

CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLAN 2026-2031



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Foreword

It is my privilege, as Chair of the Children's Services Board, to introduce the Children's Services Plan 2026–31—a blueprint for real and lasting change for Aberdeen's children, young people, and families. This plan is rooted in our commitment to ensure that, by 2036, every child and young person in Aberdeen has the opportunity to fulfil their potential, regardless of background or circumstance. Our vision is bold but clear: to close the gaps that persist in our city, particularly for those living in our most deprived communities. Rather than following the usual 3-year cycle, this Plan has been established to direct our shared work over the next 5 years. Amending timescales has enabled the closer alignment of the Children's Services Plan with our Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-36 and other related strategies and plans.

We recognise that too many of our children still face barriers that prevent them from fulfilling their potential. The data shows us that: almost one in five children in Aberdeen live in poverty, and the impacts of deprivation are felt most acutely in our priority neighbourhoods. Our Plan sets out a determined response, emphasising early intervention, whole-family support, and to challenge the structural inequalities that hold families back. We will focus our efforts where they are needed most, ensuring that resources, expertise, and compassion reach those living in our priority neighbourhoods.

Ensuring children's rights are at the heart of all we do our approach is shaped by the voices of children, young people, families, and communities. Through extensive engagement, we have listened carefully to what matters most to them, safety, opportunity, belonging, and a genuine say in shaping their future. This feedback, coupled with robust local data and the expertise of our partners, underpins the three central priorities of this plan

Challenging Child Poverty

Central to our vision is our focus to reduce child poverty. We will use data-driven tools to identify and support families facing hardship, expand financial inclusion initiatives, and address barriers to access to healthcare, affordable childcare, housing, and food security. Our whole-family approach means support will not be piecemeal, but coordinated, timely, and empowering - helping families to build resilience and stability for the future.

Real change will only be achieved through meaningful collaboration across all sectors - local government, health, education, the voluntary sector, and, most importantly, families themselves. We are committed to transparency and accountability, with clear measures to track progress and a governance structure that ensures every partner plays their part.

Let's work together, to challenge ourselves and each other, and to make Aberdeen a city where every child is valued, supported, and able to flourish. The Children's Services Plan 2026–31 is not just a document, it is our shared promise to the children and families of Aberdeen to enable them grow up loved, safe, and respected, realising their full potential. Together, we can deliver on that promise.



Graeme Simpson

Children's Services Board Chair,

Chief Social Work Officer, Aberdeen City Council



Our Vision

By 2036 we want to make sure that all children and young people in Aberdeen achieve their potential. To achieve this, we have set ourselves two 10-year goals that:

95% of young people in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 1 and vulnerable groups achieve a positive destination on leaving school by 2036.

Why is this a priority?

It is clear that the life circumstances of children and the impact of poverty affects their educational attainment, and that educational inequality can lead to inequalities of health and wellbeing in early adulthood and beyond. In Aberdeen, increasing numbers of children live in poverty, have disabilities, have additional support needs, or have developmental concerns before starting school.

By age 16–19, participation in education, employment, or training is significantly lower in the 20% most deprived areas (83.5%) compared with the least deprived areas (95.9%). Young people who have experienced trauma in early life are at greater risk of disengaging from school and require targeted support to prevent lifelong disadvantage. Community feedback highlights the need for safe, affordable, youth-focused spaces, activities, and accessible lifelong learning opportunities. Without intervention, these inequalities will continue to limit positive destinations and long-term outcomes for children and young people.

Our Response

Children and young people will be empowered through co-created, safe, and welcoming spaces, with access to trusted adults, and initiatives to build confidence and emotional skills. We will improve early identification and coordinated multi-agency responses for those affected by exploitation, substance use, or developmental delays, ensuring timely and effective support.

We will provide bespoke support for young people at risk of leaving school without a positive destination, develop work experience programmes that bridge classroom learning with practical workplace skills, especially for disengaged young people.

Where We Are Heading

By 2036, through collaborative planning and our system changes empowering young people and supporting their attainment and transition, we aim to break cycles of deprivation, foster resilience, and ensure every child and young person in Aberdeen has the opportunity to achieve a positive destination on leaving school.

Reduce the proportion of people in relative poverty and homelessness by 6.5% by 2036

Why is this a priority?

In Aberdeen today, too many people face impossible choices, deciding between heating their homes or putting food on the table. Rising costs, insecure incomes, and inefficient housing have left 18% of the population in relative poverty, with thousands of children growing up in low-income households. One in seven households has no one in work, and those most at risk, such as lone parents, families with disabled members, and minority ethnic communities, often feel powerless and unheard. Children from deprived areas are more likely to experience poor health, miss developmental milestones, and face barriers such as parental smoking and being overweight. Support systems, though well-intentioned, are fragmented and reactive, leaving gaps that perpetuate hardship and increase the risk of homelessness. Community voices have made it clear: there is an urgent need for support with the cost of living and longer term solutions that are shaped by those who experience these challenges first-hand. Too often, systemic barriers prevent people from having a say in decisions that affect their lives.

Our Response

In response, Aberdeen is taking bold, coordinated action to address the root causes of poverty and inequality by moving away from fragmented, crisis-driven responses towards a joined-up, preventative and community-led system. Through the Families and Communities Support Model, services across the city are being connected so people can access practical help, advice and prevention support in one place, earlier and without being passed between organisations. At the same time, embedding early intervention and homelessness prevention, supported by earlier risk identification, strengthened partnership working under Ask and Act, and new digital tools, means fewer people reach crisis point. Together, these changes reflect what communities have told us they need: accessible, joined-up support shaped by lived experience, focused not only on managing immediate pressures but on building long-term financial stability, secure housing, and a sustained reduction in poverty across Aberdeen.

This system change ensures people receive the right support at the right time, reducing the risk of poverty and homelessness and preventing ill health and supporting healthy lifestyles.

Where We Are Heading?

By 2036, these system changes will have transformed Aberdeen. Fewer people will live in poverty, and homelessness will be significantly reduced. Aberdeen will be a city where support is joined-up, and every person has the power, support, and opportunity to flourish

Introduction

This Children's Services Plan explains our goals to supporting all children and young people in Aberdeen by the year 2031 and outlining the steps we will take over the next 5 years to reach those goals. We have organised the plan into four simple sections so you can see what we are focusing on and how we will make a difference. Here is what you will find inside:

- **About Aberdeen's Children and Families:** This section shares some main facts and figures about local children, young people, and families. It also includes what our communities, children and young people have told us about what matters most to them and what they think we should work on over the next ten years.
- **Our Main Focus Areas:** Here, we explain the two main priorities we have chosen, based on the information we have gathered. We will describe what these are and what we plan to do to achieve them.
- **Supporting Our Children, Young People and Families:** This part provides an overview of our work to support national priorities, such as education, involving children and young people in important decisions, supporting those affected by poverty, and helping children and young people who are or who have been in care, with links to our associated Plans.
- **How We will Make It Happen:** The last section explains who will be leading the work and how we will make sure these plans turn into real action. It also includes a clear list of the main activities we will carry out to achieve our goals.

We hope this plan makes it clear what we aim to achieve for children and young people in Aberdeen, and how we will work together to make these changes happen.

About Aberdeen's Children and Families

In development of our Children's Services Plan we have undertaken significant analysis and evaluation of our services, progress and areas for improvement. Details of these can be found in the following links

Aberdeen City Population Needs Assessment

Our [Population Needs Assessment](#) has up-to-date statistics about everyone in the city, including children and young people

Children's Services Plan Annual Report

Our [Children's Services Plan Annual Report](#) offers a more detailed evaluation of the work we have used to inform the priorities set out in this Plan.

(Taken together the Population Needs Assessment and Annual Report form the evaluation and evidence base we have used to identify our Children's Services Plan priorities and actions)

Your Place, Your Plans Your Future

You can find the full report on what our children, young people and communities told us were a priority in our Your Place Your Plans Your Future Final Report: [Your Place, Your Plan, Your Future](#).

Community Planning Aberdeen

There are also plenty of other useful resources and links on our Community Planning Aberdeen Website: [Home - Community Planning Aberdeen](#)

The examples below provide a very short summary of highlights on the needs of our children and young people, for more extensive detail on the data, evidence, assessment and evaluation that has informed our priorities please see our: [Annual Report 2025/26](#)

What Do We Know About Our Children and Young People?

Under 5s

82% of babies born a healthy weight.

Eligible 2 year old childcare uptake increased

Infant mortality has risen to 4.5 per 1,000 births.

12% of mothers smoked during pregnancy

Exclusive breastfeeding at 6–8 weeks now 43%.

15% of children show developmental concerns at 27–30 months.

Primary

Primary attendance increased to 93.6%.

P7 dental health improved to 85% decay-free

Three-quarters meet expected literacy and numeracy levels.

Exclusions rose to 5.9 per 1,000 pupils.

