



From mountain to sea

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



Education and Children's Services Directorate Plan

"Working together for fairer and better lives"

2022 2023 Update



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Executive Summary

The Education and Children's Service Directorate Plan update 2022 is intended for Aberdeenshire Elected Members, the citizens of Aberdeenshire and the wider public.

Education and Children's Services is the largest Service in Aberdeenshire Council providing education for children and young people 3 – 18 years, children and families social work services, resource and performance support, culture and sport services and area manager support. The 2022-2023 revenue budget for Education and Children's Services is more than £380m. Education and Children's Services priorities are aligned to the Council Priorities of Our People, Our Environment and Our Economy.

This update reflects on what has been achieved in the last year in the wide variety of teams who work together through their own business plans to deliver Services to the children, young people and communities of Aberdeenshire.

As was the case in 2019-20, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government took the decision to cancel the SQA examination diet for May 2021. The results were based on an alternative approach which reflected estimate grades drawn from teacher's professional judgement. Overall results have been largely similar to previous years. The number of positive destinations for school leavers is returning to pre-pandemic levels. The developing the young workforce initiative continues to have a positive impact through Foundation Apprenticeships.

Whilst continuing to support children and families in Aberdeenshire, social work moved ahead with improvement including implementation of a new quality improvement framework, strengthening of the self-evaluation approach and introduction of peer self-evaluation. The past year saw an increase in Care Experienced young people securing positive destinations

Although delayed due to COVID-19, good progress has been made in Early Learning and Childcare provision across Aberdeenshire with an increase in settings extending opening hours and being open over holidays.

Services have continued to operate differently in the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic and our community focused services have been invaluable in the pandemic response through mobilisation of staff into pandemic supporting roles.

Our priorities for the next year are:

- To secure continuous improvement in outcomes for children and young people
- To have better, integrated working arrangements within ECS in pursuit of improved outcomes for children and young people
- To have improved business support and resource management arrangements in place across ECS
- By developing and delivering a revised CWP Business Plan focussed on the three pillars of Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Life @ home.

Looking forward we will deliver the actions within this plan to both transform and improve our services.

Forward



I am absolutely delighted to present the directorate service plan for Education and Children's Services (ECS). This plan provides an overview of all services which sit within the directorate and outlines our organisational arrangements, an overview of our financial and staffing arrangements and provides information of current service performance levels. In addition, the plan outlines our high-level service improvement objectives as well as providing useful links to the wide range of plans and strategies, local, regional and national which inform our services across ECS. Across ECS we offer a huge variety of services to children, young people, their families and communities across Aberdeenshire across a wide geographical area including urban and rural settlements, covering a diverse population in terms of demographic and need. We are committed as a directorate to working not only strategically at Aberdeenshire wide policy committee levels, but also at area and local level, recognising the unique nature of our local authority area. This is the only way we can truly carry out our functions and meet the needs of the communities we serve.

Within ECS we are committed to our service vision of working together for better and fairer lives, underpinned by our service values of integrity, equity and empowerment. Our vision and values, along with the One Aberdeenshire principles, guide our work and steer our future direction ensuring we provide the best possible services to the people of Aberdeenshire within the resources which are available to us. We are equally committed to working in partnership, not only along with other directorates internally within Aberdeenshire Council but also with our Community Planning partners across Aberdeenshire. In addition to this, our Education service is part of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC), alongside Aberdeen City, Moray, Highland, Orkney, Shetland, Western Isles and Argyll and Bute.

