



**Community
Planning
Aberdeen**



**Aberdeen City's Children's Services Plan 2023-26 Annual Report - 2024/25
Workforce Summary Version**

INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR



As I reflect on the progress made over the past year, it is with immense gratitude that I acknowledge the incredible dedication and hard work of our workforce in supporting children and young people across Aberdeen City. Your commitment to improving the lives of our youngest residents has been incredible, and it is through your efforts that we have been able to achieve remarkable outcomes.

The past year has presented numerous challenges, yet our staff have risen to the occasion with resilience and determination. The collaborative efforts of our workforce throughout the partnership has been pivotal in scaling up our Youth and Family Support services, early intervention work, and financial inclusion initiatives. These holistic approaches have not only improved attendance and reduced exclusions but have also fostered greater parental engagement and enhanced the overall wellbeing of our families. The success of these initiatives is a testament to your dedication and the positive impact you have on the lives of those we serve.

Moreover, the establishment of co-located multidisciplinary teams such as those in Northfield and Lochside Academies has ensured more effective and holistic planning for children and families most in need of our support. Your ability to work seamlessly across various departments and agencies has been crucial in delivering comprehensive and coordinated care.

As we move forward, let us continue to build on these achievements and strive for even greater success, we are confident that together, we will continue to make a profound difference in the lives of children and young people in our community.

Thank you for your significant contributions and for being the heart and soul of our mission to support and uplift the next generation.

This summary report here presents a only flavour of the totality of the work that has been underway this year for each of our difference ages and stages of children and young people, I hope that you can recognise how your own work has and continues to contribute to these achievements.

Eleanor Sheppard

Executive Director – Families and Communities (Chair of the Children’s Services Board)



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How are we supporting our under 5s and their parents?



Children's Services Plan Key Priority:

95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27–30-month review by 2026

Our latest data shows that the % of children assessed as reaching their expected developmental milestones (including incomplete assessments) improved by 2.4% between 2021/22 (87.4%) and 2022/23 (89.8%), but there is still considerable work to do to reach pre covid levels (97.1% in 2020/21). We also need to more to ensure all eligible children are assessed, with data showing that 67.4% of eligible children were assessed in 2022/23, down from 78% in 2021/22 and 87% in 2015/16.



Where have we made a difference?

- There has been a 12% increase in uptake of ELC for eligible 2s (205 of the 456 thought eligible are attending).
- Latest data shows an increase in the percentage of babies exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks which has increased again from 41.3% in 2021 to 41.9% in 2023. Levels are now well above the national average and the gap from national is increasing.
- 93.6% of babies were born at 37+ weeks gestation, slightly above the Scottish average 93.2%.
- The average Care Inspectorate gradings for Local Authority ELC provision have increased across all Quality Indicators (QIs).

Expanding the Workforce

- 32 ELC Modern Apprenticeships have now successfully moved into the ELC workforce, this is helping to address some of our recruitment challenges.
- Recruitment of health visitors is also improving this year. We are currently on target to have increased the number of Health Visitors by 10.6 Full Time Equivalents.

Where could we improve?

- The proportion of ELC settings graded good or better dropped over 2023/24 to 80.2%, due largely to challenges experienced by our funded providers.
- Levels of maternal obesity have increased again to 25% in the three years ending 2023/24.
- Exposure to second hand smoke at 6-8 weeks has increased from 7.4% to 8% in the three years ending 2023.

What have we been doing to support our families?

Expanding our Peep offer

Peep Programmes in Aberdeen have been running now for over 20 years, however with its popularity demand for Peep sessions has increased significantly in recent years, with this in mind one of our projects is working to increase the number of Peep programmes and sessions that we can run across the city. We have been achieving this with a steady and continuing increase in the number of sessions run, number of multi-agency partners involved and the number of parents participating.



Data from October- December 2024 shows that 61 sessions were being offered across the city, an increase of 13% from where the project started in July to September 2023 with 54 sessions. Over this same period the number of families undertaking Peep sessions has increased from 253 to 372, an increase of 38%. With the number of multiagency partners involved in delivery doubling from 6 to 12.

What impact have we had?

Feedback from Parents on the Peep Programme has also been incredibly positive:

“Really want to thank all of you for everything the last few years, you have not only made such an impact on the kids, but you’ve become such a safe and comforting presence for them and Peep has always been such a stable environment that made maternity leave that bit less lonely! I’ll never be able to thank you all enough for the kindness, support, fun and most importantly friendship you’ve given us”.

We have also been undertaking considerable work to support our families of our under 5s who are most at risk, you can find more details of this in our Child Poverty section (page 10)

What Next?

