



Community Planning
Aberdeen



Aberdeen City's
**CHILDREN'S SERVICES
STRATEGIC PLAN**

2023 - 2026

Annual Report 2023

INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR



Our published Plan for children, young people and families 2023-26 articulates the outcomes Community Planning Partners are currently working to realise for children, young people and families across Aberdeen. As we reflect on progress made in the first year of the Plan, we continue to be thoughtful of how the needs of our families continues to change. This yearly review of progress therefore presents an opportunity to check that our planned improvement projects are prioritising the right things and help determine if we need to make amendments to our agreed Plan.

In preparing this annual report we have reviewed data published since March 2023 to identify any changes in data trends at different life stages. We have also benefited from reviewing the themes emerging from the extensive engagement undertaken to inform the refresh of our Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). Reviewing both data and insights has helped us draw firm conclusions on the activity most likely to realise improved outcomes over the final two years of the Plan and therefore the adequacy of the current Plan.

In developing Aberdeen City's Children's Services Strategic Plan for 2023-26, we worked to integrate the full range of statutory Plans and reports in an attempt to better align reporting, reduce duplication and free up time for direct work. As a result, this Annual Report covering 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, details the progress the Community Planning Partnership has made in delivering against several key national policies including:

- addressing child poverty;
- delivering The Promise; and our
- Corporate Parenting Plan

In addition to our planned improvement work and work supporting delivery of national policy, the Children's Services Board has continued to keep abreast of impending legislative changes to ensure our readiness for what lies ahead. This has seen the Children's Services Board participate in planning for The National Care Service (NCS) through our local Programme Board, be selected as a Bairns Hoose Pathfinder to help us build on the existing co-located Police Scotland and Children's Social Work Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) team and monitor the progress of the anticipated Children's Care and Justice Bill. The Board has extensively engaged in education reform consultations and continues to actively consider the implications of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024.

This report provides a flavour of how partners are working together to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in Aberdeen City. I continue to be humbled by the collaboration and increasing sense of shared accountability demonstrated by members of the Children's Services Board.

Eleanor Sheppard

Interim Director Children and Family Services (Chair of the Children's Services Board)

ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE REPORTING PERIOD



34 multi-agency Improvement Projects have been initiated and testing is now well underway.

Some other key achievements over the reporting period are listed below.

- Securing pathfinder status for our Bairns Hoose
- Improving outcomes for those living in some communities (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2 and 3)
- Realising a 50% increase in the number of eligible 2s placed in ELC provision
- Increasing the uptake of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) from 91.22% in 2021/22 to 94.74% in 2022/23
- Increased the % of funded ELC settings achieving good or better during inspection from 82.4% in 2021/22 to 86.4% in 2022/23.
- Realising an improvement in the annual participation measure from 91.2% in 2022 to 92.8% in 2023.
- Realising a reduction in the attainment gap (literacy and numeracy) between those living in areas of deprivation and their peers
- 82% of our communities are now performing better than could be expected in child poverty compared to only 78% a year ago
- No One Left Behind (NOLB) funding of £1,344,000 has helped deliver all-age, all-stage employability support (up from £675,202.58 last year) and 308 young people aged 16-24 benefiting
- Seed funding of £11,218.89 has been invested so far to support the creation of seven businesses (up from £3,995.79 supporting the start-up of one business last year)
- 75 young people aged 16 and 17 have engaged in at least 10 hours of employability activity weekly, each receiving a training allowance of up to £55 per week, totaling £38,931 to date this year.
- A Parental Employability Support Fund of £1,202,000 (up from £263,197.73 last year) has supported eligible parents with dependent children who are unemployed and experiencing poverty or who are experiencing in-work poverty. Seed funding of £35,756.80 has been invested so far this year, helping support the creation of ten businesses by eligible parents (up from £6,418.39 supporting the start-up of three businesses last year).
- Since the Scottish Attainment Challenge funding for youth work was made available in August 2021, a total of 893 activities have been delivered to 2,246 participants, a total of 22,626 learner hours.

We are proud of our achievements, but there is clearly more to be done.

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WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT OUR PRE AND POST-NATAL SERVICES?

What does the data published since March 2023 tell us?



Between 2002 and 2022, the 0 to 19 age group has seen the largest percentage decrease in births (-86.0%). The 40 and over age group has seen the largest percentage increase in births (+115.0%).

What is getting better?

There has been a notable reduction in premature births across SIMD 2 and 3. Levels in SIMD 1 remain highest and levels across SIMD 5 have risen.



Smoking during pregnancy has reduced from 13.01% (2018/19) to 12.06% (2020/2021) and is broadly in line with national averages. Poverty continues to be a factor although reductions are evident at SIMD 2 and 3.



Babies exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks has increased from 39.9% in 2020 to 40.87% in 2021. Levels are above the national average but continue to be impacted by poverty with variation at community level.



It is encouraging to see early reductions in premature births and in smoking during pregnancy across SIMD 2 and 3. There is now a need to look at how we can better support improvements in the smaller number of families most impacted by poverty (SIMD 1).

What has stayed the same?

In 2022, the most common age group of mothers in Aberdeen City was 30 to 34 (698 births), the same as in 2002. The least common age group of mothers in Aberdeen City was 0 to 19 (25 births), which is a change from the 40 and over age group in 2002.



The number of pre-birth children subject to child protection planning meetings remains consistent. This suggests that we are not yet providing adequate levels of community support to prevent risk.



The number of children (pre-birth and 0-4) on the child protection register remains consistent. This suggests that we are not yet fully mitigating risk for our youngest citizens.



There is clear evidence of a reduction in the number of younger mothers in the city. The number of pre-birth children subject to child protection planning meetings and the number of those aged 0-4 and on the child protection register remains consistent. This indicates that we don't have the level of support required to support some families at community level and that our approaches to offering support may require to be more adaptive within our model of Family Support.

What is worsening?

Exposure to second hand smoke at 6-8 weeks has increased from 7.3% in the 3 years ending 2021 to 7.56% in the 3 years ending 2022.



Maternal obesity increased from 21.04% in the three years ending 2021 to 22.55% in the three years ending 2022. Poverty continues to heavily impact levels of maternal obesity with those living in SIMD 1&2 having higher than average levels.



There has been a rise in the % of premature births from 8.07% in 2021 to 8.31 in 2022. Levels are in keeping with the national average. Reductions in the % are evident across SIMD 2 and 3.



The total fertility rate in Aberdeen City decreased from 1.11 % in 2021 to 1.04% in 2022.



There has been a slight drop in the % of babies born at a healthy birth weight from 85.5% in 2021 to 85.1% in 2022. This is slightly better than the national average.



In Aberdeen City, the standardised birth rate decreased from 7.2 per 1,000 population in 2021 to 7.0 per 1,000 population in 2022. In comparison, the rate in Scotland overall decreased from 8.7 to 8.6.



The reduction in fertility and associated decrease in birth rate is thought to be attributable to both environmental and social factors. Addressing environmental factors and focussing on the determinates of good health alongside Community Planning Partners will continue to be important. There may also be a need to think more explicitly about how the built environment can influence behaviours by continuing to focus on prevention, particularly around obesity levels which can dramatically impact longer term health outcomes for children and families. There are clear signs that action on obesity should be added to our Plan.

Recent improvements are evident across Quintiles 2 and 3. Although these gains are welcomed and thought partially attributable to the work of the Children's Services Board, there is a need to work differently to address the needs of families across SIMD 1. It could be reasonably concluded that the established 2023-26 Plan has had a limited impact on families living in Quintile 1 and that these families are proving harder to support within our current system. There is a need for partners to collectively identify those families so that we can more rigorously track progress, better understand the issues they face and work with them to support positive outcomes in a person centred and family led way.

So, what next?

The improvement projects outlined in the current Plan are still thought to be appropriate. In addition, it is proposed that the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund be used to secure a data analyst to support our identification and tracking of outcomes for those in SIMD 1 and consider how we could better support families to maximise outcomes.

There is also a need to consider how best to address obesity given how obesity impacts on long term health outcomes and add this work to our Plan.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT OUR UNDER 5s?

What does the data published since March 2023 tell us?



The ethnicity of our under 5s is more diverse now than in March 2023. The number of under 5s accessing health and education services has risen over the last year with considerable pressure being felt across health and education services.

What is getting better?

The percentage of funded ELC settings achieving good or better during inspection has risen from 82.4% in 2021/22 to 86.4% in 2022/23. Despite the improvement trend, local results remain 4% lower than the national average.



There has also been a 50% increase in the number of eligible 2s placed in ELC provision. Work with the DWP to align data sets is positively impacting uptake.



There has been an encouraging increase in the uptake of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in the city with 94.74% of our eligible population placed in 2022/23 compared to 91.22% in 2021/22.



The increase in uptake of ELC placements and gradual improvement in quality is welcomed. There is a need to continue with current approaches to address the variation in quality still seen across the city.

What has stayed the same?

Coverage of 27-30 month assessment and uptake of immunisations.



Children aged 0-4 remain the largest group on the child protection register.



School records suggest there has been a 1% rise in the % of P1 children recorded as having a speech disorder from 3.22% to 4.22%. However, a reduction in those recorded as having communication support needs from 2.62% to 1.75% in 2023.

Uptake of immunisations in some communities is significantly lower than the city average and there is a need to target those communities better. Health Visitors have worked hard to undertake assessments of children at 27-30 months and coverage is improving across the city. This fuller coverage is now highlighting the number of children who are not meeting developmental milestones. There is a need to look at how we could work together to support childhood development of the under 5s more fully at community level.

What is worsening?

Deaths in children (1-15 years) have risen from 12.2 per 100,000 in 2020 to 13.3 per 100,000 in 2021. This is lower than the national average



Recruiting Health Visitors is even more challenging now than a year ago. 6 less (41) Health Visitors are now in post compared to last year, this is 30 below complement.



Uptake of the 6 in 1 immunisation at 24 months is lowest in Tillydrone and George Street at 90%. Uptake in Ashgrove and Cummings Park is reducing. Similar patterns are evident with the MMR



There has been a drop in the percentage of children identified as meeting developmental milestones at the 27-30 month review from 97.1% in 2021 to 87.3% in 2022. However, this is a better than the national average of 82.1% and will have been impacted by more widespread assessments.



The current shortage of Health Visitors is impacting on work for this age group. Despite the considerable challenges, there is evidence of improvement in some key measures due to resources being used flexibly to address the recruitment challenge.

So, what next?

The improvement projects outlined in the current Plan are still thought to be appropriate, but the need to reflect on the needs of families living in different communities is again evident in this age group. There is therefore a need to consider how best to utilise community based staff to ensure that our approaches reflect the unique context of each community and take account of the increasingly complex and unpredictable circumstances our families face. Planned work to base Health Visitors within ELC provisions should progress as a first step to encouraging closer locality working.

There is a need to consider how we could better align the work of the Children's Services Board with Locality Plans in future planning cycles to ensure that the Children's Services Board benefits from the insights of community assets.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT OUR PRIMARY PUPILS?

What does the data published since March 2023 tell us?



There has been a rise in primary pupil numbers from 14,573 in September 2022 to 15,210 in September 2023 with far greater diversity now evident. In 2019/20, 503 learners within our schools were recorded as being disabled, this has now risen by 34% to 676. 3.76% of school pupils are recorded as having Autistic Spectrum Disorder, compared to 3.53% last year.

What is getting better?

School attendance in term 1 of 2023/24 is sitting at 94.8% (primary) compared to 94.33 in 2020/21. This is slightly better than national levels.



There has been a rise in the % of adults who are satisfied with local schools from 70.1% (2018-21) to 71.3% (19-22). Levels now look positive compared to other urban Local Authorities



The attainment gap between those living in areas of deprivation and their peers in literacy and numeracy has reduced. The position is now better than the family group average and in line with national average.



There has been a rise in the % of P1, 4 and 7 pupils achieving expected levels in literacy and numeracy . however there is variation with Tullos and Sunnybank having the lowest ACEL levels in the city. There is evidence however, that variation is reducing

The % of schools achieving good or better during inspection at the end of 22/23 was 78.1% compared to the baseline data of 68.75% in 19/20.



The proportion of LAC with more than one placement has reduced from 21.2% in 2021 to 18.8% in 2022. This is however above the family group and national average.



There has been a reduction in the % of children identified with communication and support needs from 4.39% in 2022 to 2.42% in 2023. The number of children with a speech and language disorder remains consistent however (4.44% in 2022 and 4.63% in 2023)



There is early evidence of some recovery from the pandemic with 82% of pupils in P6 and 7 reporting excellent or good health which is 2% higher than last year and better than the national average. However, levels of dysregulation remain high and are thought attributable to poorer levels of parental mental health resulting in part from the various societal shocks experienced over the last few years. The situation locally is similar to the situation reported through national research. The Children's Services Board will take a keen interest in the local arrangements being put in place to address the Cabinet Secretary's 5 point plan. Progress is being made in addressing the attainment gap, but this needs continued focus.

What has stayed the same?

Active travel to school has reduced from 60.7% in 2022 to 58.3% in 2023. Levels of active travel remain very high compared to other Health Board areas.



The percentage of primary 1 children with poor dental health remains largely unchanged. Around 30% of children continue to have poor dental health at the Primary 1 stage.



38% of children in our primary schools have an additional support need compared to 36.8% a year ago. This is thought to be largely consistent.



The drop in active travel, albeit disappointing, is thought to have more or less stayed the same as before the pandemic. Levels of active travel remain high compared to other Local Authorities.

This age group again highlights the considerable variation in patterns of behaviour and outcomes across communities which can be masked by looking at city wide data sets.

What is worsening?

There has been a drop in the proportion of Primary 1 children being of healthy weight from 83.19% in 2020 to just under 70% in 2021. This is slightly above the national average.



There has been a 2.2% increase in the number of children living in poverty (after housing costs) from 2021 to 2022. 1 in 5 children now live in poverty. The Local Authority sits above the family group average but below the national average.



The % of children with a Coordinated Support Plans and Child's Plan remains consistent. The percentage of those with Individual Education Plans has dropped from 9.88% to 8.21%.



There has been a slight drop in the number of children being cared for within their community from 88.9% in 2021 to 88.5% in 2022. This is above the family group average but below the national average.



The number of children aged 5 – 9 admitted to hospital with an unintentional injury has more than doubled since 2018/19.



The percentage of children entering Primary 1 with at least one developmental concern has increased from 2.5% in 2019/20 to 3.1% in 2021/22.



World events continue to impact children and families with more families experiencing poverty than before. 1 in 5 children across Aberdeen City are now experiencing poverty. The impact of the cost of living crisis is evident in the mental health of parents and carers and this is impacting on children and young people. Our continued focus on these areas, already outlined in the current Plan, will be important.

So, what next?

Planned work to increase alignment with adult services should be accelerated and a more adaptive approach to supporting children at community level should be considered. Obesity levels appear to be increasing and if not addressed, could impact negatively on health outcomes in the longer term. As outlined previously, there is a need to consider how best to address this.

There is a need to finalise and implement the planned evaluation framework detailed in the current Plan to help monitor the impact of the Tiered Intervention Framework as there continues to be evidence of rapid escalation from Tier 1 to 3. Consideration should be given to building community level data into this work given the variation in outcomes at community level.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT OUR SECONDARY AGED PUPILS?

What does the data published since March 2023 tell us?



There has been a rise in secondary pupils numbers from 10,430 in September 2022 to 10,977 in 2023. The pupil population has become increasingly diverse. Recent Scottish Census data identified that our city population has grown by 0.5% since 2011.

What is getting better?

Drug related hospital admissions (young people) have reduced from 115 per 100,000 in 2021 to 100 per 100,000 in 2022.



The employment rate for young people has increased from 42% in 2021 to nearer 51% in 2022.



The annual participation measure has increased from 91.2% in 2022 to 92.8% in 2023. This is still below the Family Group and National average.



There has been a drop in alcohol related hospital admissions for those aged 11-25 from 270 per 100,000 in 2021 to 255 per 100,000 in 2022. This is below the national average



There has been a rise in the % of all pupils gaining 5+ awards at Level 6 from 36% in 2021 to 39% in 2022. This bucked the reducing national trend. 4 schools sit above their VC, but 7 sit below.



There has been a rise in the % of all pupils gaining 5+ awards at Level 5 from 63% in 2021 to 70% in 2022. The improvement rate is faster than the national rate. 5 schools now sit above their VC, but 6 sit below.



There has been a rise in the overall average total tariff score from 866 in 2021 to 957 in 2022. This is slightly below national and well below the family group average.