The priorities for improvement within this plan have been identified through our own self-evaluation and through external review and scrutiny, including through the Best Value Assurance Review. The ECS directorate is committed to an ongoing cycle of self-evaluation and continuous improvement in all aspects of its work. Most of the work undertaken across ECS is also aligned to the Council priority areas of Education and Health and Wellbeing, under the "People" pillar. However, the breadth of service areas covered by the directorate means that we have links to each of the Council pillars and priorities. Whilst we will continue to support a range of service areas across ECS, our key strategic priorities for the life cycle of this directorate plan can be summarised as follows:

- To secure continuous improvement in outcomes for children and young people
- To have better, integrated working arrangements within ECS in pursuit of improved outcomes for children and young people
- To have improved business support and resource management arrangements in place across ECS

- To develop and deliver a revised CWP Business Plan based on the three pillars of *Live Life Well*, *Live Life Outdoors* and *Live Life @ home*

I look forward to working with colleagues across ECS and with our Elected Members, partners and wider stakeholders in bringing our service plan and our vision to life.

Regards

Laurence

Laurence Findlay
Director of Education and Children's Services

Introduction

The Aberdeenshire Council Plan provides the strategic policy framework for the delivery of services by the Council. The Council Plan is the Council's corporate plan.

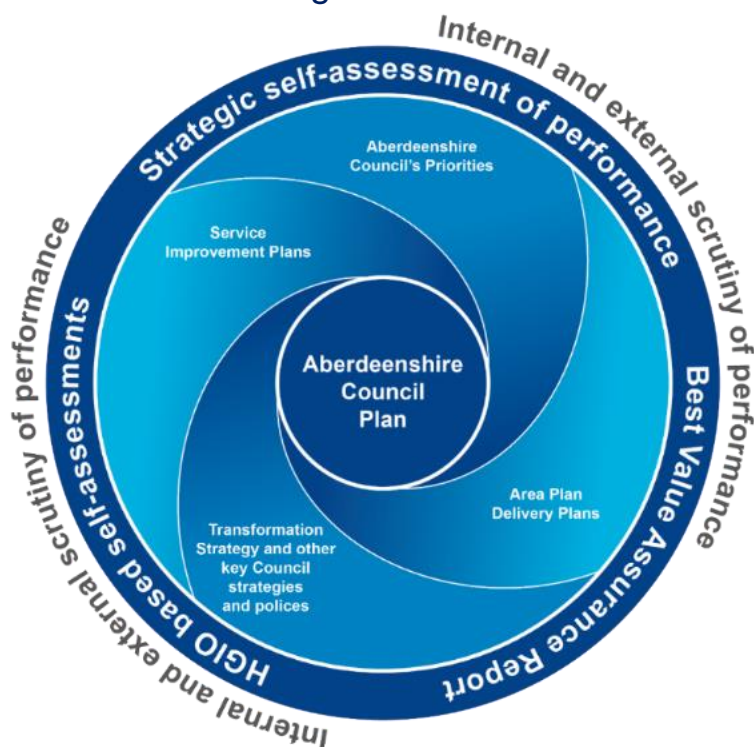
The Council Plan is implemented through six strategic priorities, namely education, health and wellbeing, infrastructure, resilient communities, economy and enterprise and estate modernisation and the day-to-day work carried out by services across the Council.

This Education and Children's service directorate plan is an essential element of the Council's performance management and improvement framework. In this plan we set out the key issues for delivering services in support of the Council vision and priorities, provide a focus on performance improvement and describe specific risks that may impact on the delivery of the service.

Our plan draws on the community impact assessment, with a firm focus on working with our partners and communities to deliver those priorities identified by our residents as important to them during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This plan is informed by the Council's Strategic Assessment, its Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the Community Impact Assessment. The MTFS is designed to ensure that council services remain financially sustainable in the current economic climate. This plan aligns with the Council Plan and Community Planning Partnership priorities and demonstrates how we will support delivery of corporate improvement action plans including the Child Poverty Action Plan, How Good is Our Governance and the Best Value Assurance Report 2020.