Primary 1 attendance lower than national at 91%.

Diversity increasing across primary school communities.

Secondary

Secondary roll has increased to 11,360 pupils.

Alcohol-related hospital admissions fell to 190 per 100,000.

96% have an adult to talk to about feelings.

70.9% of S6 achieved five or more Level 6 awards.

Sustained Positive Destinations were 90.1%

Exclusion rates remain high at 26.7 per 1,000.

What Do We Know About Our Children and Young People?

Care Experience

Our Bright Spots survey had a 72% response rate (highest in Scotland)

88% school attendance for care-experienced pupils.

Exclusions increased to 659.9 per 1,000 pupils.

Only 60% care-experienced pupils reached positive destinations after leaving school.

47% of care leavers not in education, training or work.

Family Time Hub strengthens safe and meaningful contact children with their families.

Child Poverty

11.9% of children live in low-income households.

Workless households remain high at 17.4%.

66.7% of children in poverty live in working families.

Single-parent families make up 58% of low-income households.

Fuel poverty affects 26% of households, higher in social housing.

Universal Credit caseload rose to 23,881 residents.

Children's Rights

Youth voice strengthened through Aberdeen Youth Movement

Young people are co-designing services, plans, and consultations.

Care-experienced young people are helping to shape recruitment decisions.

Children are influencing local policy via citywide consultations.

Shadow Board for young people being established in 2026.

Young people are redesigning Rights Service materials and information.

Your Place, Your Plans Your Future: What have our Communities Told Us:

People of Aberdeen and our communities are at the heart of Community Planning Aberdeen. 2087 people across Aberdeen, including 587 children and young people, shared what matters most to them through our Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future engagement.

The engagement ran from 24th March to 18th May 2025 and was a combination of the following:

- online survey for adults
- online survey designed for children and young people.
- Six local events, with specific activities designed by the Aberdeen Youth Movement and Aberdeen Ambassadors for children and young people.
- outreach programme where we went to 98 groups/schools/locations across Aberdeen and facilitated participation to meet people's needs.

Engagement Results

Participants rated a range of place-and-community-related themes on a scale of 1–7 and contributed more than 13,000 comments about what they think is working well in Aberdeen and the areas they felt needed to improve. The data and comments have been considered alongside the Population Needs Assessment in making decisions about which priorities and system changes should be within the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. Read the full engagement report [here](#).

Mean scores - all participants



The five highest ranking themes were:

Natural space (5)
 Play and recreation (4.3)
 Facilities and services (4.2)
 Social interaction (4.2)
 Feeling safe (4.2)

The five lowest ranking themes were:

Influence and sense of control (3.3)
 Traffic and parking (3.4)
 Work and Economy (3.7)
 Care and Maintenance (3.8)
 Public Transport (3.8)



Our Main Areas of Focus

Taking into consideration all the information above as well as the wider data and evidence from our Population Needs Assessment, Annual Report, Consultation, feedback from our workforce and key stakeholders, we have developed our Strategic Priorities for our Children's Services Plan. The Plan will involve working directly towards 2 main priorities outlined under our Local Outcome Improvement Plan:

Children Families and Lifelong Learning:

Safe, co-designed spaces offering onsite support, person centred activities and individual progression pathways for young people at risk: Co-design and deliver a joined-up system of safe, supportive spaces and approaches, targeted interventions and personalised progression pathways that identifies and supports young people at risk of harm, disengagement from education, substance use or child criminal exploitation

Communities and Housing:

Integrated Community Support Model: Develop a place-based system of hubs, personal casework, integrated pathways and outreach support providing a single co-ordinated experience of access to financial empowerment, housing support and pathways to safe and affordable homes, food sharing, health, employability and family support. This system change ensures people receive the right support at the right time, reducing the risk of poverty and homelessness.

You can find more details of these in our [Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-36](#)

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Input			Output	Outcome	
System Change	People who will receive proportionate support	Lead Partner	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031	Longer Term 2036
1. <u>Safe, co-designed spaces offering onsite support, person centred activities and individual progression pathways for young people at risk</u> Co-design and deliver a joined-up system of safe, supportive spaces and approaches, targeted interventions and personalised progression pathways that identifies and supports young people at risk of harm, disengagement from education, substance use or child criminal exploitation.	Children and young people at risk of harm, homelessness, disengagement from education, substance use or child criminal exploitation Boys in deprived neighbourhoods	Aberdeen City Council Co-Lead: Police Scotland	No. of young people (by locality) using the safe spaces % of young people at risk of substance use harm or exploitation actively supported through new model, reporting improved SHANNARI measures No. of youth anti-social behaviour calls % of 12-18 year old boys reporting sense of belonging or connection to peers Percentage increase in school attendance % of Young people receiving bespoke support transitioning to positive destination	90% of young people in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 1 and vulnerable groups achieve a positive destination on leaving school by 2031. Baseline: (2023/24) Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 1: 84.5% Looked After Children: 60% Additional Support Needs/ Disability : 89.4% SIMD 5: 94.7%	Ten Year Outcome 1 95% of young people in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 1 and vulnerable groups achieve a positive destination on leaving school by 2031. Baseline: 2023/24 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 1: 84.5% Looked After Children: 60% Additional Support Needs/ Disability: 89.4% SIMD 5: 94.7%

COMMUNITIES & HOUSING

Input		Output		Outcome	
System Change	People who will receive proportionate support	Lead Partner	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031	Longer Term 2036
3. <u>Families and Communities Support Model</u> Develop a place-based system of hubs, personal casework, integrated pathways and outreach support providing a single co-ordinated experience of access to financial empowerment, housing support and pathways to safe and affordable homes, food sharing, health, employability and family support. This system change aims to ensure people receive the right support at the right time, and seeks to reduce health inequalities and the risk of poverty and homelessness, while preventing avoidable harms such as poor mental wellbeing, domestic abuse and substance use.	Families in deprived areas and those identified as vulnerable. People most at risk of homelessness	Aberdeen City Council (ACC) Co-lead: ACVO	No. households receiving financial and wraparound support. No. of families whose needs are met through universal services Number of individuals prevented from being homeless % of vulnerable families with children under five receiving support No. of families subject to public protection intervention	Reduce the proportion of people in relative poverty and homelessness by 3% by 2031 Baseline 2024/25: 11.9% of children (0-15 yrs) in Aberdeen live in relative poverty and 18% of people in Scotland. Baseline: 332 young people and 838 single adults across (2024/2025)	Ten Year Outcome 3 Reduce the proportion of people in relative poverty and homelessness by 6.5% by 2036 Baseline 2024/25: 11.9% of children (0-15 yrs) in Aberdeen live in relative poverty and 18% of people in Scotland. Baseline: 332 young people and 838 single adults across (2024/2025)

Looking to the Future

How Policy and Legislation are likely to affect our services

Over the next five years, children's services in Scotland will be shaped by a continued shift towards a rights-based, preventative and whole-family approach, underpinned by significant legislative and policy reform. Central to this is the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024. As duties embedded in the Act become more established, public bodies will be required to routinely evidence how children's rights are being respected, protected and fulfilled in decision-making, service design and resource allocation, with increased expectations around participation, impact assessment and transparency.

Delivery of Keeping The Promise will continue to be a major driver of change to 2030. The Children's (Care, Care Experience & Children's Services Planning) Act 2026 seeks to further support to care experienced children, reduce system complexity and strengthen early family support. Implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 continues to be planned for with full implementation now anticipated in 2027. This will seek to further divert young people away from adult justice pathways to access trauma informed and community based support that provides early and effective intervention. These key pieces of legislation and associated reforms signal a continued move away from crisis-led intervention towards relational, trauma-informed and community-based support, particularly for adolescents and those on the edge of care or justice systems.

Eradicating child poverty is expected to remain a local and national priority, influencing social security, childcare, housing and employability policy. Planned mitigations to UK welfare reforms, further expansion of early learning and childcare, and increased emphasis on whole-family support models are likely to impact how local partnerships design and commission services.

Children's Services Planning itself is also evolving. From 2026 onwards, plans will be required to demonstrate compliance with UNCRC incorporation and stronger alignment with outcomes-based, place-based planning, reinforcing accountability for collaboration, prevention and measurable improvement in children's wellbeing.

Aberdeen has welcomed and continues to see shifts in its population demography largely driven by migration challenges as a result of world conflict. Our school role population has notably increased in recent years along with a growing number of asylum seeking young people. Adapting our support offer to these groups remains evolving and responsive to their needs. We anticipate responding to migration demands will remain a focus as we welcome more young people to our city.

Supporting Our Workforce

Over the next five years, the ability of our services in Aberdeen City to meet the needs of children, young people and families will depend heavily on having a resilient, skilled and supported workforce across education, health, social work, early learning and childcare, and the third sector. Local evidence shows that while our workforce continues to demonstrate commitment and creativity, it is operating in a context of rising demand, increasing complexity of need, and sustained pressure on capacity and resources.