Increasing both the completeness of, and the proportion, of 27–30-month developmental milestone assessments will remain a key focus for the year ahead.

Work to ensure all families receive appropriate financial support by collaborating with NHS health points services and the local population to raise awareness of available resources.

We will conduct further scoping work to understand the opportunities for pre- and ante-natal women related to healthy weight and better understand the factors which sustain household smoking behaviour

Consider the rise in premature births, particularly in some areas of the City, as we engage with Professor Marmot and Public Health Scotland through the Collaboration for Healthy Equity in Scotland (CHES).

Identifying and supporting children who show signs of harm or neglect.

Being able to recognise the signs of harm and neglect in children and young people is a key factor in ensuring that we can intervene at the earliest possible stage to help them achieve the best possible outcomes. As such, one of our projects is focussed on supporting staff to recognise these signs and to improve their confidence in taking action for the child or young person by knowing who and how to refer them to services that can support them.

How are we supporting our primary school age children?



Children's Services Plan Key Priorities:

90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026.

This year our latest data shows there has been improvement across all Curriculum for Excellence measures and the city is now in line with national averages, up one ranking position in P1,4 and 7 for literacy to 18 of 32 local authorities, and up 2 ranking positions on attainment gap for P1, 4 and 7 Numeracy to 20 of 32 local authorities.

Where have we made a difference?

- There has been a rise in primary school attendance, latest data shows attendance levels at 92.3%
- The number of children registered for free school meals has increased across primary 6 and 7, from 682 in 2021/22 to 876 in 2022/23. This growth in registration is greater than the 5.7% growth in population across P6 & 7
- The number of young people participating in universal sports activities has risen by 25%.



Our Primary School Population

There has been a rise in primary pupil numbers from 14,573 in September 2022 to 15,210 in September 2023.

We are increasing diversity in our schools is evident (26.9% primary pupils are registered as being from an ethnic minority locally compared to only 12.2% nationally, with 56.7% identifying as being 'white UK' compared to 77.7% nationally). However, the number of children who have English as a second language has reduced from nearly 22% in 2022/23 to just over 19.1% in 2023/34. Despite the reduction, the percentage of learners who have English as a second language is significantly higher than the national average of 8.6%.

Where could we improve?

- Attainment in CofE is down one ranking position on attainment gap for P1,4 and 7 Literacy to 21/32, down one ranking position on P1,4 and 7 for numeracy to 19/32.
- The number of children hospitalised due to asthma, 0-15 years, increased from 105.4 per 100,000 in 2022/23 to 117.8 per 100,000 in 2021/22 and appears to be rising further.
- Although attendance is better than the national position, the city sees poorer school attendance at P1 (91.6%). This dip at Primary 1 is not seen nationally.

What have we been doing to support our Primary School Pupils?

Improving dental health in P1

We are currently running a pilot project to improve the dental health of our P1s in Torry. Using a wide range of approaches to support children in the community. This has included engaging with staff and pupils in the local primaries at Tullos and Greyhope. Linking Childsmile with Peep and Book Bug sessions to promote dental health directly to new parents, as well as engaging with services and practitioners with a targeted approach to supporting families such as providing them with toothbrushing resources and helping them to register their children at a local dental practice.



This is particularly important as latest public data from the year 2023/24 shows that there has been a slight dip in the number of P1s in Torry with no obvious signs of tooth decay. This is also reflected citywide with a decrease from 73% of P1s showing no obvious signs of tooth decay in 2022/23 compared to 71% in 2023/24

Supporting our more vulnerable children?

Our Whole Family Support model continues to evolve as we think differently about how we work more closely with and for families in need of our help and support. Some examples of this work include:

Place2Be Project

We are supporting the development of the Place2Be project, which focuses on the mental health of children under the age of 10. This project offers pupils the opportunity to attend drop-in sessions for immediate counselling without needing referrals or waiting lists.

Whole Family Wellbeing Funding

We have invested in scaling up Youth and Family Support, early intervention work, and financial inclusion aligned to our Family Support Model. This holistic approach aims to improve attendance, reduce exclusions, and increase parental engagement and attainment.

Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM)

We are rolling out SCIM to ensure that every child who has experienced abuse or neglect has access to a Bairn's Hoose model of support, including trauma recovery services. This model provides a multi-agency, co-located service that is rights-focused and ensures recovery is central to our intervention.



