

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

---

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education & Children's Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	30 April 2024
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Health & Wellbeing Report
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	F&C/24/120
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Shona Milne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Emma Powell
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.1

---

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the Health & Wellbeing surveys undertaken within Aberdeen City Schools in November and December 2023 and the current support in place for wellbeing, both physical and mental.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 notes the content of this report and the data shared within Appendix A;
- 2.2 instructs the Interim Director Families and Communities to consider the findings of the report and plan next steps as part of work being taken forward through the Children's Services Plan and associated National Improvement Framework Plan; and
- 2.3 instructs the Interim Chief Officer Education and Lifelong Learning to report the findings of the next Health and Wellbeing surveys to Committee within one calendar year.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Within the curriculum, health and wellbeing is organised into six areas:
- mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing
  - planning for choices and changes
  - physical education
  - physical activity and sport
  - food and health
  - substance misuse
  - relationships, sexual health and parenthood

All schools deliver a health and wellbeing curriculum aligned to the six areas of responsibility and keep this under regular review. A range of [resources](#) are available to support curriculum planning and provide staff with access to relevant and up to date resources to support curriculum planning. A progression overview and resource bank for Physical Education for Primary

Schools is also available to all Aberdeen City Education Staff and was developed by Aberdeen Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (PEPAS) team.

- 3.2 The Education Service regularly surveys pupils to help identify trends and determine the adequacy of current approaches. The report in Appendix A, is a summary of city wide findings from the two most recent Health & Wellbeing Surveys issued to children and young people within Aberdeen City during November and December 2023. One survey is delivered in partnership with Schools Health Improvement and Research Network (SHINE) and focusses on mental wellbeing for pupils in P6-S6, the second focussed on physical wellbeing, and was designed locally and undertaken by pupils in P5-S6.
- 3.3 The city wide analysis, contained in Appendix A, shows that there are improvements in wellbeing compared to previous data sets which include:
- a reduction in levels of pupils with low mood and at risk of depression.
  - an improved picture on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) which measures mental health difficulties;
  - improved levels of reported self-confidence levels and optimism;
  - improvements in physical health;
  - an improved picture in relation to feelings of safety, inclusion, good health, aspects of sleep, and being listened to.

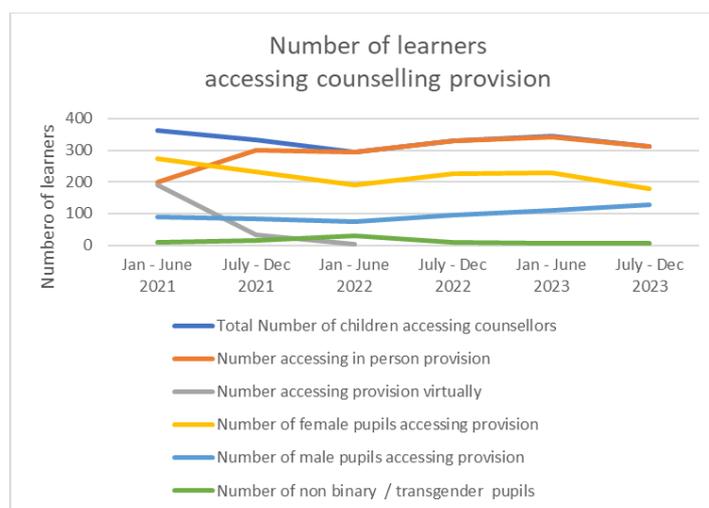
In general, city outcomes sit above national comparator data. Two previous areas of concern for us, reports of self-harming and happiness with appearance have both improved in this year's data. Improvements were also observed for this with our 'Did Not Disclose' gender group, and with girls. There remain areas for us to consider more fully. These include a need for us to work with community planning partners to:

- continue to address the gap between the Family Affluence Scale Groups (low, medium and high) even though each group is showing an improved position;
  - address lower positivity towards school (especially between primary and secondary), although we have seen improvements against feelings of pressure in relation to schoolwork, and higher reporting of liking school;
  - address the expected poorer mental health and wellbeing of girls with a focus on our cohort of S4 girls (our S3 group last year) who are continuing to show poorer self-reporting in mental health measures;
  - consider how best to respond to the increased use of technology including its impact on sleep, and going to bed later;
  - consider how best to support secondary pupils to eat breakfast; and
  - continue to work with the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership to address the slight increase in the number of pupils trying of e-cigarettes/vapes and other substances.
- 3.4 School leaders have access to Associated School Group (ASG) SHINE reports through a PowerBI dashboard to help illustrate local trends over the last 3 years. This trend data is enabling individual schools and ASG partnerships to identify positive changes and areas for inclusion in School Improvement Plans for 2024/25.