Key workforce risks include recruitment and retention challenges across key sectors, (health visiting, children's social work and early years services), increasing workloads, and the impact of stress and fatigue on staff wellbeing. National and local evidence point to growing risk of burnout and turnover, particularly in roles providing statutory or crisis-led support, which in turn affects continuity of relationships for vulnerable children and families. In Aberdeen, financial pressures and service redesign also have the potential to create uncertainty for staff, reinforcing the importance of clear communication, strong leadership and practical support during periods of change.

As a partnership we are committed to treating our workforce as a core enabler of improved outcomes. This includes strengthening recruitment and retention approaches, expanding access to learning and development linked to trauma-informed and rights-based practice, and supporting flexible, multidisciplinary ways of working. We will continue to align workforce planning across organisations, reducing duplication and supporting shared skills, supervision and peer support where possible.

Supporting wellbeing is a central priority. Local plans recognise the need to protect time for reflective practice, promote psychologically safe working environments, and make better use of digital tools and new service models to reduce unnecessary burden on staff. By investing in our workforce, listening to their experience, we aim to build a stable, confident workforce able to deliver consistent, high-quality support to Aberdeen's children and families over the longer term.

**‘Scotland must hold the hands of
those who hold the hand of the child’**

Helping to Support Our Children, Young People and Families

Our Children's Services Plan priorities in the previous section, highlighted the main changes we will make to our systems and services to improve overall outcomes for children and young people in the city. However, our Plan also has the responsibility of explaining how we are going to address national priorities for children and young people. The section that follows provides an explanation of what we will do to support these national priorities, specifically on the topics of:

Getting it Right for Every Child: how we are supporting our services and families to help children reach their full potential

Best Start in Life: Supporting our Children under 5 and their Parents to ensure they get the Best Start in Life

Empowered and Resilient: Supporting the Mental Health and Wellbeing of our Children and Young People

Attainment and Transitions: Improving educational outcomes of those for our children and young people

Supporting those with Additional Support Needs and Disabilities: the work we will undertake to improve outcomes for this vulnerable cohort children and young people

Making sure we uphold Children's Rights in line with the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child into Scots law.

Keeping the Promise, ensuring sustained multi agency attention to improving the outcomes for children and young people who care experienced to deliver on the commitments set out in The Promise by 2030.

And Tackling Child Poverty, our strategic approach to tackling child poverty over the next 5 years

Getting it Right for Every Child

Getting It Right For Every Child is Scotland's national approach to ensuring all children, young people, and their families receive the right support at the right time so that every child can realise their full potential. Getting it right for every child is both a guiding principle and a practical framework for services across Scotland, aiming to improve and safeguard the wellbeing of children and their families.

In Aberdeen, we are committed to fostering an environment where every child is loved, safe, heard, and respected. Getting It Right For Every Child underpins all our work with children, young people, and their families, especially those facing vulnerability. This approach shapes our efforts to create better outcomes for everyone by focusing on strengths, choice, and inclusion.

Central to our practice is placing children and families at the core of decision-making. We actively listen to their voices and uphold their rights, encouraging participation in all decisions that impact them. Our support is tailored and meaningful, built upon recognising the unique strengths within families and empowering them to be fully involved.

Effective partnership working is crucial for achieving the best results. Our teams in health, education, social work, and the voluntary sector collaborate closely, sharing knowledge and expertise. Families are engaged and respected throughout the process, ensuring they remain fully informed and included in planning for their child's wellbeing.

Our understanding of wellbeing is holistic, encompassing health, development, family, and community life. We use the SHANARRI indicators (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included) to assess what is going well and identify areas needing extra support. Tools such as the My World Triangle and Resilience Matrix help us gain a comprehensive understanding of each child's circumstances, guiding assessment and planning.

For details information on our approach you can find the details here: [Getting it Right for Every Child Operational Guidance](#)



Best Start in Life

Supporting children under 5 and their parents is central to delivering the *Best Start in Life*, taking a partnership and public health approach that recognises the importance of the antenatal period and the earliest years in shaping lifelong health and wellbeing. Through collaborative working across health, social care, education, third sector and community partners, we will address the wider determinants of health and reduce inequalities from the earliest possible stage. The Health Visiting Universal Pathway, beginning with the antenatal contact, provides a consistent and preventative framework for supporting families, with a focus on maternal health and wellbeing, early attachment, breastfeeding, healthy weight, smoking prevention and cessation, parental mental health and early parenting support.

Early identification and timely support for developmental and health needs is a core component of this approach. Working closely with early learning and childcare, allied health professionals and family support services, health visiting teams will contribute to early developmental surveillance and intervention, particularly in relation to speech, language, social and emotional development. Using a preventative, place-based model informed by data and local intelligence, partners will work together to support families proportionately, prevent escalation of need and ensure every child has the strongest possible start in life

Empowered and Resilient

Our **Mental Health Strategy** is intended to support people in Aberdeen grow up, live, work, and age in communities that support their wellbeing. Beginning with strong and positive connections building the foundation of good mental health, we are committed to strengthening support for parents, carers, and families. Universal and targeted parenting programmes, peer groups, play-based learning, and home-visiting approaches will help families feel confident and supported. We also want people of all ages to feel connected to their communities, with more peer-led groups and opportunities to build friendships. Intergenerational programmes such as befriending schemes and school visits to care homes, will help bridge generations and reduce loneliness.

A second priority is protecting people from adversity. Trauma-informed practice will continue to develop across services, ensuring staff understand the impact of trauma and respond with empathy. We will strengthen homelessness prevention, especially for young people, and focus on improving mental health equity for women and girls by expanding safe spaces, peer support, and outreach.

Mentally healthy environments also matter. By embedding “Mental Health in All Policies”, we will make sure mental wellbeing is considered across all community planning activity. In schools, whole-school approaches to wellbeing, including peer mentoring and restorative practice, will help children feel safe, included, and supported. Across the city, accessible community hubs, green spaces, and clear wayfinding will encourage connection, activity, and belonging.

We also want everyone to develop the emotional and practical skills they need for life. This includes teaching emotional literacy, self-compassion, resilience, and skills related to learning, digital wellbeing, and work.

Finally, people should be able to get help early, without barriers. Clear pathways, trusted link workers, community connectors, and simple navigation tools will make support easier to find. Young people will also have a stronger voice in shaping mental health priorities, and inclusive spaces, such as LGBTQ+ support groups will continue to grow.

For a fuller picture of the health needs you can find a copy of our evaluation report here: [Aberdeen City Population Mental Health Action Plan 2026-27](#)

Attainment and Transitions



National Improvement Framework

We are strongly committed to making sure every child and young person in the city gets the best possible education. We work closely with schools, parents, community groups, and national partners to tackle challenges, celebrate successes, and strive to make school a positive and rewarding experience for everyone. The Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Action Plan is reviewed and updated annually to reflect the priorities of the education service. Below is a summary of the action we are undertaking and what we are planning in the years to come. If you would like further detail, you can find the latest evaluation here: [Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan Evaluation 2024/25](#)

Looking to the Future

By improving school buildings, supporting teachers, focusing on literacy, numeracy, and wellbeing, expanding the curriculum, and making the most of technology, we will help pupils enjoy learning and prepare for their futures. Collaborating with families, community partners, and national organisations is at the heart of this work.

Key to ensuring this will be our focus on the Attainment and Transitions System Changes Identified in this Plan. Focussing support to those children and families in SIMD1 and in particular those children who are at risk of disengaging from school, will struggle to achieve a positive destination and those awaiting a diagnosis for their Additional Support Needs, we will maximise our support offer at the earliest possible stage.

Supporting those with Additional Support Needs and Disabilities

Over the next five years, we will strengthen how we support children and young people with additional support needs or disabilities, ensuring they are included, supported and able to achieve their potential. This work reflects a shared commitment to early support, joined-up planning and a rights-based approach.

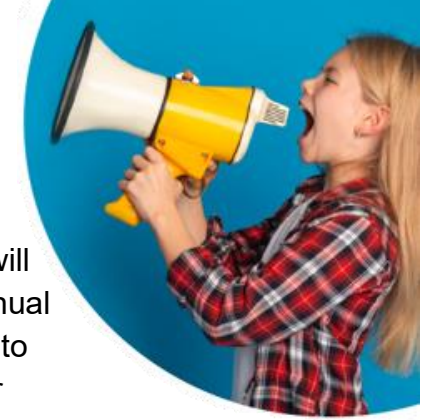
Support will begin as early as possible, including in the early years, through closer working between health, education and family support services. Early identification of needs, timely assessment and clear pathways to support will help children and families access the right help without unnecessary delay. Education services will continue to work closely with health and social work colleagues to provide personalised support in early learning and childcare settings and schools, supported by specialist additional support needs and outreach services.

