

CHILDREN'S SERVICES BOARD

Note of Meeting

24th March 2026

Present: - Emma MacPherson); Gette Cobban (GC); Graeme Dale (GD); Graeme Simpson (GS); James Simpson (JS); Julie Warrender (JW); Margaret Stewart (MS); Nicola Graham (GS); Paul McNamee (PMcN); Shona Duff (SD) Shona Milne (SM); Tracy Davis (TD).

Apologies: - Eleanor Sheppard (ES); Kirsten Douglas (KD); Phil Mackie (PM); Robin McGregor (RM).

Agenda item		Actioned by:
1. Welcome and apologies	GS Welcomed SD as a guest attendee	GS
2. Note of previous meeting	Note of Meeting 19th January 2026 Proposed by: GD Seconded by: JW All matters arising considered within the items below	GS
3. Keeping the Promise – The Story So Far ‘Story of Progress’ towards Keeping the Promise ; Keeping the Promise: A Local Perspective: The Promise Progress Framework	SD provided an overview of activity underway to Keep the Promise nationally and locally including: GS provided an introduction to the Item, noting this approval of the Children, Care Experience and Children’s Services Bill (otherwise referred to as ‘The Promise Bill’) - The bill has now been made into an Act and is pending Royal Assent. An implementation timeline is still to be provided but will have significant implications for all services. - CSB agreed to continue to monitor its progress and bring any relevant implications to the CSB for discussion	SD/GS CSB/GS/JS

Agenda item		Actioned by:
	SD then provided an Overview of The Promise Route Maps: The Promise – Route Maps and Doing Data Differently SD provided an overview of the Promise Route Maps published in December 2025 as part of Plan 24–30, outlining their role as the primary delivery instruments for achieving The Promise by 2030. • 25 Route Maps sit under the five foundations of The Promise and set out milestones, responsibilities, dependencies and timescales. • The Route Maps are interdependent, with progress in some areas contingent on delivery in others, including legislation, advocacy and care leaver entitlements. Members noted that the Route Maps are living documents and will be updated to reflect policy, legislative and implementation changes, including the Promise Bill and Care and Justice Act. CSB Noted: • Concerns were raised regarding the Route Maps complexity, the time required to navigate them, and their limited usability as a practical planning or prioritisation tool. Capacity and resource constraints were identified as key barriers. • The Route Maps were not easily accessible to non-specialist audiences, including the care-experienced community. • TD/GC noted concerns regarding the lack of dedicated resource to support engagement with the Route Maps and the risk of over-reliance on local authority Promise leads. COSLA Engagement • COSLA has requested feedback from Chief Social Work Officers and senior leaders on how Route Maps are informing local planning, areas of alignment or duplication with existing activity,	

Agenda item		Actioned by:
	Doing Data Differently An update was provided on the Promise's Doing Data Differently programme, including the Information Sharing Project, the Promise Progress Framework and Story of Progress, and the newly launched Promise Data Map. The Data Map focuses on capturing information about the types of data held by organisations rather than individual-level data. CSB Members noted: • The limited awareness of the Data Map across partners, uncertainty regarding expectations. • Governance and resourcing, and concerns relating to information governance. • System compatibility and delivery support. • The potential value of a Once-for-Scotland approach to data sharing was highlighted, subject to national support. <u>Actions</u> • CSB members: to familiarise themselves with the Promise Route Maps and consider relevance to current planning and improvement activity. • SD: to offer support to partners on navigating and understanding the Route Maps, including demonstrations were helpful. • SD: to seek clarity from the Promise team on expectations, timescales and resourcing for the Data Map and Doing Data Differently activity. • SD: to provide an update to the next CSB on national expectations and emerging guidance relating to data and Route Maps. • GS: to bring a fuller briefing on the forthcoming Promise Bill to a future CSB meeting.	CSB Members SD SD SD GS