Neuro Divergent Pathways

Our neurodivergent pathways project has tested a pilot in Woodside primary school looking at providing multiagency support for families awaiting an autism diagnosis for their children, looking at various strategies and supports. This has included helping school staff to adapt their learning environments and working with health colleagues to ensure accelerated referral and diagnosis as well as providing extensive support to families in the interim. This Neurodivergent Pathway has had a number of successes which are detailed in the [project end report](#), including in reducing the time taken for children for children to be assessed receiving very positive feedback from parents:

"Just finally getting the support for our son, which was all we ever wanted, that's the main thing, like, obviously the diagnosis helps because you can't often get supported without a diagnosis, but that wasn't the thing for us, it was getting the support and educating ourselves and being kind of able to help them."

"We feel definitely feel like we have more tools and more information now than we ever have, and that is all down to the Test of Change".

How are we supporting our secondary school age children?



Children's Services Plan Key Priorities:

90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026.

95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 and 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.

100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/disabilities will experience a positive destination by 2026.

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

Citywide figures on young people who left school in academic year 2022/23 shows that sustained positive destinations are relatively high (90.1% in 2022/23) for children in SIMD1 there has been a reduction of 2.1% (85%-82.1%) and 5% for SIMD 2 (88.6%-83.6%) since 2021/22.

There has been a slight increase in the number of young people with Additional Support Needs achieving a Positive destination over this same time period. Latest data (2022/23) shows that the sustained positive destinations for children in with ASN/Disabilities has increased by 1% (91.06% - 92%).

Where have we made a difference?

- The number of presentations at National 5 increased to 11,236 in 2024 from 10,660 in 2023, an increase of 576 and the highest number on record for the local authority.
- 77% of learners now feel positive or very positive about their body image, an increase of 6% since 2022
- 4% reduction in anti-social behaviour calls between 2023 and 2024 (from 3341-3212).

70% of young people reporting that they feel listened to all the time.

Uptake of courses in growth sectors

- The number of young people undertaking integrated healthcare courses has increased by 193% since 2023 from 54 to 149 in academic year 2024/25
- We have begun to see increasing pupil awareness and uptake of digital/tech courses. In 2023/2024, 1128 young people completed such courses, an increase of 19.75%.

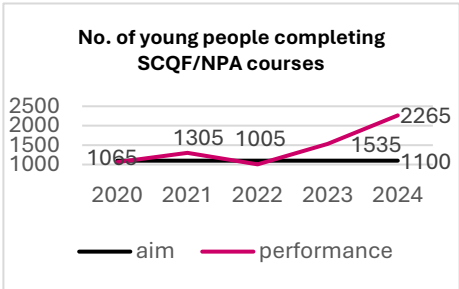
Where could we improve?

- Latest data shows a rise in the rate of suicide among 11–25-year-olds at 8.2 per 100,000 in 2022 up from 7.9 in 2021
- The average total tariff score for those living in SIMD 1 has reduced from 591 to 481.
- Only 61% (69% last year) of learners who completed the health and wellbeing survey have at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity a day.

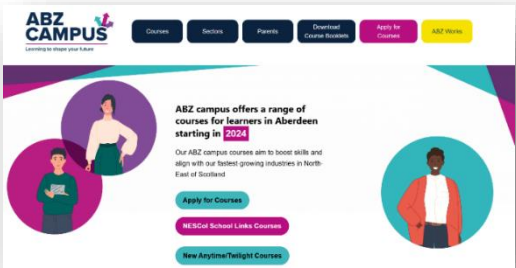
How are we working to improve the positive destinations of our young people?

ABZ Campus

One of the ways we are seeking to improve positive destinations is through Our ABZ Campus Programme, which has been helping up us to achieve significant improvement to the number of young people completing NPA/FA/HNC courses across the city.



ABZ Campus was developed to provide equitable access to a citywide curriculum for all pupils regardless of their school. Enabling delivery of different courses and improving links with/delivering courses through other providers such as NesCol. The programme also employs Pathway Advocates to provide intensive regular career and curricular support for more vulnerable young people.



The project has far surpassed its aim of 10% with a 125% increase in completion rates of SCQF/NPA. This is from the baseline of 1005 in 2021/22 to 2265 by the end of the last academic year (2023/24). There has also been a 20% increase in the completion of Foundation Apprenticeships (127 - 156 students in 2023/24) and an increase from 0 HNCs in 2021/22 to 12 in 2022/23 and 9 in 2023/24 respectively.

Supporting young people at risk of disengaging with school

For 2024-25, Strategic Equity funding of £955,190 has been allocated to continue providing youth workers, family learning workers, and Financial Inclusion Team support to schools, children, young people, and families across the city. Data from our yearly [school wellbeing survey](#) suggests that the interventions are making a considerable difference to our children and young people, with almost all local outcomes more positive than national averages.

What Next?

We will 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.