A strong focus will be placed on inclusive education and meaningful participation. Schools will be supported to meet a wide range of needs through professional learning, access to specialist advice and partnership working with health and third sector providers. This will help children and young people with additional support needs or disabilities feel included, supported and able to learn and achieve alongside their peers wherever possible.

Improving transitions will also be a key priority, particularly at points such as starting school, moving between schools, and planning for adulthood. Partners will work with children, young people and their families to start conversations earlier, improve communication between services and ensure support continues smoothly as young people move through different stages of their lives.

Families and carers will continue to be recognised as essential partners. Planned activity includes improving access to information, short breaks and practical support, and ensuring families are fully involved in decisions that affect their child. Across all of this work, children and young people with additional support needs or disabilities will be actively involved in shaping services, helping ensure support reflects their views, experiences and aspirations.

United Nations Rights of the Child



We are working hard to ensure that we are embedding the United Nations Rights of the Child in all that we do you will see this throughout this Plan and our [Annual Report](#) which identify actions undertaken (See the Appendix in our Annual Report) and actions planned (Children's Services Plan - see our Delivery Plan section below) over the next 5 years to take further affect to Children's Rights, going forward we aim to have children and young people at the centre of our planning and delivery of the Children's Services Plan.

Shaping Decision Making

We are committed to involving young people in planning and running Community Learning and Development activities. The city's Community Learning and Development Plan for 2025–2030 was developed with young people and other groups, aiming to ensure their voices shape services and decisions. Groups like Aberdeen Youth Movement and Young Ambassadors offer regular opportunities for young people to share ideas and lead decision making.

The Plan focuses on youth work to build confidence, encourage volunteering (over 3,000 Saltire Awards earned), and support positive post-school paths, especially for those needing extra help. Success is measured by partner progress, youth participation, and youth-led project impact. Achievements are reviewed by the Community Learning and Development Strategic Partnership, ensuring young people's voices guide Aberdeen's future.

Children and Young Peoples Shadow Board

We are establishing the Children's Services Board Shadow Board to ensure children and young people are part of key decisions. The Shadow Board will include representatives from youth groups, school councils, and groups for young people with care or justice experience, helping to make decisions, design services, and keep leaders accountable. There will be projects during term time, mentoring, and recognition through awards or internships.

Initially, the Shadow Board will focus on Children's Services Board goals, then support the wider Community Planning Aberdeen Partnership. It will learn from experts, map youth involvement, and clarify its role among other youth voice groups. Activities such as workshops, mentoring, and joint planning have run from June 2025 to April 2026, with a launch event marking the conclusion. This process ensures young people help shape the board and plan, with ongoing reviews to keep improving. Their input will guide decisions and positive change across Aberdeen

Keeping the Promise



Aberdeen City's Corporate Parenting Plan 2026–2029 sets out our shared commitment to ensure that every child, young person and young adult with care experience grows up feeling safe, loved, respected and supported to achieve their full potential. As a partnership of Corporate Parents across the city, we recognise our collective responsibility to provide the same care, consistency and ambition that any good parent would want for their own child. This plan brings together our vision, priorities and the actions we will take to Keep The Promise and deliver meaningful, measurable improvements in the lives of those who rely on our support.

The plan is firmly grounded in the voices and lived experiences of care experienced children, young people and care leavers. Our Bright Spots survey, ongoing engagement sessions, and our strengthened participation work, young people have told us what matters most: stability, trusting relationships, safety, belonging, practical help and opportunities to thrive. Their insights shape our priorities and guide our decision-making, ensuring the plan reflects both what young people need now and what they want us to do differently.

Aligned to national and local priorities, including the LOIP, Children's Services Plan and The Promise Plan 24–30, the plan sets out clear commitments across health and wellbeing, education and employability, relationships and belonging, housing and transitions, participation and voice, rights and advocacy, and tackling poverty. It also recognises the diverse needs, identities and experiences of our care experienced population, ensuring support is inclusive, responsive and grounded in trauma-informed, rights-based practice.

Delivery will be supported by strong governance, multi-agency collaboration, ongoing workforce development and the meaningful use of data, evidence and lived experience. Together, these foundations will help us track progress and ensure accountability for creating the conditions in which our children and young people can flourish.

You can read the full Aberdeen City Corporate Parenting Plan 2026–2029 here: [Corporate Parenting Plan 2026-2029](#)

Child Poverty



Tackling child poverty remains one of the most important responsibilities of Aberdeen's Children's Services Partnership. Our Local Child Poverty Action Report provides detail on the actions we have undertaken to date and what actions we will take in future – across employment, costs of living, and social security – to reduce the number of children growing up in low-income households and to support families who are experiencing financial pressure in order to reduce Child Poverty over the next 5 years. It underlines the need for early help, coordinated local services, and strong community-based support, particularly in neighbourhoods experiencing the highest levels of disadvantage.

Though child poverty levels in Aberdeen remain below the Scottish average, many families continue to face financial strain. Some neighbourhoods experience significantly higher rates of poverty, underlining the need for continued targeted support. It also highlights groups at greatest risk, including lone parents, families with a baby under one, larger families, families with a disabled child, and minority ethnic families.

We continue to focus on strengthening employability pathways for parents, expanding access to childcare, and supporting families to move into fair and sustainable work. Programmes such as ABZWorks, ABZ Campus, Family Learning, and targeted employability support have helped parents gain qualifications, increase confidence, and access training and job opportunities.

We plan a wide range of actions to reduce household costs. Such as improved access to free school meals, financial advice, community food support, fuel assistance, warm spaces, affordable childcare, and targeted cost-of-living support. Work is ongoing to remove financial barriers within schools, expand breakfast provision, increase access to early learning for eligible two-year-olds, and ensure families know what help they are entitled to.

Finally, the Report outlines how income from social security is being maximised through Money Advisors in schools, benefit checks, targeted outreach, and better data-sharing. This has helped families increase their household income, manage debt, prevent crisis, and remain more financially secure. The detailed report can be found embedded within our Children's Services Plan [Annual Report](#) 2025/26, in line with statutory guidance we will keep this Report up to date, revising and adapting each year responding to emerging needs

Our Delivery Plan

Our Delivery Plan is a summary of the key actions, in addition to the system changes described above, that we are going to undertake over the next 5 years to deliver against the priorities and goals set out in our Plan. Below we provide

- Governance, which outlines how we will manage the improvement work
- A section outlining the actions we will take to support improved outcomes for Children, Young People and Families
- Full list of actions will undertake to achieve the Plan

Actions against the Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated to show our progress through our Children's Services Plan Annual Reports, you'll be able to find these on our Community Planning Website: [Our Children's Services Board](#)

How we will make sure we are achieving our aims - Governance

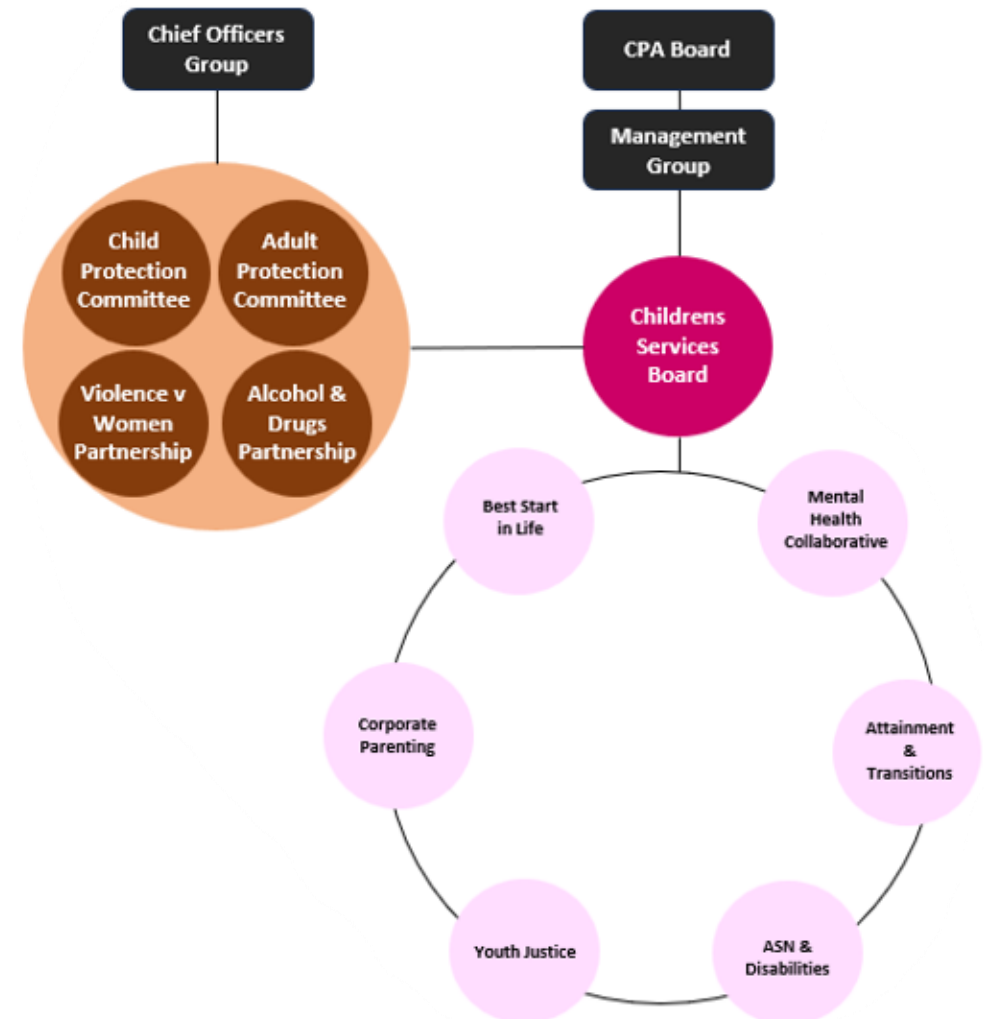
The Children's Services Board is governed by and accountable to the Community Planning Management Group, which in turn is accountable to the Community Planning Aberdeen Board.

