

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report aims to ensure Members are fully sighted on the progress being made on education and wider children's services reforms.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 note the update on education and wider children's services reforms:
- 2.2 instruct the Interim Director Children and Family Services to continue to consider the implications of each published report to ensure we remain ready to respond positively to any national policy changes; and
- 2.2 instruct the Interim Director Children and Family Services to update Committee following publication of the final Daniel's report in October 2023.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 On 24th January 2023, the Education and Children's Services Committee instructed the Chief Education Officer to update Committee on the on-going education reform programme. In addition, Committee continues to await clarification on the shape of a National Care Service to inform next steps for children's social work. This report provides an update on what is known about the various reforms that could impact on how services are delivered for children and young people.

EDUCATION REFORMS

- 3.2 Report CFS/23/009, presented to Committee in January 2023, provided an update on progress against the recommendations first made by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Organisation (OECD) and subsequently considered by Professor Ken Muir in [Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education](#) in September 2021.

- 3.3 The January report outlined a number of national education reform programmes underway at that time including:
- the National Discussion; Let's Talk Education to help shape a consensual vision for education in Scotland led by Professor Carol Campbell and Professor Alma Harris
 - the Hayward Review to help reform qualifications and approaches to assessment
 - a review of the skills delivery landscape led by James Withers
 - the establishment of new inspection agencies.

NATIONAL DISCUSSION

- 3.4 The National Discussion on Education (the National Discussion) was conducted by the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) and was co-facilitated by Professor Carol Campbell and Professor Alma Harris. Learners, parents, teaching staff and many other stakeholders with detailed knowledge shared their views about Scotland's future education system as part of the National Discussion.
- 3.5 A number of overarching priorities emerged through the National Discussion with comments about curriculum structure most common. Participants expressed clear support for a broad curriculum focusing on literacy and numeracy, but many felt Curriculum for Excellence should be streamlined and decluttered. There were repeated calls to recruit and retain more teachers and pupil support staff, and for better teacher training. Many felt these improvements would drive greater capacity, stability and quality in education and underpin better learner experiences and outcomes.
- 3.6 Participants advocated for the focus on health and wellbeing in schools to continue as a core feature. It was widely felt that schools should provide a safe and secure environment, have a positive and supportive ethos, build positive relationships between teachers and pupils, and deliver support through pastoral care teams, counsellors, mentors and youth work. The most prevalent theme in comments on mental health was for funding and better access to specialist or professional mental health support in schools.
- 3.7 Multiple participants highlighted the value of alternative teaching and learning approaches, advocating for outdoor learning, out-of-classroom learning and extracurricular activities, play-based learning, fun and more creative and innovative approaches.
- 3.8 Comments on inclusion and supporting children and young people with Additional Support Needs in mainstream schools centred on three areas. Several participants called for training and improved knowledge and understanding of a range of support needs. Several others recommended adaptations to teaching styles or environments for pupils with disabilities or long-term conditions and for neurodiverse young people. Some, however, raised concerns about inclusion, stating it does not meet the requirements of young people with additional support needs or the rest of their class. Calls to adequately fund these and other priorities was another prevalent theme.

- 3.9 The value of engaging with parents and families was raised in response to most questions, with participants calling for better communication with parents and assistance for families who need more support. Other recurring themes included the importance of collaborating with external stakeholders to safeguard young people and the potential for a mutually beneficial relationship between schools and local communities.
- 3.10 Participants often advocated for the education system to offer young people clear, flexible and practical learning pathways depending on their needs, abilities and interests. They argued a one-size-fits-all approach and focus on academic success is no longer appropriate. Instead, participants suggested that children should be provided with a range of academic, practical and vocational routes, including workbased learning, with parity of esteem for all learning options. Participants often argued that the education system should teach life skills; financial education, household management, digital literacy and skills for work were frequently mentioned.
- 3.11 Another recurring theme was for education to meet each young person's needs by responding to learners' passions and interests, offering tailored choices, letting young people develop at their own pace, and adapting teaching and learning to their abilities. Some highlighted the value of positive pupil/teacher relationships, and some advocated for a rights-based education which embeds and prioritises young peoples' rights and needs. Some participants commented on equity, inclusion and diversity, stressing the need for the education system to have sufficient funding and staff to support all young people to learn and succeed, including those from different backgrounds and marginalised groups.
- 3.12 Other themes included calls for the education system to reflect and promote the diversity of Scotland's population in the workforce and curriculum, to accept and celebrate different perspectives, to remove financial barriers, and to deliver equitable funding and opportunities regardless of geography. There was little consensus on the future role of exams, testing and assessment. While some expressed support for exams and assessment, several participants want Scotland to reduce or end exams and standardised testing. They described other types of assessment they believed would produce a fairer and more effective qualification system.
- 3.13 As well as a recurring call to listen to teaching staff, participants argued that teaching staff should feel empowered in their job, have a more manageable workload and be rewarded at a level that reflects the profession's value. A Summary of findings is available. [National discussion on education: consultation analysis - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-discussion-on-education-consultation-analysis-2022/pages/10-to-14.aspx)

