently with social work input, on the cusp of social work support or experiencing child protection concerns. Family Learning frequently support the maintenance of de-escalations from social work and is recognised by colleagues as an essential role in the support received by families. The team have developed strong relationships with a wide variety of partner agencies with the goal of ensuring that families access the right support at the right time.



Family Learning Case Study

Working together with home and school

A child displaying aggressive behaviours at home and in school was referred to Family Learning. The child was only attending school for 2 hours each morning at the time of referral and found it difficult to be in class, spending most of the time in school in the nurture room. The referral outlined the parents' need for support to understand the child's emotions and to establish structured routines and boundaries within the family home. Family Learning began building positive relationships with the parents and supported them to attend an 'Understanding Emotions' group. 1:1 support was offered in the family home, establishing positive routines, and encouraging mum and dad to work together to respond appropriately to the distressed behaviours of their child. At the most recent multi-agency meeting for the young person, there has been a marked improvement.

The child is now accessing a full timetable, and most of his timetable is within the classroom with his peers. The child can recognise when he is becoming frustrated, and there is a system in place to allow space for him to deescalate. Mum and dad are noticing that their young person is less heightened at home, and they are seeing a clear reduction in heightened behaviours.



Youth Work

Over 2022-23 617 referrals have been received from across all secondary schools. 178 individual 1-2-1 sessions were delivered along with 421 group sessions.

- 26% of referrals sought support with health and wellbeing.
- 20% of referrals sought support to manage relationships.
- 16% of referrals sought support to improve communication with others.
- 13% of referrals sought support to improve self-awareness.

Two years of data strongly supports the provision of youth work in schools and Scottish Government Scottish Attainment Challenge funding of £473,825 will be used to maintain this provision. Work will continue to align this provision with the Family Support Model over session 23/24.

Youth Work in the community

The youth work team runs youth groups and supports volunteers at Northfield community centre to run a drop-in group every Thursday for teenagers.

The youth work team post-Covid has changed its approach to youth participation and therefore the Aberdeen Youth Movement (AYM) has been set up. The AYM aims to provide a place for young people to express their views and use their voice in a less formal environment than was the case with Aberdeen City Youth Council.

Scottish Youth Parliament members, who are supported by the youth work team, have as a priority children and young people's right to food. They recently held a pop-up event where they spoke about the campaign: They also spoke at length around the new SYP campaign and report which is titled 'Young People's Right to Food' [Young People's Right to Food \(syp.org.uk\)](http://syp.org.uk) This was one of SYP's 2021-23 campaign priorities. The membership carried out research to find out about young people's experience in accessing food, and to gather their opinions on different solutions to problems within Scotland's food system. [Right to Food - Scottish Youth Parliament \(syp.org.uk\)](http://syp.org.uk)



Family Learning at Bramble Brae Primary School

At Bramble Brae the most impactful Intervention has been our Family Learning Worker (0.8) which has been integral to our plans supporting a focus on attendance, engagement, and participation. Our worker has provided focused interventions and workshops for families and has provided 1105 learning hours within our school community.

Over the session there have been 25 courses/1 to 1's. 1 to 1 support priorities the 6 priority family types with 100% of those supported falling within one of these categories. There have been 62 participants over the session with 92% of those in attendance reporting an improvement in confidence and 97% of participants reporting an improvement in knowledge and skills.



Family Learning Case Study - Young Parents Group

Family Learning have been running a support group for Young Parents under the age of 25 in Seaton Community Centre since September 2022. This is a space for young parents to meet other parents their own age and develop a peer support network. Participants have said that they previously struggled to access regular parent and toddler groups due to the difference in age between them and the other parents who attend. Each week they make lunch together and take part in an activity which is decided by the participants themselves. A core group now attend regularly. The group have worked on a variety of creative projects and participants have been able to take part in activities they otherwise wouldn't have enjoyed. The participants have had speakers in from services like St Machar Credit Union, ABZ Works and CFINE and have since signed up to access these in the community regularly. Visits have been undertaken to Aberdeen Art Gallery and SHMU, which group members have enjoyed. Some of the participants are quite vulnerable and have a limited support network.



Through engaging with the Young Parent Group, they have been able to access 1-2-1 support from Family Learning workers, Family Learning courses and Grounded Counselling. Two of the group members have children transitioning to primary school after the summer and are now thinking about volunteering opportunities in the community and potentially returning to work. Family Learning staff continue to signpost them to appropriate support and opportunities.

"I go to young parents to socialise with parents who are the same age as me. I've found in other groups with mixed ages younger parents get a lot of judgement but in this group it's very welcoming and no one judges anyone! You can get help and advice or even just an ear to listen to your rant! It's a great environment and I love going every week!"

"Between 'I'm a Parent...' and 'Understanding Emotions', I feel that I have been able to learn so much!"





Accelerated Reader at Bucksburn Academy

What was the identified gap? A gap in literacy levels in S1 and S2. Several pupils were starting S1 with a low reading age.

What intervention was used to support this area? Accelerated Reader was purchased to support this area.

How many pupils were impacted by this intervention? 301

How many pupils in SIMD quintiles 1 and 2? 34

How many of these pupils were receiving free school meals? 36

What happened? From growth data taken from Star Reading: 81.25% of S1 pupils in quintile 1+2 have increased their reading age so far this session. The average increase was 6 months. 77.78% of S2 pupils in quintile 1+2 have increased their reading age so far this session. The average increase was 9 months 63.2% of S1 pupils who receive free school meals have increased their reading age this session. The average increase was 1 month. 76.5% of S2 pupils who receive free school meals have increased their reading age this session. The average increase was 6 months. The increase in reading age for S1 and S2 as a whole was as follows: S1 - 7 months S2 - 4 months.

People's views The reading ages of all pupils is shared and kept updated on a spreadsheet which is shared with staff. A number of staff have said that the data is useful to them for gauging the amount of differentiation that is required for individual pupils. Support for learning also uses this data to decide which pupils require extra help with reading and set up small literacy groups once a session to help them.

Observations Accelerated reader also helps to motivate the pupils to read more which in turn helps to raise their reading ages. There are competitions to see who can read the most words, class word totals and word millionaires and word multi-millionaires.





Youth Work Making a Difference - Case Study Lochside ASG 2022-2023

Cooking skills were offered as part of the ongoing support offered by the Youth Work in Schools Team. The sessions support engagement, contribute to young people's life skills and support positive Health and Wellbeing. Confidence 2 Cook sessions ran from August 2022 and 22 young people have taken part at the Deeside Family Centre.

During an initial 4-week Confidence to Cook course young people choose what they would like to learn to cook. They learned about food/kitchen safety and were encouraged and supported to experiment with foods, recipes, and flavours.

One young person recently completed a Dynamic Youth Award based on their Confidence to Cook sessions, two young people have applied to NESCOL to study Hospitality and one young person will be starting a cooking course through Barnardo's employability after Summer. The sessions are based on healthier eating on a budget and young people can make their favourite foods for a fraction of the cost and know the health benefits of reducing sugars and salt.

The engagement and attendance at these sessions is very good and the sessions remain fully booked until October 2023 with young people requesting further sessions. Guidance Teachers have noted the positive impact these sessions have in engaging young people in further learning opportunities and continue to discuss the learning offer with parents and young people and submit referrals to the Youth Work in Schools Team.

The sessions allow young people and staff to build positive relationships and identify other areas where support is needed e.g. safety in the community, offending, relationships or future goals.

Feedback from young people

"I know how to make burgers and tacos, my favourite food"

"I want to do cooking for working with children, I have taken HE next year"

"I have a place at College for cooking'; 'skills for when I am older"

"Helping my mum cook the Christmas dinner"

"I want to be a Chef, gaining my confidence to cook certificate will help"

Parent feedback

"I've tried all the things and I must say they've tasted pretty good, he's fair chuffed with himself"

"He is at school today and is looking forward to his cooking!"

"he is really enjoying the sessions.. thank you': 'beetroot burgers are tasty' 'he has been cooking up a storm in the house over the holidays"

Work to develop a Family Support Model

Following analysis of the effectiveness of ASN and Outreach services, the education service began transforming the management and delivery models of ASN and outreach services around 3 years ago. A generic request for assistance form was developed to function as a single access point for all ASN and Outreach services including the School Nursing Service, Children's Social Work, Autism Outreach, and the virtual school.

The data is used at three levels; at whole system level to help us determine the success of our current approaches, at category of need level to help shape approaches and at individual pupil level to help inform individual planning for children and young people. This approach is proving helpful in identifying emerging risks. This live data helps us target groups easily to help mitigate risk.

The system has helped transform working practices, resource allocation and our commissioning of internal services and is now being extended to include all services for children as we design our model of Family Support.

The Children's Services Plan provides the direction of travel for working with community planning partners to shape a model based on the 10 principles of Family Support outlined in The Promise. The delivery of effective early support will be enabled through the provision of an updated and extended Request for Assistance process which we anticipate will be in place from August 2023.



Westpark Primary School working with Barnardo's to support wellbeing

What was the problem? Some children finding it hard to settle in the school environment.

What did we do? 20 children have attended Barnardo's groups with a focus on peer relationships, building self-esteem and target setting. In addition to supporting children to develop strategies to regulate emotions and manage conflict and challenge.

16 learners and families had 1:1 Barnardo's support from Northern Star worker or student on placement (7% of roll)

What happened? Almost all targeted children now report feeling happy, safe, and normal at school. Almost all now identify people who they trust and safe spaces within school. Almost all now identify supports which make a difference to them.

There has been a decrease in the number of reported near miss incidents as children have identified and can use strategies to regulate heightened emotions.

Almost all target children have very good or improved attendance and engagement as a result of feeling more confident and comfortable within the school environment and knowing that support is available for them when needed.

Three care experienced learners have had Barnardo's support for more than a year. As well as increasing their engagement with the curriculum, Barnardo's have also acted as a bridge between home and school, supporting families at multi-agency meetings and identifying additional supports (financial, food banks, holiday programs)

The Northern Star worker attended courses on harmful sexual behaviour, safeguarding and emotional abuse, which has allowed her to support staff when engaging in professional dialogue about risk awareness and seeking support from partner agencies.

She communicates daily with senior management and most class teachers, allowing for a dynamic and agile approach to meeting pupil need. The collaborative working model has also supported staff wellbeing and regulation.

Placements offered to social work students this year allowed additional families to benefit from 1:1 support, as well as teachers to request additional targeted group work support.

What next? Barnardo's will continue to work with the school community to develop trauma-informed approaches for meeting the needs of the most vulnerable groups in our community, providing tailored support to individuals and their families, to raise school attendance, engagement and attainment.



Youth Diversionary Hub

The youth diversionary hub in the Mastrick area of the city continues to provide young people with opportunities to meet up out-with school time and take part in sports and arts activities. Antisocial behaviour in the area continues to decline. As an offshoot of the Hub a group for primary 6 and 7's was set up which runs from the local community centre.