We need to take further action on the health led National Self Harm Plan to get ahead of the concerning rise in suicide. We need to better understand our local data in order to amplify our preventative offer. Looking further into the ways we can support our identify young people most at risk and feel confident to refer them on to the supports available

There is a need to initiate focused work on sustained positive destinations for secondary pupils. This includes working with all of our partners to better understand and identify those who do not secure long-term positive destinations and how we can better support them.

Supporting our care experienced young people into positive destinations

Through our employability support for care experienced young people project we've put in place a range of initiatives to help remove barriers and provide support and opportunities to help them feel confident and ready for employment. 59 young people have been supported over the last year. The programmes have been very successful across a number of outcomes, including: sustained engagement; achieving qualifications; engaging in work experience; progressing into a positive destination; sustaining that destination.

We have worked to build on the successful design and delivery of a pilot project co-designed with a small group of care experienced young people in 2023 and are now focusing on creating a structured employability service at a location where care experienced young people feel comfortable and supported, and where they can meet a range of trusted employability professionals.

How are we tackling child poverty?



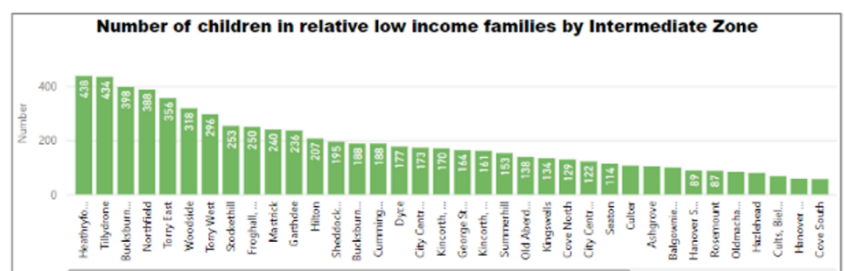
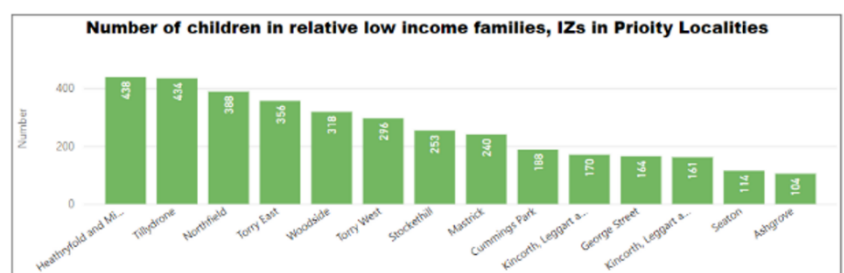
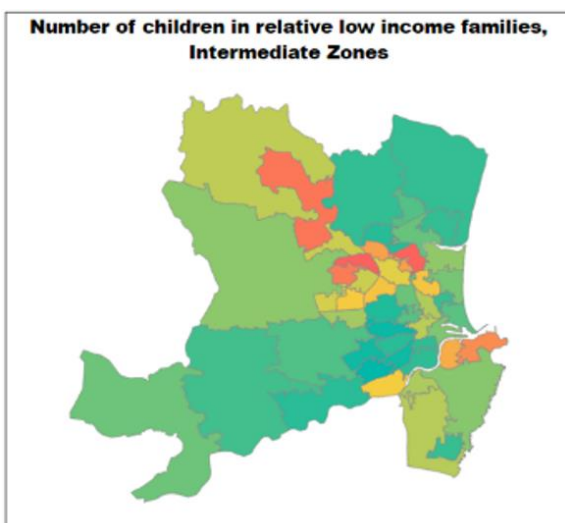
Children's Services Plan Key Priority:

Address the disparity in outcomes for the 6 groups identified as being at higher risk of poverty: (lone parent families, minority ethnic families, families with a disabled adult or child, families with a younger mother (under 25), families with a child under one, and larger families (three or more children).

The most recent data (June 2024 End Child Poverty measure) estimated that for 2022/24 21.8% (20.5% in 2021/22) of children in the city were living in households where the household income is below 60% of median income after housing costs (more than 1 in every 5 children). This shows us that that despite a range of interventions put in place locally, there continues to be a steady rise in the number of children living in poverty.

Where have we made a difference?

- The number of people on universal credit has increased from 7.705 in March 2020 to 20.145 in Sept 2024.
- 92% of communities are performing better in child poverty than might be expected (when comparing them to similar communities). The city centre (east and west), Tillydrone and Bucksburn East have the poorer outcomes.
- 90% of communities are performing better in out of work benefits than might be expected (when comparing them to other similar communities). Torry east, Heathryfold/Middlefield, Woodside, Mastick and Northfield have the poorest outcomes.