Agenda item		Actioned by:
4. Aberdeen City Corporate Parenting Plan 2026-29 Corporate Parenting Plan 2026-2029.pdf	SD presented an overview of the draft Corporate Parenting Plan 2026–29, noting that the Plan is a statutory requirement and will form a key component of the Children’s Services Plan, while also operating as a distinct partnership document: Development • The Plan has been developed collaboratively through the Corporate Parenting Improvement Group and partner engagement over recent months. • The Bright Spots Survey (2024) is a primary evidence base, with strong engagement from care-experienced young people providing lived experience, priorities and areas for improvement. • Priorities have been sense-checked with corporate parents and young people at an engagement event in October 2025, • The Plan is intended to be a living document, capable of being reviewed and updated in response to emerging legislation, policy change and learning, including the phased implementation of the Children (Care and Care-Experienced Persons) legislation. Content and Structure • The Plan covers the period 2026–2029 and is presented in a visual and accessible format, including a digital flipbook. Initial feedback from young people indicated that this approach was more engaging and easier to navigate. • The Plan sets out key foundations, vision, guiding principles, achievements and progress to date, and aligns priorities with the refreshed Children’s Services Plan. • Priority areas include: health and wellbeing; education, attainment and employability; transitions; participation and voice; relationships and belonging; and rights and advocacy. The Plan explicitly recognises the impact of poverty on care-experienced young people and the diverse needs of young people, including those placed out with Aberdeen City, requiring different engagement approaches.	SD

Agenda item		Actioned by:
	Action Planning Approach - The Plan does not include an extensive detailed action plan. Instead, it sets out a series of high-level, schematic actions, with detailed delivery planning to be developed collaboratively through the Corporate Parenting Group. Young people will be involved in shaping actions to ensure they are meaningful, proportionate and achievable. Corporate Parenting Leadership and Commitment - Concerns were raised regarding variable attendance at the Corporate Parenting Group and the delegation of attendance to officers without sufficient authority to drive change. - CSB members were reminded that delivery of the Plan requires senior-level commitment, shared ownership across all corporate parents, and consistent attendance by individuals with influence and decision-making authority. - There is scope to widen membership of the Corporate Parenting Group, including interest from Sport Aberdeen. Invitations and representation will be reviewed to ensure appropriate coverage across partners. - Members noted that forthcoming legislative changes will widen eligibility for aftercare, introduce statutory lifelong advocacy, and strengthen multi-agency planning and reporting expectations, including responsibilities for IJBs, NHS Boards and local authorities. Bright Spots Survey - Work is underway to strengthen local participation and communication approaches to maintain up-to-date insight into young people's lived experience, particularly for groups who are less able to engage through traditional mechanisms.	GD/SD

Agenda item		Actioned by:
	<u>Actions</u> • SD/GS: Representation at the Corporate Parenting Group to be reviewed to ensure attendance by appropriately senior and influential officers. • SD: Continue refinement of the draft Corporate Parenting Plan, including amendments identified through partner and young people's feedback. • SD: Corporate Parenting Group to develop detailed delivery actions collaboratively through the Corporate Parenting Group, with involvement from young people • SD/CSB Leads: Review and widen Corporate Parenting Group membership, including engagement with Sport Aberdeen – Shona Duff / CSB Leads • SD/Participation Leads: Strengthen participation and communication approaches to maintain up-to-date insight into young people's lived experience – Shona Duff / Participation Leads	SD/GS SD SD SD/CSB Leads SD/ Participation Leads
5. Draft Children's Services Plan Update Draft Children Services Plan 2026-31 Consultation Version (Feb 2026).pdf Children's Services Plan 2026-31 Easy Read Consultation Version (Feb 2026).pdf	JS provided an update on progress with the draft Children's Services Plan 2026–31, including the ongoing consultation process and emerging feedback: Draft Consultation and Feedback • The draft Plan has just completed its statutory consultation period and been shared with the Anti-Poverty and Inequalities Committee for comment. The Plan is scheduled for presentation to the Education and Children's Services on the 28 April. • A workshop with Community Planning Partnership strategic leads is also planned to provide further scrutiny and affirmation of the proposed system changes (30 March). • Initial feedback received to date was reported as broadly positive, with no significant concerns raised.	JS

Agenda item		Actioned by:
	• Comments received so far have focused on: The overall length of the Plan; areas of repetition with the Children's Services Plan Annual Report; some data points requiring clarification or updating; and a small number of actions requiring inclusion, including vaccination-related activity. • Analysis of public consultation responses is ongoing and will be incorporated once available. • Members were advised that the final stage of formal approval will be through the Education, Children and Young People Committee on 24 June. Plan Structure and Revisions • A revised version of the Plan is being developed to address feedback and reduce duplication with the Annual Report. • The revised draft has been significantly streamlined, with substantial reductions in length. The Plan is intended to function as a strategic summary and index document, with links to detailed supporting strategies, plans and theory of change documents rather than repeating extensive contextual data. • The vision, outcomes and system change priorities remain directly aligned to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). • Contextual information will be presented as high-level highlights by age, stage and key population groups, with detailed analysis signposted to the Annual Report. • Forthcoming legislative and policy changes, including the Promise legislation and other emerging national requirements, will be explicitly referenced within the Plan, with a clear statement that actions and priorities will be adapted over the lifetime of the Plan in response to these changes.	