The group recently took part in a very successful residential at Cromdale outdoor Centre. We asked young people, 'on a scale of 1-10 how much have you enjoyed taking part in your activity?'

The average response was 8+ indicating it was a very good experience for the young people.

In addition to finding out if they enjoyed themselves young people were asked for their comments on what they enjoyed; what they didn't enjoy; what they learned; and what were you good at.

They enjoyed: **All, everything, biking, canoeing.**

They didn't enjoy: **Nothing, walk, going up hills, food.**

In the main respondents were very positive about the residential experience but found new experiences challenging, which is to be expected, no one gave up on an activity showing resilience and determination.

They learned: **Canoeing & what plants are safe to eat in the woods.**

Young people from urban areas can miss out on experiences in wild places that enrich an individual's life, learning to travel self-sufficiently on water for the first time or finding out about foraging helps young people broaden their horizons and take on bigger challenges.

They were good at: **Canoeing, teamwork, cycling and being kind.**

In a mixed group not everyone can be athletic and team members all bring different skills and attributes that makes them important. Being able to work with others and recognising kindness are positive attributes for good mental health.



Adult Learning continues to support our communities

Through community learning and development, 2314 adults have been engaged in adult learning activity and the city-wide family learning offer provided 250 activities to 481 adults (and their 389 children/young people), resulting in an improvement in knowledge, skills, confidence, access to additional support services and the removal of barriers to future learning and engagement.

Adult Learners are equipped to meet key challenges and transitions in their lives including digital inclusion, literacy, numeracy, ESOL and financial resilience. Many learners are supported to move on to further learning, volunteering and employment opportunities. Key achievements include:

- 818 adults reported improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes because of their engagement.
- 54 adults completed nationally recognised awards through CLD activity (SCQF levelled and awards such as Adult Achievement Award)
- 495 families with complex needs were supported by community projects
- 487 people took part in adult learning activities through the Fairer Aberdeen Programme.
- 567 people took part in employability programmes and 236 people moved into work
- 386 people took part in adult learning opportunities provided by funded community projects.

Targeted learning packages were developed and delivered for those whose employment opportunities had been hardest hit by Covid-19, the travelling community, those recovering from mental illness and those engaged with the criminal justice system

Evaluation of the accredited learning offer for adult learners across the city is currently progressing and will inform next steps.



Dyce Academy using IDL to close the gap

What was the problem we were trying to solve? In-school data (BGE Literacy levels) showed that BGE pupils on FSM showed significantly less achievement in writing in S1 and S2 and reading in S2 and S3.

What did we do? We implemented the use of a IDL (International Dyslexia learning – identify develop learn) literacy programme for a targeted group of pupils from S1 - S3. This programme focussed on developing knowledge and confidence in different areas of literacy for these pupils through consistent use of the programme.

What happened? Overall, 80% of pupils who have engaged with this programme have increased their reading age. These increases range from 1-month to 2-year age increase. When pupils were asked how much they felt the programme was helping with their literacy skills, almost all pupils agreed or strongly agreed that IDL has helped their literacy skills.

What next? As IDL has been a success with a targeted group we are going to broaden the use of the programme and introduce it into an identified S2 English class with a view to further rolling it out to other English classes. This approach along with the purchase of accessible library books will look to further close the gap and increase literacy skills and confidence levels amongst our BGE cohort.



Wider achievement in schools

Schools actively reintroduced the aspects of outdoor learning which were halted during the pandemic, these include P7 residentials, day visits using coach transport, and Duke of Edinburgh's award camping expeditions. Secondary schools started planning overseas visits in late 2022 when restrictions were lifted, with most of these scheduled to take place in summer 2023 and beyond due to need for a long lead in time.

The Duke of Edinburgh's award programme has returned to pre pandemic levels across the city with new groups at Oldmachar Academy, the Virtual School and the Open Award Centre who are now based at Northfield Academy. There are currently 992 pupils active in DoE across the city.

The JASS (Junior Award Scheme Scotland) has restarted in primary schools along with the citywide restart of the John Muir awards, Saltire awards, Dynamic youth awards, Hi5 awards and Youth achievement awards.

The AMPED (Aberdeen Motorcycle Project for Educational Development) has now been relocated to Northfield Academy and will work collaboratively with Nescol who will be delivering Automotive courses at the school.

As part of the digital transformation strategy, ACC collaborated with Evolve, an existing web based, digital platform for the planning, approval and management of educational visits, sports fixtures, and extracurricular activities. The system was set up in autumn 2022 and following on from some testing went live in October 2022. Training and familiarisation sessions were organised and undertaken online and also upon request from individual schools. Evolve has the reporting capabilities to develop performance analysis of participation and attainment inclusive of wider achievement awards (including DoE.). The Evolve team are currently developing in-system links to secure payment systems such as Parentpay which ACC currently use. 6 months after the launch of Evolve in Aberdeen we have 2165 active users, 1239 registered off site visits, and 26,908 participant days recorded.



The Community Planning Partnership has worked hard to ensure the curriculum in schools is well placed to support young people into positive destinations. A wide range of activity has been put in place to support family wellbeing and support citizens into employment. It would now be helpful to align data sets so that partners can better assess the complementary nature of interventions to ensure that we maximise collective impact.



Next steps in supporting young people and their families to benefit from income from employment

The following work is being driven through the Children's Services Plan:

- Continue to develop ABZ Campus to deliver a broader range of qualifications and pathways for young people which are aligned to growth sectors to enable them to secure employment in the longer term.
- Continue to work to close the gap between the attainment levels of those living in poverty from those who do not by implementing the Pupil Equity tracker and sharing best practice
- Deliver Aberdeen Computing Collaborative to ensure long term employability.
- Continue to address the cost of the school day
- Improve transition planning from child to adult services for those with a disability and increase the number of disabled young people In full time education
- Ensure that the voices of children (including those who use alternative communication systems) are central to processes and Plans
- Improve the health outcomes of expectant and new mothers
- Continue to support families facing redundancy.
- Continue to support the mental health of children, young people and their families





5.2 Cost of living

The wider challenges created by the current Cost of Living crisis around fuel and fuel costs and high levels of inflation create a greater risk of families falling into poverty. The following case studies illustrate longer term interventions to help address this issue.

Long term interventions - Housing strategy

The [Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023](#) identifies six strategic outcomes including adequacy and improvement of housing supply; the prevention of homelessness; improvement in private sector renting, and reducing fuel poverty. These are supporting outcomes which create the right conditions for tackling child poverty through a focus on mitigation for all families.

In 2021/22 there were 692 affordable housing completions which is the highest number of affordable homes delivered in Aberdeen through the affordable housing supply programme which also includes part of the council's ambitious plans to deliver 2,000 new social rented homes. 653 units are projected for completion in 2022/23.

During 21/22 we implemented our new model of Housing & Support to help people sustain their tenancies in Aberdeen City Council housing. This role is specifically designed with a view to reducing risk escalating to child or adult protection status. Each Housing & Support Officer now has a smaller patch size to help them get to know households in the area better, and work in-coordination with other services to support families and children. During 2021/22 99.31% of anti-social behaviour cases resolved in the year.

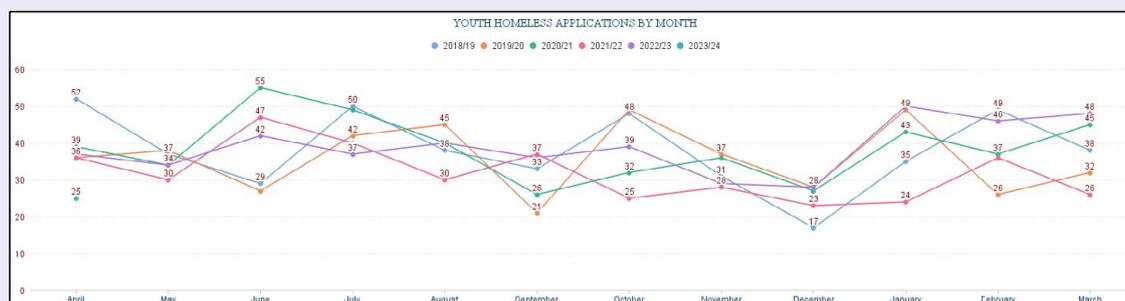
During 2022/23 there was a 26% increase in homelessness. This is the highest level in Aberdeen since 2010/11. There has, however, been a decrease in the use of temporary accommodation arrangements for families with children. As of 31st March 2023 there were 45 households in temporary accommodation with dependent children, a total of 83 children, compared to 31/3/22 when there were 65 households with 109 children. (these figures are a snapshot at the end of the quarter, and will fluctuate during that time).

Council approved the Housing Domestic Abuse Policy in 2021. This is a key policy to reflect the aims of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 that came into force in April 2019. This Act makes domestic abuse involving a partner or ex-partner, whether physical or emotional or coercive control a criminal offence. It reflects the aims of Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) as well as Aberdeen's Violence Against Women Partnership action plan and strategy. The focus of early intervention in the policy aims to support and protect those fleeing or experiencing harm and provide an avenue to remove the perpetrator from the tenancy, as opposed to the victim having to flee.

The Council spent £22.6M on meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standards in 2021/22. Over the course of 2021/22 we fully rewired 599 properties, installed 3852 hard wired smoke detectors, 1739 heating systems and 1222 crime check doors. We also replaced 61 windows and 163 kitchens. The national council average for homelessness applications sits at 290 with the Aberdeen City average considerably above this level (390 as of early 2022). This equates to around 1.7 applications per 1000 citizens which is aligned to the national average.

Nationally 9% of families are in rent arrears. The level was considerably higher in Aberdeen (14%) in early 2022. There is evidence of a steady increase in rent arrears over the course of the last 2 years.

Experiencing homelessness is known to have a damaging impact on people's health. Youth Homelessness is caused by family breakdown, physical and mental health, previous exclusions from school, other education, training, and employment.



Our data is showed an 18% reduction in youth homelessness for 16-24 year olds from 465 in 2020/21 to 383 in 2021/22, more than 3 times our aim original aim of a 6% reduction. However, during 2022/23 there was a 22% increase amongst young people (18-24 year old) compared to the same period in 21/22, and although this is concerning it is lower than 26% overall increase in homelessness in Aberdeen this year. To address this we are testing a community hosting model to prevent young people from presenting as homeless; whether provision of continued support to 16 and 17 year olds who leave the homeless process without a tenancy or completing their time in supported accommodation to reduce the repeated youth homeless presentations.