The Children's Services Board ensures our partnership meets its responsibilities set out by the government in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and ensures we provide the information it requires through its statutory guidance.

In particular the board does this by:

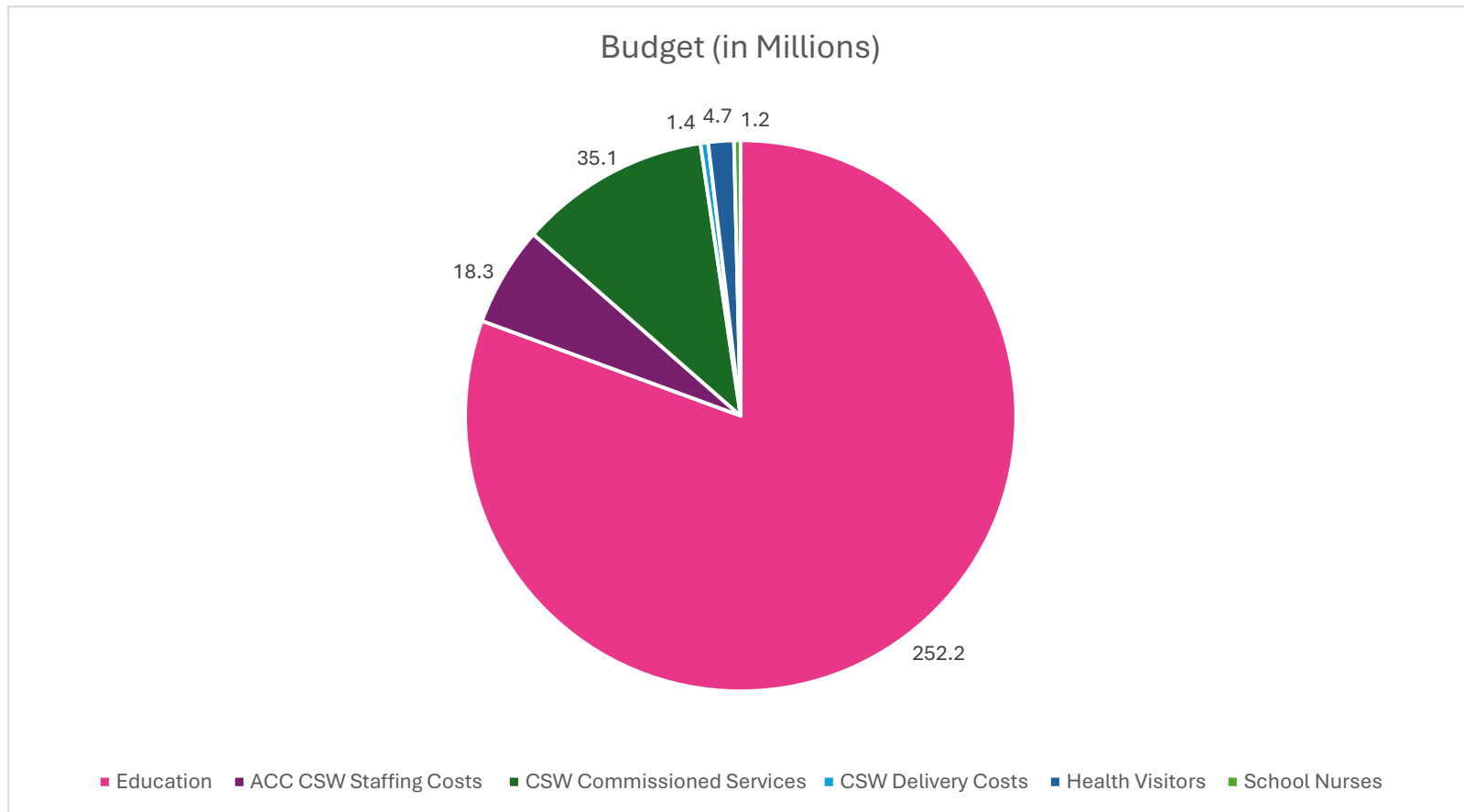
- Ensuring we deliver this Children's Services Plan and 6 System Changes we have identified in it
- Working together as a Community Planning Partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people within Aberdeen City
- Leading the implementation of national drivers and requirements relating to children and young people (Such as United Nations Rights of the Child, Child Poverty and Corporate Parenting)
- Ensuring we deliver on our commitment to Keep the Promise by 2030.

As the Plan comes into implementation we will review our governance arrangements to ensure they can adapt to reflect our new priorities



Budget and Resource

The Chart below provides a broad overview of our key budgets for delivery of our Plan and associated activity:



Best Start in Life

Best Start in Life					
Input			Outcome		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
Getting it Right for Every Child , Best Start Bright Futures	Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 Communities	Improving Health Outcomes Introduce prevention measures and education to reduce health risks during pregnancy, support mums with making healthier decisions by: - Introducing the Antenatal visit within the health visiting pathway for support and education. - Providing support through the Best Start in Life System Change (Case Worker). This will include activity on the following areas: - Smoking During Pregnancy - Maternal/Childhood Obesity	Increased number of parents supported in each activity	In Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 1 Communities: Reduction in smoking during pregnancy Reduction in Child/Maternal Obesity Increased Breastfeeding Rates Increased number of Primary 1s with no obvious signs of tooth decay

Best Start in Life					
Input			Outcome		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
			- Breast Feeding - Dental Health - Vaccination Uptake		
National Early Language and Communication Project	Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership /National Health Service Grampian Speech and Language Therapy team in conjunction with Aberdeen City Early Years Team	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 and 2 Communities Early Years prevention/early intervention	Supporting Early Language and Communication development: - Developing an early years workforce which is knowledgeable and confident in supporting speech, language, and communication - Families receive consistent national messaging in relation to developing speech, language, and communication - Increase understanding of shared responsibility for early speech language and communication development across the system	Percentage of Early Years Practitioners completing SLC Knowledge and Skills Matrix % of families receiving national Supporting Language and Communication (SLC) messaging at key touchpoints % of settings using approved national materials	% of children in (Scope Area) from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 Communities and 2 Communities with Supporting Language and Communication concerns at 27-30 months by 25% by 2030
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child					
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and	Children's Services Board/Aberdeen City Council Education &	Children aged 0-5 in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation	Develop methods for Primary 1s and under 5s, to have their views heard	Number of 0-5 year olds, assessed on participation on	Adults and young people are making joint decisions in

Best Start in Life					
Input			Outcome		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
Feedback from Young People	Lifelong Learning teams/shadow board/Young Ambassadors	Quintile 1 and 2 Communities		ladder of empowerment	environments set up to support young people's contribution
Keeping the Promise					
The Promise Scotland Transforming how Scotland cares for children, families, and care-experienced adults	Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 Communities	Working With Families of Children at Risk of being taken into care Implementing universal pathway to ensure early intervention.	Increase in number of families being supported at an earlier stage, reducing requirement for Child Protection Register	Number of under 2s on the Child Protection Register
The Promise Scotland Transforming how Scotland cares for children, families, and care-experienced adults	Family Nurse Partnership	Care Experienced Parents	Supporting Care Experienced Young Mums to be confident parents, by providing tailored support	Number of young mums supported through the programme	Increase in the number of Young Care Experienced Mums that feel confident as a result of the intervention
Child Poverty					
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017	Aberdeen City Council	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 Communities	- Streamlined benefit check referral process, making it easier for families. - Information pack available for families and professionals to support signposting and	Increased number of referrals to Financial Inclusion.	All families' eligible for Financial Inclusion are receiving it.