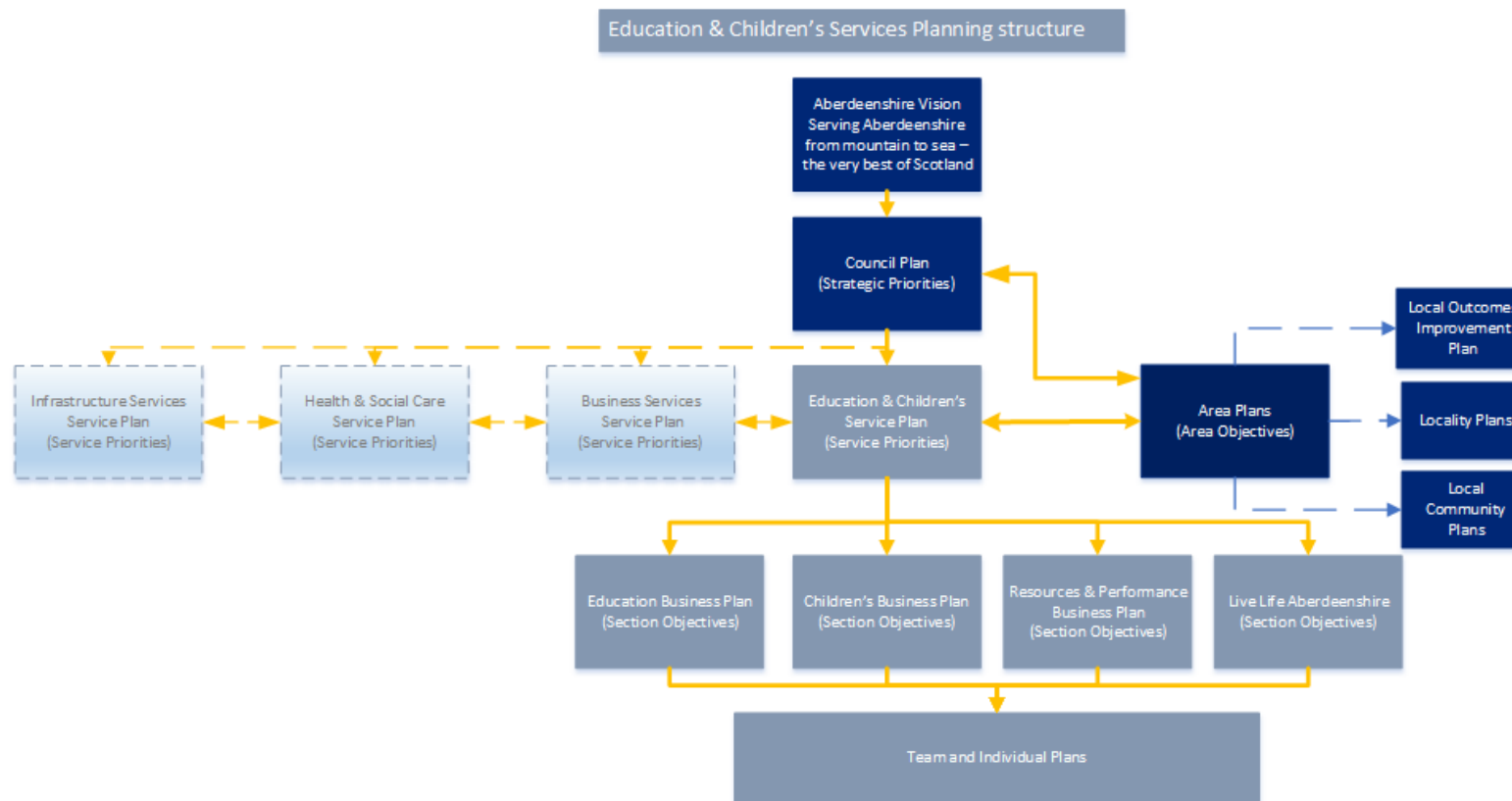
Council Plan Diagram



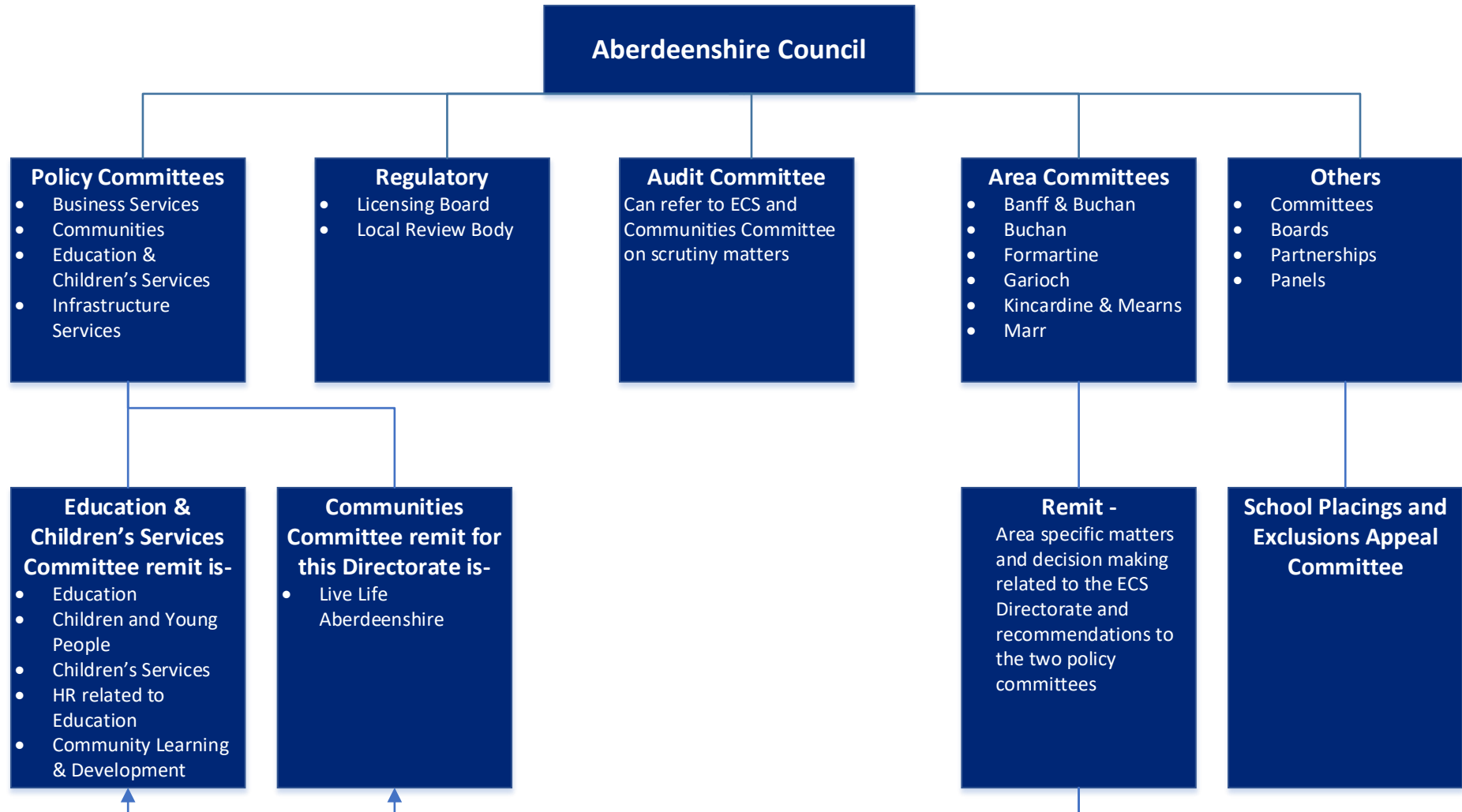
Strategic Context

Planning for the future is a critical element of Education and Children's Services responsibility which allows the service to set future direction in line with the Council's priorities; align actions across all teams to achieve a common aim; ensure the right activities are being undertaken at the right time; be proactive and responsive to an ever-changing landscape.

The following diagram demonstrates how Education and Children's Services support the Council priorities and demonstrates the link between the Council priorities through to individual work plans. Consultation with other Service Directorates and Area Planning mechanisms ensure a cross service approach to planning.