Long term interventions - Holiday programmes

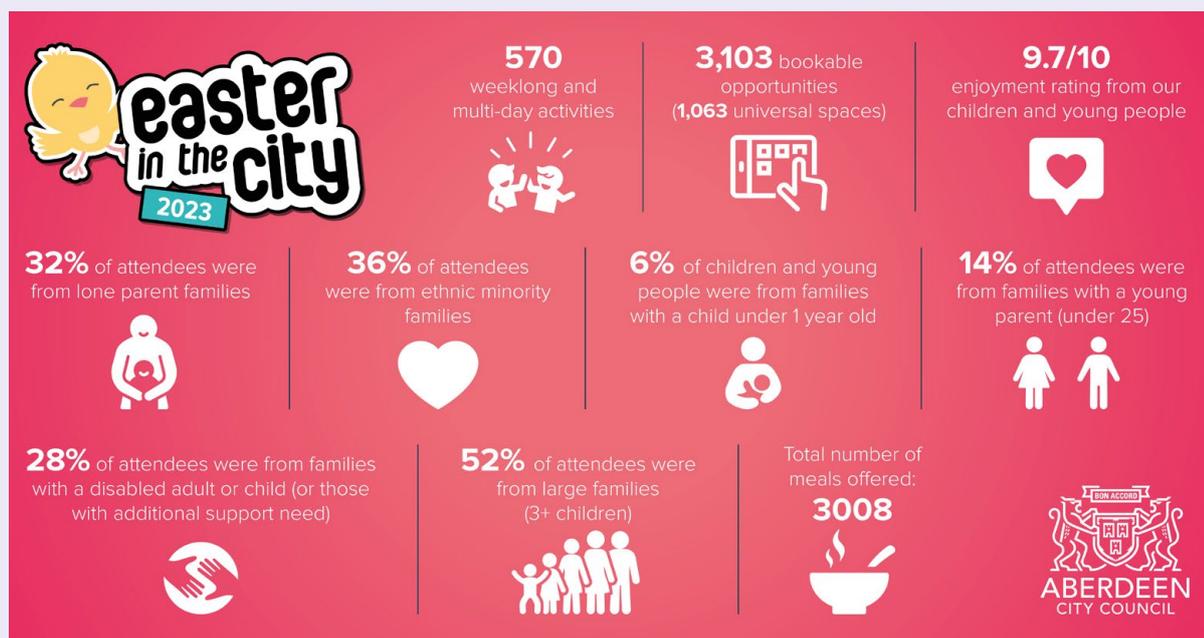
Following the success of previous programmes (Summer of Play 2021, Easter of Play 2022, Summer in the City 2022, and Easter in the City 2023) the Council allocated £100,000 for holiday programmes to be delivered over school holiday periods (summer and autumn 2023 and spring 2024).

In line with the aims of the previous 'In the City' holiday programmes, the main focus remains to encourage participation and to maximise the positive opportunities available to young people and their families with a particular focus on those within the Tackling Child Poverty Plan priority groupings.

The programme will continue to engage with the widest demographics, providing opportunities for both priority families and those who do not identify as part of a priority group to take part. The programme will also continue to target the 5-14 years age group with some activities still being made available for those not in this age range. Bookable opportunities for priority families will take the form of short, family, half-day and full-day session.

To date the programmes have provided more than 39,000 bookable opportunities, including weeklong / multiday camps and childcare camps, day long and short activities being offered, as well as numerous drop-in activities in parks, museums, galleries and local communities and bespoke programmes for those with complex additional support needs.

The enjoyability rating as provided by children and young people for the most recent programme (Easter in the City, 2023) was 9.7 out of 10.





Long term interventions - Food pantries

We are committed to reducing food poverty and increasing access to affordable food by increasing membership of community pantries which provide a more dignified and sustainable alternative to foodbanks.

What improvements did we make? Through our multi agency improvement project we are testing the following improvements:

- Targeted support to people receiving emergency food parcels to help them to become pantry members
- A booking system to help remove any barriers from stigma & ensure COVID restriction protocols in place to keep all safe
- A mobile pantry to increase access to affordable food across the city
- Opportunities & support for volunteers to manage the pantries.

What have we achieved? 55% increase in total pantry membership between April 2021 & May 2022

A **250%** increase in pantry volunteers since Jan 2021

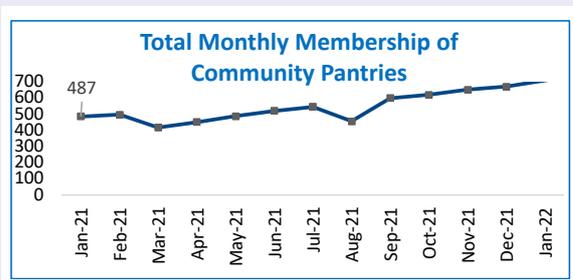
As of May 2022, the mobile pantry has **94** members and available in **8** neighbourhoods, namely: Kincorth, Middlefield, Sheddocksley, Tillydrone, Seaton and Bucksburn, with Hilton and Northfield having been recently added.

Feedback from one mobile pantry member was: *“I thought I would be embarrassed coming, but I actually really enjoy it. I always get at least 2 meals covered. In the holidays the kids came and was excited at getting veg! They are not enthusiastic about fruit and veg, but they are if it’s from the van.”*

Feedback from our pantries members have been positive, with feedback stating:

“One thing I really love about visiting the pantry is that from day one of visiting I was treated like a person. You are never judged or looked down on and you are always made to feel welcome.”

“Less worry and stress about where the £ is coming from for our next shop!!”



“The Pantry is brilliant, such value for money. You pay £2.50 and leave with over £20 of food. I tell all my friends to join. Even with the new system, it is great, I feel really safe and everything is done so well with the one-way system, but it’s a shame we aren’t allowed in the coffee bar, I really miss that. “

What Next? CFINE has a commitment to launch a further four pantries out in the community and development is underway to make sure this happens

Other achievements over the reporting period

Access to Free sanitary products has improved

A survey of school pupils in July 2022 showed that a significant number of pupils were still unaware that Free period Products (FPP) were available in school to anyone who needs them. Around 50% pupils requested re-usable products in various forms. Overwhelmingly, pupils wanted products to be available in a toilet or designated place where they didn't have to ask for them.

Several activities undertaken have been undertaken by the Education service to increase support for children and young people by increasing the understanding of menstruation, its impact and providing increased awareness of how to access resources.

These include:

- Free period products distributed to School Health leads.
- Launch of FPP posters in schools
- Launch of animation to promote reusable products in partnership with Waste and Recycling
- Reusable products education resources for schools
- Health & Wellbeing network input from Hannah Miley focusing on Demystifying Menstruation
- Parent Newsletter update provided for parents about how and where to access resources



965 boxes of products have been delivered to schools since January 2023.



Culter Primary Partnership with Aberdeen Football Club

What problem were we trying to solve? Through attendance data, teacher observations and pupil comment we noted that a number of children were arriving at school with factors impacting on their readiness to learn and engage. Some children were complaining of not having breakfast or morning snacks resulting in their first nutrition of the day being school lunch. Additionally, a number of children were continually arriving significantly late or displaying poor attendance. Class teachers also identified a number of children with “high energy” appearing unsettled or restless first thing in the morning. Valuable learning time was being lost and additional staffing resources were being deployed to support the children struggling to engage

What did we do? Through our partnership with Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust (AFCCT) we began two free breakfasts clubs from 8-9am offering high energy games and fun football activities followed by a free varied, nutritious breakfast and access to morning snacks supplied by CFine. We opened up bookings to all pupils but prioritised our targeted identified/PEF pupils for places.

What happened? Pupils/Parents welcomed the breakfast club and it has become a regular fixture. This session, we have served over 450 free breakfasts and seen positive feedback/attendance from pupils and parents. Teachers report an improvement in high energy pupils seeming more settled and ready to learn following attendance at breakfast club. Some pupils have seen an improvement in punctuality and attendance on the days they are attending breakfast club. We are reassured that all pupils who attend have received a healthy nutritious breakfast and access to extra fruit/water for morning snack.

What next?

We plan to continue running two Breakfast Clubs next session offering priority for our PEF pupils and target families. We will continue to encourage engagement from our pupils displaying poor attendance/punctuality and look at ways to incentivise their attendance. We hope these strategies will ensure greater equity for all and minimise the impact of child poverty on our pupils learning, engagement and achievement.



Families welcomed the use of the Aberdeen Gift card

Aberdeen City Council was awarded £2.85M from the Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery Fund, administered by the Scottish Government. In July 2022 the City Growth and Resources Committee agreed that £1.9M of these funds would be allocated towards the Aberdeen Gift Card Scheme, to relieve hardship and to boost the local economy. This project was designed to support low-income households by circulating pre-paid gift cards to be spent at participating businesses within Aberdeen City (including local and national retailers, entertainment and leisure venues, cafes and restaurants), to provide immediate financial relief.

Households entitled to Council Tax Reduction (CTR) as of 21 June 2022, were identified as eligible to receive the Scotland Loves Local Aberdeen Gift Card. By December 2022 14,172 gift cards were issued to eligible households, with £125 of credit on each card. In mid-January 2023 further gift cards will be distributed to those households eligible for CTR since the initial extraction of the data in June to date.

The cards must be activated within 3 months of receipt and customers have 12 months from activation to spend their credit. A support line was implemented to assist customers, most calls relate to customers asking for help with activation or general digital literacy support and / or access to the internet. As at 9 January 2023, 8819 (62.2%) of gift cards had been activated by customers, with £606K spent locally.

The intention had been to provide the gift cards in time for them to be used over the Christmas period but due to Royal Mail strikes in December some cards or activation codes were not delivered in time. This was the only major issue encountered in the roll out of the project and its impact is low as the cards are valid for 12 months from activation.

Artist in Residency at Glashieburn School



What problem were we trying to solve? The impact on attendance, participation and engagement based on emotional resilience, self-confidence, anxiety/fear, general resilience, and ability to cope with change.

What did we do? We worked with Creative Learning to put an Artist in residence in place across 3 terms.

What happened? The recommendation from Creative Learning was that the children were involved at all stages, including the interview process, this allowed full ownership of the project. The children based those selected for interview on how interesting their art project was, how engaging they thought it would be for their peers- would it have a 'hook and how would it support them in becoming more resilient. The children worked with school staff to create a set of questions for interview and sat in on these across a day. The children selected to interview had been part of the Resilience residency funded by Creative Learning last session as part of the return from Covid, so they had an understanding of what the project outcome needed to be.

Three Artists were selected to work across the 22/23 session- each with a different art approach but all with a focus on improving resilience, confidence and self-esteem. The children selected to work with each artist were based on data, including attainment, attendance data and SHINE survey data, as well as parental and teacher concerns. We also selected a whole class to work with an artist where we have a high level of need, looked after or care experienced children, low engagement with out of school activities, and three children who are finding it difficult to cope with returning to the classroom after periods of school closure.

The work our first artist allowed children to see the benefits of change and how to put strategies in place to deal with the negative emotions change brought about. As these groups were mixed, they also supported friendship and relationship building. One child benefitted from the residency in terms of communication and providing evidence in support of professional judgement of a level in Talking and Listening. The children involved spoke of the artist being calm, approachable and a good listener, and for one particular child the artwork allowed them a space to work anxiety free, where they felt no pressure for their work to be 'correct'.

The second residency was based with a class and used the outdoors with links to mindfulness and linking with nature. The children have commented on how calming these sessions have been, providing a clearer headspace and a level of freedom to explore, supporting confidence. The class teacher involved has commented on how being outdoors in nature has allowed them to see a different side to some of the more introverted children, commenting on a growth in confidence which some have transferred into the classroom.