There has been a rise in the % of pupils from the most deprived areas achieving 5+ awards at Level 5 from 43% in 2021 to 48% in 2022.



Although seeing a reduction in those who have reported self-harming, 4:10 young people who did not disclose their gender had reported self-harming at least once and the variation between the number of boys and girls reporting this, showed a greater number of girls.



There are encouraging signs in some health and education outcomes with a 4% increase in those who felt positive about their body image and nearly 11% more reporting good levels of physical activity compared to six months ago. 5% less children now report loneliness than 6 months ago.

Despite the gains, some groups of children continue to do less well than others with clear signs of less positive movement in those living in SIMD 1. This again, guides us to look at those living in SIMD 1 at a more granular level and maintain our focus on more vulnerable groups.

What has stayed the same?

42% of children in our secondary schools have an additional support need compared to 44% a year ago



A consistent % of referrals to SCRA are made as a result of care and protection concerns. This continues to be lower than the national average.



The overall average total tariff score for those living in SIMD 1 remains largely unchanged (566 to 2020/21 compared with 567 to 2021/22). Gains are evident in all other quintiles.



The % of young people with communication and language needs (1.26% in 2022 and 1.55% in 2023) and speech and communication disorder (2.41% in 2022 and 1.55% in 2023) remains consistent.



Requests for support as a result of poor emotional regulation, support for parents and mental health concerns remain highest within our request for assistance process.



We are still some way from the virtual comparator in terms of education outcomes and must maintain our focus in this area and work to address the variation from school to school. The number of children who are dysregulated and in need of additional support remains higher than pre-pandemic levels, this is in keeping with national research. Reported levels of sleep in young people continues to be an area of concern.

What has worsened?

There has been an increase in the % of referrals to SCRA due to offences (5.7% in 2021 to 7.6% in 2022. This is higher than the national average.



There has been a rise in 5 year death by suicide in 11-25 year olds rates from 6.68 per 100,000 in 2020 to 7.86 per 100,000 in 2021.



School leaver destinations have dropped slightly from 95.59% in 2021 to 93.82% in 2022. This is below both the family group and national average



Drop in the % of pupil from the most deprived areas achieving 5+awards at Level 6 from 17% in 2021 to 13% in 2022.



School attendance for term 1 of 2023/24 sat at 90.5% This is better than national levels however still of concern.



Pupils from P6 to S6 who did not disclose their gender were 6 times more likely to be negative about life as a whole and 5 times more likely to report poor health.



Those in the low family affluence group and those young people who did not disclose their gender, were more likely to report a range of negative outcomes across nearly all measures within the survey which is similar to the national picture.



205 learners reported self harming more than 10 times,. More children report feeling lonely locally than nationally Loneliness Nationally 15.6% -12.1% & ACC 29%-17%



The proportion of all S1-S6 pupils who express that they always or often feel confident has risen, with a current average of 53.7% for boys and 27.3% for girls, these gender based averaged measures represent an increase of just over six percentage points for boys and five percentage points for girls. Although there isn't a directly comparable national measure, national data suggests that our gender difference is more marked than the national average. Locally, the gap between boys and girls sits at 29% with the national sitting at 17%.

There is a need to consider the health led National Self Harm Plan when published to ensure that the Plan is implemented timeously.

The disparity in outcomes across communities is considerable. There is a need to rethink how we support some communities to better address the variation in outcomes.

So, what next?

There is a need to maintain our Plans around the senior phase curriculum and also continue to give close attention to personal and social education programmes to ensure that our young people know how to keep themselves safe, programmes may be influenced by the local plans to implement the National Self Harm Plan. Work to improve school attendance should continue.

The impact of family affluence on our young people is more marked than the national average. There is a need for us to think carefully about how best to support those living in SIMD 1 in order to address this.

The disparity in outcomes suggests that the wider family supports currently in place are not making a difference to some groups, triggering a need to think quite differently about how we work with and for families in need of our help and support.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CHILD POVERTY IN THE CITY?

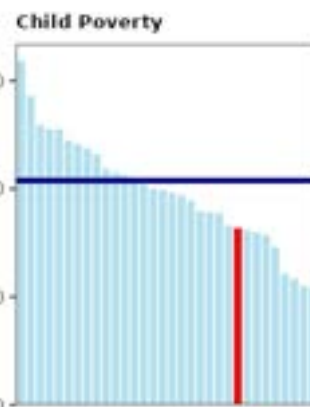
What does the data published since March 2023 tell us?



The cost of living crisis continues to impact on the resilience and mental health of families. Families are facing exceptionally difficult decisions on a daily basis and the impact of these challenging circumstances is evident in all datasets published over the last year. This clearly highlights how poverty is an overarching factor in outcomes for children and families.

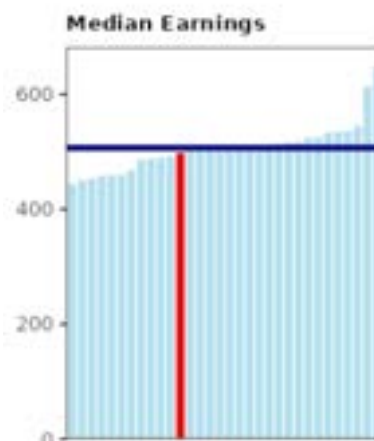
The number of children living in poverty

Official statistics detailing the exact number of children living in poverty across the city varies according to the methodology used. However, it is thought that there are 7,000 children living in households where the household income is below 60% of median income after housing costs (1 in every 5 children). This number has risen over recent years. Almost two thirds of children in low-income families are in working households. The Improvement Service Community Planning Tool shows that the Local Authority area currently sits 23 out of 32 Local Authorities for levels of child poverty which is below the national average.



The working age population

In the year from April 2022-March 2023, 24% of Aberdeen's working age population (over the age of 16) were economically inactive, up from 19% in the previous year. Of those who were economically inactive, 39.4% were students, 23.9% were long-term sick, 15.6% were looking after home/family and 8.1% were retired (prior to national retirement age). Of those who were of working age and not working, 24.7% wanted to be working and were actively seeking employment.



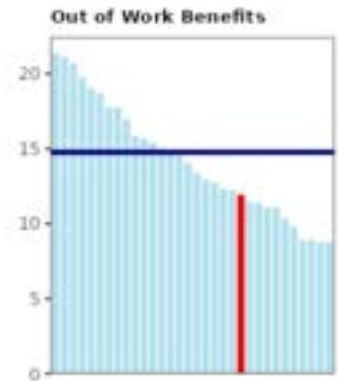
In the 2022 calendar year, there were an estimated 15,200 workless households in Aberdeen, a rise of 4,500 on 2021, to levels similar to the Scotland level of 18%. The Improvement Service Community Planning Tool shows that the Local Authority area currently sits 12 out of 32 Local Authorities for levels of Median Earnings which is in line with the national average.

Rise in homelessness

In 2022-23, there were 1,762 homelessness presentations to the council, an increase of 25% on the previous year. In March 2023, 399 households were in temporary accommodation (up from 264 in March 2022), 45 of these households had either pregnant women or children in them. It will be important for the Children's Services Board to remain closely aligned to work being undertaken to address homelessness.

Claimant count

Despite the rise in number in those thought to be living in poverty, the city level claimant count fell by 3.6% over the 6 months between March 2023 to November 2023 (from 5,020 to 4,840) 2023, this is 5% lower than in November 2022. This is the lowest number of claimants recorded in the past 3 years. However, the claimant count for young people aged 16-17 and 18-21 at November 2023 had both risen slightly from March 2023 (combined 460 to 480 claimants).



In November 2023, there were 1,530 Claimants in our priority localities, around the same as in March 2023 (1,510). This represents 31.7% of all claimants in the city, a marginal increase on the position at both March 2023 and November 2022.

The claimant count rate varies across the city by zone, from a low rate of 0.3% seen in West End North to a high of 6.5% seen in Tillydrone.

The Improvement Service Community Planning Tool shows that the Local Authority area currently sits 21 out of 32 Local Authorities for levels of Out of Work Benefits which is below the national average.

Spread of poverty across the city

Poverty is not spread equally across our city. The number of children living in relative low-income families, based on the End Child Poverty research, varies across the city by ward zones.

There is a high of 1,050 in Northfield/Mastrick, (30.4%), 719 in Torry/Ferryhill (24.0%) with Hilton/Woodside/Stockethill (25.5%) and Tillydrone/Seaton/Old Aberdeen sitting at around 650 children living in relative low-income families. Tillydrone/Seaton/Old Aberdeen has the city's highest proportion of children living in relative low-income families at 31.8%.

The George Street/Harbour ward has a relatively lower number of children in this category than these zones at 399 children but, despite falling out with the priority locality structure, levels closely match the % figure for Torry/Ferryhill. The proportion of all city claimants in George Street/Harbour is second only to Tillydrone at 5.3%.

The impact of this is seen across a range of outcome measures as shown in the following grid based on 2021/22 data from the Community Planning Outcome Tool. This disparity has been evidenced through the review of data by life stage outlined earlier in this Annual Report.

		Average Highest Attainment - 2020/21	Child Poverty (%) - 2021/22	Crime Rate, per 10,000 - 2021/22	Depopulation Index - 2021/22	Early Mortality, per 100,000 - 2021/22	Emergency Admissions, per 100,000 - 2021/22	Out of Work Benefits (%) - 2021/22	Participation Rate - 2021/22
Aberdeen City	Least deprived	6.1	3.9	717.8	91.8	250.3	18298.6	3.4	96.5
Aberdeen City	Most deprived	5.0	35.0	2057.2	101.6	787.2	29916.6	26.8	83.8
Scotland	Least deprived	6.1	6.0	519.3	94.2	243.6	18309.4	4.3	96.2
Scotland	Most deprived	5.1	37.3	1882.5	100.3	794.7	32122.0	31.4	87.2

Grant applications and Advice Services

The number of Best Start and Best Start Foods grant applications received from city residents as at September 2023 was 3,145, compared to 2,735 in the same period the prior year. This represents an increase in the proportion of all applications from 3% to 4% of Scotland level awards and could partially indicate that families are now better aware of supports available.

Over 2022/23, the city's Council funded Common Advice services offered client financial advice and support to 547 Young People, (0-24 years) representing 8.6% of all clients. This number is higher than in each of the three prior years but a smaller proportion of all clients as result of a pattern of growth in clients across all age groups.

Of those households, where information around compositions were provided, 1,247 comprised households with children (23.3% of all clients compared to 20% in the previous year) with 62.9% of these households consisting of lone parent households, a rise of over 3% on the previous year. This latter cohort represents 14.6% of all households recorded as clients of the Common Advice services and has risen by 3% since 2021/22.

Overall, in 2022/23 the number and proportions of clients in a household with children showed an increasing trend on the 2019/20 baseline with the growth in single parent family clients being the more significant influence. Source: Common Advice Performance Management Reporting Framework submissions.

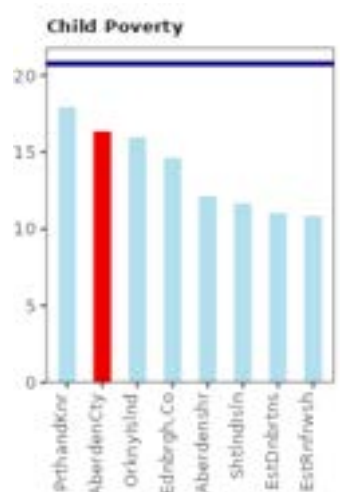
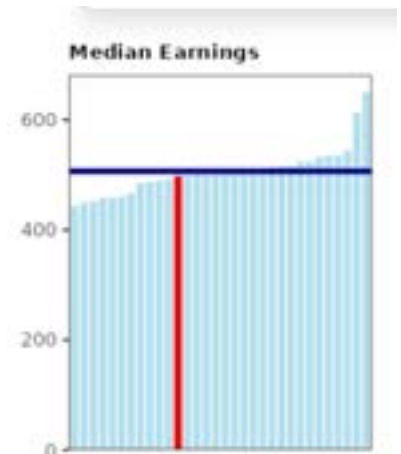
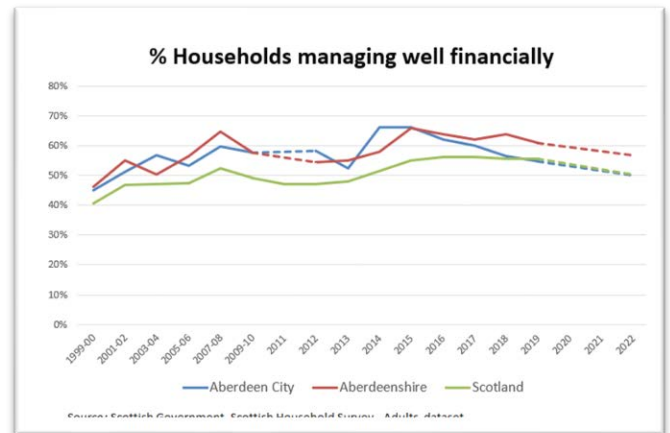
The Improvement Service Community Planning Tool shows that the Local Authority area currently sits 12 out of 32 Local Authorities for Median Earnings, more or less in line with the national average.

Benchmarking performance

Levels of child poverty in the city are slightly below the national average.

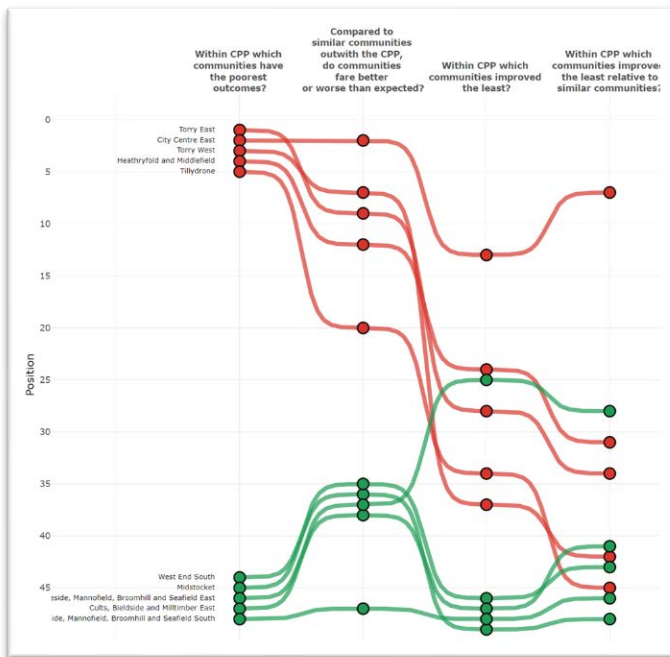
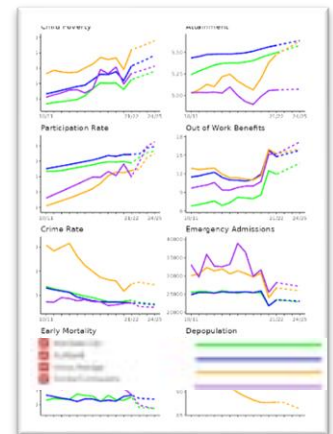
However, levels are relatively high when compared with our SIMD based comparators although progress has been made in closing the gap over the last year with our performance moving up one place compared to our family group.

A review of the Improvement Service Community Planning Outcomes Tool shows that 82% of our communities were performing better than expected as of 2021/22 which is 4% higher than the prior year.



Projections from the same Tool indicates that child poverty (before housing costs) will rise over the next 3 years to around 19%, (from the 2021/22 baseline of 16%) but this this will likely be at a rate below that of most comparators and the national pattern, which will retain the City's performance ranking in the upper third of Scottish Local Authorities.

The visual from the Improvement Service Community Planning Tool below shows how communities performed against their virtual comparators.



A detailed review of the Tool clearly evidences the disparity in outcomes from ward to ward.

Variation in circumstances and concerns by adult group

This disparity is equally clear from the responses to our recent Local Outcome Improvement Plan engagement which used a Place Standard tool to explore 14 themes about the physical and social elements of life in Aberdeen City in order to shape the refresh of our Local Outcome Improvement Plan. The Children's Services Board has a key role in delivering against the People Outcomes relating to children and their families.



It's really important that the Children's Services Board understand the needs of families given the influence of parental wellbeing on children and young people. As a result, the Board needs to consider the needs of families holistically as we develop our model of Family Support.

The whole population responses provide a clear picture of what matters to our residents. At first glance this would guide the Children's Services Board to conclude that there is a role only to continue to capture the lived experience of service users in the design of changed services.