Agenda item		Actioned by:
	Workforce Considerations - Members agreed the importance of including a short section within the Plan on the Workforce. It was agreed that this section should focus on shared system-level commitments rather than individual organisational workforce plans. Statutory Content and Delivery Planning - The Plan will continue to meet statutory requirements, including reference to Getting It Right for Every Child, UNCRC implementation, The Promise, child poverty and mental health and wellbeing. - A detailed delivery plan is included to meet statutory expectations, presented in a clear and visual format. - Governance arrangements will be updated to reflect changes to community planning and LOIP structures as they are finalised. - Appendices will provide assurance of alignment with the National Performance Framework and UNCRC articles. Easy-Read / Child-Friendly Version - MS provided an update on development of an accessible version of the Plan, co-produced with Aberdeen Youth Movement. - Members welcomed the approach, noting that the document was clear, readable and accessible without being overly simplified. - It was agreed that further minor refinement of visuals would be undertaken and that feedback from young people would continue to inform whether an additional simplified version is required.	

Agenda item		Actioned by:
	<u>Actions</u> • JS to continue to revise the draft Children's Services Plan to reflect consultation feedback, streamline content and incorporate agreed additions • JS to circulate an updated working draft to CSB members at key stages of the approval process • JS to insert a short section on workforce sustainability and resilience • NHS/LA Leads to review draft mental health and wellbeing content to ensure alignment with existing strategies • MS/JS to finalise and refine the easy read / accessible version in consultation with Aberdeen Youth Movement	JS JS JS NHS/LA CSB Members MS/JS
6. Draft Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2025/26 Aberdeen City Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2025-26.docx	JS provided an update on the Draft Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2025/26, noting it is nearing completion; however, a number of gaps and updates remain to be addressed to ensure accuracy and completeness prior to formal approval: • Members were advised that section leads should re-review their respective contributions to ensure that narrative, data and examples are current, accurate and reflective of activity undertaken during the reporting period. • Specific areas highlighted for further review included primary and secondary school age data, updates relating to The Promise, and completion of outstanding narrative within the child poverty section regarding Free School Meals	

Agenda item		Actioned by:
	Timescales and Approval - Members were advised that the Annual Report must now move into formal governance and approval processes alongside the Children's Services Plan. - Final amendments, updates and comments must be provided no later than Close of Play on 24 April. Where no response is received, sections may be progressed on the basis of nil response in order to meet governance deadlines. - James confirmed that support would be available to contributors requiring clarification or discussion and encouraged partners not to delay in raising queries or issues. <u>Actions</u> - CSB Leads: to review and update their respective contributions to the Annual Report, ensuring accuracy, completeness and up-to-date data - SM: Education leads to review and update primary and secondary school age and section of the Child Poverty chapter relating to free school meals - GS: Complete the sections relating to The Promise/Whole Family Wellbeing Funding - CSB Leads: Complete any outstanding narrative - JS: Circulate an email setting out required updates, deadlines and expectations - JS: Collate final updates and prepare the Annual Report for governance and approval processes	CSB Leads SM GS CSB Leads JS JS

Agenda item		Actioned by:
7. Audit 8 Findings Draft Action Plan - Audit 8.docx	Graeme Simpson to share the findings of the Aberdeen City Multi Agency Child Protection Audit 8, regarding Children Living at Home who are on a Compulsory Supervision Order. CSB was advised of recent audit activity relating to children who are looked after at home, undertaken to support self-evaluation and preparation for potential joint inspection. The findings have been shared with the Child Protection Committee and were noted by the Board: Key Themes Arising from the Audit • Consistency and timeliness of reviews for children looked after at home • Children on the edges of school and those subject to part-time timetables, aligning with existing LOIP improvement activity • Health outcomes for looked after children, including challenges associated with accessing and aligning data across health systems • Ensuring children and young people's voices continue to direct and inform planning and improvement activity • Effective use of chronologies • Consistent application of national guidance in relation to education support plans Implementation of Recommendations • Responsibility for overseeing improvement activity relating to looked after children will sit with CSB, with progress to be monitored and reported on a quarterly basis. • Members were encouraged to actively support delivery of agreed actions and to raise issues early where barriers are identified.	Graeme Simpson