Our third Residency has just started this week, and is providing opportunity for children with a range of additional support needs to cope with change and work as a team, developing tolerance and respect.

What next? Our plan is to work with Creative learning to analyse the reports from all 3 artists and consider pupil feedback and broader education data sets.

Food insecurity remains

CFINE, an Aberdeen based charity, is the delivery partner operating Fare Share Scotland regionally with 7 local authority areas across the north of Scotland supplying over 300 charity and community groups with surplus and donated food. The number of food parcels being distributed is steadily rising.

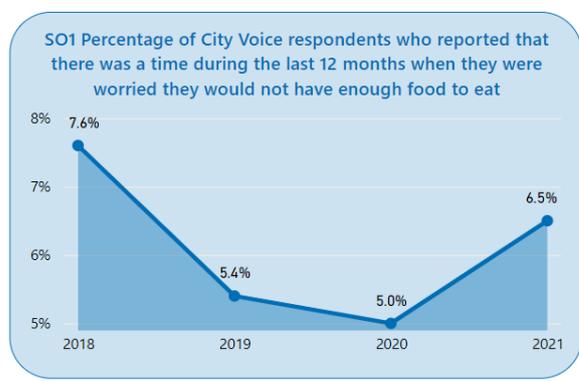


The Fairer Aberdeen Fund supported the distribution of 557 tonnes of free food (the equivalent of 1.6M meals), and 975 food bank users were referred to other support services. 3 Community Pantries were supported, with 232 members, as a more dignified and sustainable alternative to emergency food provision. 3032 people received money and income maximisation advice, with 1059 of them receiving a total financial gain of £5,941,710 the equivalent of £5,610 per person. 557 tonnes of free food distributed.

CFINE provides services to tackle food poverty, working with a range of organisations across the city, providing food and free sanitary products, as well as supporting beneficiaries to access financial support to improve their situation. They support community food outlets in priority areas and are developing pantries as a more sustainable and dignified response to food poverty.

The impact of the cost of living crisis on the provision and affordability of food is more acute than the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The chart below compares the period of recovery from the pandemic, and the impact of the subsequent cost-of-living crisis.

The number of food emergency food parcels being issued continues to cause concern and has led to the establishment of community pantries and community growing gardens. There is a need to better understand and mitigate the impact of food insecurity on child nutrition to do what we can to address the likely and long term impact on child wellbeing



Participatory Budgeting approach has been used to support local organisations to deliver support to local communities through the £1.6m Fairer Aberdeen Fund

The current cost of living crisis has escalated need which was already heightened following the COVID-19 pandemic, this is leading to increased demand across the whole system as resource is reducing. There is a need to think very carefully about our use of collective resource and continue to integrate and co-deliver to enable Community Planning Partners to effectively mitigate risk.

Community support

Community Flats are supported in Cummings Park, Tillydrone and Seaton, to support people with a range of issues. They support people with welfare reform issues and help to address isolation.

The Fairer Aberdeen Programme supported 495 parents and families with complex needs and 231 young people accessed 1,824 counselling sessions. 103 older people were supported to develop digital skills to help them keep in touch with their families and to access online services. 975 people saved with a credit union which provided £1.8m affordable loans, helping people avoid pay day loans and doorstep lenders. 581 disabled clients received financial support and money advice, resulting in a reported financial gain of £1.5m. 312 households of older people and people with disabilities were supported with income maximisation and sourcing charitable funding, achieving a financial gain of over £500,000 and 1112 households in priority areas received assistance with repairs, adaptations, and handyman services.



Increasing uptake of Early Learning and Childcare for eligible 2s

The service continues to work closely with colleagues in health to identify families eligible for ELC provision to increase uptake of ELC for eligible 2s. In 2022-23 the number of care experienced parents accessing an eligible 2's place for their children has increased by 50%.

The Scottish Government is in the final stages of rolling out a data sharing pipeline project. This will ensure that LA's are aware of who may be eligible and can contact families to support applications. Aberdeen City Council has signed the data sharing agreement and is awaiting the first cohort of contacts to enable us to send them eligible 2s information and encourage them to apply for a placement.



Orchard Brae School working to help families with the cost of living crisis

What problem were we trying to solve? Reduce the impact of cost of living on families with children with disabilities living in areas of deprivation. Focus on food, personal care items and clothing to increase pupil focus, engagement, and attendance.

What did we do? Clothing bank set up by a class with information sent out to all parents within this group. Request for donations for reusable school clothing asked from parents/carers/staff. Clothing, personal care items and food purchased. A meal of the fortnight launched for families – families could request a pack which included an easy read, easy make recipe card and basic ingredients to make a meal for four. Purchased supermarket vouchers to send to PEF families to support with everyday items and clothing.

What happened? Our evidence is somewhat anecdotal - increased attendance for overall group, slight increase in engagement levels. One of our best outcomes was the engagement from the parents as we had a 100% return/positive acknowledgement after receipt of the vouchers. This has had a positive impact on our ability to further develop the engagement. Some of this group of parents will now be involved in our family engagement leadership group to support all aspects of school life.

What next?

Continue with the clothing bank.

Re-launch meal of the fortnight to make more sustainable and varied

Vouchers to be purchased again to support with everyday items.

Explore possibilities of a family area to support families to charge phones, do washing, get a warm drink and access to support.

Increased access to childcare is positively impacting parents

The expansion of early learning and childcare has resulted in far greater uptake in places. The expansion focussed in part on making provision more accessible and the accessibility of services and broader range of delivery models have helped realise a significant rise in uptake.

Most parents and carers who responded to the last survey could identify clear improvements to their child's development as a result of the expansion. We asked parents and carers what impact the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (from 600 hours to 1140 hours) has had on them and their family:

- 65.4% (nearly two-thirds of respondents) stated that they access an ELC setting to enable them to facilitate the working day.
- 10.3% required the service to support their further education or training.
- 51.2% of respondents stated that they had more time for other responsibilities as a result of the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare.
- 38.7% of respondents indicated that they had more money/disposable income as a positive impact on their family.
- 26.1% stated improved wellbeing /respite as a positive impact from the expansion of ELC, with 24.3% of respondents finding they now have more time to themselves.
- 28.5% are now considering a return to work or study.

As well as improving outcomes for children, the expansion of ELC aims to support parents into work, study or training by making it more affordable. Over one quarter of respondents said they were now considering a return to work or study and feedback from parents around the impact on families is positive.

“The extra hours have greatly improved our lifestyle and wellbeing as a family, I am able to contribute more financially as I have the option to work more during the week. A definite positive impact.”

“Childcare is very expensive and at one point it was over £2,000 a month this is obviously not sustainable for long periods. The funding will give us breathing space to pay of mortgage etc.”

“No disposable income but it will take a HUGE burden off me. Time to yourself/improved wellbeing/respite is only for non-working parents or parents with additional childcare such a family help etc. Most single parents do not have those privileges.”

We will be consulting with parents and carers again between June and September 2023 and work will soon progress to better understand the long term impact of the expansion on families to help reshape the offer for maximum impact.



Walker Road addressing literacy gaps

What problem were we trying to solve? Improve Literacy attainment of selected pupils from across the school.

What did we do? A Principal Teacher (partly funded via PEF) was tasked with coordinating Reading Wise and Talk boost interventions for pupils who were below track for Literacy in line with national expectations. A part-time Pupil Support Assistant (also funded via PEF) worked with class teachers and other PSAs to ensure that targeted pupils accessed these resources consistently throughout the 2022/23 session. More recently, the Principal Teacher has worked in partnership with teacher colleagues to support improved teaching of writing and to coordinate bespoke writing support for targeted Primary 7 pupils.

What happened? Reading Wise and Talk boost data shows improved literacy of pupils who accessed these interventions. Most of these pupils made increased progress towards achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in Literacy. There is initial evidence of increased pupil progress in Writing.

What next? In the 2023/24 session, we will work towards class teachers and PSAs having more ownership of Reading Wise and Talk boost, so these become sustainable. The recent work on Writing will be enhanced through our participation in a Lochside ASG improvement priority focused on Writing and will be informed by current local and national Writing developments.

Fairer Aberdeen

The Fairer Aberdeen Programme funded 38 initiatives across community learning and development providers, tackling poverty and supporting 35,610 people.

Fairer Aberdeen projects help meet a range of needs including Pathways to get people back into work, shmuTRAIN to support young people into employment, education or training, CAB Outreach Service and CFINE SAFE TEAM to provide money advice, and the provision of affordable loans through St Machar Credit Union.

Home-Start improves the outcomes for families with complex needs, Mental Health Aberdeen provides counselling for young people, Choices delivers an early intervention programme to break the cycle of gender-based violence, and Befriend A Child provides accessible group activities for children.

The Fairer Aberdeen Programme supported 643 volunteers, providing 114,280 hours of volunteering time, with a value of £1.7m, and 5 Community Projects or Flats were funded in priority neighbourhoods to support community capacity building as well as providing a range of services and support.



Engagement with communities through Community Learning and Development

286 adult and young people took part in influencing and engagement activity through CLD including community planning, participatory budgeting, local and national consultations, and co-production and influencing service design. Through the Fairer Aberdeen Fund 149 young people were involved in producing youth media. Befriending youth groups and kinship carers were also supported.

Supporting those in need of our support

Community Learning and Development supported:

- 171 Community Groups
- 1064 adults and young people reached and engaged with one off promotional events/drop-ins/community events/engagements.
- Over 100 volunteers to help bring properties to standard to welcome refugees totaling upwards of 2000 volunteer hours.
- Increased levels of community volunteering
- Increased community management/ownership of green spaces and the development of food growing spaces and projects.

There are an increasing range of breakfast clubs/wrap around supports for families

We have a mixed model of Breakfast Provision in the city which can broadly be divided into the following three categories:

1. Registered provision – A Breakfast Club registered as childcare with Care Inspectorate and for which a fee is paid by parents / carers. (23 primary schools)
2. Unregistered provision – A free Breakfast service provided directly by the school. Often funded via Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to give children and young people a nutritional start to the day. (7 primary schools & 2 secondary schools)
3. ACC Catering service – A Breakfast service provided directly by Aberdeen City Council Catering Service at no or low cost to families, again to ensure children and young people start the day with some breakfast. (7 primary & 7 secondary schools)

Nationally, there are planned developments to extend wrap around care for school age children and to deliver this free for low-income families. Breakfast Club provision will be considered as part of this programme. We await further guidance and look forward to working with partners across the city to deliver this. Meantime we have a good supply of Breakfast Provision to meet the different needs of families in the city.

Children have access to good provision of IT and community connectivity

There has been considerable investment in community connectivity over recent years alongside investment in Chromebooks. 500 data connections have been provided to families in need and over 14,000 Chromebooks have been purchased to support learning in school and at home. In addition, the Connecting Scotland programme provided a further 461 Chromebooks and iPads with mobile connectivity to vulnerable families in our communities. More recently, 200 Chromebooks with data connections have been provided, through Connecting Scotland, to support our Ukrainian families. This investment has ensured that almost all children and young people from P6 – S6 have access to a digital device now.