### 3.5 Approaches in place to support Mental Wellbeing

We continue to commission Mental Health Aberdeen to support all children from age 10+ with counselling support where required. This can be accessed through a referral by school staff or self-referral. A higher number of females are currently being supported (127 males compared to 179 females) with 5 young people who identify as transgender or non-binary. The number of males accessing support is steadily increasing.

3.6 Reasons for seeking support vary, however a high number of learners are receiving support for anxiety, with a significant rise in the number receiving support for difficult relationships.



3.7 We currently have 14 Primary schools working in partnership with Place2Be. Place2Be offer in person supports within the primary school setting for children aged 3 and up, families and staff. From October to December 2023 a total of 507 children and young people were supported in 683 sessions including 1-1 counselling and group or whole class sessions. The service has also held 37 parent partnership sessions during this time. 10 schools report that the programme is having a significant positive impact on the levels of engagement of learners.

3.8 All schools continue to engage with the Compassionate and Connected Communities (CCC) programme. We have built the capacity of 11 further members of staff to act as trainers for the programme. Taking this approach of on-going training for trainers ensures that we maintain a full 64 trainers across the city with a trainer available in each city school when there is staff movement or retiral. 82% of schools with a trainer in the setting rated the programme as very good and reported that the school relationship policy reflected a trauma informed approach. They also reported that trauma informed language was embedded and evidenced in daily interactions.

3.9 The Fit Like Family Wellbeing Team has been operational since 2020. The service continues to receive a high level of requests for support.

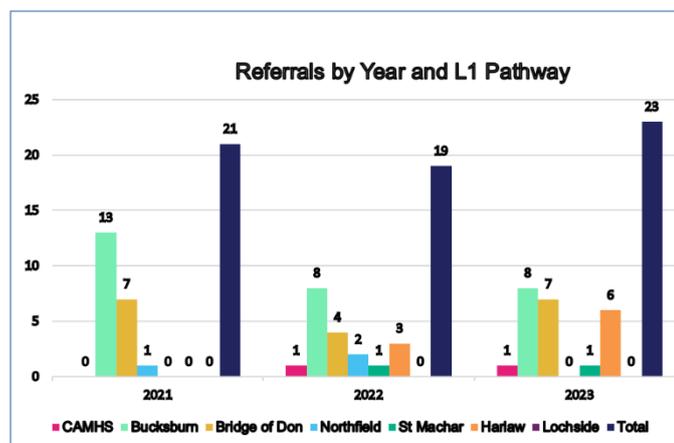
- 2021 - 648 requests for support and 484 (74%) new families offered support
- 2022 - 585 requests for support and 335 (57%) new families offered support

- 2023 - 599 requests for support and 378 (63%) new families offered support

On average the Fit Like team support approximately 425- 475 families at any one time. In 2023, 455 families were engaging in support from the Fit Like Team, ranging from family time groups, parent groups to support anxiety and distress, consultations, along with bespoke whole family support.

In 2023, of a sample of 113 families who moved on from Fit Like help, 87 (76%) families went on to engage in universal support, 14 families went on to require social work support and 12 families went on to access support from CAMHS.