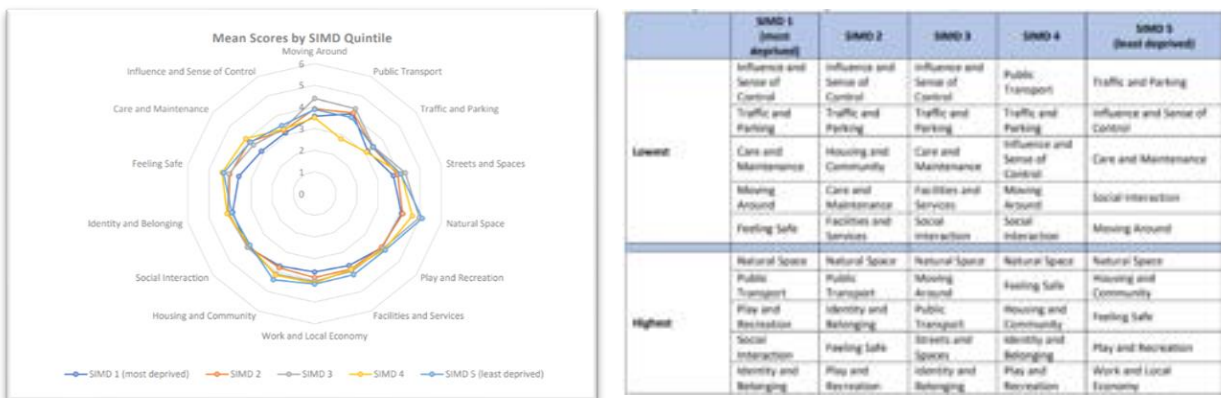
However, the responses to the engagement have been broken down in different ways to allow us to gain further insight into the needs of distinct groups.

- The **five highest** ranking themes were:
1. Natural space (4.7)
 2. Identity and belonging (4.1)
 3. Feeling safe (4.1)
 4. Play and recreation (4.1)
 5. Housing and community (4.0)
- The **five lowest** ranking themes were:
1. Influence and sense of control (3.3)
 2. Traffic and parking (3.4)
 3. Care and maintenance (3.6)
 4. Facilities and services (3.9)
 5. Work and Local Economy (3.9)

A review of the data by locality (North, South and Central) shows that there are differences being reported by our citizens depending upon which part of the city they reside in. As a result, there is variation in the themes ranked highest and lowest.



A review of the data by SIMD Quintile, highlights variation quite differently.



It is of particular concern that those living in SIMD 1 raise concerns about their sense of influence and control and also express concerns about feeling unsafe.

	SIMD 1 (n=43)		SIMD 2 (n=72)		SIMD 3 (n=47)		SIMD 4 (n=30)		SIMD 5 (n=65)		All (n=364)		
Column 1	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Base
Influence and Sense of Control	3.12	1	3.25	1	3.32	1	3.3	3	3.48	2	3.27	1	266

Scores around identify & belonging and social interaction in particular at SIMD 1, provide an insight into the sense of community evident across some communities with a higher proportion of citizens living in SIMD 1. The Children's Services Board needs to consider how to better capitalise on community to help support improving outcomes.

When responses from those living in Priority Areas is compared with the Locality data, we benefit from further insight. Scores from those living in Priority Areas were generally lower.

	Central		North		South	
	Theme	Mean	Theme	Mean	Theme	Mean
Lowest	Traffic and Parking	3.1	Influence and Sense of Control	3.3	Influence and Sense of Control	3.4
	Influence and Sense of Control	3.1	Traffic and Parking	3.6	Traffic and Parking	3.5
	Care and Maintenance	3.4	Facilities and Services	3.7	Care and Maintenance	3.6
	Work and Local Economy	3.7	Moving Around	3.8	Public Transport	3.9
	Moving Around	3.8	Public Transport	3.9	Streets and Spaces	4.0
Highest	Natural Space	4.6	Natural Space	4.9	Natural Space	4.7
	Play and Recreation	4.2	Identity and Belonging	4.2	Feeling Safe	4.3
	Identity and Belonging	4.1	Streets and Spaces	4.2	Work and Local Economy	4.2
	Social Interaction	4.1	Housing and Community	4.2	Moving Around	4.1
	Public Transport	4.0	Feeling Safe	4.1	Identity and Belonging	4.0

	Central PAs		North PAs		South PAs	
	Theme	Mean	Theme	Mean	Theme	Mean
Lowest	Care and Maintenance	2.9	Influence and Sense of Control	3.0	Influence and Sense of Control	3.1
	Traffic and Parking	3.1	Traffic and Parking	3.3	Traffic and Parking	3.2
	Influence and Sense of Control	3.1	Facilities and Services	3.4	Housing and Community	3.2
	Work and Local Economy	3.4	Housing and Community	3.4	Care and Maintenance	3.4
	Facilities and Services	3.6	Feeling Safe	3.5	Streets and Spaces	3.7
Highest	Natural Space	4.4	Natural Space	4.1	Natural Space	4.3
	Public Transport	4.3	Public Transport	4.0	Work and Local Economy	4.1
	Play and Recreation	4.1	Play and Recreation	4.0	Public Transport	4.0
	Social Interaction	4.0	Identity and Belonging	3.9	Play and Recreation	4.0
	Moving Around	3.9	Social Interaction	3.9	Feeling Safe	4.0

We can see that the feelings of being unsafe are most keenly felt in the North Priority Area.

A review of the data by age and ethnicity, shows considerable further variation.

	0-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+		
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Count
Influence and Sense of Control	3.3	5	3.3	5	3.3	5	3.6	5	3.2	5	3.4	5	206
Housing and Community	3.4	3	3.7	3	3.6	3	4.0	12	4.1	10	4.0	13	40
Traffic and Parking	3.5	2	3.5	3	3.1	7	3.9	2	3.9	2	3.5	3	296
Feeling Safe	3.6	1	3.6	1	3.6	10	3.7	6	4.1	12	4.4	11	203
Identity and Belonging	3.6	1	3.6	1	3.4	3	3.6	5	3.6	5	3.6	5	203
Care and Maintenance	3.6	1	3.6	1	3.4	3	3.6	5	3.6	5	3.6	5	203
Feeling Safe	3.6	1	3.6	1	3.6	10	3.7	7	3.7	7	3.6	10	41
Social Interaction	3.6	1	3.6	1	3.6	10	3.6	9	3.6	9	3.6	9	203
Play and Recreation	3.6	1	3.6	1	3.6	10	3.6	10	3.6	10	3.6	10	203
Streets and Spaces	4.0	1	4.0	1	3.8	11	3.8	10	3.8	10	3.8	10	40
Facilities and Services	4.0	1	4.0	1	3.7	8	3.8	10	3.9	9	4.0	7	39
Work and Local Economy	4.4	1	4.4	1	4.2	1	4.2	1	4.2	1	4.2	1	203
Moving Around	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	203
Natural Space	4.6	1	4.7	1	4.7	1	4.6	1	4.5	1	4.7	1	34
Public Transport	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	4.0	1	203



It's interesting that those under 24 also have concerns about their influence and control but have greater concerns about housing and community than other age groups. Influence and control is also flagged by looking at the mean scores by ethnicity. This highlights the critical importance of working with communities to empower and enable.

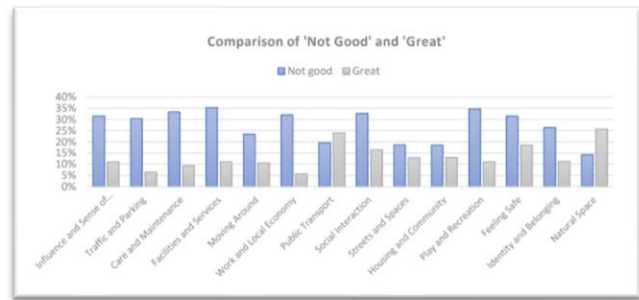
Having access to data that enables more granular analysis by group is invaluable and will enable the improved targeting of our work.

What do our young people tell us?






A similar survey for children and young people asked about the same 14 themes. The 106 children and young people who responded were asked if things were, 'Not Good and needs to be improved', were 'Okay' or 'Great, as good as it could be'.

The most common response for all themes was 'Okay' with at least half of all respondents choosing this option for all of the themes. Comparing other responses, for almost all of the themes a higher proportion of respondents choose 'Not Good' for each themes. The exceptions to this were Natural Space and Public Transport – these also had the highest proportion of respondents (25.7% and 23.9% respectively) who chose 'Great'.

The themes with the highest proportion of 'Not Good' responses were Facilities and Services (35.2%), Play and Recreation (34.7%) and Care and Maintenance (33.7%) which each had over a third of respondents choosing this option.



The summarised output of what children and young people said on the People themes is outlined below.

Theme	What is good now?	What would make it better?
 Facilities and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good shops (22.6%) • School (22.6%) • Doctors (12.3%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clubs (22.6%) • Doctors (20.8%) • School (16%)
 Feeling safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling safe during the day (38.7%) • Lighting (16%) • Play spaces (15.1%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less anti-social behaviour (34%) • Feeling safe at night (32.1%) • Brighter/more lighting (22.6%)
 Identity and belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food (18.9%) • The people (17.9%) • Local museums (14.2%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festivals (29.3%) • Music (16%) • Culture (15.1%)
 Social interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are child friendly spaces (30.2%) • Meeting friends (19.8%) • Cafes (17%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places to hang out (29.3%) • Child friendly spaces (24.5%) • Places to meet friends (23.6%)
 Play and recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play parks (29.3%) • Easy to find spaces (19.8%) • Making your own fun (19.8%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of activities (32.1%) • Sports areas (30.2%) • Organised fun stuff (27.4%)

It is thought that this feedback reinforces the legitimacy of the actions already outlined in the Children's Services Plan.

The feedback on work, the local economy and influence and control are also important as we continue to work with other LOIP Outcome Groups and consider how we ensure that children and young people have voice and influence.

What do datasets tell us about those most likely to experience poverty?

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, however work is underway to improve this. Additional funding has been secured from the national Child Poverty Fund to start aligning data across the Council and DWP and this should help provide a more holistic picture of the situation in future. The funding will allow improved development of baseline information across the actions under the three drivers of poverty described below, along with improved baselines and understanding of requirements to tackle poverty among those with protected characteristics, the six priority family groups and care experienced young people. NHS Grampian is also working on a Child Health dataset that includes specific indicators for child poverty aligned to the drivers and priority families.

The groups identified as being most at risk of poverty continue to face particular challenges locally:

Half of all children living in **single parent families** are experiencing poverty. In 2022/23 there were 646 (+46 on 2021/22) applications to the Scottish Welfare Fund managed by Aberdeen City Council, which were from single parent families. This was 13% of all applications, up by one percentage point on the previous year. These families, by far, represent the single largest group of applicants in the Child Poverty Priority category. In August 2023, the number of single parent family claimants aged under 25 in receipt of Housing Benefit has remained stable in comparison with March 2023, comprising 14 applicants, down from 22 in August 2022

Minority Ethnic Families: 63% of those who are in ethnic minority families are employed compared to 72% of those who are white in Aberdeen City. There is presently no consistently reliable data around the influences behind this differential at national or local levels.

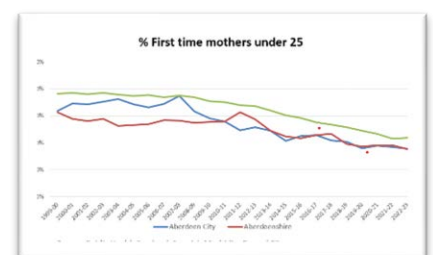
Disability: As of 30th September 2023, Aberdeen City Council had received 1,260 applications against the Child Disability Payment funding stream, in comparison with 610 applications at the same point in 2022. The number of payments made to families through the Child Winter Heating Assistance grants in 2022/23 was 670, a rise of 155 (+30%) on the previous year. This represented 5.2% of all Winter Heating awards.

Youngest child less than one year old: In August 2023, there were 492 households in Aberdeen City on Universal Credit with a child under 1, with more than half 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 132 households with 3 or more children who were in receipt of Housing Benefit in August 2023. This is a 28% increase from 103 in March 2023, and 102 in August 2022. There were 1,769 households with 3 or more children who were in receipt of Universal Credit in August 2023, substantially above the positions in both March 2023 and August 2022.

Younger mother: The number of first time mothers under 25 has dropped slightly.

There is a need to continue to think about how we collect and align data to ensure that we continue to build an understanding of the challenges facing our residents.



What is getting better?

According to Improvement Service data, 82% of our communities are performing better than could be expected compared to only 78% a year ago.



Levels of child poverty compared to other similar Council areas have improved by one place when comparing our performance to our family group.



In November 2023, the city level claimant count had fallen from 5,020 in March 2023 to 4,840 (- 3.6%) -5% lower than in November 2022. This is amongst the lowest number of claimants recorded in the past 3 years.



The number of Best Start and Best Start Foods grant applications received from city residents (as at September 2023) was 3,145, compared to 2,735 in the same period the prior year. This represents an increase in the proportion of all applications to this stream from 3% to 4% of Scotland level awards.



The new 'Infant Feeding in a Crisis' pathway is being delivered in full. All referrals have resulted in a voucher for feeding supplies, a full benefits check and a food pantry application if applicable.



It is really encouraging that 82% of our communities are performing better than could be expected based on outcomes in other similar communities across the country and that the percentage of those doing better than expected is increasing. However, this also means that 18% are not doing as well as they could be. This provides further evidence of the need to look at community data in a far more granular way.

Although the city has improved its relative Local Authority position against child poverty measures by one place, there is more to do.

What has stayed the same?

Young single parent families in receipt of housing benefits was unchanged between March and August 2023.



Levels of child poverty in the city are slightly below the national average but relatively high when compared with our SIMD based comparators. Progress has been made in closing the gap over the last year.



In November 2023, there were 1,530 Claimants in our priority localities, around the same as in in March 2023 (1,510). This represents 31.7% of all claimants in the city.



63% of those who are in ethnic minority families are employed compared to 72% of those who are white in Aberdeen City. There is presently no consistently reliable data around the influences behind this differential at national or local levels.

Although our overall breastfeeding figures are increasing, by the time of first health visitor visit 20% less mothers living in SIMD1 are continuing to breastfeed compared to mothers living in SIMD 5.

In August 2023, there were 492 households in Aberdeen City on Universal Credit with a child under 1, with more than half being lone parent families.



The lack of real time data makes determining changes over relatively short time periods challenging. It is hoped that a recent award of resource as part of the Child Poverty Fund will help improve the quality of real time data and that this will help the Children’s Services Board to identify live trends to support agile improvement work.

What is getting worse?

The trend data and projections around increasing relative child poverty for the city are negative



In the year from April 2022- March 2023, 24% of Aberdeen’s working age population (over the age of 16) were economically inactive, up from 19% in the previous year.



There has been a significant rise in the numbers of families with 3 or more children claiming Universal Credit



The claimant counts for young people aged 16-17 and 18-21 at November 2023 had both risen since March 2023, from a combined 460 to 480 claimants.



In 2022/23 there were 646 (+46 on 2021/22) applications to the Scottish Welfare Fund managed by Aberdeen City Council, which were from single parent families. This was 13% of all applications, up by one percentage point on the previous year.



As of 30th September 2023, Aberdeen City Council had received 1,260 applications against the Child Disability Payment funding stream, in comparison with 610 applications at the same point in 2022



Lengthy waiting lists for some child health services are negatively impacting on the health and wellbeing of children and families, and in some situations, the ability of parent’s to take up employment.



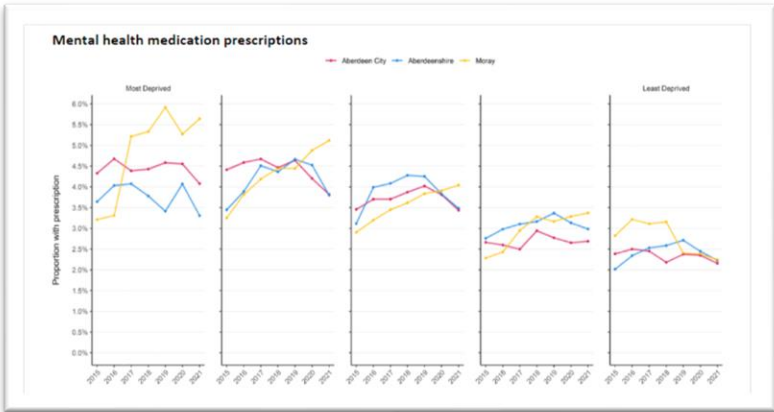
The data shows that poverty continues to impact on our families and that this is likely to continue. There is emerging evidence that families are increasingly accessing their entitlements and this is encouraging, but does highlight the number of those who need our help at this challenging time. There is a need to continue to carefully target those groups most likely to be impacted by poverty wherever possible and continue to increase our knowledge and support of them.