Infant Feeding and Financial Inclusion Pathway Support

Through our access to emergency formula project, we have introduced a new infant feeding in a crisis pathway that delivers a Cash First Approach, supporting the family with food insecurity as well as support to maximise income. The project has made significant progress in the development of this pathway.

100% of referrals have been supported, with 58 vouchers issued to 41 families. 11 families have had repeat support. Families have also received follow-up contact from the CFine SAFE team, financial screening appointments, and additional support with food access, energy grants, and child-related items. The financial gain from the support is estimated to be around £15,000 per year. All families were also offered access to emergency food, a food pantry application, and support with energy-related costs. Positive feedback from participants highlighted the benefits of the vouchers and additional services provided.

We have had very positive feedback from participants:

- “The vouchers were a massive help to our family since our daughter requires the anti-reflux formula. This is about 133% of the price of an already expensive one. Monthly this adds up quickly. This has allowed us to prepare for winter, an expensive time generally. The other services such as the safe team and pantry have been a great help also. The pantry really helps us maintain cooking healthy meals without forking out an arm and a leg. The safe team have guided us through almost our first year financially which without, we would be struggling a lot more.” Local father who Received help from SAFE, IFP vouchers twice and attends the pantry on a regular basis.
- “You give me £60 voucher for formula, and I also received pantry food, thank you, it has really helped”. Local mum who received lots of help with various issues relating to their baby.

What Next?

Our Children Services Board will be working to expand our support for families who live in SIMD1.

This year we are delighted to have been selected as a Fairer Futures Pathfinder. We have commissioned CELCIS as our evaluation partner as we develop our model of Family Support, developed a [High Level Implementation Plan](#) and appointed a [Programme Lead](#) to support this important development.

Governance arrangements for our Fairer Futures work have been agreed. We have achieved much over the last year and will now establish our Fairer Futures Steering Group to coordinate the reform work being undertaken as part of our partnership with Scottish Government. All, ‘business as usual’ activity will continue to be overseen by the Children’s Services Board.

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 social isolation.

The Fairer Aberdeen Programme supported 135 parents and families with complex needs and 297 young people accessed 2,127 counselling sessions.

There were 600 contacts with older people to develop digital skills to help them keep in touch with their families and to access online services.

5,420 people saved with a credit union which provided £2.1m affordable loans, helping people avoid pay day loans and doorstep lenders.

981 households of older people and people with disabilities were supported with income maximisation and achieving a financial gain of over £537,000 and 1,742 households in priority areas received assistance with repairs, adaptations, and handyman services.

How are we Keeping the Promise?



Children's Services Plan Key Priority:

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.

81.3% of Looked After Children in a positive and sustained destination.

Work to support our care experienced children and young people is driven by our Children's Services Plan and Corporate Parenting Plan. This year we have made significant progress in helping to [Keeping the Promise](#) of improving outcomes for our care experienced young people as well their experience of being in care over the past year. Full details of this can be found in our [Keeping the Promise Year 3 Evaluation](#).

Where have we made a difference?

Positive Destinations

There has been a 10% reduction in the gap between the % of care experienced young people (81.3%) and all young people (90.1%) achieving a positive and sustained destination in 2022/23 compared to 2016/17 (74% CEYP and 92.8 All). This was a year-on-year increase of 13.9% from **67.4% in 2021/22**.

Support Care Experienced Young Parents

Our Family Nurse Partnership aiming to ensure that Care Experienced Young People, as early as possible in their pregnancy, have support for both them and their unborn child, are currently supporting 27 parents under 19 year old and 11, 20-25 year olds.

Of those that have completed the course, 90% feel prepared to be parents, indicating that it is having a very positive impact on those young people involved.

Over the coming year the project is seeking to work more closely with other agencies to be able to identify more eligible Care Experience parents.

Reducing Number of Looked After Children Missing From Children's Homes

Our 'Not at Home' policy normalises a young person's lifestyle and ensures that despite their care experienced status, their absence from a children's home is managed more similar way to that of a non-care experienced young person. The introduction of this policy has seen the number of reported missing care experienced young people drop from 39 in 2022 to less than 5 in 2024.

Care Experienced Young People themselves report that it was often much better for them as they would not have the feeling of being "hunted" by the Police

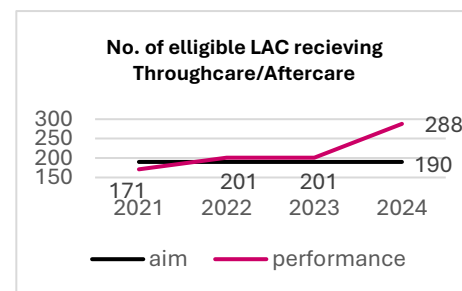


**the
promise**

Helping Looked After Children Transition out of Care

For those leaving care we are working to further develop our multi-agency and integrated approaches to ensure they receive high quality throughcare and aftercare.