Committee Structure



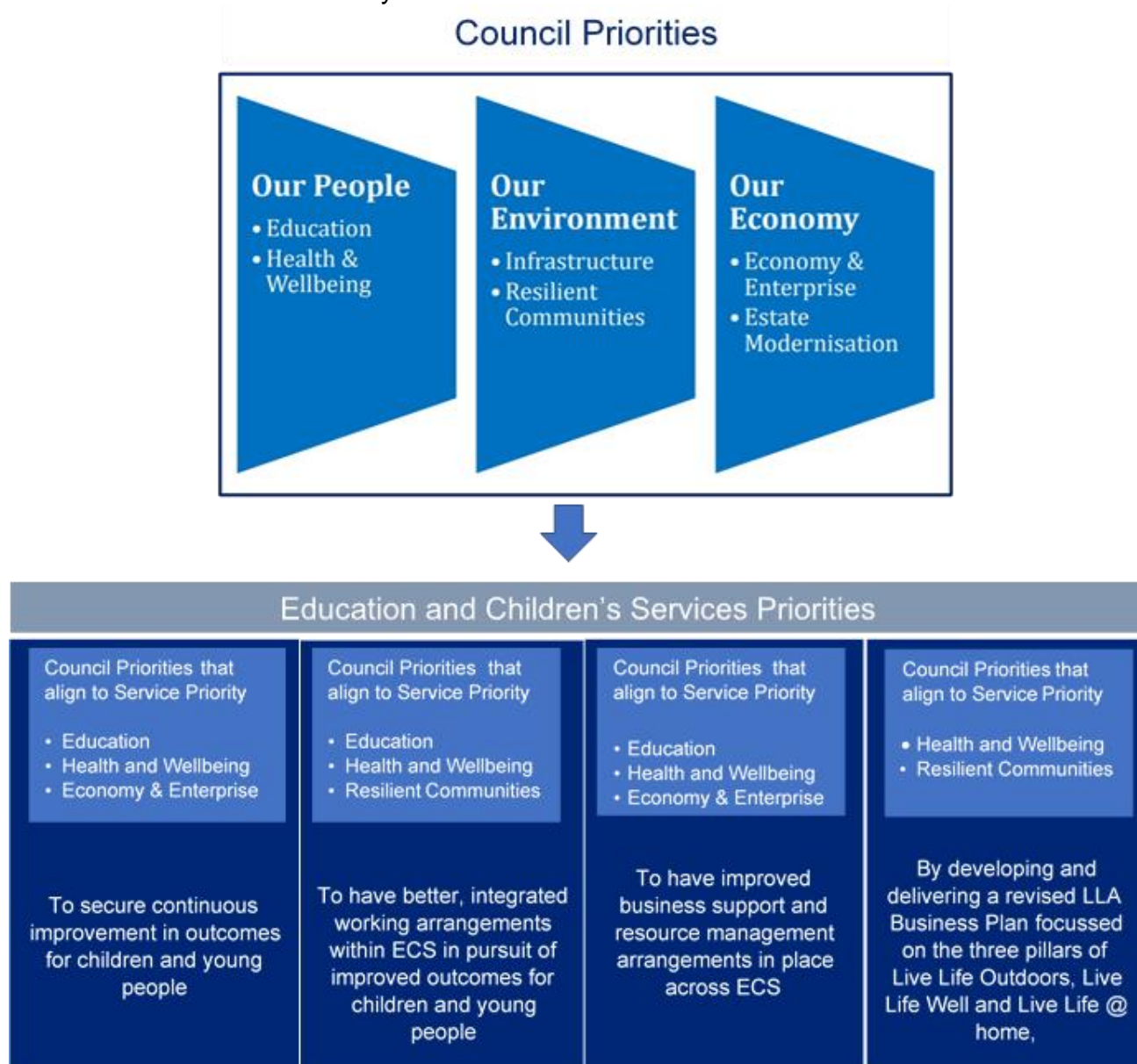
Council and Service Priorities

Review of the Council Priorities

Back in 2017, a set of 11 priorities was agreed by Full Council and they have steered the work of officers. From March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had a huge impact on Aberdeenshire communities, the economy and on public services. It was decided to develop new priorities which better reflect the current challenges being faced by the council and the region. The Council Priorities fall under three pillars, essential to support wider recovery.