The recent engagement to inform the development of the LOIP has suggested that there is better awareness of, and access to Council Officers and elected Officials now. Citizens seek more opportunities to get involved in decision making and ways of knowing “where to raise my voice for my community”. Participation continues to be important.

The disparity in outcomes, largely determined by SIMD quintile is of concern. Despite some evidence of progress across SIMD 2 and 3, outcomes for those in SIMD 1 are by far the poorest as evident in this heat map showing the number of developmental concerns for children at aged

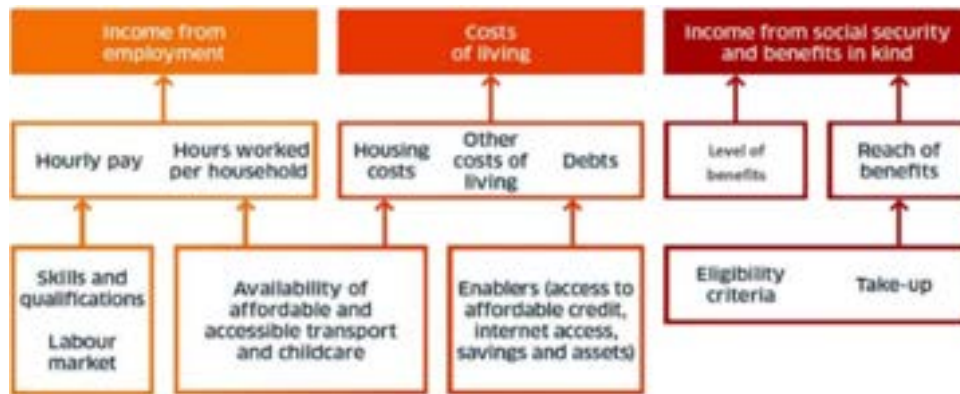
4/5 (the darker the colour the greater the level of concern). There is a risk that the gap between those living in SIMD 1 and their neighbours increases.

The direct link with poverty and mental health outcomes is clear as shown by the medication prescriptions by SIMD quintile and referrals for children and young people. There is a need for targeted work to address the needs of those living in SIMD 1, We have to accept that current arrangements are not realising improvement.



Best Start, Bright Futures

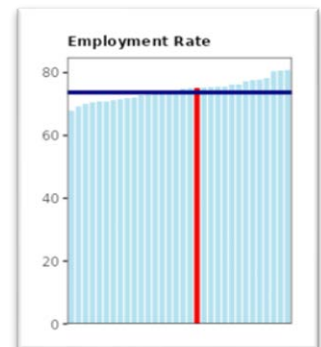
Best Start, Bright Futures tells us that the three drivers of poverty are income from employment, cost of living, and income from social security and benefits in kind. We know that impacting these drivers will positively impact levels of child poverty and so have structured our report under these three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



Income from employment

Ensuring that our young people and families gain the skills required to secure employment is central to our work. All of the actions outlined in the last Child Poverty Action Plan Report are well progressed with progress outlined below.

The employment rate across Aberdeen City rate currently sits slightly above the national average. Less citizens are employed in lower paid occupations compared to the national average.



Employment in 'lower paid' occupations (% of all in employment)

Aberdeen City	Aberdeenshire	Scotland
23%	19%	27%

Source : ONS Annual Population Survey, year to Jun 2023

ABZ Campus update

Work has continued to progress Phase 2 of ABZ Campus in order to ensure our young people have the skills required to secure employment in the longer term. Discussions have continued with delivery partners of Foundation Apprenticeships and existing courses to ensure the delivery of a wider range of courses.

An exciting partnership has commenced alongside Aberdeenshire Council for a series of *anytime* courses for young people outwith the confines of the column structure and school week. Delivery partners for a range of *anytime* courses are SRUC, University of Aberdeen, RGU and RGC Online.



Plans for a pilot employability experience for young people with additional support needs is also included in Phase 2 plans.

We remain ready to evaluate the impact of the 37 courses being offered as part of Phase 1 of ABZ Campus 23-24 to determine the impact of the approach on the young people registered.

Aberdeen Computing Collaborative

A digital event was held for 1000 teaching and support staff which included workshops from RGU and representation from Aberdeen University. The event had computing science inputs for Early Stages and Upper Stages Primary staff focused on growing interest in the subject. Esports has now been established at St Machar Academy and discussions are progressing to add Bucksburn Academy as a second Esports hub.



Discussions continue with ABZ Works team to review the Computing Science offer. RGC Online is being explored as a means to supporting more young people to secure Higher Computing within the ABZ Campus offer. Developing communications for parents/carers/young people to promote the opportunities in the sector and the range of pathways available will now be progressed.

National and local extra-curricular opportunities, with a Computing Science or Digital focus, continue to be shared with schools. A young person survey of uptake and attitudes to Computing Science more widely is in draft. A city-wide meeting of Computing Science staff is planned for February to identify opportunities for further collaboration on resource development and the identification of training needs to allow staff to support a broader curriculum.

ABZ Works update

Significant strides have been made by the Council's ABZWorks employability service, which continues to see rising numbers of referrals for employability support from a steadily widening pool of referral routes. We are increasingly receiving referrals for people with significant barriers to employment. The appointment of a Child Poverty Coordinator, designed to focus on employability, is currently in the recruitment process, with the successful candidate anticipated to be in post in early Spring.

A series of pilot projects has been developed by the ABZWorks keyworkers, delivering activities in regeneration areas for target groups identified by the Local Employability Partnership. Some of these pilots have now been mainstreamed and contracted out, while others continue to be delivered in-house with support from industry partners and training providers – this includes a project designed with and for care experienced young people, and Fit Next, which was created at short notice for school leavers without a positive destination when funding delays meant there was no contracted provision available.



The service ran Scotland's first jobs fair for refugees, displaced people, and asylum seekers, in

partnership with the Refugee Employer Network, attracting more than 500 job seekers. A [report](#) detailing the work undertaken to support the community, and detailing their broad skill sets and barriers to employment was published.

The inaugural ABZWorks Conference took place, paving the way for closer partnership working with agencies across the city, services gap analysis, areas of emerging need, and co-design of services.

A dynamic purchasing system for the procurement of employability services was co-designed with providers, launched and is now being well-used. All employability provision is being procured via the framework, which has attracted more providers to engage with us and provide a broader range of services to city residents at all stages of the pipeline. Our approach is being used as an example of best practice by the Scottish Government's Improvement Service.

We continue to see the impacts of the cost of living crisis on employability programme participants and provide funding to remove the financial barriers to participation in services and employment. More detail on individual projects is included below.

The ABZWorks team has secured several local and national awards in recognition of the quality of their work.

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. Referrals for employability support continue to rise.

Thirty-nine employability services contracts have been awarded in 2023/24, worth more than £650,000, providing a broad range of support and training opportunities across the city, and we anticipate offering more tendering opportunities when we receive grant funding for 2024/25. This is in addition to grant-funded activities such as Employer Recruitment Incentives and paid work experience schemes.

ABZWorks Development Grant

An ABZWorks Development Grant has been launched to support grass roots organisations, particularly those in the priority areas, to build their capacity to develop and deliver employability activities and build links with hard-to-reach groups. Up to £10,000 is available per organisation. Fourteen applications have been received in the first round.

The service is in the process of commissioning research into local barriers to parental employment/engagement with employability activities, with a particular focus on single parents, minority ethnic parents, and parents with a disability and/or a disabled child. Recommendations on how to address those barriers at an Aberdeen and community level will be provided as part of this work.

Work experience programmes

Paid work experience programmes with guaranteed interviews for those who complete have been established and 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 working ages in the health and social care sector).

Two newly launched schemes got underway in November 2023 – one with third sector employers for unemployed parents of dependent children, and another scheme in early learning and childcare settings, with a primary focus on parents. 23 paid work experience placements have been provided to date.

The team has also supported the creation of a training kitchen in HMP Grampian to support people to learn industry skills, gain accredited qualifications and secure employment on release with hospitality industry partner Greene King.

ABZWorks has created the Fit Next programme for school leavers without a positive destination, removing barriers to employability participation, building confidence, social circles, employability skills, introductions to training providers and employers, and work experience.

The education team, with support from the Wood Excelerate Programme and NHS Grampian, has supported the establishment of an in-school healthcare classroom at St Machar Academy. A year of collaborative planning has resulted in an inspirational space with industry standard equipment to empower young people and teachers to learn and teach through the lens of health, social and community care.

Employer Engagement

The Employer Recruitment Incentive scheme, which provides up to £6,000 to employers to offset the costs of taking on new members of staff, has been diversified to incentivise the recruitment of not only young people, but also eligible parents, refugees and displaced people. We anticipate an increase in the funding amount in the next financial year in line with the rise in the Real Living Wage.

A series of employer engagement sessions to promote inclusive employment in the city for key groups is underway. These aim to increase employer confidence and increase the number of opportunities for groups including parents, young people, displaced people and refugees, disabled people, and people with convictions.

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, 730 people have received employability support via ABZWorks and the number continues to rise.

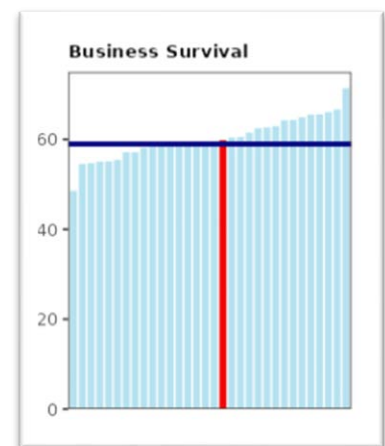
We continue to provide Aberdeen Gift Cards to employability programme participants to remove some of the financial barriers to employment. This money is spent locally, boosting the economy and supporting jobs, while equipping individuals with essentials for interviews and starting work, such as interview clothes, transport costs, hair cuts, etc. To date, £1,395 has been distributed via Aberdeen Gift Cards.

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. To date, £50,000 has been committed to parents via this grant, which continues to be paid. The Local Employability Partnership has identified parents and young people as key target groups for employability support. United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Funds (UKSPF) are being leveraged to provide a range of employability support to eligible individuals, including those who are economically inactive, this includes a series of test and learn pilots for a broad range of people, including parents with dependent children, young people, disabled people, people with long-term health conditions, and minority ethnic people aged 16+.

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. The ABZWorks seed fund, set up in November 2021 to support all those meeting the funding eligibility criteria to start a business by providing start-up monies, has supported 34 people to start their own business to date, with growing interest in the funding. ABZWorks has partnered with Business Gateway to deliver this activity, with business adviser and employability keyworker support in place for all entrepreneurs accessing the fund. We now have a dedicated Business Gateway Adviser to help increase the number of direct referrals. As a result of these improvements, there have been 104 referrals of individuals in receipt of universal credits who are considering 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.



ABZWorks has introduced a salary payment for eligible parents setting up their own business, paid at Real Living Wage rate for hours worked on their business, to support their progression and mitigate the risk of financial hardship as individuals build up their business.

We have partnered with the Scottish Childminding Association to provide seed funding to eligible city residents who wish to become registered childminders, removing the financial barriers which often prevent people from taking up this career opportunity.

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 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 2023/24 shows that our tailored employability support programmes have supported 59 care experienced young people this year alone, compared to 63 over the past three years combined. 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.

Aberdeen City Council's ABZWorks employability service secured the national SURF Removing Barriers to Employability Award in December for its work to support care experienced young people.

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.

A paid work experience scheme has been created to support employability participants, particularly parents, into early learning and childcare roles within the authority, with a guaranteed interview on completion.

The ABZ Pipeline will see the Council work with employers in the energy sector to strengthen educational links and help pupils learn about the industry, careers, and the various routes into them. It will create a programme of linked opportunities with multiple employers to establish a planned and targeted pipeline of activities across the secondary school phase.

This will introduce young people to a range of insider insights into the industry, support their understanding and career aspirations, link to the curriculum, and support education staff. This work, led by staff from the City Growth and Education services, will be replicated for other key sectors and will support pathway planning by increasing young people's understanding of the sectors, opportunities within them, and the routes in, including qualification and skills needs.

Sector specific training courses have been, and at the time of writing, are being commissioned to ensure Aberdeen has a skilled workforce. Commissioning activities are linked to a number of sectors including construction, renewables, early learning and childcare, health and social care, and digital.

Planning for the future

Phase 3 of the Scottish Government's No One Left Behind strategy will come into effect on 1 April 2024, placing an increasing focus on employability support for people with disabilities and long term health challenges, alongside those currently supported and parents experiencing poverty. This will result in a significant increase in the amount of employability support provided by the Council and contracted providers. Planning for that is ongoing, and a series of test and learn pilot projects are being commissioned meantime for delivery in the final quarter of 2023/24 ahead of the introduction of phase 3.

Of the 121 parents registered for support with ABZWorks since April 2023:

- 24 have secured employment, 13 of whom we know are being paid Real Living Wage, though we believe the actual number to be higher;
- Six have accessed seed funds to set up their own business and are now self-employed, with a further six in the business development stage.

The recent engagement work to help shape the refresh of the LOIP showed us that our citizens acknowledge that training opportunities, volunteering opportunities and availability of jobs was good. Suggestions for improvement included improving the type and range of job opportunities available, in particular through having “more jobs around the area [as] usually have to travel far just for a part time job” and by having “more decent jobs” and “less reliance on service industries such as nail bars, and betting shops.”

Improving employment support, especially locally, was stated, so too was increasing opportunities for those with a criminal record, or by providing “more help for people with disabilities” or providing “job clubs for young school leavers [with] help to do CV’s and apply for jobs.”

Increasing volunteering opportunities and also communication around volunteering opportunities were stated as other main suggestions of improvement. These suggestions will be considered as part of the LOIP refresh.

Scottish Attainment Challenge funding supporting pupil and family wellbeing.

For 2023-24, Strategic Equity funding of £638,079 has allowed the continued provision of youth workers, family learning workers and Financial Inclusion Team support to schools across the city.

With a clear remit for early intervention and targeting those children, young people and families most at risk of disengaging from education, this resource is helping to prevent escalation of need. Collaborating with school staff in a multi-agency approach, focus areas include; improving attendance, reducing exclusions, increasing engagement and raising attainment and achievement. Transition has been a significant focus and there are many examples of effective transition programmes to support primary-secondary transition, providing young people opportunities for social development through meeting up with peers from different schools while developing their skills in various activities and building confidence in working with new people.

The Family Learning Team works in partnership with schools, local community groups and other agencies. The primary focus is to engage with parents, carers and their children to deliver learning activities that positively impact the whole family, such as outdoor learning, cooking classes, parenting workshops and to foster and nurture positive attitudes to lifelong learning. Individual and targeted support can also be provided for support with behaviour, school attendance or additional support needs. The team has 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.

Families are signposted to the Financial Inclusion Team who can provide a range of confidential services including benefit checks, help to claim benefits or challenge decisions; provide debt management advice and speak to creditors on behalf of clients. Next steps around Scottish Attainment Challenge funding will be detailed in the Education National Improvement Framework Plan for 2024/25.

Youth Work achievements

Since the Scottish Attainment Challenge funding for youth work was made available in August 2021, a total of 893 activities have been delivered to 2,246 participants, a total of 22,626 learner hours. Most of the referrals are for one to one or small group work with a focus on improving confidence and resilience. Bespoke support for children in P7 making the transition to S1 is also part of the youth work team’s offer.

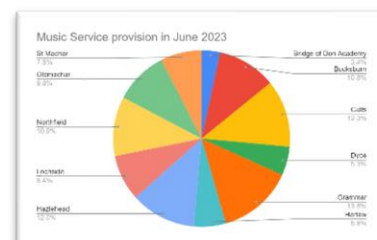
There has been an increase in the number of wider achievement awards being offered to children and young people, in particular the Hi5 award. Awareness raising of these awards has led some partners such as Children 1st and Craigelea also offering them to the young people they work with.

The CLD Youth Work team continues to change its approach to Youth Participation, moving away from more formal structures to a more inclusive and young people-friendly way of engagement. Aberdeen Youth Movement (AYM) has been invited to take part in a number of local and national events to offer a young person's perspective on issues that affect them and a schedule of meetings with Partnership Leaders is now underway.

AYM also acts as the Youth Activities Funding group and since 2022 they have assessed and approved over £91,000 of funding for activities that help young people develop skills, improve their confidence and access opportunities that can be life changing. Over financial year 2023/24, 1409 young people have benefitted from a Youth Activities Grant.