Best Start in Life					
Input			Outcome		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
			increasing awareness of eligibility.	% or £ increase in benefit uptake by families offered financial health check.	
Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 The Promise Scotland Transforming how Scotland cares for children, families, and care-experienced adults	Aberdeen City Council and National Health Service Grampian	Priority families as set out in the Child Poverty Delivery Plan. Single parent, child under age 1, parent under age 25, large families, minority ethnic families, families with a disabled child or adult.	Established lived experience panels to inform and influence solutions to poverty proofing services. Panels to be configured with families living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 Communities. Opportunity to link with Torry Health Matters and Primary Care Services in Torry initially. Better understanding financial barriers to accessing services and exploring approaches to mitigate this, including cash first options. Families valued and empowered as partners in finding solutions. Increase uptake of financial health check through widening existing financial inclusion/ income max pathways.	Evidence of community voice reflected in planning and decision-making processes (Integrated Impact Assessments, for example) Qualitative – families report feeling valued and empowered. Number of lived experience panel solutions being explored/ implemented. Number of households receiving full benefits check.	Low-income families and those experiencing financial hardship are informing solutions to reduce detrimental financial impacts.

Best Start in Life					
Input			Outcome		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
No One Left Behind strategy	Aberdeen City Council Employability and Skills Team	Priority families as set out in the No One Left Behind strategic plan. Single parent, child under age 1, parent under age 25, large families (3+ children), minority ethnic families, families with a disabled child or adult.	Targeted employability support for parents seeking to enter the workforce or re-enter the workforce after a career break.	Number of parents supported by ABZWorks Number of parents completing accredited training Number of parents entering employment Number of parents sustaining employment for 12 months.	This activity is entirely externally funded and subject to annualised funding. Families in need of employability support are aware of and can access it. % increase in number of parents engaging in employability support.

Empowered and Resilient

Empowered and Resilient					
Input			Output		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
Introduction - Justice for children and young people: vision and priorities 2024-26 - gov. scot – Priority 1 – (updated national vision and priorities to be published June 2026) / Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 / Standards for those working with children in conflict with the law 2021 – standard 9 (updated Standards scheduled for publication June 2026) / Bairns' Hoose standards – Healthcare Improvement Scotland	Scottish Children's Reporter Association/ Bairns Hoose	Children referred to reporter. Any person utilising the support from the Single Point of Contact.	Victims are supported, their rights upheld, with specific attention paid to child victims and their families including: Creating a Single Point of Contact. Police Scotland Youth Engagement Officers working with schools to explore use of restorative practice in school settings. Workforce development will be established to increase knowledge, understanding and application of the Standards for those Working with Children in Conflict with the Law.	Number of people who take up offer of support from Single Point of Contact. Number of Individuals trained, (reviewing quality of delivery through evaluation)	Single Point of Contact. is developed and understood in city.

Empowered and Resilient					
Input			Output		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
Introduction - Justice for children and young people: vision and priorities 2024-26 - gov. scot – Priority 2 / Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 / Standards for those working with children in conflict with the law 2021 – standard 2, 3, 4, 5.	Police Scotland/YJMU, Children's Social Work/Justice Social Work, Commissioned Services	Children in Conflict With the Law including those under the age of criminal responsibility	Children are diverted away from formal justice system to appropriate alternative support through the continued delivery of the Whole System Approach by: - Increasing access to diversionary activity (Early and Effective Intervention) in the community as early intervention measure. - Ensure Guidance on Diversion from Prosecution is known and understood, - Increasing knowledge and understanding of the Sentencing Guidelines for under 25's and how we write about this group for purpose of reports. - Where a child is involved in court processes there are appropriate robust supports in place to ensure the child	Early and Effective Intervention and diversionary opportunities for all children being accessed, increased awareness, and uptake, of diversionary opportunities.	Increased number of young people engaged in diversionary activity

Empowered and Resilient					
Input			Output		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
			understands what is happening and their rights upheld at all stages.		
Introduction - Justice for children and young people: vision and priorities 2024-26 - gov. scot – Priority 2	Police Scotland, Children's Social Work, Justice Social Work, Commissioned Services, 3 rd Sector partners	Initially Children from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 and 2 Communities	Criminal Exploitation of Children Framework and Screening tool: workforce to be trained in its use and utilising as part of work with all children (all under 18s). Protecting children from all forms of exploitation including online exploitation. Reduce impact of Organised Crime Groups/SOCGs in targeted areas by making information for parents, children and communities about CEC and responses and where to find assistance by developing contextual safeguarding approaches with the multiagency partnership. Linking closely with Child Protection Committee Lead Officer to ensure CEC Framework and Screening Tool are fully embedded into practice in the city. Workforce	Data from duty to notify and National Referral Mechanism referrals indicate use of the framework and screening tool. Numbers charged with Criminal Exploitation of Children (CEC) offences, prosecuted Increase . Criminal Exploitation of Children marker being appropriately applied to	All targeted staff groups trained in use of the framework and duty to notify process

Empowered and Resilient					
Input			Output		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
			development needs are considered and delivered.	Vulnerable Person Database Increase in Criminal Exploitation of Children being marked as a referral reason on D365 (including initial and secondary referral reasons) Numbers engaging with specialist support for Criminal Exploitation of Children/Risks Outside The Home.	
Standards for those working with children in conflict with the law 2021 – standard 6 / Scottish government response to "reimagining	Police	Young people who are/or are at risk of coming into conflict with the law	Children will only be arrested, detained, or imprisoned as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time	Number of children released on undertaking	Increase in use of undertakings

Empowered and Resilient					
Input			Output		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
secure care" report - gov. scot / Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024					
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child					
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Feedback from Young People	Children's Services Board/Aberdeen City Council, Youth Work team/Aberdeen Youth Movement	Children and young people who have life experience of things that are in the Children Services Plan 12-18 years	Make sure young people help make choices in the Children's Services Plan, so adults and young people can decide things together and everyone's ideas are listened to and matter	Level of participation from ladder of empowerment	-adults and young people are making joint decisions in environments set up to support young people's contribution
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Feedback from Young People	Children's Services Board / Aberdeen City Council, Youth Work team/Aberdeen Youth Movement /shadow board	children and young people who have life experience of things that are in the Children Services Plan 12-15 years	Take what works well from the Children's Services Board and trying it in other parts of our city plans	Level of participation from ladder of empowerment	Number of Children's Services Plan outcomes represented by young people
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Feedback from Young People	Children's Services Board / all Community Planning Aberdeen partners/Aberdeen Youth Movement	All Children and Young People	Information for and about children and young people is shared in language and ways that is easy for them to find and understand. When children and young people are asked their views, they are	% of Community Planning Aberdeen plans are written in child/people friendly language or have an easy read version.	All Community Planning Aberdeen Plans and Strategies have friendly language or have an easy read version

Empowered and Resilient					
Input			Output		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
	and other youth participation groups		told why, what will happen to the information and what will or has happened as a result.	Evidence of consultation with young people on public materials produced	
Keeping the Promise					
Local Corporate Parenting Plan; The Promise United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Children (Scotland) Act 1995 Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 Housing Options Protocols for Care Leavers (Scottish Government, 2013)	All Partners to the Corporate Parenting plan lead; Children's Social Work; Housing; NHS Grampian; Police Scotland;	Care Experienced Young People aged 16 – 26	Develop and implement a revised Care Leavers Housing Protocol which ensures safety, choice, excellent quality accommodation options and robust pathway planned supports.	Up-dated Care Leavers Housing Protocol published and implemented Number of care leavers supported through revised protocol Number of staff aware of and implementing revised protocol Number of staff trained on the revised protocol	Improved housing stability for care leavers. Reduction in tenancy breakdown Young people reporting that they feel safer and more secure in their tenancies Housing protocols fully embed trauma-informed and rights-based approaches
Local Corporate Plan The Promise	Children's Social Work and	Care experienced children and young people	Support and enable care experienced young people to influence corporate parenting decisions by being part of a	The Loop magazine will continue to be developed,	Young people actively involved in shaping corporate

Empowered and Resilient					
Input			Output		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Incorporate Act Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014	Corporate Parents across the Partnership		Loop (Participation Network) directly connecting to the Corporate Parenting Strategic Improvement Group - Young people with care experience have chances to voice their views - Formal feedback loops created between the Network and the Strategic Improvement Group. - Deliver workforce development sessions to build understanding of participation methodologies - Undertake workforce survey to assess awareness, confidence and understanding of participation, and use the findings to inform workforce development and service improvement.	coproduced by care experienced young people and published quarterly Percentage of corporate parenting actions influenced by young people. Increased awareness of participation principles and right-based approaches Percentage of corporate parenting actions influenced by young people Increased awareness of participation principles and	parenting priorities and strategies Engagement embedded as routine practice Participation principles embedded in all corporate parenting plans Young people report feeling their views shape decisions Engagement practices standardised across services.