Council Strategic Priorities

Council Priorities and how they link to Education and Children's Services Priorities



Area Plans

The focus of Area Plans is the delivery of Directorate Plans at an area level and to provide a clear performance and scrutiny framework. The plan aims to capture the

synergies and relationship with Directorate Plans. The action plan will provide Councillors, Officers and Communities with a clear understanding of what will be happening in their area across the two-year life of the plan. Responsibility for area plans lies with Area Management Teams which consist of cross representation of services at a senior level. The plans will also provide Local Elected Members with oversight of service delivery in their area as well as allowing the required scrutiny.

Area Plans will:

- Set out Directorate plans at an area level
- Capture and reflect council and community priorities and delivery of actions
- Collate proposed service delivery and give Area Committees oversight of the service delivery in the area
- Allow the required scrutiny and monitoring that is specific to the area and provide the opportunity for the formal scrutiny process to be taken forward by Area Committees
- Support Area Committees as the decision makers on local issues
- Provide linkage between the Council and the Community Planning priorities
- Reflect and complement statutory and other community plans relative to each area – e.g., Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs), Locality Plans, Community Safety, Community Justice, Children's Services, HSCP
- Have regard to the public sector equality duty and the climate change commitment recognised by the Council
- Area Plans should also set out the aims and aspirations for the future of the area, capturing what communities would like to see and what they would like the Council to achieve. This aspirational element creates a distinct relationship with the Directorate Plan and should be considered when agreeing future Directorate Priorities. The Area Committees add the essential strategic input to this cyclical process.

Local and National Policy Issues

Education and Children's Services work together, and in partnership, through a variety of plans, reports, and strategies to deliver the Service Priorities. It is the actions in these plans, reports and strategies that achieve our priorities.

Children's Services Plan

Education	Children's Services
National Improvement Framework Plan Aberdeenshire	Aberdeenshire Child Protection Committee Annual Report
NIF Reporting and planning Scottish Government	Corporate Parenting
Educational Psychology Service Improvement Plan and Standards & Quality Report 2020-2022	Aberdeenshire Violence Against Women & Girls Partnership Strategy & Action Plan 2019-2021
Northern Alliance planning Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan	Aberdeenshire Young Carer Strategy
Developing the Young Workforce	Aberdeenshire Children and Young People's Charter
Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan	Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Plan 2018 –2022
Aberdeenshire local phasing delivery plan – COVID-19	Aberdeenshire's Framework for Supporting Children with Significant and Complex Needs
Education Scotland Inspection Reports	
Mental Health & Wellbeing & Children with Disabilities action plans - Children's Services Plan	
Curriculum for Excellence	
CLD Plan CLD Regulations governing Education Scotland inspection CLD	
Resources and Performance	Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships
Early Years The Early Years Framework Realising the Ambition: Being Me Curriculum for Excellence How good is our early learning and childcare	Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships Business Plan Item 14
Learning Estates Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy: Connecting People, Places and Learning Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 - guidance Accessibility-Strategy-2019-20.pdf (asn-aberdeenshire.org)	Sports & Physical Activity Strategy 2018-2028
Aberdeenshire School Catering Service	Cultural Strategy 2018 - 2028

Schools Health Promotion & Nutrition Scotland Act	
Parent Menu Information Portal	
Area and Partnerships	Council
Local Community Plans	Council Plan
Local Outcomes Improvement Plan	Best Value Assurance Report 2020
Connected and Cohesive Communities – locality Plans	
Aberdeenshire Community Learning & Development Plan	
GIRFEC Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy	

Public Sector Equality Duty

Education and Children's Service discharges equalities duty through adhering to [Aberdeenshire Council's Equalities Policy](#).