THE HAYWARD REVIEW

- 3.14 The Hayward Review focussed on qualifications and assessment and the final report was published in June 2023.
- 3.15 There were three phases to the Review and three points at which comments and views from stakeholders were sought:
- phase one: summer 2022 - consultation on vision and principles

- phase two: October 2022 - public consultation on options for change and subsequent publication of the [Interim Report](#) in March 2023 setting out the future direction of travel
 - phase three: March 2023 - engagement on a preferred model, consideration of the findings of the National Discussion and subsequent submission of the final report to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills in June 2023.
- 3.16 Recommendations in the final report focus on the introduction of a Scottish Diploma of Achievement (SDA) with three elements: Personal Pathway, Programmes of Learning and Project Learning. The Review recommends that the Diploma should be the graduation certificate offered in all settings where Senior Phase education is provided. All learners should be offered the chance to experience learning in all elements (Personal Pathway, Programmes of Learning and Project Learning) of the Diploma and that these should be entitlements.
- 3.17 **Programmes of Learning**
The final report states that learners would continue to study in-depth individual areas of the curriculum, general subjects and vocational, technical and professional qualifications. These would remain a fundamental part of qualifications. Where currently qualifications are graded, e.g., Highers, Advanced Highers, they would continue to be graded.
- 3.18 Courses would be designed in modules. As learners complete modules, they would build credit. Where a qualification has an examination, the credit learners have built through the course would be combined with the result from the final examination to obtain the final grade. This would reduce the risk of a single high stakes exam. A wider range of methods of assessment would be used and methods would be appropriate to the individual programme. The number of examinations in the Senior Phase would be reduced.
- 3.19 **Personal Pathway**
The central focus of the Personal Pathway is reflection on learning, whether that be learning in school, in college or in the community. The purpose of the Personal Pathway is to give learners the opportunity to personalise their qualification profile by selecting aspects of their experiences that reflect their interests, the contributions they make to society and their career aspirations in employment and to discuss these in a reflective way.
- 3.20 The focus of the Personal Pathway is not on the number of experiences but on what an individual has learnt through an experience. The Personal Pathway would not be graded but would be subject to an authentication process. The Personal Pathway would be owned by the learner.
- 2.21 **Project Learning**
In Project Learning, learners would have the opportunity to use the knowledge and skills they have developed in their Programmes of Learning to tackle a significant question or problem that is important to them by undertaking a Project. For some learners, the focus could be on a global challenge, for

example, climate change, migration or social justice. Projects could be undertaken individually or in groups, but assessment would be individual. Project Learning would not be graded but will be linked to SCQF levels each with a different number of credit points.

3.22 **What else does the Review Recommend?**

The Review recommends that there should be a digital profile for all learners which allows them to record personal achievements, identify and plan future learning.

3.22 Different types of qualifications should be described using the 'SCQF level' as the key descriptor followed by type of qualification. E.g. SCQF Level 6 – Higher.

3.23 The report notes that one of the most important lessons from the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence is how important it is to have a clear plan to put ideas into practice. The plan for the introduction and development of the SDA will require major cultural change throughout the educational system. In addition, investment would be required for professional learning, time for collaboration and for moderation (including avoiding bias) to ensure fairness for every learner and public confidence in the system.

3.24 The [full report](#) is available on the Scottish Government website.

3.25 **WITHERS REVIEW**

The independent review of the skills delivery landscape was initiated to ensure the public body landscape for skills remains fit to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future. It is part of work to deliver an agile, people-centred skills system, built around collaboration, which meets the ambitions of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation and the Scottish Government's response to the Scottish Funding Council's Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability.