The Scottish Government commitment to a device for every child will help increase the number of children and young people who have access to a suitable device from the 41% of the school population to 100%.

86% of young people recently reported that they are supported to know how to feel safe online with 10% stating that they didn't know.



Understanding the acceptability of the Early Years Financial Inclusion Pathway

Research was undertaken by Robert Gordon University in 2022 to understand the acceptability of the Financial Inclusion Pathway for parents and for professionals (midwives, health visitors and family nurses). The intention was to promote good practice and positive experiences, and to understand barriers in order to overcome them. The [evaluation](#) can be read here.

Warm Spaces

Warm Spaces have been established across this city, with a mix of Council premises and community and third sector organisations providing support. Information can be found at <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/people-and-communities/warm-spaces>. There are 48 venues across community centres, libraries, churches, and public spaces.

Support provided through Warm Spaces includes a range of activities and opportunities offered across the city, from offering a welcoming warm space, signposting to information, access to internet, a hot drink, hot meal, access to participate in centre programmes or specific lead warm space activities such as a reading newspapers, sustainable crafting, yoga, reading corners and board games.



Developments across the city October 22– March 23 include:

- City wide Warm Space Directory up and running.
- Branding for Warm Space introduced
- Volunteer remit created & training opportunities for volunteers created. 28 accessed training opportunities
- Staying Well & Warm Roadshow - 4 roadshows took place offering a range of supports and advice in response to the cost-of-living crisis. (Central library, Cummings Park, Tillydrone Community Campus & Kincorth Community Centre) A wide range of partner agencies attended – CFINE- safe team, Scarf, Home Energy Scotland, Financial Inclusion, Library service, Grampian Credit Union, Care & Repair, NHS vaccination team, Family & Adult Learning, Adult Learning, Social Security Scotland, Health Point, health Improvement team and Housing. Over 110 people were given advice & information.
- Funding enabled Community Development to purchase blankets, food, kitchen equipment, training, and resources for activities to support the initial pilot centres. As visits to other Warm Space community spaces happened, we were able to respond and build capacity in community venues by helping with kitchen equipment and food to respond to their community's needs.

From a community perspective each Warm Space developed its own unique offer. Examples of this have been free warm drinks, spaces to read paper, enjoy games or participate in the community centre programme. Overall, there has been an increase in the development of centres in providing community meals – soup 'n' sarnies, community breakfasts, community meals and hot lunches and increase in the use of community food pantries.

The Community Planning Partnership has worked hard to ensure that families have been provided with support around the cost of living. A wide range of activity has been put in place to maximise family finances. It would now be helpful to align data sets so that partners can better assess the complementary nature of interventions to ensure that we maximise collective impact.

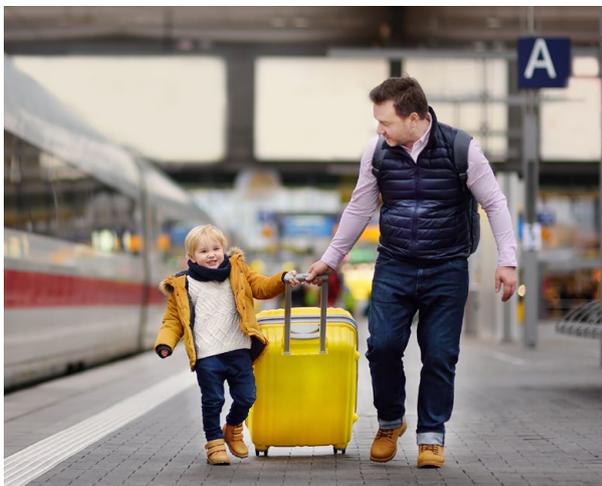
Next steps in supporting young people and their families with the cost of living

The following work is being driven through the Children's Services Plan:

- Better understand how the needs of the 6 groups identified as most at risk differ in need so that we can respond proactively.
- Increase access to emergency first stage formula and food for infants.
- Continue to allocate food vouchers over holiday periods for those in receipt of free school meals on account of household income and better understand the low uptake of free school meals and address this
- Implement an extended out of school care offer in line with national policy and continue to promote uptake of ELC placements
- Increase awareness and take-up of the Best Start Foods Grant and disability benefits
- Continue working to ensure school clothing grants are automatically given to low-income families by linking to payment of their Housing Benefit/Universal Credit Social and leisure activities
- Increase awareness and take-up of concessionary travel for young people and of Discretionary Housing Payments and the Council Tax Reduction

As the LOIP is being refreshed, The Anti-Poverty Outcome Group is looking to:

- How to move away from emergency food aid towards more sustainable ways of preventing and reducing food insecurity.
- How to increase awareness and take-up of family and friends rail cards





5.3 Income from social security and benefits in kind

Long term interventions - Money Advisors in schools

The Council has attached Money Advisors to schools to help support families within their own communities through the use of £136,497.12 Education Recovery and then Scottish Attainment Challenge funding. 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. This has been a targeted approach by life stage.

Over the last year the 4 Money Advisors who are attached to the Financial Inclusion Services have helped families achieve:

- Financial Gains of £1,077,325.24
- Assisted/Assisting 194 households with debt issues.
- Helping with total debts of £1,129,447.58
- 381 households given full benefit checks.
- Assisted 57 households to claim benefits.
- Assisting 12 households to challenge being turned down for benefits.

Families who have accessed the Financial Inclusion Service independently of the school Money Advisors have been helped to achieve further:

- Financial Gains - £324,916.45
- Assisted/assisting 119 household with debt issues
- Helping with debts of £908,660.99
- 233 household given full benefit checks.
- Assisted 67 households to claim benefits.
- Assisted 23 household to challenge being turned down for benefits.

Data from the online benefits calculator shows that families have been assisted to help claim an additional £246,157.03** per week of new benefits

**This does not confirm if they went onto claim the benefit and has this anonymised this could be people doing several calculations.

Over the last year, 2,919 free school clothing grants have been approved. This equates to grants for 2,890 Primary pupils and 1,634 secondary pupils.

Despite the proactive approach taken, there is evidence that SIMD quintile still has a disproportionate impact on health and educational outcomes and promotion could continue to be targeted to each of the 6 groups most likely to be impacted and by life stage to maximise uptake.

Other Achievements over the reporting period

We continue to work on maximising the uptake of benefits.

There has been a proactive promotion of new benefit entitlements including promotion of the increased child payment through the universal services and through social media channels. We continue to monitor update to help determine the effectiveness of approaches. Targeted communications to those in priority groups have been tested over the last year.

Cost of Living support continues to support household costs with additional funding for Scottish Welfare Fund to support medium priority applications. This also includes provision of benefit and financial advice, as well as further support to ensure the provision of adequate emergency food. In addition, support is being provided through the Lone Parent support fund to help lone parents with the costs if transitioning to employment.

The development of an emergency access to infant formula pathway will ensure a supply of food for infants as well as mothers and families, as well as the provision of further benefits and financial advice.

There has been an increase in the number of discretionary housing payments awarded and effective systems are in place to allocate community care and crisis grants to those who need them.

Provision of free bus passes

The provision of free buses passes for children and young people has been promoted since the launch of the Under 22 Free Bus Travel Scheme. All 5-21 year olds resident in Scotland are eligible for Young Persons' Free Bus Travel, using a National Entitlement Card with the free bus travel product on it. The scheme has been promoted through multiple channels both locally and nationally and through schools to increase awareness of the benefits of free bus travel and to maximise uptake. As of January 2023, over 22,500 young people have applied for and obtained a National Entitlement Card with free bus travel and are benefiting from this service.

Bus fares in Aberdeen are relatively comparable to those in other Scottish Cities, with the following fares as of May 2023:

| | Adult Single Fare | Child Single Fare | Adult Day Ticket | Child Day Ticket |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Aberdeen (First Aberdeen) | £1.95 - £3.05 | £1.50 | £5.10 | £3.00 |
| Dundee (Xplore Dundee) | £2.20 - £2.75 | £1.50 | £4.40 | £3.30 |
| Edinburgh (Lothian Buses) | £2.00 | £1.00 | £4.80* / £5.00 | £2.50 |
| Glasgow (First Glasgow) | £1.95 - £2.85 | £1.45 | £5.40 | £2.50 |

*Tap and cap using same contactless card

The most recent fare increases in Aberdeen (April 2023) saw fare increases of between 7-15% compared to 2022, and across other cities in Scotland, bus fares have increased by an average of 12%.



Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments

Bridging Payments (previously known as the COVID Hardship Grants) were introduced ahead of the extension of the Scottish Child Payments to all eligible under 16s. Families with children in receipt of free school meals due to reasons of low income were eligible for the Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payment. The number of children eligible for this grant increased significantly since winter 2020. The final bridging payments have now been made and the extension to the Scottish Child Payments (administered by Social Security Scotland) has been implemented.

| Season | Number awarded |
|-------------|----------------|
| Winter 2020 | 2872 |
| Spring 2021 | 3633 |
| Summer 2021 | 2882 |
| Autumn 2021 | 4552 |
| Winter 2021 | 4398 |
| Spring 2022 | 4683 |
| Summer 2022 | 4676 |
| Autumn 2022 | 4548 |

We are now looking to provide more targeted information for groups to ensure that families are aware of all of the potential benefits that may be available to them as shown by targeted communication for those supporting children with a disability or caring responsibilities.

Family Wellbeing Fund

Family Wellbeing Fund provides support to families through the provision of advice and to develop a support plan linked to topics such as money advice, fuel payments and employability. As these households are identifiable, this provides an initial payment of £100 to the household, with a second payment of £150 as an incentive to engage with services to maximise their income. This will help support those that need further support but are just above the thresholds for mainstream help available. A review is being undertaken to look at expanding the criteria to reach out to more families.

Free school meal registrations have increased but uptake is too low

When looking at the number of children (including those who are now automatically entitled in P1-P5), the number of children registered for free school meals is 3617 based on low income and 9569 based on P1-5 entitlement. The increase in entitlement makes annual comparison difficult and entitlement will be extended to P6 and P7, expected in 2025/26. While there have been increases at schools in priority neighbourhoods, increases have been seen across schools in the city, including those in areas out with priority neighbourhoods.

Scottish Government have committed to completing the roll out of universal free school meals to all Primary School pupils within the current parliamentary term. Enabling works in school kitchens and dining spaces are required to ensure schools are suitably equipped to deliver the expected increase in meal numbers. Some capital funding has been allocated by Scottish Government in 2022/23 with further funding to follow in 2023/24. The funding that has been identified will be used to take forward the most pressing priority projects identified.

When looking at the number of children (including those who are now automatically entitled in P1-P5), the number of children registered for free school meals has increased from 4281 to 4678 over the year 2021/22, an increase of just over 9%. While there have been increases at schools in priority neighbourhoods, increases have been seen across schools in the city, including those in areas out with priority neighbourhoods.