Removal of the costs of the school day

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 in 2020 varied from 1% (in areas of deprivation) to 25% (in more affluent areas). The range currently sits at between 5.3% and 13.8% and is more balanced across areas.



Data will continue to be closely monitored as we continue to address the equity agenda.

Request for Assistance

Work to develop a Family Support Model Following analysis of the effectiveness of Additional Support Need (ASN) and Outreach services, the education service began transforming the management and delivery models around 3 years ago. A generic request for assistance form was developed to function as a single access point for all 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 more 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. Version 2 of the Request for Assistance system will be launched soon.

Wider achievement in schools

Since the end of COVID-19 related restrictions in 2022, schools have very quickly reintroduced all aspects of wider achievement awards.

Day visits, which include all curricular and outdoor activities have returned to pre-pandemic levels, however there is now less reliance on privately booked coach travel due to increased costs. P7 residential continue to have to be planned and booked well in advance due to increased demand and the closure of some outdoor centres.

The numbers of pupils participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's award programme has seen an increase in numbers compared to pre pandemic levels, this is due to delayed completions still being undertaken along with increased interest from new groups including Orchard Brae, the Virtual School and Oldmachar Academy. The Aberdeen Open Award Centre which offers DofE opportunities to any young people in the City is now based at Northfield Academy. There are currently 1040 young people active in DofE across the city, this is nearly 50 more than last year..

Aberdeen City has the 3rd highest level of pupils in Scotland achieving a John Muir Award with 443 young people achieving the award with 83 of these being inclusion awards. Other awards being undertaken in the city are: Saltire awards, Dynamic youth awards, Hi5 awards and Youth achievement awards. An Automotive project based at Northfield Academy is now delivering Automotive courses to Northfield Academy pupils and their peers from across the city.

The Evolve system for the approval and management of educational visits, sports fixtures, and extracurricular activities is now established and has been running for 1 year. It has been praised by staff who prefer the web based digital system. Training and familiarisation sessions are regularly offered to new teachers along with the Youth Work Team who have also been introduced to the platform.

Within the first year of using Evolve there was:

- 2287 active users
- 3505 Visits recorded
- 57,367 participant days recorded.

Access to Health Services

Tackling child poverty is a priority within NHS Grampian Health Inequalities Action Plan. In addition to the integrated pathways described above, health services are mitigating the cost of attending appointments or hospital stays by designing a cash first approach to food and travel subsidies for patients and parents or carers. Families have told us that they have missed appointments because they cannot afford the cost of travel and being able to claim costs back after the effect is not a solution. There is a new work stream underway to poverty proof discharge processes. This will include routine financial enquiry and onward referral where appropriate.

So, what next?

Considerable work continues to increase income from employment with our ABZWorks team achieving national recognition for their work. This work will continue. The ABZWorks team will take account of the Regional Economic Strategy and associated Skills Plan when published and reflect next steps within the refreshed LOIP.

Costs of living

The wider challenges created by the current Cost of Living crisis around fuel costs and high levels of inflation create a greater risk of families falling into poverty. Levels of fuel poverty in the city are currently far higher than the national average and 10 out of 32 for fuel poverty which places the Local Authority area in the top third of all Local Authority areas.

Free period products

Access to Free period products has continued to improve with a focus on the promotion and availability of reusable products, as we begin to see the impact of the refreshed marketing campaign: *Free products for all. Period.*

This has included the pilot introduction of period pants of which 276 units have been provided, requested mainly by primary schools. In our academies, workshops by Unicorn Cup took place in November to develop understanding of menstruation and the use of reusable cups. Staff reported that 'The feedback from young people has been incredibly positive. They have really enjoyed taking home the products to try and very much enjoyed the delivery of the workshop.'

215 boxes of menstrual cups have also been provided since April 2023. When combined with re-usable pads and disposable products 1291 boxes have been provided to schools between April 2023 and November 2023.

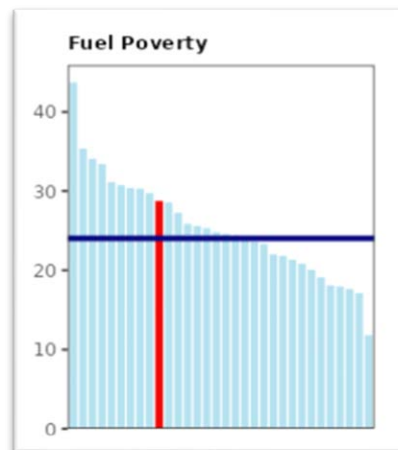
Aberdeen Gift Card

Households entitled to Council Tax Reduction (CTR) as of 21 June 2022, were awarded Scotland Loves Local Aberdeen Gift Card by the Council with £125 of credit on each card. Between 07/12/22 and 15/09/2023 total Aberdeen Gift Card spend was £1,385,492.39 (out of £1,788,250 of activated card) and 14,306 cards had been issued. Over 50,000 transactions have been made. After March 2024, any unspent funds from activated cards and inactivated ones will come back to ACC to be re-purposed.

Addressing food insecurity

The Fairer Aberdeen Fund supported the distribution of 554 tonnes of free food (the equivalent of 1.3M meals), and 1306 food bank users were referred to other support services. 3 Community Pantries and 21 Community Food Outlets were supported as a more dignified and sustainable alternative to emergency food provision. Updated data will be available from June 2024.

4651 people received money and income maximisation advice, with 1230 of them receiving a total financial gain of £2,323,811 the equivalent of £1,889 per person.



Community support

Community Flats are supported in Cummings Park, Tillydrone and Seaton, to support people with a range of issues. Over the last year they supported people with welfare reform issues and have helped to address isolation.

The Fairer Aberdeen Programme supported 444 parents and families with complex needs and 203 young people accessed 2,033 counselling sessions.

There were 590 contacts with older people to develop digital skills to help them keep in touch with their families and to access online services.

5,099 people saved with a credit union which provided £1.9m affordable loans, helping people avoid pay day loans and doorstep lenders.

369 households of older people and people with disabilities were supported with income maximisation and sourcing charitable funding, achieving a financial gain of over £440,000 and 489 households in priority areas received assistance with repairs, adaptations, and handyman services.

Access to free Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)

Increased access to ELC is positively impacting parents and carers. The expansion of ELC focused in part on making provision more accessible. The accessibility of services and broader range of delivery models has helped realise a significant increase in uptake and this increase has been sustained. Over 95% parents and carers who responded to the last Parent and Carer Consultation (June 2023) identified ELC as having a positive impact on their child's development. 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:

- 39.8% of respondents stated that they had more time for other responsibilities as a result of the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare.
- 29.2% of respondents indicated that they had more money/disposable income as a positive impact on their family.
- 24.1% stated improved wellbeing /respite as a positive impact from the expansion of ELC, with 18.9% of respondents finding they now have more time to themselves.
- 24.1% are now considering a return to work or study. 73% of parents and carers are aware that Aberdeen City Council offers Eligible 2's ELC placements.

The service continues to review demand for provision on an annual basis to ensure that the delivery models are designed around the needs of children and families.

The Scottish Government are currently undertaking some pilots to determine how best to further roll out School Age Childcare. The Authority has recently reported to Education and Children's Services Committee on the National Delivery Framework for School Age Childcare and remains well positioned to react positively to when more detailed delivery plans are developed in 2025/26. This will set out what a targeted School Age Childcare offer will look like for families within communities and providing a clear timescale for delivery.

In preparation for this, the Local Authority has managed to secure additional funding from Scottish Government to support preparations for the expansion.

The purpose of the Inspiring School Age Childcare Spaces (ISACS) Fund is to improve indoor and outdoor spaces in school estates for the purposes of supporting provision of School Age Childcare. Aberdeen City Council submitted four project funding proposals to Scottish Government / Scottish Futures Fund in May 2023, in relation to this Programme. We are delighted to confirm the projects listed below were considered to have met all the qualifying criteria at the time the assessment workshop took place and have been identified by Ministers to be included as part of ISACS Programme.

Project Name:	Maximum award approved:
Cornhill School Community Wing	£100,000
Orchard Brae School	£56,420
Kirkhill Primary School	£59,431
Muirfield Primary School	£93,610
Total Funding Awarded	£309,461

Fairer Aberdeen

Over 2022/23 the Fairer Aberdeen Programme funded 36 initiatives designed to tackle poverty and a total of 44,228 people have benefitted. The reach of the funding is wide with projects funded to support the development of pathways into work, family support, money advice and affordable loans and early intervention programmes designed to address gender based violence.

The Fairer Aberdeen Programme supported 739 volunteers, providing 144,869 hours of volunteering time, with a value of £2.2m. 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.

There is now a need to ensure that the totality of offers available to families is more clearly mapped and aligned to ensure that we maximise the impact of all available resource.

Provision of free breakfast clubs

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.

Provision of IT

Children have access to IT provision, through the investments made during lock-down and subsequently, and we are now entering a new phase of transformation. Partnering with Microsoft to deploy services and devices for children across the city, investing in connectivity infrastructure for schools and supporting parents to gain greater insight into their child's learning. This deployment of devices and services has begun with two test of change schools, Woodside Primary School and St Machar Academy, with additional schools being on-boarded from August 2024 to September 2025.

This investment will ensure that almost all children and young people from P4 – S6 continue to have access to a digital device. 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.

Improvement Service data shows that 97.8% of all city properties can now access superfast broadband, up from 95.6% in 2022/23.

Warm Spaces

Warm Spaces have continued across the city, with a mix of Council premises and community and third sector organisations providing support.

There are 41 venues across community centres, libraries, churches, and public spaces. Support provided through Warm Spaces includes a range of activities and opportunities, 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 warm space activities such as reading newspapers, sustainable crafting, yoga, reading corners and board games. From a community perspective each Warm Space developed its own unique offer. Examples of this have been free warm drinks, spaces to read newspapers, enjoy games or participate in community centre programmes.



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 nationally and locally including through schools in order to increase awareness 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, by early November this figure has increased to 29,621.

Emergency formula

The Best Start in Life Group has led work to ensure that appropriate infant formula is available for new mothers. This saw the Group work in collaboration with CFINE and Abernecessities to develop a formula/'cash first' approach.

The Infant Feeding in a Crisis pathway is currently being tested, and has already begun to see referrals to CFine through the Family Nurse Partnership, full support being given to those who have been referred. The project continues to work with providers and families to raise better awareness of the offer.

The project enhances the already established Early Years Financial Inclusion pathway. Both pathways have been well received by Midwives, Health Visitors, the Family Nurse Partnership and Allied Health Professionals. The Financial Inclusion pathway is a universal pathway that asks and offers all women and families if they require financial support

Food vouchers for holiday periods

Vouchers have been distributed to families who are eligible due to low income during holiday periods. The voucher, with a value of £25 for each two week period, continues to be welcomed.

Summer Holidays, 2023 – 4925 learners

Autumn Holiday, 2023 – 5154 learners

Winter Holiday, 2023 – 5153 learners

Best Start Food Grant

The number of Best Start and Best Start Foods grant applications received from city residents as at September 2023 was 3,145, compared to 2,735 in the same period the prior year. This represents an increase in the proportion of all applications from 3% to 4% of Scotland level awards and could partially indicate that families are now better aware of supports available.

School Clothing Grants

As of November 2023, 4500 free school clothing grants have been approved over the year. This equates to grants for 3008 Primary pupils and 1,498 secondary pupils and constitutes an increase of over 1100 grants being awarded compared to the last reporting period.

Access to Out of School Care (SAC)

549 parents and carers responded to the 2023 consultation on School Age Childcare in the city. Responses were gleaned from all 11 of the Aberdeen City's ASGs from parents and carers accessing School Age Childcare through all available services. Local Authority and private providers, both registered and unregistered.

The consultation findings demonstrate that 43% of all respondents who currently access School Age Childcare do so to support the working day with only 3% to enable them to attend College or University. 10% of all respondents use School Age Childcare to enable their children to play and/or socialise with other children, with only 1 (0.18%) respondent sighting respite as reason to access childcare.

The majority, 36% of all respondents currently require the services of an After School Club, with 22.8% requiring a Breakfast Club term time. Of those respondents accessing term time care, 16% required both a Breakfast and After School provision. There was also an increase from 2021 of 8% to our 2021 of service users accessing childcare for In-service days during 2023.

Various registered and unregistered holiday childcare services are currently available across the city during the Spring, Summer and Autumn school holidays with 37.89% of respondents requiring care during all three holiday periods. Interestingly there was 10% more respondent's children attended an unregistered Sports/Activity Camp compared to those accessing a

registered Holiday Club. A fifth of respondents of all respondents (20.03%) accessed both registered Holiday Clubs and unregistered Sports/Activity Camps. 10.93% of respondents accessed the Spring/Summer/Autumn 'In the City' programme 2023 with 25% of those respondents accessing a mix of registered, unregistered and In The City programme services. Evidence suggests that many parents and carers are currently accessing a mixed model of child care during the holidays to meet their needs.

While we have good coverage of SAC in Aberdeen there is still a demand for more places. Therefore it is important that we work with our partners to continually assess supply and demand across the city, and when and where possible either expand on existing provisions and/or create new services. As SAC is a paid for service, it is important that any new services are viable and sustainable. Expansion also has to take account of space available and the maximum number of registered places according to Care Inspectorate registration.

With almost a quarter of respondents (24%) saying they will require School Age Childcare for their preschool children currently attending an ELC nursery and/or childminder it is important that we also look ahead and consider future coverage. Therefore we must continue to facilitate communication between parents, carers currently accessing ELC Nursery provisions and childminders and all SAC providers regarding future supply and demand.

Affordability continues to be a concern for many families with almost 17% saying they do not access SAC due to cost. We are also increasingly aware that cost can be an ongoing concern for many families who are currently in work but facing cost of living challenges. 46% of families saying they were not aware of any available financial support and only 28% of respondents currently receiving support it is essential that this information is made more readily available. We will work with the Financial Inclusion Team and all SAC providers to ensure that all parents and carers are made aware of what financial support is potentially available to assist with the costs of SAC. We will also link with the Scottish Out of School Care Network (SOSCN) to ensure that all information shared is current and in line with their of their existing drive to promote potentially available childcare financial support and benefits.

In order to respond positively to the findings of this survey, the Early Years team will now:

- establish a focus group with our School Age Childcare partners to help develop and inform the refresh of the Aberdeen City School Age Childcare Policy;
- engage and communicate with parents, and carers whose children are currently attending ELC nursery and childminder settings to monitor future projections of potential supply and demand. At this time we will also communicate the importance of planning ahead with regards to wrap around care once children transition to primary school;
- continue to promote the availability of potential financial support and benefits available to assist in the cost of childcare; and
- develop a more detailed understanding of our own SAC services we will continue to consult and engage with Aberdeen City Council service users directly to ensure that we are continuing to meet their needs within our services.

So, what next?

There is considerable work being undertaken in this area and this will continue in line with current plans. The education service remains ready to progress an expansion of out of school care in line with national policy when known.

Income from social security and benefits in kind

Money Advisors in schools

The Council has attached Money Advisors to schools to help support families within their own communities through 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. The reduction in gains made as a result of attaching Money Advisors to schools suggests that more families are now making use of the On-line calculator or accessing the Financial Inclusion Service through alternative routes. This should be considered carefully as the use of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding is considered for 2024/25.

Over the last year the 2 Money Advisors who are attached to the Financial Inclusion Services have helped families achieve:

- Financial Gains of £273,159.16
- Assisted/Assisting 56 households with debt issues.
- Helping with total debts of £256,688.75
- 108 households were given full benefit checks.
- Assisted 39 households to claim benefits.
- Assisting 8 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 - £360,894.71
- Assisted/assisting 120 household with debt issues
- Helping with debts of £908,660.99
- 207 households given full benefit checks.
- Assisted 38 households to claim benefits.
- Assisted 6 households to challenge being turned down for benefits.

Data from the online benefits calculator shows that 894 families have used the online benefit calculator. Of the completed calculation, 679 families had £194,046.60** per week of new benefits identified.

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

Maximising the update of benefits

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 have been distributing the Support for Families booklet which gives information on entitlement at different life stages of children (Early Years, Primary School, Secondary School and staying on at School) which commenced in 2021 and is updated each year. We continue to monitor 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

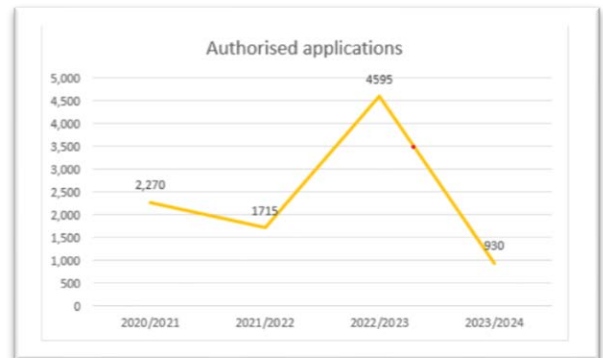
emergency food.