Since the initiation of our improvement project addressing this, there has been a 68% increase in the number of eligible young people receiving aftercare (171 in 2021 to 288 in 2024), with 78% of eligible young people receiving support in 2024.



What have our Care Experienced Children and Young People told us about their experience of care?

This year our Bright Spots survey developed in partnership with Centre of Excellence for Looked After Children's Care and Protection (CELCIS) and Corum Voice captured the voices of two cohorts the 'Your Life Your Care' survey capturing the voices of 345 4–17-year-old Care Experienced Children and Young people and 227 16-26 year olds through the Your Life Beyond Care' survey. Full reports on their feedback can be found here: [Your Life Your Care/Your Life Beyond Care](#)

Needless to say, the information they provided us was invaluable, here are some of the highlights of their feedback:

Your Life Your Care

- More than half of children and young people (11- 17yrs) in Aberdeen had the same social worker over the last year.
- Six out of seven (86%) children and young people in care (8-17yrs) felt their lives were getting better.
- Fewer children and young people in Aberdeen had received an explanation about why they were in care.
- CEYP (11-17yrs) reporting they had with a really good friend was lower than the general population (91% to 97%).

Your Life Beyond Care

- More than nine in ten of care leavers (92%) who answered felt that they had a person who they trusted, who helped them and stuck by them no matter what.
- Two-thirds (66%) of comments about Youth Team Workers or Social Workers were very positive. More Fewer children and young people in Aberdeen had received an explanation about why they were in care.
- One in five (22%) care leavers felt lonely 'often/always', over twice the rate for young people in the general population.
- One in three (30%) of care leavers did not 'always' feel safe in their home and 36% did not 'always' feel safe in their neighbourhood. 41% did not 'always' feel settled in their home.

What Next?

We must consider how to positively respond to the feedback provided through the Bright Spots programme. Our children and young people have provided us with very clear feedback on areas where we have improved and areas where we still have further work to do.

We will explore how to build on this highly valued engagement work with our care experienced children, young people and young adults.

In addition, we will be expanding our whole family support offer to ensure early and preventative support to families mitigating the need for a referral to children's social work and ultimately supporting our efforts to reduce the number of looked after children living out with their family network.

Corporate Parenting Training

We must continue to build on our efforts to ensure all staff, with corporate parenting responsibilities, better understand how their role can contribute to improving the outcomes of care experienced young people.

If you haven't done so already we would strongly encourage you undertake training, no matter how peripherally you may feel your role in supporting care experienced young people may be. For more details about what training we offer contact Kris O'Mahoney: komahoney@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Children's Rights and Participation: How are we embedding UNCRC?



Children's Services Plan Key Priority:

Embedding the United Nations Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026.

On the 16th of July The UNCRC Implementation Bill finally came into effect, challenging all of us to ensure that the rights of the child are fully embedded upheld in everything that we do. Considerable activity has been underway to involve children and young people in our work in Aberdeen city for a number of years and this year has been no exception We recognise the need to continue to amplify our collaboration with children and young people and ensure that there are effective mechanisms in place to support the meaningful empowerment and participation of children and young people. We have been working with our wider Community Planning Partnership to ensure that our Children and Young People can be involved as far as possible in our improvement work.

Where have we made a difference?

- We now ensure that all of the reports that we now present to our Community Planning Board that affect Children and Young People have been informed by them.
- We have undergone a review of our Local Outcome Improvement Plan's Projects and are ensuring that all of those that affect children and young people involve them in some way.
- 90% of our staff report that they are confident in engaging children and young people.

Young carers supporting other young carers

Our young carers project was established to increase the number of young carers we support across the city. Since early last year the project has had continuing success, having increased the number of young carers accessing support by 20% and maintained it at this level.

Our Young Carers have been proactively involved in recruiting other young carers into the programme working in partnership with Station House Media Unit, in 2024 producing their [Young Warriors Video](#) published during Carers week highlighting the struggles and the experiences of our very own young carers in Aberdeen



Do you know of a young person who wants to be involved in our Community Planning Improvement Work?

Our Young Engagement Team is keen to make sure that all our young people have an opportunity to be involved in our improvement work.