3.26 The review focussed on the skills functions of Scotland's national public bodies including Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), including the design and delivery of apprenticeship programmes, regional and sectoral skills planning, and employer engagement.

3.27 It was led by an independent advisor and took evidence from a wide range of stakeholders to inform its recommendations which were published on 7th June 2023. The [report](#) sets out the case for transformational change.

3.28 Key recommendations made by Withers include:

- the creation of a new single funding and delivery body, bringing together functions from Skills Development Scotland (SDS), the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and, possibly, the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS)
- giving the enterprise agencies a clear remit for supporting businesses, with workforce planning as an embedded and integrated part of business development and planning

- ensuring there is a clear remit for the new qualifications body – the successor to the SQA - in overseeing development and accreditation of all publicly funded post-school qualifications
- moving responsibility for national skills planning to the Scottish Government
- reform of SDS to create a new body with a singular focus on careers advice and education

3.29 Reports relating to education reform are being considered in the round by Scottish Government and a single response/action plan will be developed and published in due course.

3.30 **NEW EDUCATION AGENCIES**

Proposals to legislate for new education agencies have been postponed by a year. Consideration of the functions/responsibilities of each agency progresses with recruitment to the Chief Inspector post on-going.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REFORM

3.31 In 2021, the Scottish Government published the findings of an Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland (Feeley, 2021) and recommended the creation of a National Care Service for adult social care. Later that year when Scottish Government launched its consultation on the National Care Service, it included a proposal that children's social work and social care services should be included within it. Consultation responses identified significant debate on whether integration of systems, processes, services, or agencies would help realise improved outcomes for children and young people.

3.32 **DANIELS REVIEW**

Scottish Government commissioned The Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection (CELCIS) to undertake research to help inform decision making about how best to deliver children's services in Scotland in light of the proposed introduction of the National Care Service, and its commitment to Keep the Promise of the Independent Care Review (2020). An Independent Steering Group chaired by Professor Brigid Daniel, Professor Emerita at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, has supported the design, implementation and delivery of the research study.

3.33 The commissioned research study aims to answer the question, ***“What is needed to ensure that children, young people and families get the help they need, when they need it?”*** and has four separate strands of work, which together aim to provide a comprehensive and holistic approach to answering this question.

3.34 Each strand of work was published between June and August 2023 with a final report drawing together and synthesising all four strands of the findings to address the research question due to be published in October 2023.

STRAND 1

3.35 In June 2023, The Centre for Excellence for children's Care and Protection (CELCIS) published a report on the first strand of work titled, [Children's Services Reform Research: Rapid evidence Review](#).

3.36 CELCIS gathered, analysed and synthesised evidence primarily from peer-reviewed research papers nationally and internationally to explore different models of integration in high income countries. Consideration was given to the strength of evidence on their effectiveness in improving services, experiences and outcomes for children, young people and their families. CELCIS have determined that the quality of the studies reviewed was high, but that due to the predominance of small-scale qualitative studies and few longitudinal studies that provided data over a significant time period, caution must be taken in assessing the strength of the evidence presented and in generalising these findings to other populations, systems and processes.

3.37 **Finding 1 – there is a lack of evidence of models of systems-level integration**

The studies reviewed were based to a large extent on service and team integrations, rather than macro-level system integrations. This means that whilst the evidence may be strong in relation to what works at service-level integration, it gives little information as to the impacts, benefits, and challenges, that may be encountered in system-level integration, thus it does not allow CELCIS to draw any firm conclusions or recommendations in relation to large-scale systems integration.

3.38 **Finding 2 - Integration should be viewed as an outcome of a range of components**

‘Integration’ as a concept is difficult to define and articulate. The studies’ authors often spoke of ‘integration’ without defining what they meant, what the objectives of integration were or what it aimed to achieve, or how this would be done.

3.39 Through the process of the review, CELCIS developed a ‘components of integration model’ which combines the different perspectives of what integration ‘is’ across the papers. The value of this model lies in allowing a more nuanced understanding of integration, not as a singular process activity, but as an outcome of a broad range of components, the importance or impact of which will vary within different contexts. It thus allows both the ‘features’ of integration and the ‘activities’ of integration to be incorporated.