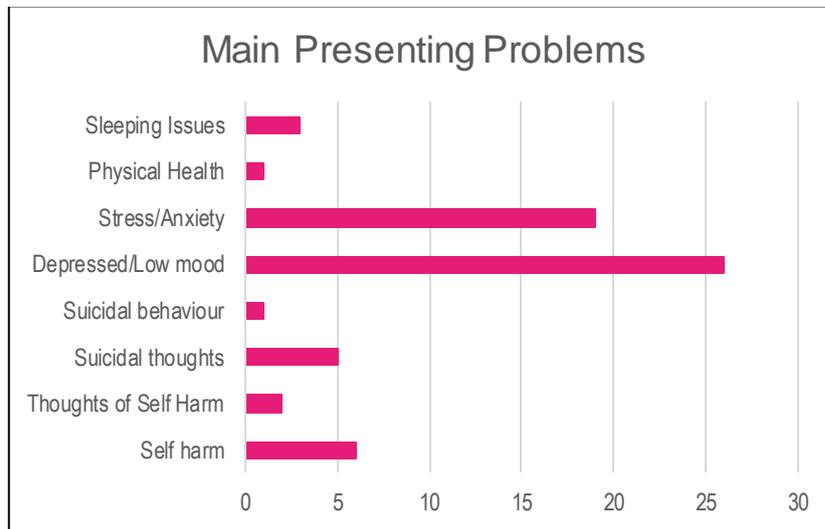
3.10 The pilot of DBI (Distress Brief Intervention) is available in 6 Secondary Schools (Bucksburn Academy, Bridge of Don Academy, Northfield Academy, St Machar Academy, Harlaw Academy and Lochside Academy).



The programme is offered in partnership with CAMHS and Penumbra and focusses on learners aged 14-16. This programme offers more targeted support for young people who have been identified or self-identify the need for support and helps some of our most vulnerable learners to access trained staff and a pathway to support through Penumbra and CAMHS if required.

Between May 2021 and July 2023, 61 young people were referred with 57% of people referred having been successfully contacted (as per guidance and aims) within 24 hours of referral. As would be anticipated, schools who implemented DBI earliest have more fully utilised the intervention.

89% of those referred engaged in DBI Level Two support and completed their support with planned discharge/closure.



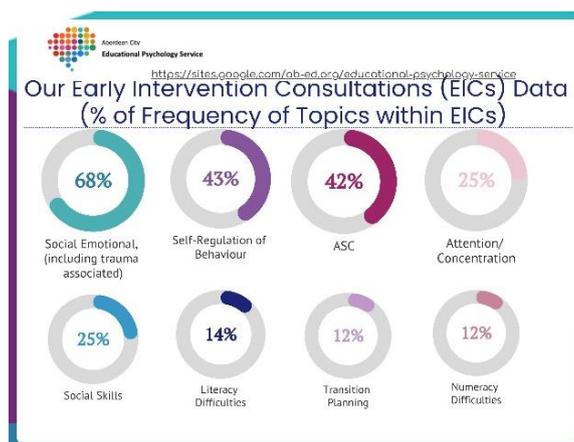
The most common presenting problems leading to referral were young people struggling with depression/low mood or stress/anxiety. The most common contributory factors were relationships and life coping issues. The following quote, from a PT Guidance, summarises the impact one school are observing from implementing DBI:

*“I have seen huge positive impact from the service - several of my young people have used DBI and found it very helpful at reducing their distress and either, allowing them to cope better going forward, or supporting them whilst they are waiting for other more long-term support to be allocated. DBI's quick response time is hugely helpful for young people when they are in distress - the majority of other services can take weeks or months to allocate support, and DBI allows a young person to feel valued and like a priority in their time of need. It also gives them the tools to manage their feelings in future situations of distress, which is really helpful. DBI has become a key part of our package of support for young people, and we have seen it to be hugely beneficial as a school.”*

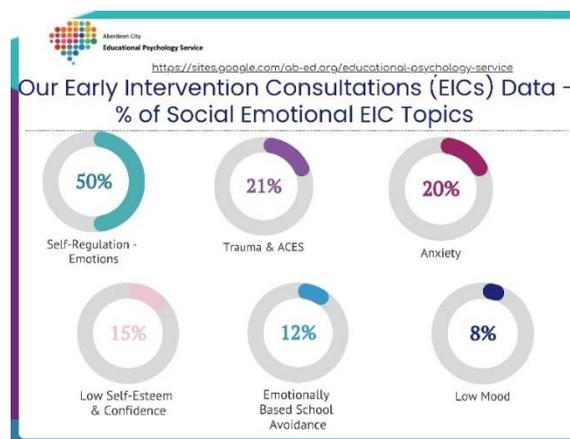
81% of people referred were female, 16% were male and 3% identify as Other gender. This broadly correlates with what could be expected as a result of the SHINE survey results.