In addition, support is being provided through the Lone Parent support fund to help lone parents with the costs if transitioning to employment. 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.

Scottish Child Payment

The Scottish Child Payment was fully rolled out to all children aged under 16 from the 14 Nov 2022. Data up to 30 September 2023 shows that since its' introduction in February 2021, there have been 11,885 applications made, with 9,510 applications approved.

This new benefit has provided an additional £14,745,270 of new money into Aberdeen City for families.



Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund

The Council applied for funding from Scottish Government and was successful in a bid to work with a preferred partner organisation to create a dashboard which will allow Aberdeen City Council to identify families who would benefit financially from targeted pro-active engagement, for vulnerable families in crisis, or those at risk of falling into crisis. This would enable the Council to do targeted prevention work rather than reacting to people who contact us. The dashboard is created by bringing together indicators of poverty from data held by Aberdeen City Council, The Department for Works Pension and other publicly available data.

By combining data sources, we will be able to identify levels of financial exclusion and risk at an individual and household level, allowing us to follow up on those experiencing childhood poverty of the following priority families.

- Minority ethnic families
- Lone parent families
- Families with a disabled person
- Families with three or more children
- Families with children under one
- Families with mothers aged 25 or under

Family Wellbeing Fund

The Family Wellbeing Fund approach was developed by the Financial Inclusion Team (FIT) to support families affected by the DWP two child limit, through the development of a support plan linked to topics such as money advice, fuel payments and employability. The plan was to provide 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, with the aim being to support 100 families by March 2023 with a cost of £25,000.

While the overall number of families affected in Aberdeen is known to be around 1200, engaging with them has proved to be very difficult. Work has been undertaken with key agencies supporting families to try and increase referrals, with a session with providers taking place on 20 June 2023 involving Citizen's Advice, Homestart, Children 1st, CFINE advice team and ACC Children's and Families service. While there was recognition of the value of the approach due to low level of uptake it was agreed that this funding would change to provide fuel vouchers to continue the provision due to likely demand due to the cost-of-living crisis.

Based on data up to 31 Dec 2023, 979 households have received fuel vouchers to the value of £9953.

Free school meals

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 is expected to be extended to P6 and P7, within the lifetime of the current parliament.

While there have been increases at schools in priority neighbourhoods, increases have been seen across schools in the city, including those in areas outwith priority neighbourhoods.

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 72.3% and 56.5% 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 outwith the main school building and provide 'grab and go' food provision, allowing pupils to be outwith school to meet their friends but still uptake their free school meal entitlement. The installation of the pod is expected in early 2024, coinciding with other works taking place in the school playground including external dining facilities. Learning from this trial will be used to determine next steps.

Data taken from the annual Healthy Living Survey saw free school meal uptake in Primary Schools rise from 69.6% in 2022 to 72.3% in 2023. Uptake in Secondary Schools also rose from 47.7% in 2022, to 56.5% in 2023.

Update of Early Learning and Childcare for Eligible 2s

183 Eligible 2 year old children were placed in ELC in 2022/23, representing approximately 31.66% of the eligible population. The introduction of a new Data Pipeline Project with the DWP will help increase this percentage through better targeting of those who are eligible for school session 2023/24. The team continue to work to increase uptake further.

In the City Programmes

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 continues to engage with the widest demographics, providing free opportunities for both priority families and those who do not identify as part of a priority group to take part. The programme targets 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 have taken the form of short, family, half-day and full-day sessions.



Since summer 2021, the programmes have provided more than 49,000 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 Summer 2023 programme was 9.6 out of 10. This rating was consistent with the previous programme.

On-going funding of the programme will be considered as part of the Council budget setting process.

So, what next?

In addition to the work already in place and being progressed through the Children’s Services Plan, the Council and its Community Planning Partners remain committed to using all available tools to enable young people and families to access financial support and the benefits for which they are eligible. This includes the development of intelligence led insights from the Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund project detailed above. The Childrens Services Board will collaborate with Community Planning Aberdeen’s Anti-Poverty Outcome Improvement Group to prioritise use cases from this insight.

Having delivered significant improvement in benefits uptake, Community Planning Aberdeen have reset targets for the city to increase this by a further 10% by 2025.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROMISE



Central to the work of the Children’s Services Board is delivery of The Promise.

The Children’s Services Board reviewed progress in delivering Plan 21-24 in October 2023. The [evaluation](#) highlighted that good progress is being made in a number of areas but that the partnership is not on track to fully deliver on all areas of Plan 21-24. This position is reflected nationally.

This draft evaluation framework has been developed to help us measure our progress towards delivery of an effective Family Support model aligned to the Promise. It is anticipated that this framework will have to be revisited when the next Promise Plan and associated evaluation framework is published in June 2024. The final evaluation framework will be used to monitor the impact of our Family Support Model on a yearly basis and over time. Readers should note that in looking at trend data, quite different groups of children and young people are often being compared and these differences need to be taken into consideration.

5 year trend data (where available) has been aligned to the actions in Plan 21-24 that can be measured locally, the RAG rating reflects the evaluated position outlined in our October evaluation.

Plan 21-24 action	RAG rating	5 year trend
Priority 1 – A Good Childhood		
Support		<p>Increasing trend in the no. of Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) engaging in Active Schools activity.</p> <p>Increasing trend in the no. of CEYP accessing free leisure from 294 in 2019 to 647 in 2024 (the number includes adult members who enable engagement)</p> <p>Decreasing trend in the percentage of young people who started treatment in CAMHS within 18 weeks of referral from 93% in 2018 to 46% in 2023</p> <p>Increasing trend in the no. of families accessing financial support from 295 in 2018 to 1040 in 2022/23</p> <p>Stable trend in the no. of children and young people supported universally by the Educational Psychology (EP) Service (407 over 2022/23)</p>

		<p>Increasing trend in the no. of children and young people who were supported through specialist Educational Psychology involvement or assessment throughout the year (206 in 2022/23).</p> <p>Stable trend in the no. children and young people looked after in residential care from 10% (51) in 2018/19 to 12% (67) in 2022/23.</p>
A right to education		<p>Improving trend in reducing levels of unauthorised school absence from 6.93% in 2017/18 to 4.35% in 2021/2022 for all Looked After Children and Young People.</p> <p>Stable trend in the attendance rates of Looked After Children and Young People from 86.91% in 2017/2018 to 86.59% in 2021/22.</p> <p>Improving trend in reducing the exclusion rates of Looked After Children and Young People from 174 temporary exclusions in 2017/2018 to 55 in 2021/22.</p> <p>Stable trend in the attainment of Looked After Children and Young People in Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) (combined P1,4 and 7).</p> <p>Improving trend in the % of Looked After Children and Young People achieving Early Level Numeracy by the end of P1 from 61.54% in 2017/18 to 77.27% in 2021/22.</p> <p>Improving trend in the % of Looked After Children and Young People achieving First Level Numeracy by the end of P4 from 30% in 2017/18 to 50% in 2021/22.</p> <p>Stable trend in the % of Looked After Children and Young People achieving Second Level Numeracy by the end of P7 from 33.33% in 2017/18 to 33.33% in 2021/22.</p> <p>Stable trend in the % of Looked After Children and Young People achieving Third Level or better Numeracy by the end of S3 from 56.25% in 2017/18 to 52.63% in 2021/22.</p> <p>Improving trend in the % of Looked After Children with 1 or more qualification at SCQF Level 3 from 81.82% in 2018/2019 to 88.24% in 2021/2022.</p> <p>Stable trend in the % of Looked After Children with 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 4 from 72.73% in 2018/2019 to 70.59% in 2021/2022.</p> <p>Decreasing trend in the % of Looked After Children achieving a literacy qualification at Level 4 from 72.73% in 2018/2019 to 64.71% in 2021/2022.</p>

Increasing gap between % of Looked After Children leavers and the local authority average attaining a Level 4 qualification in literacy from 19.4% in 2018/2019 and 29.44% in 2021/2022.

Increasing gap between % of Looked After Children leavers and the local authority average attaining a Level 4 qualification in numeracy from 20.26% in 2018/2019 to 36.75% in 2021/2022.

Decreasing trend in the % of Looked After Children achieving a literacy qualification at Level 5 from 36.36% in 2018/2019 to 17.65% in 2021/2022.

Decreasing trend in the % of Looked After Children with 1 or more qualification at SCQF Level 5 or better from 40.91% in 2018/2019 to 29.41% in 2021/2022.

Decreasing trend in the % of Percentage of Looked After Children with 1 or more qualification at SCQF Level 6 or better from 18.18% in 2018/2019 to 11.76% in 2021/2022.

Decreasing trend in the % of Looked After Children with 1 or more qualification at SCQF Level 7 or better from 4.55% in 2018/2019 to 0% in 2021/2022.

Decreasing trend in the average tariff points achieved by Looked After Children and **increasing gap** between those who have experienced care and their peers.

Stable trend in the % of school leavers who were Looked After away from home in positive initial destinations from 81.82% in 2018/2019 to 80% in 2021/22.

Decreasing trend in the % of school leavers who were Looked After at home in positive initial destinations from 63.64% in 2018/19 to 57.14% in 2021/2022.

Increasing trend in the % of Looked After Children and Young People considered for a Coordinated Support Plan from 3% in 2019 to 49% in 2023 in the city.

Increasing trend in the staying on rates of those who are cared for compared to their peers for S4, S5 and S6

S4/S5 Staying on Rates		
	2016/17	2022/23
All	83.34%	87.02%
All Looked After	44.8%	62.5%

		S5/S6 Staying on Rates			
			2016/17		2022/23
		All	65.54%		62.43%
		All Looked After	14.3%		30%
Relationships		<p>We will commence annual reporting of the no. of children who were not placed with their brothers and sisters at the point of placement start date</p> <p>Decreasing trend in the no. of children placed with ACC Foster Carers from 15% (81) in 2018/19, to 14% (73) in 2022/23.</p>			
Brothers and sisters		<p>87% (467) of looked after children and young people are placed with siblings (2023 new measure)</p> <p>13% of looked after children and young people are separated from a sibling (2023 new measure)</p> <p>Stable trend in the no. of foster carers who take sibling placements</p> <p>Improving trend in the no. of Kinship Carers receiving multi-agency support</p>			
Youth justice		<p>Decreasing trend in the no. and % of young people in secure accommodation due to criminality (2023: 1/<1%)</p> <p>Increasing trend in the no. and % of complex young people in secure accommodation due to SCRA decisions</p> <p>Improving trend in the no. of offences linked to young people in local children's homes (nil over reporting period)</p> <p>Improving trend in the % of young people charged with an offence</p>			
Advocacy		<p>Increasing trend in the % of CEYP accessing independent advocacy</p> <p>Increasing trend in the no. of children and young people accessing Young Person's Rights Service who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care experienced (Jun 2023: 14) Involved in child protection processes (Jun 2023, Legal Status = Promotion of welfare of children in need: 4) 			
Moving on		<p>Improving trend in the no. of CEYP working with a mentor from 0 in 2019 to 52 meeting mentors (MCR) and 4 supported by the Pathways Co-Ordinator (MCR) in Jan 2024.</p> <p>Consistently high trend in the no. of care leavers with a pathway plan from 100% in 2018/19 to 100% in 2021/22.</p> <p>Increasing trend in the no. of young people in continuing care</p>			

		<p>placements from 16 in 2018/19 to 31 in 2022/23.</p> <p>Stable trend in the provision of pathway plans. 92% of all young people eligible for a pathway plan have one (2023)</p> <p>Decreasing trend in the no. of youth homelessness applications from care leavers (0 in 2023)</p> <p>Increasing trend in the no. of young people not paying Council Tax up to 26 years due to Council decisions</p>
Physical intervention		<p>Reducing trend in the no. of restraints used in local children’s homes (1 in 2023)</p> <p>Reducing trend in the no. of restraints used in education</p> <p>CSW will implement guidance on recording of the use of restraint for all CEYP placed in out of authority placements and other community settings in 2024.</p>
Priority 2 – Whole Family Support		
Family Support		<p>Stable trend in the no. of care experienced 2–5-year-olds attending ELC:</p> <p>2020/21 - 74 (31 – 3-5s and 49 Eligible 2’s) 2021/22 - 70 (25 – 3-5s and 45 Eligible 2’s) 2022/23 - 42 (19 – 3-5s and 29 Eligible 2’s) 2023/24 - 26 (19 – 3-5s and 6 Eligible 2’s to date – January 2024)</p> <p>Stable trend in the no. of care experienced parents applying for Eligible 2’s ELC place for their child(ren):</p> <p>2021/22 - 2 2022/23 - 4 2023/24 - 2</p> <p>Stable trend in the no. of % of care experienced parents engaging with the Family Nurse Partnership</p> <p>Improving trend in the no. of CEYP living with Foster Carers on continuing care arrangement from 8 in 2018 to 24 in 2023.</p> <p>Stable trend in the no. of families accessing the Fit Like Family Wellbeing Service (585 referrals in 2022 of these 335 (57%) new families accessed support; 599 in 2023 of these 378 (63%) new families accessed support.</p> <p>Stable trend in the number of families who identified that their circumstances/risks had improved as a result of support provided by Includem - 15 in 2022, 12 in 2023.</p>

		<p>Increasing trend in the number of kinship care breakdowns from 4 in 2018/19 to 8 in 2022/23</p> <p>Increasing trend in the No. of kinship carers accessing multi-agency support.</p> <p>Stable trend in the recruitment of new foster carers with a steady average of around 10 per year (in 2023 12 new foster carers were approved from 6 households).</p> <p>Stable trend in the no. of kinship care assessments undertaken, the average for the preceding three years is 22 kinship assessments per year.</p> <p>Increasing trend in the no of families supported through the Links Hub. In Year 1 of Links Hub opening, 2022/23, 33 families were identified as in need of intensive support, and 45 families are currently being supported in Year 2, 2023/24. Issues include poverty, domestic violence and alcohol and drug misuse.</p>
Peer and community support		<p>Increasing trend in the no. of families being support by Community Learning</p> <p>Increasing trend in the no. of families the Family Learning Team are engaging with from 236 in 2017/19 to 621 in 2022/23.</p> <p>Increasing trend in the impact of Family Learning. In 2018/2019 88% of respondents reported an improvement in confidence and 90% improvement in skills & knowledge. In 2022/2023 91% of respondents reported an improvement in confidence and 98% an improvement in knowledge & skills.</p> <p>Stable trend in the no. of families being supported by Barnardo's young carers service. (2022 - 144 young people/123 families; 2023 152 young people/131 families).</p> <p>The average length of engagement with the Young Carers Service is stable at 2-3 years.</p> <p>444 parents and families with complex needs were supported by organisations accessing grants from the Fairer Aberdeen Fund. 70% of families agreed risk had been reduced and 4 families no longer required Social Work support.</p>
Service integration		<p>Evidence from multi-agency thematic audits undertaken highlight a positive and stable trend. In 2022 63% of cases audited were evaluated as good or better in 2023 this was 80%. (Not directly comparable due to audit sample, focus and questions.)</p> <p>Increasing trend in the no. of shared services delivered (7 on-going collaborations with Children's Social Work)</p>

Family therapies		<p>Stable trend in the length of engagement with the Fit Like Family Wellbeing Service: less than 6 months 24%; 6-12 months 28%; 12-18months 19% and 18+ months 18%.</p> <p>Stable trend in those moving on from the Fit Like Service. In 2023 of the 113 families who moved on from the Fit Like Wellbeing Service 76% were supported by universal services; 12% were supported by CSW and 11% were supported by CAMHS.</p> <p>Stable trend in the no. of families accessing support from Includem. In 2022 Includem engaged with 42 young people, in 2023 this was 45.</p> <p>Stable trend in the average length of engagement Includem had with young people. 49 weeks in 2022, 43 weeks in 2023.</p>
Priority 3 – Supporting the Workforce		
Workforce values		Increasing trend in the % of the children’s workforce, chief officers, elected members and all corporate parents who complete Corporate Parenting training aligned to The Promise
Trauma informed		Increasing trend in the % of children’s workforce has undertaken trauma awareness training (100% for ACC), 80% of frontline children’s social work practitioners have completed the 4 TURAS Trauma Skills modules
On-going relationships		There are no local policies which prevent on-going relationships
Workforce support		Increasing availability of staff wellbeing supports.
Priority 4 - Planning		
Planning		<p>A reducing trend in the % of care experienced children with 3 or more placements from 6% in 2017/18 to 5% in 2021/22</p> <p>A reducing trend in the % of care experienced children with more than 1 placement in the past year from 21.7% in 2017/18 to 18.8% in 2021/22.</p>
Investment		<p>An increasing trend in the number of households experiencing poverty (1 in 5 children now live in poverty)</p> <p>An increasing trend in the number of families supported to claim all benefit entitlements</p>
Information sharing		<p>A stable trend in the number of IRDs held from 417 in 2018/19 to 350 in 2021/22.</p> <p>A declining trend in the % of IRD leading to Child Protection Planning Meetings from 64% in 2018/19 to 24% in 2022/23</p>

		Evidence from multi-agency thematic audits undertaken highlight a positive and stable trend in relation to information sharing to protect children from harm. In 2022 80% of cases audited were evaluated as good or better in 2023 this was 75%. (Not directly comparable due to audit sample and focus.)
Priority 5 – Building Capacity		
Legislation		
Children’s Hearing System		
Inspection and regulation		
Policy coherence		Improved alignment of national policy (local arrangements)
Data mapping and collection		Improved access to data through D365
Governance structures		Sound local governance arrangements

The evaluation framework will be revisited when the second Promise Plan is published. Thereafter data trends will be reported annually through this Annual Report.