Figure 1: Components model of integration

3.40 **Finding 3 - The place of shared culture, with committed leadership at all levels**

A shared culture with committed leadership at all levels appears to be a significant facilitator for integration. Strategically, leaders need to drive change and connect with those implementing change. Operationally, the workforce

needs time to build new relationships across different professional peer groups and have the support from and confidence of leaders, including managers, to develop new shared ways of working. Commitment is needed from the early stages of driving change to when integrated structures are more embedded, which take years, not months.

3.41 CELCs found that Governments need to support transformational reform programmes involving integration through clear direction, aligning legislative and policy agendas, properly resourcing integrated efforts and providing the necessary context for integration.

3.42 **Finding 4 - Professionals need appropriate support, resources and time during the process of integration**

Implementation of an integrated service or system requires significant, long-term, commitment and resourcing from the highest levels of political and policy leadership if it is to be successful. Where integrated services worked well together, there were benefits of improved levels of professional skills and knowledge, greater sharing of knowledge and expertise, and changes to practice including more time working directly with children, young people, and their families. There were also a range of lessons and challenges which are applicable to workforces across different areas, services, and interventions, which included increased workloads, particularly an increase in 'unseen' work such as the time it takes to build and sustain relationships with colleagues from different disciplines and the importance of clear roles and responsibilities for all team members.

3.43 **Finding 5 - Supporting and supportive relationships are vital to integration**

Relationships are vital in providing support to children and their families. The importance of relationships also extends to how integration is experienced and facilitated by and for professionals. Significant emphasis must be placed on the importance of relationships to the success of service or system integration. It is important to allow time for trusting relationships to develop. Time spent together with a consistent professional allows understanding, and the trust that comes with that, to develop. Young people, parents and carers alike reflected on the importance of a strong relationship with a relevant professional and highlighted the challenges of developing such relationships with multiple professionals from multiple services. For professionals, there are links to being co-located, but the evidence indicates that co-location without the additional time needed to meet, discuss, and build and maintain those relationships, is not sufficient. If integrated services and systems can be delivered through a professional who has the time to spend building and maintaining a trusting relationship with an individual or family, then integration could contribute to a more effective response and outcome for children and families

3.44 **Finding 6 - The central importance of holistic practice with children, young people and families**

The importance of holistic practice was a consistent theme throughout this strand 1 review. Whilst only a few services may have explicitly set out to provide holistic support, the importance of seeing the child, young person,

parent, carer, and family in the round, appeared in many papers. This is especially apparent in the limited information available from the studies on what children, young people, parents and carers value in services.

3.45 Finding 7 - More evidence is needed about the impact of integration on rights.

Across the evidence reviewed, there was a lack of discussion or consideration of the rights implications of integrative efforts. Many papers at some point referred to the 'empowerment' of individuals, as well as the importance of people needing and using services being central in identifying and shaping the provision of appropriate services, but there was no discussion of these ideas from a rights-based perspective. It is critical that efforts are made to understand the impacts that the integration of public services might have on the realisation of rights.

3.46 Finding 8 - The importance of involving children and families needing the support of services in the design and implementation of integration.

There was limited evidence that those who use the support of services helped shape them through the review. Understanding the experiences of children, young people, parents and carers is vitally important. The Promise of the Independent Care Review in Scotland (2020) noted the tendency of services and systems to measure predominantly process based indicators, which are often easier to measure, rather than the things which are meaningful to children and families. CELCIS found from the research reviewed: those who are easiest to involve in research, the professionals, were included in great numbers, while children, young people, parents and carers were only meaningfully represented in a small number of studies. While it is important to use existing information already gathered before seeking out new information, the evaluation of future integration efforts should prioritise the consistent and systematic gathering of feedback from those who use services on their experiences, before and after any change, and how these could be improved.

3.47 Finding 9 - There's a complex relationship between integration and outcomes.

There were very few longitudinal studies available for review, and even fewer which looked beyond a two-year timescale in their assessment of the integration efforts. This current lack of research studies completed over a long time period means that the strength of evidence focused on the impact of integration is currently limited.

3.48 Many of the outcomes which are hoped to be achieved as a result of integrating services are also inherently long-term, often seeking changes to behaviours or experiences for large portions of the population, and are unlikely to be observed within a timescale of months or even two to three years. Given the limited strength of the evidence reviewed in the study, the study concluded that there is little evidence of a causal link between integration and outcomes.