Empowered and Resilient					
Input			Output		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
				rights-based approaches. Workers report improved confidence in applying participation methodologies. Positive assessment of the impact of the Corporate Parenting Delivery Plan	
Child Poverty					
Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017	Aberdeen Foyer	Young people who are or are at risk of Homelessness	Youth Led Housing Pathway Design dedicated housing pathway, developed with and for young people. It will allow them to access affordable housing options immediately and, in a trauma, -informed way. The aims are to: Reduce youth homelessness	Youth housing pathway designed and implemented Number of young people using the pathway Impact on youth homelessness (assessed	Reduce Number of Young People in Temporary Accommodation

Empowered and Resilient					
Input			Output		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
			- Minimise reliance on temporary accommodation - Provide smoother transitions for those leaving home with lower support needs	through evaluation process)	

Attainment and Transitions

Attainment and Transitions					
Input			Outcome		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
The Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC) About Curriculum for Excellence Curriculum for Excellence Education Scotland	Aberdeen City Council Education	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 Schools	Increase the number of pathways available to young people through expansion of ABZ Campus Support schools to review their curriculum offer in light of the new curriculum	Number of ABZ Campus Pathways	% increase in the number of pathways available to young people through ABZ Campus
Relationships and behaviour in schools: national action plan 2024 to 2027 - gov. scot	Aberdeen City Council Education	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 Schools	Support schools to ensure relationship and behaviour policies are in line with national plan	Number of incidents recorded	Reduced number of incidents recorded in schools
Children and young people - national neurodevelopmental specification: principles and standards of care - gov. scot	National Health Service Grampian	Children with Additional Support Needs in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 schools	Ensure formulated support is offered as early as possible. Improve assessment processes and referral quality by removing	Child's plans reflecting Neurodiversity support	Children and families receive the support that they need at the earliest opportunity to enable them to participate fully at

Attainment and Transitions					
Input			Outcome		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
			duplication and designing a joint assessment process to avoid repetition. Improve knowledge and confidence of the workforce to recognise Additional Support Needs and respond appropriately, to know the support options available, to present for pre-assessment with a Multi-Disciplinary Team discussion where appropriate and to make good quality referral with all pre-assessment work completed.	Reduction in rejected referrals Reduced repetition of assessment processes. Overall reduction in time from referral to diagnosis. Annual qualitative survey. Referrals audit – appropriateness and quality.	school and in the community. Children and families will experience a smoother assessment process where they will not need to repeat their story or be passed between services. Staff will be aware of support options for children with Additional Support Needs and their families They will be confident in making appropriate referrals with all pre-assessment work completed.
No One Left Behind strategy	Aberdeen City Council	Young people (16+) not in employment,	Employability support for young people aged 16+ not in	Number of young people being	This activity is entirely externally funded and

Attainment and Transitions					
Input			Outcome		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
	Employability and Skills Team	education, or training	employment education or training. Employability support for young people leaving school without a positive destination.	supported by ABZWorks Number of young people supported by ABZWorks completing accredited training Number of young people supported by ABZWorks entering employment Number of young people supported by ABZWorks into further education Number of young people supported by ABZWorks sustaining a positive destination for 12 months	subject to annualised funding. Young people, their families, and partner agencies will be aware of and able to easily access and engage in employability activity.

Attainment and Transitions					
Input			Outcome		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child					
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Feedback from Young People	Aberdeen City Council Community Learning and Development	Young people who take part in youth work	Young people will help make decisions about things that matter to them by taking part in activities and groups made for their age, where their ideas are listened to and make a difference	% of young people being supported by youth work who achieve a nationally recognised award	% of young people being supported by youth work who report that their physical and mental wellbeing has improved.
Keeping the Promise					
Local Corporate Parenting Plan; North East of Scotland College Corporate Parenting Plan; The Promise; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 Scottish Care Leavers Covenant (2015)	Children's Social Work Corporate Parenting Lead, North East Scotland College	Care Experienced Young People aged 16 -26	Develop and implement a multi-agency North East Scotland College Forum that co-ordinates support for care leavers by: - Enabling care leavers to access, sustain, and succeed in education opportunities offered by North East Scotland College - Promoting inclusive educational pathways and improving outcomes through multi-agency collaboration - Ensuring student voices are central to planning and decision-making. - Facilitating information sharing to support	Forum established and meeting regularly with active multi-agency participation. Referral systems and information-sharing protocols in place and used effectively. Care leavers report improved access to advice and guidance for education and training.	Improved alignment with national standards and local strategic plans for corporate parenting Sustained improvement in college enrolment and retention rates for care leavers. Reduction in the number of care experienced young people not in education,

Attainment and Transitions					
Input			Outcome		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
			individual students in sustaining and completing courses. Working collaboratively to prevent financial disadvantage, including avoiding unnecessary suspension of bursaries.	Increased awareness among staff and partners of support pathways and financial entitlements. Early evidence of reduced disruption to bursary payments through collaborative intervention.	employment, or training Enhanced educational attainment and progression into employment or further study Student voice embedded in planning and decision-making processes across North East Scotland College and partner agencies Multi-agency collaboration becomes standard practice for supporting care leavers, ensuring financial stability and continuity of learning.

Attainment and Transitions					
Input			Outcome		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
Child Poverty					
Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017	Aberdeen Foyer	Young people who are or are at risk of Homelessness	Build on Upstream Pilot: Rationale: Northfield Academy has piloted Upstream, a preventative approach that spots young people who are at greater risk of homelessness. Homelessness prevention still depends, however, upon getting the right support to these young people at the right time. Action: Building on the pilot, Homewards Aberdeen will increase the wraparound support that is available for young people who have self-identified through the initial survey.	Track improvements in wellbeing outcomes for young people identified through the survey Monitor how many participants avoid homelessness following early intervention Assess feedback from young people and schools on the support received Use learning to inform and encourage wider rollout of the Upstream model across Aberdeen	Increased number of young people supported by the programme

Attainment and Transitions					
Input			Outcome		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017	Shelter Scotland	Young people who are or are at risk of Homelessness	Train Young People in Housing Skills Rationale: Housing instability is greater for young people who lack the skills to get and keep a home. Survey information shows that many young people in Aberdeen don't currently have these skills. Action: Homewards Aberdeen will deliver material and lesson plans to local schools. It will focus on housing options, tenancy rights, and essential life skills for maintaining a home.	Material and lesson plans designed and piloted	At least 90% of young people in Aberdeen know where to seek guidance on housing
Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017	The Royal Foundation, Burgesses of Guild and Seven Incorporated Trades	Young people who are or are at risk of Homelessness	Unlock job opportunities for young people in Aberdeen: Rationale: Getting and keeping a job is crucial to avoiding homelessness. Action: Homewards Aberdeen will work with private-sector partners to create inclusive, sustainable jobs for young people who are at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness.	Number of employers signed up to the Crisis Homeless Alliance (CHA) Number of employers signed up that receive support to implement the CHA pledge	At least four Aberdeen-based employers supported to begin hiring 18- to 25-year-olds who are at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness

Attainment and Transitions					
Input			Outcome		Outcome
Key Local or National Drivers	Lead Partner	Target Population/ Prevention Tier	Key Action/ Deliverable	Output Measure	Medium Term 2031
			Target sectors will be guided by local labour market analysis, including insights from Hays, and will recognise the changing economy of Aberdeen. We will also encourage employers across Aberdeen to sign up to the Crisis Homelessness Alliance's framework. Our particular focus will be on helping employers to meet the pledge of "supporting employees who may be at risk of homelessness." This includes supporting employers to: • Identify staff who are at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness • Provide information and guidance • Signpost, and give access to, timely support		

Appendices

The following appendices provide some key information about our Plan:

National Performance Framework: This section provides an overview of how our Plan aligns with the National Performance Framework Outcomes

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles: This section expands on our United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child section above, showing how each of the elements of our Plan align with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

National Performance Framework

Scotland National Performance Framework

The National Performance Framework is Scotland's wellbeing framework and sets the vision for the kind of Scotland we all want to live in. The National Performance Framework provides key outcomes that Children's Services Plans such as ours should aspire to achieve for our children, young people, and families.

Our Plan has been developed with these outcomes in mind, as you should see from the details in each chapter our Plan aligns closely with these outcomes. Currently the National Performance Framework is under review, and a revised version is due to be published later in 2026.

In the meantime, for the development of this Plan the table that follows provides a helpful summary of how each the 11 indicators here aligned to the various sections of our Plan. This list is not exhaustive but is intended to help indicate the overall aims of the activities in each section of the Plan.