Whole Family Wellbeing Funding

[The Whole Family Wellbeing Funding \(WFWF\)](#) is a £500 million investment over the current Scottish Parliament (2022 to 2026). As part of Element 1, £32 million has been provided in each of the financial years 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024 to support Children’s Services Planning Partnerships across Scotland to scale up and drive the delivery of whole family support services in their areas and build capacity for transformational change.

In Aberdeen City we have invested our WFWF in a variety of areas to support our children, young people and their families to improve our holistic whole family wellbeing offer, including:

Scaling up Youth and Family Support

Scaling up our investment in Youth Workers, Family Learning and Financial Inclusion attached to schools to ensure that children, young people and families can access support more readily.

Request for Assistance

Developing the second version of our Request for Assistance system in order to create a single pathway for families to access support services.

Co-Located Multidisciplinary Teams

Piloting co-located multidisciplinary teams in Northfield and Lochside Academies to ensure more effective and holistic planning for the children and families most in need of our support.

Supporting Kinship Carers

Building the capacity of kinship carers to enable them to feel better supported and have their own needs recognised more effectively.

Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM)

Rolling out SCIM in order to ensure that every child who has experienced abuse or neglect has access to a [Bairn's Hoose](#) model of support including access to a trauma recovery service.

Place2Be

Supporting the development the Place2Be project, focussing on the mental health of children under the age of 10.

Parent Support – Children with Disabilities

Improving the peer and community support available for children with disabilities within Aberdeen City.

This Annual report, and current discussions around the resourcing of our Bairn's Hoose, are helping to inform our use of the fund.

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES BOARD

What do we need to change in the second year of the Plan?



The working arrangements of the Children's Services Board

The Children's Services Board has invested time in considering how best to track progress against our ambitious plan. This has led to the implementation of an agreed tracker to help improve transparent tracking of progress. Taking this approach is helping to highlight emerging risks and issues. This greater visibility is enabling the Board to take swifter action when required. These changes are helping to build a culture of collective responsibility and candour amongst Board members.

In addition to providing leadership to our Sub Groups, the Children's Services Board has collaborated to evaluate progress on a number of key policies. This has included evaluating our approach to the development of our Plan to ensure that we are well prepared to undertake the next wholesale review in 2026, development of our [Child Poverty Action Report](#) in June 2023 and our evaluation of progress towards delivery of [Plan 21-24](#) in October 2023. Our discipline of on-going evaluation on key policies is helping improve our collective understanding of the challenges facing our children and families and helping us take a more holistic and agile approach. As we move forward, all of our annual reports will be built into the Children's Services Plan Annual Report so that the connections across different policies are fully taken into account.

The quality of our evaluation is improving. The finalisation of a robust evaluation framework aligned to The Promise will help us assess the strength of all three tiers of our Tiered Intervention Framework and help us facilitate the shift of resources towards preventative and early intervention. The framework will be finalised when the second national Promise Plan and associated evaluation framework are published in 2024. We continue to benefit from close collaboration with our local Health Determinates Research Collaborative (HDRC) and have commissioned a long term study on the impact of expanded ELC provision to inform next steps in our developing model of Family Support. The HDRC have also committed to working in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh to help us evaluate the impact of our local Bairn's Hoose.

The Board has benefited from closer working with the Child Protection Committee (CPC) this year and now works in collaboration to deliver shared audits and quality assurance activity. This has seen the Board review the effectiveness of arrangements to support children and young people who have experienced harmful sexual behaviour and to review the circumstances which trigger a referral to services under the category of physical abuse. The Board also collaborated with the CPC to plan delivery of our Bairns Hoose as part of a national pathfinder. We look forward to working with the national Bairns Hoose team over the coming year as the capital works get underway and the team starts to be established.

A refreshed Request for Assistance (RfA) process has been developed and will soon be delivered to help us monitor demand and the impact of services in real time. This second version of the system will enable us to look at how effectively different interventions support the mitigation of risk and help inform our future commissioning.

As well as commissioning Children 1st to deliver a Bairns Hoose Trauma Recovery Service aligned to our Fit Like Hubs, we have recommissioned Family Support Services that fully embed the 10 principles of Family Support outlined in The Promise. We hope that our Bairns Hoose will provide opportunities to work regionally and with the Island Local Authorities.

We recognise that there is more to do to improve the quality of data collection, matching and processing to enable more accurate and timely analysis of needs by group and at community level. A recent successful bid to the Child Poverty Action fund is helping us move this work forward further.

Those represented on the Board continue to support a high proportion of displaced children and young people including those fleeing conflict and unaccompanied asylum seeking children. After Glasgow, the city welcomes the highest proportion of displaced people and services continue to respond with agility although this has placed considerable pressure on local services. Mitigating the risk to service provision will require our on-going attention.

The Board successfully implemented updated GIRFEC Operational Guidance over the reporting period. Unfortunately there was no appetite to develop a more regional approach to support colleagues working across the health board. Work is ongoing to secure greater alignment between GIRFEC and GIRFE for those who have a disability but this work requires to be accelerated. Revisions have been proposed to our agreed Child's Planning format based on feedback from children and young people and this feedback will be retained as we await an updated national position.

Over the course of the year, the impact of poverty on children and families has become more evident. The Children's Services Board has agreed content for a child poverty training course. SHMU has been commissioned to develop the training film by using local voices and case studies. Taking this approach will ensure that our workforce access consistent messaging and understanding of the issues facing the families we collectively serve.

Considerable time has been invested by our Sub groups in the development of Improvement Project Charters with examples of on-going work shown in the appendices. Taking this approach has supported new groups of staff from across the Community Planning Partnership to join forces on shared projects aligned with our Plan. The progress of each charter is routinely reported to the Community Planning Aberdeen Board. A total of 34 Improvement Projects have been agreed and all are now making good progress.

Best Start in life Group Projects

The focus this year has been on supporting infants and their families in a number of key areas of early health, including working with staff throughout the partnership to help build their confidence in recognising early signs of neglect and poverty to ensure we can support the needs of those children and their families at the earliest possible opportunity. As a result, the Group has worked closely with partners such as Women's Aid and Alcohol and Drugs Action to offer opportunities to support families who may otherwise have been referred to Children's Social Work.

Over the course of the year we have been working to expand our Peep offer by establishing a number of new groups including at Tullos, Muirfield and Greyhope among others and have also worked with Childsmile, ELC settings and Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership to promote whole family dental health support at these sessions. Links with local dental practices have been strengthened to further promote dental health to children and families.

The Group has made significant progress in establishing a 'Cash First' approach to offering financial support to those who need it as well as improved emergency access to infant formula in collaboration with Cfine and Abernecessities. This is showing important signs of success to date with all those referred currently receiving full support. Further details of this work can be found in the case studies in the appendices

Mental Health and Wellbeing Group Projects

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Collaborative Subgroup have focused this year on developing a number of projects tackling various aspects of support for Children and Young People.

The Group is working to reduce demand on CAMHS by improving the way we refer to the service. This has involved raising awareness among staff across the partnership of the various tier 2 supports available as well as working to expand the Tier 2 offer of support. We now plan to refine the referral process to make sure that children and young people can be referred to the right service and so that once they have, they can receive that service as soon as possible.

The group continues to prioritise the mental health and health care needs of Care Experienced young people and are working to make sure that 100% of children who leave care receive mental health support within 4 weeks of being referred.

In our communities, particularly in our priority areas, we are working with our children and young people to make them feel safe in their communities and we are now seeing an increase in confidence reported by young people. This work is on-going.

Corporate Parenting Sub Group

The Corporate Parenting Subgroup continues to lead our focus on supporting our Care Experienced Children, Young People and their Families. Driven through our Aberdeen City Corporate Parenting Plan and providing a leading role in ensuring our Partnership Keeps the Promise. The improvement projects being led by the Group reflect this focus.

The Group are working to maximise the number of our eligible Care Experienced young people receiving multiagency/throughcare support, and linking to the related project from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Collaborative, ensuring that all Care Leavers are offered a comprehensive health needs assessment.

In to 2023 we have seen a 6% rise in the number of young people receiving multiagency/throughcare support with good indications that this has further increased into 2024. We have significant success in supporting our Kinship Carers. Our programme of support has expanded significantly, with a 900% increase in the number of partners offering supports and we have doubled the number of carers we now support. Further information can be found in the case studies below.

Working upstream we also have projects focussing on supporting Care Experienced young people to be confident parents and providing improved holistic whole family support to reduce the number of children entering the care system.

The Group are considering how best to implement the recommendations for Corporate Parents from the Secure Care Pathways report:

- A clear plan for the provision of consistent mental and emotional health support for young people in and on the edges of secure care
- Health boards should lead work with other corporate parents to ensure that young people receive consistent support to address emotional distress including self-harm and suicide risks
- Work with community-based services and secure care providers to ensure the suitable provision of substance misuse support for young people in and on the edges of secure care
- Ensure that young people who have left secure care don't experience a drop off in support and that all relevant multi-agency partners are involved in the planning and delivery of support at this stage

Attainment and Transitions to Adulthood Sub Group

This subgroup ensures that we take a partnership approach to supporting our children and young people to have the best possible educational experience and improve post school opportunities into further/higher education, employment and training.

This year we have worked to expand our curriculum offer through the delivery of ABZ Campus which made a further 37 courses available to our young people. We have responded positively to future growth sectors, such as digital, by increasing the number of pupils undertaking digital and technology courses. A similar approach has been taken to volume sectors, such as healthcare, with increased opportunities for young people to secure a qualification. On-going work on ABZ campus has increased the rate of those completing National Progression Awards/Foundation Apprenticeships and HNC courses. More information can be found in the appendices.

The group works closely with colleagues in the ASN/Disabilities and Corporate Parenting Subgroups to support our more vulnerable children and young people to achieve. For instance introducing and embedding a Pathways Advocate into each secondary school to support those who are care experienced and creating a consistent template for monitoring, tracking and supporting care experienced or vulnerable young people.

The Group are in the process of testing a training tool to support staff to recognise and feel confident when responding to signs of harm in our children, young people and their families.

Youth Justice Sub Group

The Youth Justice Subgroup supports those young people experiencing or at risk of entering the justice system. The Group are keenly aware that this cohort of young people will have a number of needs and may have been impacted upon by adverse childhood experiences. As a result, improvement projects take a trauma informed approach.

This year the group has been working closely with partners to provide comprehensive trauma training, with a view to destigmatising relationships between young people and key agencies such as Police and Children Social Work.

Another key focus has been early work to establish youth clubs and working in communities to reduce instances of Anti-Social behaviour. As of December 2023 there has been a 50% reduction in recorded instances of ASB.

The number of Looked After and Accommodated Children cautioned and charged with an offence has now reduced to 0. We are now seeking to expand this success to the wider care experienced cohort as well as other young people at risk of entering the justice system by supporting our police and community services to take a more trauma informed approach to cautioning and charging young people; expanding opportunity to divert them from prosecution and ensuring that their community support needs can be met.

Additional Support needs and disabilities Sub Group

The ASN & Disabilities Subgroup projects reflect our need to give the best possible opportunities for our young people with additional support needs and disabilities to achieve positive outcomes.

A number of partnership improvement projects have been progressed to provide community, peer and educational support for this cohort in order to help ensure that children and young people with ASN remain in full time education and are well supported when transitioning into post school education employment and training.

This year we have successfully piloted a Neurodevelopmental Pathway model aimed at increasing the number of families of children with a neurodevelopmental concern or awaiting diagnosis accessing support prior to diagnosis. The pilot has shown a promising increase in the number of families accessing support, and we are now looking to expand this offer.

We have also been successfully supporting our young carers, We have increased the total number of registered young carers accessing support by 14% since April 2023 from 116 -135, more information about this particular project can be found in our case studies section below.

This Group is currently without a formal Chair and work is on-going to address this.

What next for the Children's Services Board?

Reviewing our progress has confirmed the suitability of the Children's Services Plan 2023-2026. As a result, we propose to continue to deliver on our agreed Plan for 2023-26 but to also invest our time and energy in some additional areas:

- Develop further our use of data to be able to access more granular data at community/group level to enable a more bespoke response based on community need. There will be a need for this work to be closely aligned to Locality Plans as we move forwards. Time will also be invested in more fully understanding and tracking the outcomes for those living in SIMD1.

- Linked to the first, is the need to review how services engage with our most vulnerable in SIMD1 given the clear evidence that current arrangements are not realising improved outcomes. Taking an approach that promotes human rights and is family led will be important.
- There is a need to look at how to prevent childhood obesity through a coordinated preventative strategy that is not limited to children
- Respond positively to the Statutory Guidance on the UNCRC when published.
- Implement the recommendations for Corporate Parents from the Secure Care Pathways report:
 - A clear plan for the provision of consistent mental and emotional health support for young people in and on the edges of secure care
 - Health boards should lead work with other corporate parents to ensure that young people receive consistent support to address emotional distress including self-harm and suicide risks
 - Work with community-based services and secure care providers to ensure the suitable provision of substance misuse support for young people in and on the edges of secure care
 - Ensure that young people who have left secure care don't experience a drop off in support and that all relevant multi-agency partners are involved in the planning and delivery of support at this stage

What are we trying to achieve?

To create a universal Early Years Financial Inclusion Pathway (EYFIP) to prevent pregnant women and families with children under 5 years falling into financial crisis

And to create a targeted Infant Feeding in a Crisis Pathway (IFCP) to ensure that mothers and families with children aged under 5 years at risk of food insecurity, have access to first stage formula and income maximisation support

How are we doing this?

We are testing the pathway with priority neighbourhoods health professionals and CFINE initially with the potential to expand throughout other charity food providers.

- 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
- 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

What have we achieved?

Working in partnership with CFine & their SAFE team to support families, through our **Early Years Financial Inclusion Pathway we have:**

- Developed a universal pathway that asks all pregnant women and families if they require financial health checks.
- Ensured a feedback loop to the HCPs from the Service Provider are supporting the family

And for the **Infant Feeding in a Crisis Pathway we have:**

- Built on a pathway being tested in Aberdeenshire, developing an Aberdeen City specific IFC Pathway.
- We have created a multiagency team to work on the pathway and test the Cash-First Approach
- IFCP training has been provided to Aberdeen City based Family Nurses. Who began testing the pathway in November

What impact have we had?

The project is still in its early stages of development but our early testing has already begun to see referrals to CFine through our testing with the Family Nurse Partnership, **full support being given to those who have been referred**

What do we plan to do next?

- We will continue to meet regularly as a multi-agency working group to monitor both pathways, continuing to collect data and feedback on the referral process and number of families that have benefited
- We will continue to test the IFCP for four months with Family Nurse Partnership
- In early 2024 we will expand IFCP to Health Visitors
- We intend to further expand this to Midwifery services by Spring/summer 2024
- We will continue ongoing awareness raising/training on the pathways with relevant staff. To ensure both staff and families potentially in need of support are better aware of the offer

Appendix 2. Supporting Our Kinship Carers: Improving our Partnership Offer

What are we trying to achieve?