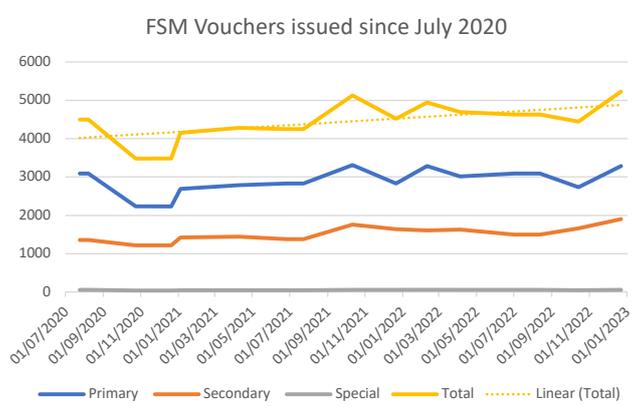
Improvement in registrations has been realised through changes to benefits awarding systems. Claimants of housing benefit and council tax reduction are now automatically awarded the free school meal benefit.

Uptake of free school meals varies considerably from school to school and the school catering service are working with local schools to better understand the factors guiding children and young people to not take up their entitlement. According to the most recent data from the Healthy Living Survey, the percentage uptake in Primary schools currently sits at 69.6% and only 47.7% in secondary schools.

Work is in progress to establish a food hub at St Machar Academy to test an alternative approach. The food hub will be out with the main school building and provide 'grab and go' food provision, allowing pupils to be out with school to meet their friends but still uptake their free school meal entitlement. Learning from this trial will be used to determine next steps.

Vouchers have been distributed to families who are eligible due to low income during holiday periods, and these continue to be welcomed by families.

Free school meal vouchers issued to families on low incomes during holiday periods



The Community Planning Partnership has worked hard to increase the uptake of social security and benefits in kind. There is a need to carefully track uptake so that corrective action can be taken if required. It would now be helpful to align data sets so that partners can better assess the complementary nature of interventions to ensure that we maximise collective impact.



Next steps in increasing income from social security and benefits in kind

The Children's Services Board are working to:

- Enhance formal financial inclusion and income maximization referral pathways in healthcare settings
- Develop and deliver poverty training to increase knowledge of referral pathways for all staff working with families and ensure that all professionals have easy access to a benefits calculator

As the LOIP is being refreshed, The Anti-Poverty Outcome group are working to:

- Increase uptake of benefits including the Best Start Grant and Scottish Child Payment
- Increase awareness and take-up of the Scottish Welfare Fund
- Harmonise the use of language used to describe financial services.



Appendix 1

Project Charters being taken forward by the Children's Services Board

| |
|--|
| Improvement project title: Access to emergency formula and nutritional support |
| Executive sponsor: Eleanor Sheppard, Chair of Children's Services Board |
| Project Lead: Emma Williams - Advanced Public Health Practitioner (NHS Grampian) |
| Aim Statement: 100% of urgent requests for first stage infant formula and nutritional support for pre-school children are met by 2024. |
| Link to local outcome improvement plan: Stretch Outcome 4: 95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27–30-month review by 2026. |
| Link to locality plans: There are no community ideas from the locality plans aligned to this project. |
| Why is this important and issues with the current system: <p>In Aberdeen, around a third (34%) of families with a child under the age of 1 experience relative poverty compared to just less than a quarter (24%) of children overall. As of January 2023 the Family Nurse Partnership had 68 mothers under 25 enrolled in Aberdeen City with 33% requiring additional support for essential goods and equipment. UNICEF identified throughout the pandemic and in this current cost of living crisis, families that were struggling financially were lasting their infants longer between feeds or diluting feeds. In Grampian a pathway was tested for health professionals to use so that there can be timely assistance with emergency formula and further support to maximise the family income. It is unfair to expect foodbanks to rely on donations to help families in urgent need and there is a risk that the formula that is available from donations is unsuitable, e.g. second stage or hungry baby formula.</p> <p>From the UNICEF guidance Supporting families with infants in food insecurity - Baby Friendly Initiative (unicef.org.uk), NHS Grampian and Aberdeen City local authority have a duty of care to safe guard children who are at risk of food insecurity. Baby formula is only one aspect, in a recent study, care and concern to feed nutritious food to their children were also commonplace but with the admission that it was difficult to buy what they wished because healthy food cost too much to buy. The impact of the cost of living crisis on the provision and affordability of food is more acute than the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of food emergency food parcels being issued continues to cause concern and has led to the establishment of community pantries and community growing gardens. There is a need to better understand and mitigate the impact of food insecurity on child nutrition to do what we can to address the likely and long term impact on child wellbeing.</p> <p>The current issues that arise across Aberdeen City is that health professionals & emergency food providers do not have the ability, via an official pathway, to deliver a cash first approach to assist with urgent first stage formula & then support family to maximise income and have access to nutritional support. Provision of first stage infant formula rather than cash, creates a number of issues and potential waste and does not comply with the UNICEF guidance. Data on current provision and demand is not available, however a data system is being established.</p> |

Measures:**Outcome measure**

- % Of urgent requests for first stage infant formula met (broken down by locality)
- % Of urgent requests for nutritional support for pre-school children met

Process measures

- Number of families being supported by the emergency pathway for first stage infant formula
- Number of families referred to the SAFE Team at CFINE
- £ income identified for families referred to SAFE Team
- Number of families being referred for nutritional support.
- % of relevant multi-agency staff reporting that they are aware of and confident to use the relevant pathways
- Frequency of the referrals for emergency formula for the same families.
- Feedback from health professionals and families that utilise and are supported by the pathway.

Balancing measure

- Increased breastfeeding due to extra conversations about infant feeding.

Change ideas:

- Adapt the “Pathways to Support” live document to include an infant feeding early years section where urgent first stage formula support, nutritional support and early years income maximisation can be added <https://sway.office.com/DBYRe6fKzyDxsFGq?ref=Link>
- Establish a pathway where health professionals & emergency food providers can access a cash first approach for urgent first stage formula for the baby, nutritional support for the whole family and income maximisation support
- Develop a reporting system that collates amount of referrals and repeat referrals for emergency first stage formula and nutritional support

Location/test group:

Families with children under 1 year with first stage infant formula and families with children under 5 years for nutritional support. Test the pathway with priority neighbourhoods’ health professionals and CFINE initially with the potential to expand throughout other charity food providers.

Resources:

Changes can be delivered within current resources.

Pathway for staff to use and keep for reference.

Pathways for support document

SAFE Team leaflet

| <p>Potential barriers:</p> <p>Reluctance to engage with our staff for fear of escalation. Staff time at appointments/staff time if family phone for urgent help Opening times of CFINE</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|---------------|---------|-----------|--|---|----------|--|--|----------------------|--|--|---------------|---|---|------------|
| <p>Project Team:</p> <p>Emma Williams - Advanced Public Health Practitioner (NHS Grampian) Fiona Murray - Public Health Researcher (NHS Grampian) Paul Tytler - Locality Inclusion Manager - Central (Aberdeen City Council) Fiona Rae - Chief Executive - CFINE Graeme Robbie - Senior Development Manager- CFINE</p> <p>Lisa Lawrie - Deputy Chief Nurse (Aberdeen HSCP) Nicola Dickie - Deputy Chief Nurse (Aberdeen HSCP) Sarah Boslem - Health Visitor/Team leader, South Pink Team Mhairi McFarlane - Family Nurse Supervisor (Grampian) Megan Bland - Senior Charge Midwife - Community Midwifery Versha Hurry - Social Security Scotland</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Community/User representation/engagement:</p> <p>Local research was undertaken last year; Midwives', health visitors', family nurse practitioners' and women's experiences of the NHS Grampian's Financial Inclusion Pathway in practice: A qualitative investigation of early implementation and impact. Results of this study have informed the change ideas.</p> <p>The changes above will be tested with families and from the feedback received from families who are supported by the referral pathway the project will make any required adaptations before rolling the pathway out citywide. Families will co-design the "Pathways to Support" live document.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Community Ideas for Improvement Evaluation/Status</p> <p>There are no community ideas for improvement in the Locality Plans aligned to this project</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Outline Project Plan</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Project Stage</th> <th>Actions</th> <th>Timescale</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Getting Started (Project Score 1-3)</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a project group. Develop the charter. </td> <td>May 2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Designing and Testing Changes (Project Score 4-7)</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Aberdeen specific pathway. Agree a standard operation procedure. Design further changes to be tested. Commence testing of changes. </td> <td>May to December 2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Implementation (Project Score 7-10)</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project end report. Recommendations for permanent implementation of changes to sustain the gains. </td> <td>February 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Spreading Changes (Project Score 9-10)</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to recommendations of end report. </td> <td>March 2024</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | | Project Stage | Actions | Timescale | Getting Started (Project Score 1-3) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a project group. Develop the charter. | May 2023 | Designing and Testing Changes (Project Score 4-7) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Aberdeen specific pathway. Agree a standard operation procedure. Design further changes to be tested. Commence testing of changes. | May to December 2023 | Implementation (Project Score 7-10) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project end report. Recommendations for permanent implementation of changes to sustain the gains. | February 2024 | Spreading Changes (Project Score 9-10) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to recommendations of end report. | March 2024 |
| Project Stage | Actions | Timescale | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Getting Started (Project Score 1-3) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a project group. Develop the charter. | May 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Designing and Testing Changes (Project Score 4-7) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Aberdeen specific pathway. Agree a standard operation procedure. Design further changes to be tested. Commence testing of changes. | May to December 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Implementation (Project Score 7-10) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project end report. Recommendations for permanent implementation of changes to sustain the gains. | February 2024 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spreading Changes (Project Score 9-10) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to recommendations of end report. | March 2024 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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|---|
| Improvement project title: Early Years Financial Inclusion Pathway Aberdeen City |
| Executive sponsor: Eleanor Sheppard, Chair of Children’s Services Board |
| Project Lead: Emma Williams, Advanced Public Health Practitioner (NHS Grampian) |
| Aim Statement: Increase by 10% the no. of parents with children under 5 who are completing a full benefits check by 2024. |
| Link to local outcome improvement plan: Stretch Outcome 4: 95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27-30 month review by 2026 |
| Link to locality plans: There are no community ideas for improvement in the 3 Locality Plans that are aligned to this project given timing, however the ideas aligned to LOIP 1.3 “Increase the uptake of unclaimed benefit across Aberdeen City by 2023” are also relevant to this project. |
| Why is this important and issues with the current system: Nearly 13% of our children, young people across the city live in the most deprived data zones, with 21.8%, around 5500 children in the city identified as experiencing child poverty in 2021. Around 50% of households experiencing poverty have dependent children, driving children and young people to be a key consideration as we work to combat poverty. As at the end of 2022, 152 families with children under 5 have completed a benefit check. Maximising income for families, where possible, is vital and supports the early years of children and enables them to reach developmental milestones. The groups most likely to be impacted by poverty are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lone parent households • Minority Ethnic Families are less likely to be employed with the rate of employment on average being 63% in Families with a disabled adult or child • Families with a younger mother (under 25) We also know that the levels of child poverty varies considerably from community to community, with the highest % in Tillydrone/Seaton/Old Aberdeen at 26.3%. Local research was undertaken last year with Midwives’, health visitors’, family nurse practitioners’ to understand what was currently happening with families who require financial inclusion support, and identify any potential barriers with the referral process and suggestions for improvement. Staff identified the need for a feedback loop to know if the families they referred to the pathway have been supported. Some staff also identified that they did not have a pathway and used signposting instead. Income maximisation staff survey A recent local survey of Aberdeen City families identified that they would like simple and easy to understand information about benefits and income maximisation, their health visitor should be the man source for raising family awareness of potential benefits, among others. Family financial inclusion survey The main issue that the Early Years Income Maximisation Pathway is trying to resolve is to cease signposting to a service and the ability to refer direct into a service that can assist the family, with the least amount of barriers possible and for the staff referring into a service gain feedback that the family have been supported. There is a need to ensure that all staff that work with families of children under 5 have the confidence to have financial conversations with all families and must have the ability to refer direct, not just signpost, into a financial service that can assist the family to maximise their income and ensure that they are in receipt of all relevant benefits/payments. The families most at risk of children living in poverty can be supported by staff at each potential touchpoint that they may come into contact with by a referral system. It is important that all families in Aberdeen City are in receipt of the benefits/payments that they qualify to receive and be able to use them. The aim supports the actions in the Locality Plans – North, South and Central - Community Planning Aberdeen ; Aberdeen City Local Child Poverty Action Plan 2022 – 2026 and the NHS Grampian Child Poverty Action plan 2023-24. |