3.48 **STRAND 2**

In late June 2023, The Centre for Excellence for children's Care and Protection (CELCIS) published a report on the second strand of work titled, [Case-studies-transformational-reform-programmes](#)

3.49 5 countries (Finland, Northern Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the Republic of Ireland) were considered as 'case studies' to understand each country's children's social care models and the connections to health, education and adult social care structures. CELCIS looked for approaches taken to the national, regional and local organisational delivery and governance of these children's and adults' social care services that could inform Scotland's approach and also considered what could be learned from Scotland's experiences of national service reorganisation through the development of Police Scotland.

3.50 **Common rationales for and aspirations of transformational reform**

Common reasons for embarking on a transformational reform programme included systems being:

- Fragmented across national, regional and local structures;
- Marginalised within a larger health and social care system for all ages.
- Practice being risk-oriented, deficit-based and centred on crisis management.
- Limited participation of children, young people and families in decisions and planning that affect their lives.
- An imbalance in service funding and provision towards specialist and reactive services rather than early help and preventative services.

3.51 Each of the 5 countries identified a positive and ambitious 'vision' of what the reforms would achieve including:

- Closer integration of national, regional and local organisations to enable more joined up planning, funding and delivery of children's health and social care services.
- Re-balancing service funding and provision towards early help and preventative services which, in turn, aim to improve children's outcomes.
- Improved access to services for children and families, including enhanced or seamless transitions between different services.
- Embedding of children's rights and building a new relationship between services and children and families – one characterised by professionals practicing in a positive, strengths-based, and empowering manner.
- Enhanced working between practitioners from different services. • Improved workforce supports through professionalising the children's social care workforce and opening up career development and progression opportunities.

3.52 **Finding 1 - Implementation is a prolonged, complex and challenging process**

Across all six case studies, there was a recognition that transformational change is not a single event but a prolonged process, taking many years to: create a new structure or agency and its associated governance arrangements, data and IT infrastructure; build a shared organisational or multi-agency culture; establish national practice models and implement new

ways of working, and/or build constructive relationships with children, families and partner organisations.

3.53 Transformational reform programmes are also complex. The success of structural reforms is dependent on changes in organisational and professional cultures and practice, public expenditure levels, attention being paid to addressing wider structural inequalities, and workforce recruitment and retention levels. Without attention to these, the 'push factors' that were the catalyst for the reform programmes will continue.

3.54 Implementation of the transformational reform programmes has been challenging, and there was limited evidence to date of the impact of these reforms on children, families and practitioners. Despite some indicative areas of progress, such as more collaborative working at the locality level, many of the 'push factors' remained as persistent challenges. This highlights the need for reforms to engage with wider systems and factors if the wide-ranging aspirational 'pull factors' are to be achieved.

3.55 **Finding 2 - Transformational reform programmes require transformational leadership**

From the case studies, CELCIS identified the key characteristics of such leadership as including:

- An understanding of complex, multi-disciplinary systems and how to bring about changes in such systems
- Recognition of the need to have a theory of change that sets out the structural, process and/or practice change(s) involved and the expected outcomes and impacts of these, and
- Effective and inclusive communication of the reforms to internal and external stakeholders and audiences, explaining clearly what the change is, how it will be brought about, and why it is needed. Of these, explaining the 'bigger picture' or the 'why' for the change was found to be particularly important.

3.56 **Finding 3 - A conducive and settled domestic environment is required**

Given their long-term nature, any transformational reform programme will be subject to external, unanticipated events. Notwithstanding these, at a domestic political level, this study found that a conducive and settled domestic environment should be sought when introducing and implementing major transformational reform programmes, including:

- Cross-party political support for the transformational reform programme, thus enabling continuity of support should there be electoral change.
- Creating 'buy-in' and support for the reforms from the public.
- Providing long-term budgetary stability that can ensure the required investment levels are available over the reform programme's multiyear timeframe.
- Keeping the number of transformational change programmes progressed at any one time to a minimum.

3.57 **Finding 4 - Successful implementation needs strong foundations**

The study found that a series of inter-related foundations need to be in place for the successful implementation of transformational reform programmes.