- 3.11 Our Educational Psychology Service (EPS) support schools through Early Intervention Consultations (EICs), which take place between staff at all levels of the school and the EPS. 477 EICs took place over 2022/23, and 480 have taken place to date over this academic year.

EIC data from last year showed that most of the problem-solving discussions that generate strategies and supports for interventions focused on social, emotional (including trauma associated) needs.



Improved data gathering within the EPS allows for further analysis of the type of Social & Emotional issues being supported through EICs with the self-regulation of emotions most frequently triggering the referral.



The EPS continue to review and update their digital hub to offer supports to pupils, parents and staff based on information gathered throughout the year about topics and areas of need arising through their work.

- 3.12 In addition to supporting individual pupils, the EPS continue to review their delivery of capacity building programmes which are available to all schools across the city.

**Seasons for Growth** – Ongoing training and re-connector groups continue to be offered. This allows highly skilled groups to be run across education supporting pupils with significant loss and change. This year to date, 147 children and young people, an increase of 58 from last year, have been part of loss and change groups in the Seasons programme. Both the training and programme continues to be positively evaluated although some schools are reporting that staffing shortages are impacting their ability to offer Seasons fully this academic year. This will be closely monitored. All schools with staff trained would recommend the programme to others.

**Emotion Coaching** – This fully digital training programme, with follow-up EPS coaching and facilitation around implementation and effectiveness

continues to be popular with nine new schools this year already engaged with the training, and a further four looking to start next term. Training programmes are also run for parents, with content available on the EPS digital hub. 88% of schools with staff trained are reporting that the programme is having a positive impact on relationships within school.

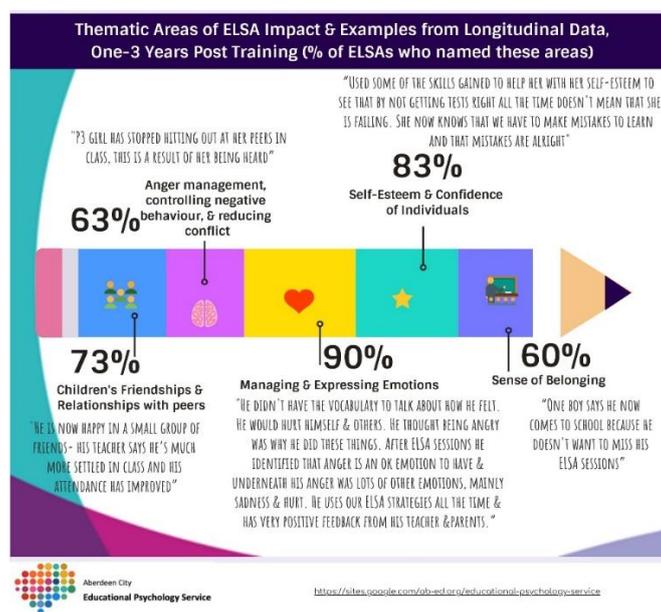
**EBSNA** – Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance – is a new programme put in place for this school session which supports staff to better understand those children and young people most likely to be impacted by EBSNA. The fully digital training programme, with follow-up EPS coaching and facilitation around implementation and effectiveness is being utilised in six schools so far this year, with a further two schools looking to start this next term.

**Executive Functions** – this is another fully digital training programme, with follow-up EPS coaching and facilitation around implementation and effectiveness. Executive functions are cognitive processes and mental skills that help an individual plan, monitor, and successfully execute their goals. When children have difficulties in this area it can impact across their learning. This is a new offer this year for small groups or individuals to increase their understanding in this area and how best to support pupils who could be impacted. Three schools have signed up this term, starting with key contacts within the establishment with a view to widening this out.

**Teenage Brain Development** – This is still in development, but a trial involving parents within Northfield Academy is currently in planning to commence next term. Further training programmes for staff and eventually young people themselves will be created.

**Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) training.** Aberdeen remains the only Scottish local authority to offer this programme that has a strong evidence base and is used across England and Wales.

Local Aberdeen City data shows the positive impact this training programme has had to support staff working with children with a range of emotional regulation needs.