Measures:**Outcome measure**

- No. of parents with children under five completing a benefits check (reported by citywide and by locality group) Baseline data- 152 Financial Inclusion Team)

Process Measures

- No. of families referred into either of the financial services (FIT or MTT) for support to complete benefit check (reported by citywide and by locality/group)
- No. of families supported the complete benefit check.
- Total amount of money secured for families.
- No. of families declining direct referral
- Staff and family feedback.

Balancing measure

- No. families requiring urgent help with money worries.

Change ideas:

1. Establish a new direct referral route with Health visitors/Family Nurses/Midwives to the Financial Inclusion Team
2. Establish new direct referral route with Allied HP, Childsmile, Breastfeeding Peer Support Volunteers, and Healthpoint staff into the Money Talk Team.
3. Develop and hold staff training sessions from the FIT/MTT & Social Security Scotland
4. Co-design and test new ways of promoting how to access support to families with children under 5 & pregnant women, such as social media promotion, via their health professionals and community groups.
5. Test a feedback loop from FIT/MTT and the staff that refer to the teams.

Location/test group:

Aberdeen City - Pregnant women & families with children under 5- initial testing in the priority neighbourhoods where we are testing a whole system approach for Maternal & Infant Nutrition (Sheddocksley, Summerhill & Mastrick)

Resources: changes can be developed within existing resources.

Worrying About Money Leaflets

Access to the referral forms for both FIT & MTT

Potential barriers

Families unwilling to discuss finances or to consenting to a referral for full benefit checks

Overwhelming the financial teams with referrals

NHS Grampian staff time during face to face engagements

Stigma for families identifying the need for help

Project Team:**Direct team members:**

Emma Williams - Advanced Public Health Practitioner (NHS Grampian)
 Fiona Murray - Public Health Researcher (NHS Grampian)
 Angela Kazmierczak Financial Inclusion Team Leader (Aberdeen City)
 Kristi Kelly - Bureau Manager CAB- Money Talk Team (Aberdeen City)
 Versha Hurry - Social Security Scotland
 Lisa Lawrie - Deputy Chief Nurse (Aberdeen HSCP)
 Nicola Dickie - Deputy Chief Nurse (Aberdeen HSCP)
 Mhairi McFarlane - Family Nurse Supervisor (Grampian)
 Lorraine Johnston - Interim Community Midwifery Team Manager

Other satellite members:

Breastfeeding Peer Support Volunteers (Aberdeen City)
 Pippa Robbie - Childsmile Coordinator (Aberdeen City)
 Allied health professionals (speech & language, dietetics, for example)
 Maternity Voices Partnership (Aberdeen City parents)
 Local mums within the city (Sheddoscksley Peer Support Group)
 Families will be involved in the design and testing of the changes.

Community/User representation/engagement

Survey was undertaken with health professionals and families with children under 5 years, feedback from which has developed the change ideas above. Summary below. Throughout the project engagement will be undertaken at key stages and families (from different localities) will be involved in the testing of the changes and from their feedback adaptations will be made, as required to ensure that it meets their needs. Families will co-design information to ensure it is provided in a user-friendly manner.

Feedback from survey of health professionals

Half of the Health professional's responses in the City currently use the Financial Inclusion Team others sign post to various other financial teams.

Most respondents would like a feedback loop to know the family have been supported.

Respondents identify limited time with client & time completing the referral are an issue.

Gaining consent to refer was also an issue and they would like a leaflet to hand out to families if consent not given.

Feedback from survey of Aberdeen Families with children under 5 years

Responders have a mix of knowledge of the benefits and payments they may be entitled to and how to apply.

They asked us to be clear about what payments are available. Do not complicate it.

None of the responders were in receipt of Best Start Foods for us to explore any issues with using the card. Further exploration is required. One responder asked for us to review the language we use around finances and being aware of our attitudes and comments.

Face to Face feedback in Central Aberdeen

Three mums from a local breastfeeding group when asked about Best Start Foods card, reported anecdotally, that they had issues with using a PIN and receiving a PIN for the card. This led to lots of money building up on the card that could not be used. There was also stigma from shop staff around splitting payment from Best Start Card and their own card.

Community Ideas for Improvement Evaluation/Status

There are no community ideas for improvement in the 3 Locality Plans that are aligned to this project

Outline Project Plan

| Project Stage | Actions | Timescale |
|--|--|----------------------|
| Getting Started (Project Score 1-3) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a project group.• Develop the charter. | May 2023 |
| Designing and Testing Changes (Project Score 4-7) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop two EYFIP pathways.• Engagement and co-design with families.• Agree a standard operation procedure.• Design further changes to be tested.• Commence testing of changes with families and staff• Adapt changes on basis of feedback from testing | May to December 2023 |
| Implementation (Project Score 7-10) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft project end report• Recommendations for permanent implementation of changes to sustain the gains | March 2024 |
| Spreading Changes (Project Score 9-10) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject to recommendations of end report | March 2024 onwards |

Improvement Project Title

Increase the breadth of courses available to young people in the Senior Phase (S5/S6) of ACC schools

Executive Sponsor: Eleanor Sheppard, Chair of Children's Services Board

Project Lead:

Mark Jones, Quality Improvement Manager, Education & Children Services
majones@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Aim Statement:

Increase by 10% the rate of completion of NPA/FA/HNC courses available to young people across the city by June 2024.

Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan:

Ninety-five percent of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.

Link to Locality Plans:

There are no community ideas from the Locality Plans aligned to this project.

Why is this important and issues with the current system:

Attainment in National Qualifications (NQ) is and will continue to be a very important part of the way in which young people in Aberdeen City secondary schools demonstrate a culmination in their learning. However, NQs form just a part of the way in which young people can have their learning recognised through certification at school.

National Progression Awards (NPA), Foundation Apprenticeships (FA) and Higher National Certificates (HNC) form some of the wider qualifications that are also recognised through SCQF. For example, secondary schools in Aberdeen City contributed towards 114 out of the total national picture of 4430 Level 6 NPA awards in session 2021-22. More widely, improving the number of completed NPA, FA and HNC awards at Levels 4 to 7 will allow young people in the local authority to better demonstrate a complete picture of their success and this will also allow our secondary schools to demonstrate an improved attainment picture against virtual comparator data.

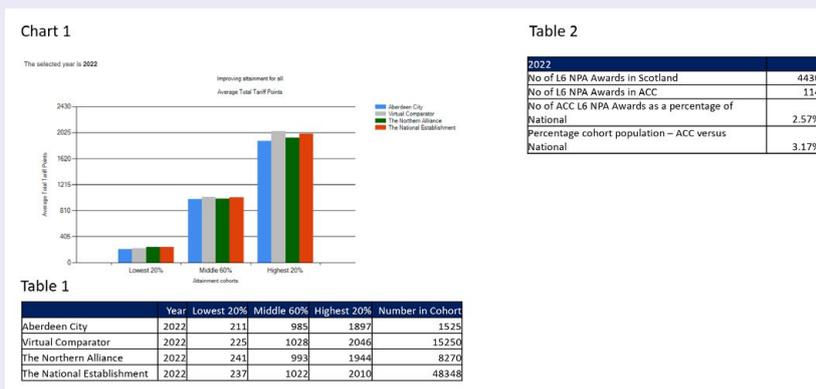


Chart 1 (data from [INSIGHT](#)) shows the tariff points for S5/S6 leavers in 2022 in Aberdeen City by lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20%.

Table 1 (data from [INSIGHT](#)) shows the same data as in Chart 1 but in tabular form, demonstrating that in 2022, Aberdeen City figures for this measure were behind the virtual comparator by 14, 43 and 149 tariff points respectively.

Table 2 (data from [INSIGHT](#)) uses Level 6 National Progression Awards from 2022 as an example to demonstrate that the number of wider awards is not proportionate to the cohort.

Measures:**Outcome Measures**

- Rate of completion of NPA/FA/HNC courses available to young people across the city by June 2024.
- Baseline data 2022 Total Tariff Points for S5/S6 as shown in Table 1 above – L20 211, M60 985, H20 1897.

Process Measures

- % Of young people participating in ABZ Campus courses (as compared against City Campus in 2022-23).
- No. of NPA/FA/HNC courses available to young people
- % increase of young people completing non SQA courses via SEEMiS during session 2023-24 (note that this data will only be available upon release of INSIGHT data in September 2024).
- % of staff participating in professional learning events during 2023-24 in curriculum development
- Participation and feedback from the voluntary open events offered to ABZ Campus young people.
- Withdrawal rates for young people engaged on Foundation Apprenticeship courses delivered by partners.

Change Ideas:

- Introduce Phase 1 of ABZ Campus, increasing the number of collectively offered courses (including NPA, FA and HNC) compared to the City Campus offer in 2022-23 to young people in Aberdeen City.
- Create a termly professional learning offer for staff in curriculum development to encourage a continuation in the broadening of pathway options for young people in Aberdeen City.
- Develop and offer programme of support (informed by young people) (including induction) for young people taking ABZ Campus courses that will enhance their experience and reduce withdrawals.

Location/Test Group:

- Young people in the Senior Phase in Aberdeen City secondary schools.

Resources:

Changes can be developed/tested within existing resources.