Driven by transformational leadership, the foundations encompass the need for thorough planning and appraisal of the reform programme at its inception stage and the development of a clearly articulate theory of change through to the importance of having long-term political and implementation support for the reform.

3.58 Finding 5 - There were commonalities in the structures and functions present at the national, regional, local and locality levels

The transformational reform programmes each took a different form but, despite their differences, CELCIS found there were commonalities to the structures and functions:

- At the national level, there was a lead government department and/or national children and family agency that set national policy and legislation, and was responsible for implementing the transformational reform programmes, working in partnership with multiple stakeholder organisations. Also at the national level were the children's services inspectorate and children's rights commissioner functions.
- At the regional level, health services for children and adults were widely planned and delivered.
- At the local (authority) level, children and families' social care services were jointly planned for, managed and increasingly commissioned.
- At the locality level, branded, multi-agency teams and hubs operated (often in co-located sites) to provide prevention and early intervention support. Services and joint working at this level were found to be most impactful on the lives of children and families.

3.59 Finding 6 - Strong national leadership and investment is required for the design and implementation of transformational reform

Across the case studies, stakeholders had asked for stronger national leadership and investment in the following areas:

- National leadership in delivering on children's health and social care needs.
- National practice guidance, standards, models and tools that provide clarity to multi-agency practitioners and can support inter-agency working.
- Integrated IT systems that can support information sharing and recording.
- National measures or indicators of children's outcomes and a national data information system that supports consistent recording and reporting of these.
- National workforce planning.
- Standardisation of procurement processes and requirements.

3.60 Finding 7 - The locality level is the main setting for integrated working

The crucial level of service delivery was at the locality level. It is characterised by co-located, multi-agency staff working flexibly together to listen to and meet the needs of children, young people and families before they require more specialist and statutory support. The learning from the case studies is that these structures benefit from having a consistent public recognition across the country and operate at a level where they each serve an average catchment size of 40,000-60,000 people.

3.61 **Finding 8 - Continued attention needs to be paid to the interfaces between services**

Across the health and social care case studies, persistent challenges were evident in how children, young people and families can access more specialist services, such as disability and mental health services, and how to support young people's transitions to adult services. The dynamic nature of the interfaces between different services, for example, due to changing waiting list sizes, mean that continued attention is needed into how services work together so that these are seamless for children, young people and families.

3.62 **Finding 9 - Continued attention needs to be paid to workforce recruitment and retention**

The impact of worsening workforce recruitment and retention challenges must also be understood. These have a direct impact on staffing and resource levels, waiting lists for services, and impede opportunities for more strategic planning and developments.

3.63 **Finding 10 - Wider policy agendas influence - and must be influenced by the experiences of children and families**

Across the case studies, services were reporting increasing and more complex needs among children and families, with rising poverty levels and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic contributing to this. The children's health and social care system and services alone cannot tackle these wider economic and societal challenges. Other government departments, such as housing and social security departments, need to listen to the circumstances that children and families are experiencing and actively consider how their policy and funding decisions can play their part in responding to their needs.

3.64 **Finding 11 - Integrated children's health and social care systems require a range of features to be in place**

Figure 3 uses our learning from the case studies to put forward the features that support the integration.



Figure 3: Features of Integrated Children's Health and Social Care Systems

- 3.65 The conclusion from these case studies is that there is no one approach that can be recommended for implementation in Scotland. However, there is learning to be taken from the case studies, not least the consensus around the functions that require national leadership, investment and development; the critical importance of facilitating multi-agency working at the most local level to children and families; and the need to attend to the factors that support effective implementation of reforms.
- 3.66 Findings 5 and 7 strongly steer the focus on locality working to improve outcomes for children and families and these findings will be considered by the Children's Services Board.
- 3.67 Finding 8 recognises the criticality of the interface between children and adult services. Work is on-going through our GIRFEC pathfinders, but it will be important to make this explicit link during the upcoming refresh of the LOIP.
- 3.68 The case studies of transformational reform programmes are the second strand in a series of four, collectively known as the Children's Services Reform Research study. The findings from the case studies will be considered alongside the findings from the other three strands of the study and all will be brought together for the final research report, due to be published in October 2023.
- 3.69 **CHILDREN'S HEARING REDESIGN**
 The [Hearings for children redesign report](#) (June 2023) calls for historic reform to the Children's Hearings System in Scotland following extensive engagement with children and young people. The report calls for the creation

of a Hearings System that puts children and families at the centre to ensure that the Children's Hearings System truly listens to and upholds the legal rights of children and their families.