To ensure that we can provide holistic family support tailored to the needs of our Kinship Carers we aim to increase the number of partners supporting kinship carers by 100%. Conscious that their diversity of need cannot be provided by social work alone, this will help both expand the offer and number of Kinship Carers that can be supported.

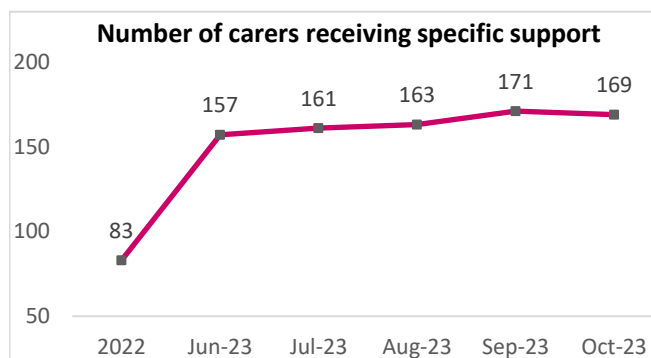
How are we doing this?

Through our multi agency project we have:

- Established a number of information events for Kinship Carers. Inviting carers and our Partners to connect and provide details of services and supports available to them.
- Developed a comprehensive directory of supports for those seeking to refer Kinship Carers. Our most current guidance can be found [here](#)
- Improved and expanded knowledge of our referral processes
- Employing a Community Development Worker to support and promote kinship support within Family Learning, Fit Like Hubs and wider agencies pertinent to kinship family support.

What have we achieved?

- To date the project has achieved a **900%** increase in the number of partners supporting Kinship Carers.
- We have **more than doubled** the number of Kinship Carers receiving specific support an 89% from **83- 169** supported



We have formalised links now made with a number of key support agencies including:

- CAHMS;
- Family Learning;
- Kinship Bletcher;
- Fit Like Hubs;
- Families Outside;
- Be-friend A Child;
- Grec;
- Financial Inclusion Team;
- Housing Team;
- Adoption Team.

What impact have we had?

Feedback from our Kinship Carers and Partners has been very positive. They have highlighted a number of areas where they feel the project has made a key difference including:

The increased support and links with different agencies

The improved communication about changes affecting them

The opportunity to capture the positive momentum

The improved recognition of role of Kinship Carers among partners

Increased participation from partners in the provision of services and supports



What do we plan to do next?

We will review our support directory to ensure that we have clear referral pathways highlighted

Continue to link with partners to extend our offer

Planning further engagement events for Kinship Carers

Appendix 3. Breadth of Courses: Expanding our Curricular Offer

What are we trying to achieve?

To increase by 10% the rate of completion of National Progression Awards (NPA)/Foundation Apprenticeships (FA)/Higher National Certificate (HNC) courses available to young people across the city by 2026, by increasing the breaths and quality of courses available to our Senior Phase Secondary pupils.

How are we doing this?

- By developing and 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.
- Creating 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.
- Developing 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.

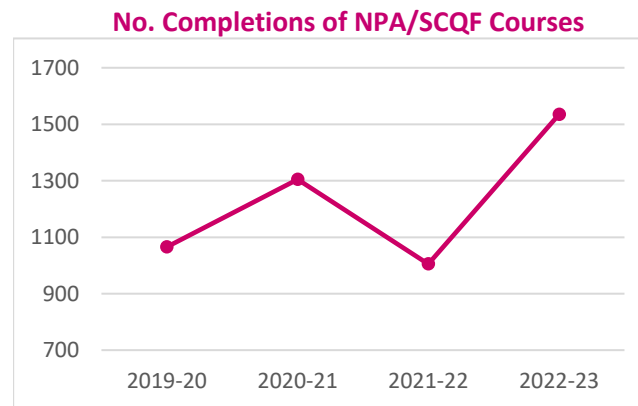
What have we achieved?

In Academic Year 2023/24 to date, there have been **65** participants in Curriculum Development Sessions

Between 2020/21 and 2023/24 the number of completions of Level 7 HNC courses has **increased from 0 -17**

The number of completion of foundation apprenticeships has **increased from 124 -208** between 2022/23 and 2023/24

The total number of completions of NPA/SCQF Courses is at its highest in the 4 years recorded with a **53% increase** from 2022 -2023



What impact have we had?

Training Sessions on Timetabling, Pathway and Curriculum Development have had very positive feedback with a significant proportion of participants indicating that the training had been **'invaluable in helping my thinking'**

What do we plan to do next?

- Attainment reviews have taken place in schools to identify where courses offered could be widened for session 24/25
- ABZ Campus will continue to be delivered across multiple sites and a range of different SCQF courses.
- Further training sessions will be undertaken
- Feedback from Focus Groups on views of the ABZ campus will be collected, analysed and used to inform changes to the curriculum offer

Appendix 4. Reducing Alcohol and Substance Use: Supporting our Curriculum

What are we trying to achieve?

We aim to decrease the number of 13 to 15 year olds who have reported using substances in Aberdeen to below the national average by 2023, through curriculum delivery and a whole population approach.

How are we doing this?

- Developing a new procedure for reporting substance use incidences in school, streamlining and improving the processes for accessing information, support and referral
- Development of a Programme of Substance Use Resources to ensure that all children and young people are offered consistent support and appropriate interventions in relation to their understanding of and use of substances
- Pilot test event and programme 2023 in conjunction with the Daniel Spargo Mabbs foundation on substance use prevention and harm reduction for pupils
- Deliver a Substance awareness workshop for parents/carers of P5-S6 pupils

What have we achieved?

There has been a **5% decrease** from 28% to 23% of 13-15year having had a drink and a **0.9% decrease** from 4.6% to 3.7% of 13-15year old who have tried drugs between academic years 21/22 and 22/23. When compared to the closest available national data, this shows that Aberdeen is 5.9% lower than the national average.

There was a **24% reduction** (31 to 25) in 2022 for requests for assistance for children and young people with factors relating to substance misuse.

Increased access to counselling for substance use has seen a **rise of 29%** in 2022 compared to 2021 and by 200% when comparing Jan-June 2023 and Jan-June.

Positive impact was also seen from the substance awareness workshop for parents/carers. 151 parents expressed interest in attending the workshop held in September 2023, although only **59 attended** in live time. In the feedback survey **88%** of attendees stated they were **somewhat or extremely confident in discussing substance use with their child** after attending the event

One Parent commented : '**Excellent workshop**. *Even as a former youth worker I feel it was such a valuable workshop to refresh my memory and as a reminder to remain vigilant. We like to think it will never be our children but I think being informed can only be a good thing either way in case the worse happens'*

What impact have we had?

Feedback on the new reporting procedure and resources has been very positive:

'We found the DUST tool really helpful in determining the threshold for referral and sourcing the right support...'

What do we plan to do next?

- The substances use guidance for schools will be revised every 3 years to ensure it is providing the best support for schools.
- Quality improvement visits by education officers will continue to monitor the impact of the curriculum.
- Data for the overall aim, as well as the requests for assistance will continue to be collected on annual basis and reported to the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.
- The ongoing test of the year-long education programme on substance use prevention and harm reduction in three schools will be reviewed at the end of the year and impact reported on accordingly.

Whilst we are comfortable that improvement will continue there is a proposal for more targeted improvement activity to reduce cannabis and polydrug use in 13-15 years olds within the LOIP being refreshed for 2024.

Appendix 5. Registered Young Carers: Providing Improved Support

What are we trying to achieve?

Young carers are one of the biggest single groups of children in need. Estimates suggest that in a city the size of Aberdeen, there may be up to 2,000 children and young people aged between 5 to 18 years who undertake caring responsibilities. We aim to increase by 20% the number of registered young carers accessing support from the Young Carers service by 2025

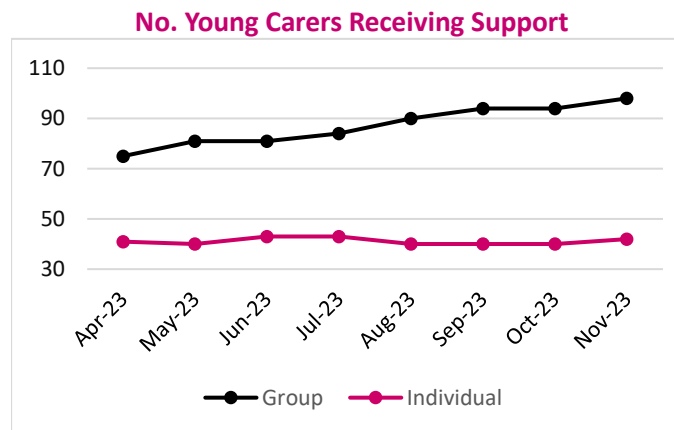
How are we doing this?

- Developing a direct referral route from key agencies such as CAMHS/ADA/Charlies House/Roxburgh House, Fit Like Hub
- Co-design with young carers information provided at drop-in sessions, PSE classes and assemblies for young people to raise their awareness for young carers to self-refer
- Co-design/ co-deliver with young carers and communities/third and private sector groups a wider range of choice/opportunities that meet our young carers interests
- Developing a promotional campaign to raise awareness of the opportunity to volunteer/befriend young carers
- Developing a directory of partnership/ community-based groups/support (e.g. 1-1 sessions), to be promoted to young carers to increase the choice of support available

What have we achieved?

The total number of registered young carers accessing support has **increased by 14%** since April 2023 from 116 -135

The number of you carers receiving group based support has **increased from 75 – 98**



80 staff have now been trained and feel confident that they are fully aware of the young carers support referral process

We have seen a significant **increase of 7– 71** referrals from education

What impact have we had?

Feedback from young carers, families and staff:

"[They] had a fantastic time on the residential trip and it was good for her confidence. Barnardos are the best!"

"Her confidence within young carers has grown so much and she's really quite involved now and has made some really good friends. It's been so nice seeing her with the groups because outside of young carers she struggles so much."

"As a former young carer [I found the training] really beneficial for understanding what makes someone a young carer and the different areas that are affected (that I experienced and didn't even realise are likely due to being a former young carer), I will 100% be sharing this information with others AND the youths we work with. Thank you so much!"

What do we plan to do next?

Working in partnership with SHMU radio and our young carers to write, develop and deliver a short film to raise awareness of young carers/ their needs and challenges

Providing further multi agency training and awareness raising with staff, children and young people

What are we trying to achieve?

Aberdeen City Council Education team have partnered with a network of professionals to develop a Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (PEPAS) team to increase opportunities for children and young people to engage in physical activity and sport.

Representatives from Sport Aberdeen, Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust (AFCCT), Russel Anderson Development School (RADS), Grampian Disability Trust, Sport Scotland and Club Scotland were keen to support this area of development.

How are we doing this?

Through our multi agency project we have:

- Developed and supported priority areas for the city across PEPAS, such as positive mental health and outdoor activity
- Utilised city-wide Data to inform decisions, including full engagement with all stakeholders
- Inputted into discussions on future PE Delivery / Staffing Structure in Aberdeen (linking PE delivery across Primary and Secondary)
- Developed and supported stronger links between PE and community sport
- Engaged with partner organisations / National Governing Bodies to further the PEPAS agenda

What have we achieved?

All of our children and young people now have access to free physical activity increasing the number of schools offering this from 82% to 100%

All schools now have Active Schools Assistants one day per week increasing physical activity throughout break times, to work with staff, increasing confidence of engagement in physical activity and supporting targeted groups of children, using physical activity to improve outcomes, including mental health and wellbeing.



Our Extracurricular programme now has:

- 180 clubs city wide involved
- Over 250 volunteers delivering the activities
- Over 2,500 children participating

What do we plan to do next?

Increase the percentage of young people participating in physical activity outwith the curriculum from 22% in 2022 to 35% in 2026.

Increase the range of accessible options for children and young people with sensory and physical impairments.

Ensure a more equal distribution of gender participation in physical activity.

Ensure that priority is given to meeting the physical wellbeing needs of CEYP in a manner compliant with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill (as enacted).

Develop a culture of body positivity/ positive self-esteem through PEPAS opportunities

Develop an inclusive and strategic approach to Active Travel



Our LOIP Projects

Stretch Outcome 3: 95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27-30 month review by 2026

[Reduce by 5% the no. of children aged 0-4 who are referred to Children's Social Work as a result of neglect arising from parental mental health, addiction and domestic abuse 2026.](#)

[Increase by 40% the number of Peep programmes delivered by multi-agency partners by 2025.](#)

[100% of urgent requests for first stage infant formula and nutritional support for pre-school children are met by 2024.](#)

[Increase by 10% the no. of parents with children under 5 who are completing a full benefits check by 2024.](#)

[Improve dental health at primary 1 to the national average by reducing the levels of dental health in areas of deprivation to 50% by 2025.](#)

Stretch Outcome 4: 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026

[Reduce demand on Tier 3 services by 5% by 2026.](#)

[Reduce waiting time for interventions starting, by each tier 2/3 service by 5% by 2026.](#)

[100% of children leaving care are referred to services that can meet assessed mental health needs within 4 weeks of the health assessment being completed by 2024.](#)

[Increase by 5% the number of S1-S6 pupils who report that they feel confident by 2025.](#)

[Increase by 10% the % of children living in areas of deprivation who feel safe in their communities by 2025.](#)

Stretch Outcome 5: 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

[Reduce by 5% the number of children entering the care system by 2024.](#)

[100% of children and young people leaving care are offered a health assessment to identify gaps in their health provision and needs by 2024.](#)

[Increase the number of care experienced young people by 10% receiving multiagency throughcare/aftercare support by 2024.](#)

[80% of care experienced parents will report that they believed they were sufficiently prepared for parenthood by 2026.](#)

[80% of the identified multi-agency workforce successfully complete Corporate Parenting training aligned to the Promise by 2025.](#)

Stretch Outcome 6: 95% of all our children, including those living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2), will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026

[75% of identified multi-agency staff reporting confidence in identifying and taking action on harm by 2026.](#)

[Increase to 3 the delivery of co-located and delivered services by health and education by 2024.](#)

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

[Increase the % of learners entering a positive and sustained destination to be ahead of the Virtual Comparator for all groups by 2025.](#)

[Increase by 20% the number of young people completing courses aligned to support the digital and tech sector by 2026.](#)

[Increase to 50 the no. of people completing more integrated health and care courses by 2025.](#)

Stretch Outcome 7: 83.5% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.

[Reduce by 20% the number of care experienced young people charged with an offence by 2025.](#)

<u>Reduce by 15% the number of care experienced young people reported missing from Children's homes to Police Scotland by 2024.</u>
<u>90% of 16/17 year olds appearing at Sherriff Court in relation to Lord Advocate's guidance will have had an assessment of their community support needs by 2025.</u>
<u>Increase by 5% the no. of 16/17 year olds who are diverted from prosecution by 2025.</u>
<u>Reduce by 15% the number of instances of youth anti-social behaviour calls to Police Scotland by 2025.</u>
Stretch Outcome 8: 100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/ Disabilities will experience a positive destination by 2026.
<u>Increase by 10%, the percentage of children and young people with additional support needs (ASN) and/or a disability accessing full time education by 2026.</u>
<u>Increase by 5%, the percentage of young people with additional support needs/disability entering a positive destination by 2025.</u>
<u>Increase by 20% the number of registered young carers accessing support from the Young Carers service by 2025.</u>
<u>By 2025, 90% of families with children with an additional support need or disability will indicate that they have access to peer and community support that meets their needs.</u>
<u>90% of identified multi-agency staff working with children and young people with disabilities will report confidence in identifying and taking action on how harm presents in children with additional support needs/disabilities by 2026.</u>
<u>Increase by 20% the number of families of children with autism or awaiting diagnosis accessing support prior to diagnosis and reduce the interval between referral and diagnosis by 2024.</u>

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 attainment, health and wellbeing and positive destinations of our care experienced by 2026	Improve the attainment and positive destinations of our children and young people by 2026	Reduce the number of young people charged with an SCRA 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 immunisations ➤ 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 bereavement 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 Bairns Hoose • 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 • Implement the recommendations of the Secure Care Review 	<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 secondary schools 	<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 ➤ 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
Enabling Priorities					
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 OOA ➤ Understand the long term impact of ELC on outcomes for families ➤ Agree and implement a whole system approach to addressing obesity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Aligned to the 10 principles of family support ➤ Jointly respond to the needs of those displaced ➤ Evaluate readiness for implementation of the UNCRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improve knowledge of the 6 groups by co-designing with service users and children ➤ Improve data matching ➤ Improve the tracking of the outcomes of those most vulnerable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase knowledge poverty agenda and of benefits ➤ Increase knowledge of trauma and risk ➤ Develop ways of working (SIMD1) to better support the provision of rights