3.13 Over 50 staff across Aberdeen City schools have successfully completed the programme. Each ELSA has ongoing support of 12 hours of psychological group supervision each year. There are 11 ASN ELSAs in-training this academic year, this is a new programme targeted to meet the complex emotional wellbeing and regulation needs of the populations of our Specialist and Enhanced Provisions.

3.14 The Education Service benefit from regular collaboration with health colleagues to ensure that the universal services are aligned and maximising their impact on children, young people and families.

In November 2023 a joint collaborative session was planned to include school senior leaders and all health visitors and school nursing teams and Educational Psychology representatives. This brought together nearly 200 colleagues from across services to work together to more fully understand each others roles and responsibilities and consider how we can more effectively work in partnership for positive outcomes. There is a plan for colleagues to meet twice per year with a follow up session planned for 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024, which will include social work colleagues and bring together 280 professionals focusing on 'Collaborative approaches, leading to improved outcomes'.

3.15 **Working in partnership to support Physical Wellbeing through PEPAS (Physical Activity, Physical Education & Sport)**

The PEPAS Group continue to work in partnership, taking a lead role as advocates and advisors on Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport on a city-wide basis.

3.16 There have been some really positive pieces of work that have developed through the PEPAS group this session including:

- The first Aberdeen [Big Run – Go run for fun](#), was held in October 2023. The event, which included all P6 pupils in partnership with the Daily Mile, saw over 2000 children participate.
- Boccia training continues to be rolled out across all schools, with some school groups taking this forward through 9 local festivals. 93 young leaders have supported the provision of Boccia, alongside 17 volunteers. 18 clubs are now established.
- Representatives from PEPAS are collaborating with school leaders, sharing practice and developing processes to support consultation, review and redraft of School Active Travel Plans. All schools are expected to have a refreshed Active Travel plan in place by August 2024.

3.17 We continue to work in close partnership with Parent volunteers, ACC I Bike officer, Adventure Aberdeen and Active Schools Coordinators to support Bikeability and Cycle training and offer Level 2 training in all of our Primary school settings. We are one of 9 Local Authorities who can report that we have all Primary Schools supported to engage in Bikeability and continue to work with partners to improve this offer. Forty-eight schools have signed up for Level 2 Bikeability.

3.18 The Being Me programme is a physical activity-based intervention to address pupil challenges with body image. Following review of our wellbeing data over

2022/23, this pilot programme is being implemented in Heathryburn, Brimmond, Fernielea, Kingsford, Abbotswell and Loirston as part of the ProActive Minds Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) between Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) and Sport Aberdeen. We look forward to considering the evaluation of this programme.

- 3.19 With a focus on early intervention and prevention, we are also currently undertaking a pilot project in some of our ELC settings in partnership with Sport Aberdeen. Active Schools Assistants are allocated to provide a valuable resource that will be able to work alongside ELC teams to build capacity and confidence in staff. This pilot is taking place in Kirkhill, Riverbank, Walker Road, Kittybrewster, Muirfield and Tullos.

#### **Active Schools Assistants**

- 3.20 17 schools continue to fund Active Schools Assistants to support increased delivery of physical activity.. This includes 2 Secondary Schools: Northfield and St Machar and 14 Primary settings: Loirston, Ferryhill, Countesswells, Ashley Road, St Joseph's, Stoneywood, Broomhill, Fernielea, Manor Park, Quarryhill, Muirfield, Westpark, Heathryburn, Holy Family, Bramble Brae and one specialist provision: Orchard Brae.

#### **Physical Health Support Visits**

- 3.21 Vaping was an area of concern highlighted by all secondary schools and resources and guidance have been shared. Reducing the number of 13-18 years olds who regularly vape to 4% has been proposed in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) refresh led by Education. A Vaping Awareness online session delivered to parents as part of Stronger Families Series in November 2023 has been shared with Academies for individual school use Education continue to work with Aberdeen and Tobacco and Vaping Free Alliance on a regular basis to respond to latest developments in Vaping Awareness and reduction.
- 3.22 On the February INSET days 54 first aiders were trained in the recognition and treatment of opioid overdoses with academies now recognised as administrators of Naloxone. A session on Substance awareness was delivered to Health and Wellbeing Leads network by Alcohol and Drug action.