3.70 The Hearings System Working Group (HSWG) was a partnership between The Promise Scotland, Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), with the Scottish Government performing an observatory role. The recommendations are based on what the Group heard from children, families, and adults with experience of the Children's Hearings System and those working alongside them. The development of the report was overseen by Sheriff Mackie and the resulting recommendations were agreed by all members of the HSWG. Together, they represent the transformational change that children and families, care experienced adults and those working alongside them have called for.

3.71 The report recommendations have the potential to have significant impact for all parts of the children's system in order to transform how children and families experience the Children's Hearings System and in the way that more robust, timely and consistent decision-making and more bespoke, high-quality support will help to keep the promise and uphold the rights of children and their families.

3.72 key recommendations include:

- Ensuring equitable availability of, and access to, early and ongoing help and support for children and for their families. In particular, ensuring all children and families are able to access the help and support that they need, when they need it, in the way that they need it, for as long as they need it.
- Actioning the Scottish Government's commitment to spending at least 5% of all community based health and social care on preventative whole family support measures by 2030.
- Urgently addressing the challenges relating to the recruitment, retention and resourcing of child and family social work teams.
- Paying serious and sustained attention to maintaining and supporting the children and families' workforce so that they are best placed to undertake the complex work required of them in a way that is characterised by a rights-respecting, trauma informed approach. This includes the third sector workforce.
- Ensuring consistent, high-quality provision of Family Group Decision Making and Restorative Justice services across Scotland.
- Addressing the pervasive impact of child poverty, the links between poverty and the Children's Hearings System and ensuring these recommendations are linked to the national work to reduce poverty and meet the child poverty targets.

3.73 The report calls for help and support, including whole family support, mental health and other important wellbeing services, to be available for all children and families who need it, regardless of whether they are engaged with the Children's Hearings System or not and this will be considered as we continue to develop our model of Family Support.

3.74 The full list of recommendations are contained in Appendix A.

3.75 Children and Family Services will continue to consider the implications of the published reform alongside multi-agency partners through the Children's Services Board to ensure that we remain ready to respond positively to any national policy changes. Committee will be further updated when the final Daniels's report has been published in October 2023.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No negative environmental impacts have been identified.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Risk of not changing our local system to reflect changes in national policy.	Regular reporting to Committee.	L	Yes
Compliance	Risk of not complying with national guidance	Education Service and Children's Social Work keeping abreast of developments associated with the Reforms.	L	Yes
Operational	Risk that staff feel disconnected from national Reforms	Information shared timeously with colleagues and engagement promoted.	L	Yes
Financial	No significant risks identified			

Reputational	No risks identified			Yes
Environment / Climate	No risks identified			

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
Impact of Report	
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement Delivery of progressive educational policies</p>	<p>The proposals in this report do not directly impact operational practice but do signal some of the changes that may be made to the future shape of the education and wider children’s services system.</p>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
<p>Prosperous Economy - 500 Aberdeen City residents upskilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026</p> <p>Mitigating the causes of immediate and acute poverty.</p> <p>Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and groups.</p>	<p>The review of the national approach to assessment and qualifications is likely to have a positive impact on those who do less well in a traditional exam situation.</p> <p>The children’s services reforms will support our move to the provision of more upstream support.</p>
<p>Prosperous People - 95% of all our children, including those living in our priority neighbourhoods, will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026</p> <p>As corporate parents we will ensure 95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education, health and emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026</p>	<p>The review of the national approach to assessment and qualifications is likely to have a positive impact on those who do less well in a traditional exam situation.</p> <p>The review of the vision for Scottish Education is likely to drive more flexible and inclusive approaches to the delivery of education.</p>

Regional and City Strategies	
Regional Cultural Strategy	The recommendations in this report do not directly impact any of Regional or City Strategies at this point but are likely to heavily influence longer term planning.
Prevention Strategy	
Children's Services Plan	
National Improvement Framework Plan	

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	No integrated Impact Assessment is required as the recommendations are currently being considered by the Scottish Government and next steps have not been proposed to consider.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	No

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Hearings for Children redesign report recommendations

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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