If you work with a young person who would like to volunteer their support, you get in touch with us via the Community Planning email account:

CommunityPlanning@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Connecting with our young people

Our Children and Young People's Rights LOIP Improvement Project has been leading on the development and expansion of the ways in which we communicate with and involve children and young people in the planning and development of our work across the city.

The group regularly engage with young people led through the Aberdeen Youth Movement. This has included the leading several Roadshows. So far these have informed the Aberdeen City Council Phase 2 Budget Consultation with 380 young people participating.

Recently this also involved the 'Fish and Ships' youth led Oct holiday workshops for children and young people marked the first in a programme of event focused on and involving C&YP in environmental issues that affect them, in the lead up to and including the Tall Ships events in 2025.



The project is also compiling a comprehensive directory of youth engagement groups across the city including key interest and targets groups. We also work closely with youth participation colleges throughout the partnership to better establish opportunities to engage with our more vulnerable or hard to reach groups.

What Next?

We will be establishing a Children's Services Children and Young People Shadow Board, led by our Young Ambassadors and Aberdeen Youth Movement. The Shadow Board will help shape our agendas and provide input to key developments around core Children's Services Plan Themes

Across 2025 we will be engaging Children and Young People in the development of our Children's Services Plan 2026-2029. This city-wide consultation will not only inform the content of the Plan but is also intended to provide a means for young people to become involved in drafting the Child Friendly Version of our Plan as well as future policies and strategies.



How can you engage Children and Young People?

The UNCRC act, challenges us all to make sure we include children and young people in everything we do to support them. Not just consulting on what we plan to do but also how we can involve them in the co-development and delivery of our work.

If you are planning to engage with children and young people our Community Engagement Toolkit on our Community Planning website offers useful guidance in the 'Identify Stakeholder'/'Check if you need to involve young people' tab:

[Community Engagement Toolkit - Community Planning Aberdeen](#)



So, what next?

Our priorities for 2025/26



Building on the work and ongoing improvements reflected in our annual report we will maintain a focus on the following areas:

- **Child Poverty:** We will be expanding the reach of our Whole Family Approach to support more children, young people and parents through the development of our local Family Support Model as part of the Fairer Futures Partnership with the Scottish Government.
- **Attainment and attendance (particularly at primary 1):** As we have seen in this report whilst there is still significant progress being made to improve our curricular offer we still remain somewhat below the Scottish average for young people progressing onto a positive destination and the number of leavers with positive destinations from our priority neighbourhoods remains quite a bit lower than the city as a whole. So, we will focus on improving the attendance and attainment of our pupils to give them the best possible chance of achieving education, employment or training once they leave.
- **Addressing variation and improving transitions between child and adult services:** whilst significant changes have been made to support children transitioning from care, there is still work to be done to support those young people transitioning from child to adult social care, such as those with ASN/disabilities. We will focus on helping to make these transitions as effective and sustained as possible.

There are also a number of emerging areas of concern that we will be looking to address:

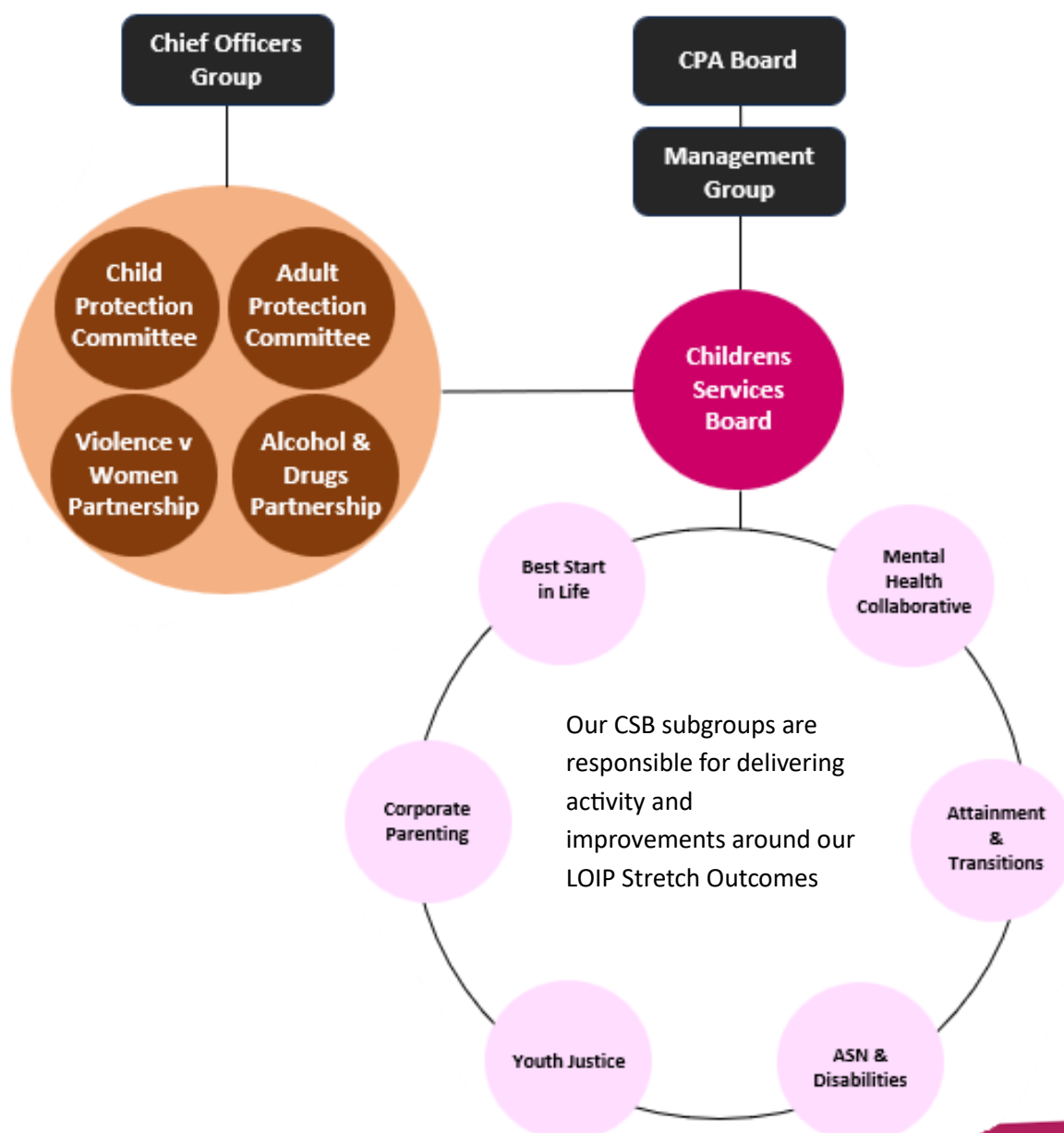
- **Childhood Obesity:** latest data indicates that there has been a concerning increase in the number of children with obesity in the city. To address this going forward we will be taking a whole system approach to healthy weight and healthy lifestyle interventions through our Healthy Weight Aberdeen Programme
- **Air Pollution:** We need to be curious around air pollution and try to better understand why more children are presenting at hospital due to asthma in Aberdeen.
- **Suicide:** We also need to look carefully at what more can be done to prevent suicide given concerning local trends.

Our Children's Services Planning Structure



Children's Services Board

Our Children's Services Board (CSB) is responsible for driving our partnership approach to improving outcomes for children and young people through our Children's Services Plan and other key statutory plans. The CSB reports to our Community Planning Board contributing to our Local Outcome Improvement Plan



OUR LEAD PARTNERS

- Aberdeen City Council
- Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership
- ACVO
- NESCoI
- NHS Grampian
- Police Scotland
- Public Health Scotland
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Skills Development Scotland
- Sport Aberdeen

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 offence by 2026	Increase the number of children with ASN or disability who secure a positive destination by 2026
Strategic Priorities					
➤ 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 ➤ Investigate factors sustaining household smoking and the rise in premature births	➤ 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. ➤ Investigate the rise in hospitalisations due to asthma and ➤ Ensure school PSE Programmes help keep children safe	➤ Deliver a Bairns Hoose ➤ Deliver 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	➤ 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	➤ Reduce levels of anti-social behavior ➤ Deliver Mentors in Violence Prevention across all secondary schools	➤ 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
➤ Implement a single Request for Assistance process ➤ reduce the number of access points to information and services ➤ investigate and address any issues in P1 attendance	➤ 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	➤ 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	➤ Aligned to the 10 principles of family support ➤ Jointly respond to the needs of those displaced ➤ Evaluate readiness for implementation of the UNCRC ➤ Support the implementation of recommendations arising from the review of Employability	➤ 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	➤ 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



**Community
Planning
Aberdeen**

Community Planning Aberdeen

You can find further information on Community Planning Aberdeen on our website: [Home - Community Planning Aberdeen](#)

Children Services Board

You can also find details of the Children Services Board, including our various Plans, Annual Reports and our latest data on our outcomes here:

[Children's Services Board - Community Planning Aberdeen](#)

Children's Services Plan 2023-2026

[Children's Services Plan 2023-2026](#)

[Children's Services Plan 2023-26 Annual Report 2024/25](#)

Contact Us

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