Agenda item		Actioned by:
	<u>Action</u> CSB: Monitor and report quarterly on improvement activity relating to children looked after at home	
8. CYP Participation in Governance and Planning	Margaret Stewart provided an update on progress in developing arrangements to support children and young people's ongoing involvement in the development, delivery and governance of the Children's Services Plan: Progress on Youth Engagement in the Planning and Delivery Process - Development of a dedicated participation structure has been progressing alongside development of the Children's Services Plan. The intention is not to create a single, static group, but a flexible and inclusive model that reflects the diversity of children and young people across the City. - There is a wide range of existing participation activity across the city, including young people engaged through universal youth participation groups, schools, community projects and targeted services. - Mapping work has been undertaken to understand existing mechanisms for youth voice, including engagement through organisations such as Aberdeen Youth Movement, youth ambassador programmes, community initiatives and previous consultation activity, including Bright Spots.	MS

Agenda item		Actioned by:
	It was emphasised that the proposed approach will not rely on a one-size-fits-all model. Instead, it will combine: • A representative group of young people to support strategic engagement • Multiple routes and mechanisms to capture wider views • Clear two-way communication between children and young people and the Children's Services Board The approach has been informed by the Lundy Model of Participation, focusing on space, voice, audience and influence. Members were advised that discussions with Professor Lundy had been affirming of the direction of travel, while also highlighting areas for further development. Key Considerations • Ensuring clarity on how and when children and young people's views will inform decision-making • Identifying meaningful points within planning, delivery and reporting cycles where youth input is most valuable • Avoiding overly frequent or tokenistic engagement, while ensuring feedback demonstrates how young people's views have influenced outcomes • Building sustainable approaches supported by multiple partners across the system • Important to capture and evidencing the influence of children and young people more consistently, recognising that good practice already exists across the city. • Future engagement should move beyond consultation towards relationship-based approaches that enable ongoing dialogue and shared understanding.	

Agenda item		Actioned by:
	- Information should be presented in formats that are understandable and engaging - Consideration must be given to how meeting information and progress updates could be shared in child- and young person-friendly ways - Must be clear about language, concepts and timescales <u>Actions</u> - MS: Continue development of a flexible participation model to support children and young people's involvement in planning and governance - MS: Further engage with existing youth participation groups to refine the proposed approach - MS/CSB Leads: Clarify how children and young people's views will feed into decision-making and reporting cycles - JS/MS: Explore options for sharing Board information and progress updates in child and young person-friendly formats - CSB Members: Ensure future engagement activity includes younger children and those requiring alternative communication approaches - MS: Share presentation materials used to illustrate the proposed engagement approach	MS MS MS/CSB Leads JS/MS CSB Members MS
9. Governance and Assurance CSB Progress Tracker (QAF Audits Tab)	James Simpson to provide an overview of outstanding actions from Quality Assurance Framework Audits JS to get in touch with SM and Allison Horne (AH) regarding updates on progress on the processes of sharing details of Childs Plans between agencies	JS JS/SM/AH

Agenda item		Actioned by:
	GS/JS to discuss incorporating the Actions of Audit 8 into the Tracker	JS/GS
10. Funding and awards tracker	Leads were asked to consider the opportunities available in the various trackers a) CPA Funding Tracker b) CPA Award Tracker c) CPA Comms Tracker	CSB Board members
11. Key messages from other groups:	Child Protection Committee/Chief Officers Group: - National Review regarding Child Sexual Exploitation is now underway, running for approximately 6 months and will include involvement from all Local Authority areas - A new risk register is currently in development this will come the CSB for comment in due course Aberdeen Young Movement - The group has been heavily involved in sharing the development of the LOIP with schools and is now looking to see how this could be shared further with young people in Further and Higher Education establishments. - Work is also underway to encourage young people to register to vote	GS MS
12. AOB	GC will be moving on from her role as the Third Sector Promise Lead; GS extended his thanks for all of her contributions over the past 3 years on behalf of the CSB and the wider Partnership. A replacement has been confirmed but cannot yet be named, they will attend in GC's place in due course	GS

Agenda item		Actioned by:
13. Date of Future Meetings	Date of Next Meeting: <i>1 June 2026</i> Future Meeting Dates: 1 June 17 August 5 October 7 December	