Potential risks and/or barriers to success & actions to address these:

- Risk of a lack of uptake by young people in applying for ABZ Campus courses will be addressed by; working closely with school and delivery partners, providing quality publicity to support choice and creating a bespoke application portal with a smooth process and access to quality data.
- The risk of a lack of commitment or buy-in from school staff will be addressed by seeking support and commitment from Secondary HT's and ensuring that a quality professional learning product is on offer.
- Risk of not providing the support that young people want will be addressed by the creation of a focus group and regular opportunity to gather feedback from young people.

Project Team:

Mark Jones (QIM), Dale McKinnon (Employability Lead), ABZ Campus Manager (TBC), Stuart Craig (QIO), ? Joanne Hesford ? (HT Oldmachar Academy), Matt Reid? (ESO), Robert Laird (NESCOL), Parent Rep, Young Person Rep.

** Sitting underneath the Project Team will be engagement and collaboration with a range of delivery partners for specific courses ensuring project is multi-agency.

Community/User Representation/Engagement:

Bi-annual feedback at a Parent Council Chairs meeting.

Bi-annual focus group of young people. Young people will co-develop the programme of support

Community Ideas for Improvement Evaluation/Status

There are no community ideas from the Locality Plans aligned to this project.

Outline Project Plan

| Project Stage | Actions | Timescale |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| Getting Started (Project Score 1-3) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project team established. Development of Project Charter. | April 2023 April 2023 |
| Designing and Testing Changes (Project Score 4-7) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design changes to be tested. Commence testing. | April 2023 |
| Implementation (Project Score 7-10) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project end report. Recommendations for permanent implementation of changes to sustain the gains. | September 2024 |
| Spreading Changes (Project Score 9-10) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to recommendations of end report. | TBC |

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|---|
| <p>Improvement Project Title</p> <p>Co-location and delivery model – Northfield Healthy Hub (provisional – setting name to be decided following consultation with young people)</p> |
| <p>Executive Sponsor:</p> <p>Eleanor Sheppard, Chair of Children’s Services Board</p> |
| <p>Project Lead:</p> <p>Name: Allison Horne Job Role and Organisation: Interim Quality Improvement Manager, ACC Email Address: AHorne@abrdeencity.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Aim statement:</p> <p>Increase to 3 the delivery of co-located and delivered services by health and education by 2024.</p> |
| <p>Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan:</p> <p>Stretch Outcome 7: 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.</p> <p>This project aims to empower the community of Northfield to determine the services provided by The Healthy Hub (name tbc) linking directly to Stretch Outcome 16. <i>‘Increase no. of community ideas identified within locality plans being tested by CPA and partners where communities are involved in the design process to at least 50% by 2024’.</i></p> |
| <p>Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan:</p> <p>There are no community ideas from the Locality Plans aligned to this project.</p> |

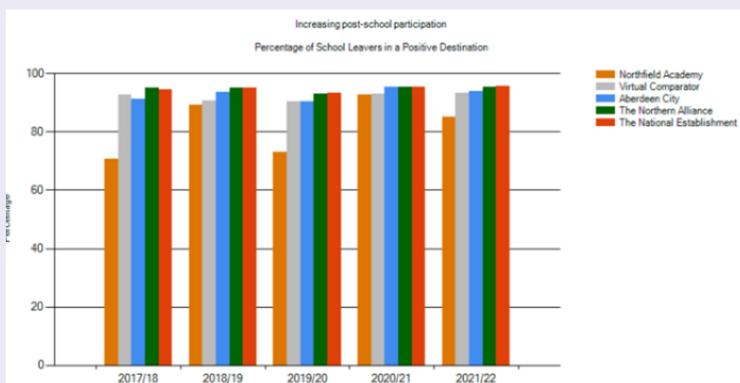
Why this is it important:

National and local research would identify that those living in areas of deprivation have been most impacted by the pandemic and their wellbeing has been most adversely affected. At present we have 1 co-located and delivered service at Links ELC. From review of this targeted partnership integration and delivery, it is evident that we now need to build on this positive start and co-designing and delivering more integrated services with partners, children and young people and their families in the heart of their community will be critical to supporting children and young people regardless of their circumstances to achieve the same health and education outcomes as their peers. Feedback from families to date reinforces the value of agencies being co-located delivering integrated services and support.

Northfield – Initial Test Area

90% of young people at Northfield Academy are categorised as being in SIMD quintiles 1 and 2.

Educational outcomes across Northfield are lower than their virtual comparator. In S4, 49% of learners achieve at least one SCQF Level 5 award compared to the city average of 80%. Only 13% of young people at Northfield achieve at least one Level 6 award in S5 compared to the 57% average across Aberdeen City.



Positive destinations at Northfield currently sit at 85% compared to the city average of 94%.

SHINE data confirms that only 59% of young people surveyed at Northfield Academy self-report positive health compared to 73% of secondary pupils across the city.

The uptake of the HPV vaccine in S3 girls is 74% in Northfield, lower than the city overall figure of 80%. There is a high proportion of younger mums (14% first time mums under 19) and older people in the community. Life expectancy at birth for Northfield is 78.9 for females and 74.8 for males compared to 81 for females and 76.9 for males citywide.

There is a need to look at how we can work with community planning partners to improve health and educational outcomes for young people and their families. Given above, the project will start testing changes at Northfield Academy and develop and test a co-delivery model to:

- promote healthy lifestyle choices to support physical and mental wellbeing
- help support young people through a (vocational) pathway (in hospitality or care for example) and into a positive and sustained destination.

Measures:**Outcome measures**

Number of co-located and delivered services by health and education (baseline 1: 2022)

Process measures

- Number of young people participating in the delivery of services in the Healthy Hub
- Number of young people accessing services in the Healthy Hub
- Number of partner/third sector/community groups participating in the delivery of services in the Healthy Hub
- % Of young people who begin to work towards a qualification as a result of their participation in the Healthy Hub (from August 2024)
- % of young people self-reporting positive health (Northfield initially) (baseline 59%: aim 66%)
- % of young people attaining at least one Level 6 award in S5 (Northfield initially) (baseline 13%: aim 25%)
- % of young people who utilise a Healthy Hub pathway to secure a positive destination (Northfield initially, session 2024/25) (aim 75%)

Change ideas:

- Co-design with young people and partners a Healthy Hub model to be located within Northfield Academy that could then be spread to other areas
- Work with young people to explore community data in order to help identify target groups and support required to be provided/available through the Healthy Hub and to produce modern child friendly communication plan to launch and to encourage young people to attend the Hub
- Co-design a programme of support for the target groups, which is supported by professionals but delivered in part by young people at Northfield Academy who are working on a vocational qualification.

Location/Test group:

Northfield: Groups will be identified in collaboration with NA learners

Resources:

Space identified in Northfield Academy to accommodate Hub which includes a kitchen area

Catering equipment

Literature and support materials re. health promotion

Potential risks and/or barriers to success and actions to address these:

- Young people and their families may not engage with the Hub – young people and families to develop the supports and programme to ensure the services provided meet local need
- There may be stigma of attending the hub – young people to be at the heart of designing Hub programme and services; communication to their peers and delivery of the programme
- If demand exceeds capacity having to wait for support could see young people disengage – look for various partners to engage and support the delivery of services within the Hub

| <p>Project Team: Allison Horne (Project Manager), ACC Shona Milne, ACC Fiona Mitchellhill, ACHSCP Lisa Lawrie, ACHSCP Stuart Craig, ACC Doug Watt/ SLT representative, ACC TBC, Skills Development Scotland TBC, NESCOL TBC, Community Member(s) TBC, Young people</p> | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Community/User Representation/Engagement: Consultation with young people on the name of the “Healthy Hub” Consultation with young people and families on the range of offer from health/education in the Healthy Hub.</p> | | |
| Outline Project Plan | | |
| Project Stage | Actions | Timescale |
| Getting started (Project Score 1-3) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project team established. Development of project charter. Identification of suitable space at Northfield Academy. Consultation with young people on the name of the “Healthy Hub” Young people to be engaged on the target groups and support to be available at the “Healthy Hub” | April 2023 May 2023 May 2023 June 2023 June 2023 |
| Designing and testing changes (Project Score 4-7) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design changes to be tested and look at who can support delivery of the programme for the groups. Identify and support young people to participate in the delivery of the programme. Identify how best to align to a qualification pathway for young people. Look at testing the co-delivery in another location. | August 2023 October 2023 April 2024 April 2024 |
| Implementing and sustaining changes that demonstrate improvement. (Project Score 7-10) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project end report. Recommendations for permanent implementation of changes to sustain the gains. | June 2024 September 2024 |
| Spreading changes (Project Score 9-10) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to recommendations of end report. | November 2024 |

Project Charters being progressed under the LOIP

| SO | Project Ref. | Project Aim and Link to Charter |
|----|--------------|---|
| 1 | 1.1 | Increase the number of people using community pantries by 20% by 2023. |
| 1 | 1.2 | Reduce by 50% the number of homes with an EPC rating of F&G by 2023, leading to 100% by 2026. |
| 1 | 1.3 | Ensure 100% of people presenting as homeless have a full financial assessment and access to all appropriate benefits by 2023. |
| 1 | 1.4 | Increase support for those who have been most disadvantaged through the pandemic by 2023. |
| 1 | 1.5 | Decrease the number of households in extreme fuel poverty in Aberdeen by 4% by 2023; and reduce the rate of socially rented households in fuel poverty in Aberdeen by 8% by 2023. |
| 1 | 1.6 | Increase the uptake of unclaimed benefits by 10% across Aberdeen City by 2023. |
| 2 | 2.1 | Increase employer sign up to the Real Living Wage by 5% year on year to 2023 to achieve Real Living Wage City Status by 2026. |
| 2 | 2.2 | Supporting 50 people to start a business in Aberdeen who will be coming off the benefits system or significantly reducing their benefits through starting a business by 2023 and 100 by 2026. |
| 2 | 2.3 | Support 15 care experienced young people progress to employment through public sector funded employability programmes by 2023. |
| 2 | 2.4 | Support 50 people into sustained, good quality employment by 2023, and 100 by 2026, with a particular focus on; those from priority neighbourhoods and people over 50. |
| 3 | 3.3 | Increase the number of people within Aberdeen City qualified with ICT and Digital skills at SCQF Levels 7 and above by 10% by 2023 |
| 10 | 10.2 | Increase to 30 in total, the number of individuals who are on a custodial sentence, on a Community Payback Order with a Supervision Requirement, on Unpaid Work Orders, on Remand or who have been Diverted from Prosecution who are being supported to make progress on the Employability Pipeline by 2022 |
| 11 | 11.5 | Reduce youth homelessness by 6% by 2023. |
| 11 | 11.7 | To support 50 low-income families in priority neighbourhood to improve eating behaviours and adopt positive lifestyle choices to help towards a healthy weight by 2023. |
| 12 | 12.1 | 100% of vulnerable young people, who are at-risk of developing problem substance use, have access to evidence-based Prevention & Early Intervention (incl Universal, Selective & Indicated Prevention support) by 23. |
| 15 | 15.2 | Increase community food growing in schools, communities, and workplaces by 12 2023. |