National Performance Framework Outcomes	
	We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy
	We are open connected and make a positive contribution internationally
	We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally
	We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
	We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential
	We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society
	We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone
	We are healthy and active
	We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment
	We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely
	We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination

Plan Priority	What the Priority Focuses On	National Performance Framework Outcomes	Why These Outcomes Apply
Best Start in Life	Early help, whole-family support, pregnancy & early years health, speech & language development, financial inclusion		Focuses on healthy starts, parental support, tackling inequality, early intervention, and removing poverty-related barriers to development, to make sure all children grow up loved safe and respected
Empowered and Resilient	Safe spaces, youth participation, protection from exploitation, boys' citizenship programme, online safety, diversion from criminalisation		Safe environments, co-designed youth support, contextual safeguarding, and diversionary approaches all protect and empower young people. This helps young people and families feel safe in all of our community spaces
Attainment and Transitions	Closing attainment gap, supporting disengaged learners, work experience, and improving employability		Ensures equal access to education, support for all learners, and fair chances for positive post-school destinations.
Keeping the Promise / Corporate Parenting	Rights-based support for care-experienced children; stability, relationships, advocacy, transitions, housing		Ensures care-experienced young people are safe, heard, supported, and able to thrive with strong relationships and stable homes.
Child Poverty	Financial inclusion, employability for parents, cash-first approaches, reducing cost barriers, food, and fuel security		Removes poverty-related barriers to rights, ensuring families have enough money for essentials and children can participate fully.
Embedded Across the Plan	The following Outcomes can be seen to be spread		Understandably there is much cross over between the various outcomes. Our Plan as a whole seeks to ensure that we respect and uphold human rights for all, that we can share our contributions and examples of practice

Plan Priority	What the Priority Focuses On	National Performance Framework Outcomes	Why These Outcomes Apply
	across the Plan as a whole		locally, nationally, and internationally. As well as ensuring that our children and young people and families can contribute to Scotland's wider international links. The Plan's links to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child are explained comprehensively in the following section



Children's Services Plan Priorities Linked to United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles

The following list provides a how the different parts of our Plan with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles. This covers the articles that relate directly to the actions described in our delivery plan, it should be noted though that extensive coverage of Children's Rights implementation have also been taken into account for all of the linked Plans/Strategies outlined in this Plan:

Plan Priority	What the Priority Focuses On	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles Supported	Why These Articles Apply
Best Start in Life	Early help, whole-family support, pregnancy & early years health, speech & language development, financial inclusion	Article 2 – Non-discrimination Article 3 – Best interests of the child Article 6 – Life, survival & development Article 12 – Right to be heard (participation for under-5s) Article 18 – Support for parents Article 24 – Health and health services Article 26 – Social security Article 27 – Standard of living	Focuses on healthy starts, parental support, tackling inequality, early intervention, and removing poverty-related barriers to development.
Empowered and Resilient	Safe spaces, youth participation, protection from exploitation, boys' citizenship programme, online safety, diversion from criminalisation	Article 12 – Right to be heard Article 13 – Freedom of expression Article 15 – Freedom of association Article 19 – Protection from violence & abuse Article 31 – Rest, play, leisure activities Article 33 – Protection from drugs Article 34 – Protection from sexual exploitation	Safe environments, co-designed youth support, contextual safeguarding, and diversionary approaches all protect and empower young people.

Plan Priority	What the Priority Focuses On	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles Supported	Why These Articles Apply
		Article 36 – Protection from exploitation Article 40 – Justice system protections	
Attainment and Transitions	Closing attainment gap, supporting disengaged learners, work experience, neurodevelopmental pathways, employability	Article 2 – Non-discrimination Article 3 – Best interests Article 12 – Voice in decisions Article 23 – Rights of children with disabilities Article 28 – Right to education Article 29 – Aims of education Article 42 – Knowledge of rights	Ensures equal access to education, support for ASN/neurodivergent learners, and fair chances for positive post-school destinations.
Keeping the Promise / Corporate Parenting	Rights-based support for care-experienced children; stability, relationships, advocacy, transitions, housing	Article 2 – Non-discrimination Article 3 – Best interests of the child Article 12 – Voice in decisions Article 20 – Children deprived of family environment Article 21 – Adoption (where relevant) Article 25 – Review of care placements Article 27 – Standard of living Article 39 – Recovery & reintegration	Ensures care-experienced young people are safe, heard, supported, and able to thrive with strong relationships and stable homes.
Child Poverty	Financial inclusion, employability for parents, cash-first approaches, reducing cost barriers, food, and fuel security	Article 2 – Non-discrimination Article 3 – Best interests Article 6 – Development Article 24 – Health Article 26 – Social security Article 27 – Standard of living	Removes poverty-related barriers to rights, ensuring families have enough money for essentials and children can participate fully.
Youth Justice / Whole System Approach (within Empowered & Resilient)	Early and effective intervention, diversion, rights-respecting justice, reducing arrest/detention	Article 37 – Protection from torture or deprivation of liberty Article 40 – Rights in justice system Article 39 – Recovery & reintegration	Ensures young people are treated fairly, detention is a last resort, and support focuses on wellbeing.

Plan Priority	What the Priority Focuses On	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles Supported	Why These Articles Apply
The following articles are not specifically referenced because they do not directly align with the priorities, or they relate to areas not covered in the plan (e.g., international law, asylum procedures, identity documents, etc.)		Article 4 – Implementation of rights Article 5 – Parental guidance and evolving capacities Article 7 – Birth registration, name, nationality Article 8 – Identity, name, family ties Article 9 – Separation from parents (except in relation to care experienced children and young people) Article 10 – Family reunification across borders Article 11 – Protection from kidnapping Article 14 – Freedom of thought, belief, religion Article 16 – Right to privacy Article 17 – Access to reliable information/media Article 22 – Refugee children (<i>there is some related content in the Plan re “New Scots”</i>) Article 30 – Minority & Indigenous children’s cultural rights Article 32 – Protection from child labour Article 35 – Protection from trafficking Article 38 – War and armed conflict Article 41 – More favourable laws already in place	Why these articles were not included Most of these rights relate to: • international protection (Articles 10, 11, 22, 38) • identity and nationality (Articles 7, 8) • privacy and media (Articles 16, 17) • child labour or trafficking (Articles 32, 35) • general legal implementation (Articles 4, 5, 41) Some are indirectly supported, for example: • <i>Article 4 (the Plan as a whole demonstrates our activities in line with our local responsibilities for United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Implementation)</i> • <i>Article 5 (parental guidance)</i> relates to family support; the Plan focuses more on early help and whole-family support. • <i>Article 22 (refugee children)</i> is aligned with the “New Scots” inclusion work.

Plan on a Page

Ten Year Outcomes		
Positive Destinations	Poverty	
90% of young people in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 1 and vulnerable groups achieve a positive destination on leaving school by 2031. - Co-design and deliver a joined-up system of safe, supportive spaces and approaches - Develop targeted interventions and personalised progression pathways that identifies and supports young people at risk of harm young people at risk of harm, disengagement from education, substance use or child criminal exploitation	Reduce the proportion of people in relative poverty and homelessness by 3% by 2031 Develop a place-based system of hubs, personal casework, integrated pathways and outreach support providing a single co-ordinated experience of access to financial empowerment, housing support and pathways to safe and affordable homes, food sharing, health, employability and family support.	
Helping Children, Young People and Families		
Best Start in Life	Empowered & Resilient	Attainment & Transitions
Associated Strategic Plans		
Vaccination Action Plan Healthy Weight Strategy	Population Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Youth Justice Strategy	National Improvement Framework Action Plan Community Learning and Development Plan
Summary of High Level Actions		
Provide early, preventative health and family support from pregnancy onwards. Identify and respond early to developmental needs, including speech and language. Support parents' health, wellbeing and confidence in the early years. Reduce health inequalities in the most disadvantaged communities. Remove financial and practical barriers to giving every child the best start.	Create safe, trusted spaces where children and young people feel supported and belonging. Identify vulnerability early and provide timely, trauma-informed support. Protect children from exploitation, harm and criminalisation through early intervention. Strengthen mental health, wellbeing and resilience for children and families. Ensure children and young people are heard, supported and involved in decisions.	Improve attendance, engagement and wellbeing to support learning. Close the attainment gap for children facing disadvantage or additional needs. Provide early and coordinated support for additional support needs. Expand flexible learning, vocational and employability pathways. Support young people to progress into and sustain positive post-school destinations.
Our National Drivers		
Children's Rights	Keeping the Promise	Child Poverty
Associated Strategic Plans		
Children's Rights Reporting	Corporate Parenting Plan	Local Child Poverty Action Report
Summary of High Level Actions		
Place children's rights and best interests at the centre of all decisions. Ensure children of all ages can express their views and influence change. Embed participation as routine practice across services and partnerships. Make information accessible, child-friendly and easy to understand. Strengthen workforce confidence in rights-based practice and UNCRC duties.	Provide stable, loving and trauma-informed care for care-experienced children. Strengthen early family support to prevent unnecessary entry into care. Support care-experienced children to achieve and thrive in education. Improve transitions to adulthood, including housing, employment and support. Ensure care-experienced young people shape decisions as corporate parenting partners.	Identify families facing financial hardship early and provide joined-up support. Increase household income through financial inclusion and advice. Reduce the cost of living pressures on families with children. Support parents into fair, sustainable employment. Use lived experience to shape poverty-proofed services and decisions.



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