#### **Next steps**

- 3.23 The report available in Appendix A will be tabled with the Children's Services Board and used to inform delivery of year 2 of the established Children's Services Plan. It will also be considered as the National Improvement Framework Plan for 2024-25 is being developed.
- 3.24 The Education Service intend to roll out First Aid training across all city secondary schools from June 2024. This will see all young people in S4 access a First Aid qualification.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The costs of all improvement actions will be undertaken within existing budgets.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 provides that children's services should be provided in a way which best safeguards, supports or promotes the wellbeing of children; ensures that any action to meet needs is taken at the earliest appropriate time and that, where appropriate, action is taken to prevent needs arising; is most integrated from the point of view of the recipients; and constitutes the best use of available resources.
- 5.2 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 places a duty on Education Authorities to secure that education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential and in carrying out this duty to have due regard to the views of children and young people.
- 5.3 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on the Authority to make adequate and efficient provision for supporting children and young people with additional support needs.
- 5.4 The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the Authority to Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not and to take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- 5.5 The ingathering of data from the surveys undertaken and the proposed steps to address the findings of these surveys will assist the Authority to implement these duties more effectively.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Only positive environmental impacts have been identified. On-going promotion of pupil voice and their participation in decision making will help develop citizens who consider environmental implications in later life.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Risk of not improving outcomes for children and young people	Data gathered from the wellbeing surveys and the work in schools in response to this is tailored to meet the needs of children and young people at	L	Yes

		a local level, thereby reducing some risk.		
<b>Compliance</b>	No significant risks identified			
<b>Operational</b>	Staff are overwhelmed, which leads to low morale as staff feel unable to meet the educational and well-being needs of young people.	Staff wellbeing surveys are undertaken which help us to understand their needs and respond with an ongoing commitment to delivering support and high-quality professional learning for all.	L	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	Risk of not having sufficient resource.	Ongoing consideration of a multi-agency approach to service delivery and resource, ensures the right support from the right place is timely and we have a more joined up process for children and families.	L	Yes
<b>Reputational</b>	Where single agency support is in place for children and young people to meet their physical and mental wellbeing needs we are unlikely to meet these needs, causing a reputational risk to the organisation.	Data scrutiny, reporting and strong partnerships enable us to enhance the Council's reputation for strong collaborative and solution focused working.	L	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No significant risks identified			

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcome (Children &amp; Young People)</p>	<p>The detail within this report supports the delivery of Children &amp; Young People Stretch Outcomes 4 to 9 in the refreshed LOIP. This includes the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase to 80%, the number of staff who feel confident about how to directly support, or refer a child for support, and signpost to appropriate services by 2022.</li> <li>• 100% of schools offer sustainable and equitable access to counselling for those children aged 10 and above who require it by 2022.</li> <li>• The number of children and young people with an eating disorder who are identified within 3 months of onset is increased by 50% by 2023.</li> <li>• Increase by 80% the use of digital wellbeing resources for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing by 2022.</li> <li>• 100% of children and young people have free access to physical activity which improves mental health and wellbeing by 2022</li> <li>• Increase the number of care experienced young people by 10% receiving multiagency throughcare/aftercare support by 2023</li> <li>• Increase number of young people who need support in relation to trauma and bereavement having access to such support by 50% by 2023.</li> </ul>
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase % of people who walk as one mode of travel by 10% by 2023.</li> <li>• Increase % of people who cycle as one mode of travel by 2% by 2023.</li> <li>• Increase the number of community run green spaces by a minimum of 8 that are organised and self-managed for both people and nature by 2023.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Regional and City Strategies</b>                      Regional Cultural Strategy                      Prevention Strategy                      Children's Services Plan</p>	<p>The universal provision of education is fully aligned to the Prevention Strategy and a key partner to the Children's Services Plan.</p>

National Improvement Framework Plan	
-------------------------------------	--

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Shona Milne, Interim Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning on 04/04/24
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	None

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## 11. APPENDICES

Appendix A – ACC Health & Wellbeing Survey Analysis (April 2024)

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Name</b>	Emma Powell
<b>Title</b>	Principal Educational Psychologist
<b>Email Address</b>	<a href="mailto:epowell@aberdeencity.gov.uk">epowell@aberdeencity.gov.uk</a> /
<b>Tel</b>	01224 764656