Policies in effect that may/should be considered when thinking about equity/equality:

- Equalities Act 2010
- Children and Young People act 2014 (Scotland)
- The Child Poverty Act (2017): the Scottish Government's statement of intent to remove child poverty in Scotland by 2030.
- The Fairer Scotland Duty (2018) places a legal responsibility on particular public bodies in Scotland to actively consider how they can reduce inequalities of income, caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions.
- The National Public Health Priorities (2018) encourages preventative measures, rather than crisis responses directing services towards the early years of a child's life, and towards early intervention.
- In February 2020, the Independent Care Review launched its conclusions on how the 'Care System' must change to support some of our most vulnerable children and young people.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) should be taken into account as the Scottish Government is committed to incorporating this into domestic law by the end of spring 2021
- [Education Reform: An Empowered System \(2019\)](#)
- [A Blueprint for 2020: Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare for Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland](#)
- [Implementation of the National Improvement Framework and Delivering Excellence and Equity national agenda.](#)
- [Learning together: national action plan on parental involvement, engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018 – 2021](#)

Sustainability and climate change commitment

Carbon Budget

The carbon budget for the Council was set at the meeting of Aberdeenshire Council on 17 March 2021. For Education and Children's Services the target for carbon reduction for 2021/22 was set at 570 tCO₂e. Each Service update their policy committee on progress on a 6-monthly basis.

Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy

Work was completed at the end of 2021 in Education and Children's Services on a Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy. This document was compiled through consultation with staff from across the Directorate and pupils in our schools. The strategy reflects the Service's recognition that we have an impact on the environment and is working to reduce that impact through responsible waste, energy, and water management.



An element of the ongoing work is the further development and implementation of the strategy in collaboration with appropriate stakeholders including pupils, staff, Elected Members and other groups as appropriate. This will include developing strategies for energy budget management in school, food recycling in all school areas, general waste recycling, reduction in the volume of paper used, litter management, use of sustainable resources and pupil projects in this area. There is already a considerable amount of excellent work being undertaken by individual schools and existing good practice will be included in the development of the strategy. This will require a mixture of process change but equally and possibly more importantly cultural change.

Education and Children's Services is committed to work with colleagues in Waste Management to look at how to reduce the waste for general collection, increase recycling and improve litter management. Covid-19 has impacted on the amount of general waste due to additional cleaning and this work will determine the Service's

ability to reduce general waste. A project is underway to identify how current processes are working, identify where the problems and improve possibilities are with staff across the service and working with pupils in schools.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding the local environment we will continue to develop an approach to protect our natural surroundings and work collaboratively with local communities and Green Space Officers to increase and protect the biodiversity on the sites where we are custodians.

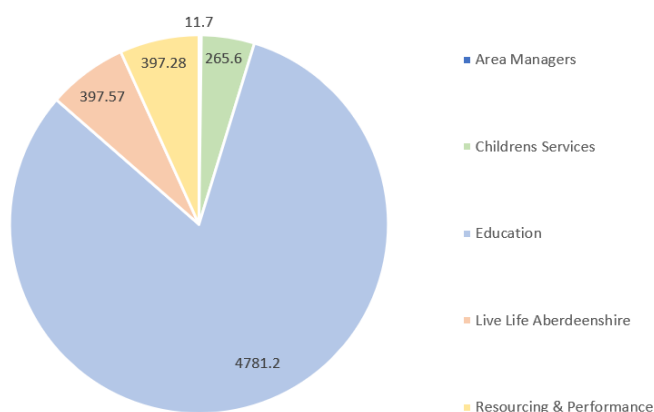
Education and Children's Services is starting to incorporate the consideration of sustainability in procurement. The Catering Team has undertaken this commitment in procurements added to the Procurement Plan 2021/2 for the purchase of fruit, vegetables and frozen foods. The carbon budget reduction will be investigated once the procurement is in place.

Education and Children's Services will also contribute to delivering the Council's Environmental Change Policy, Climate Change Declaration, Resources and Circular Economy Commitment and other sustainability related policies and strategies.

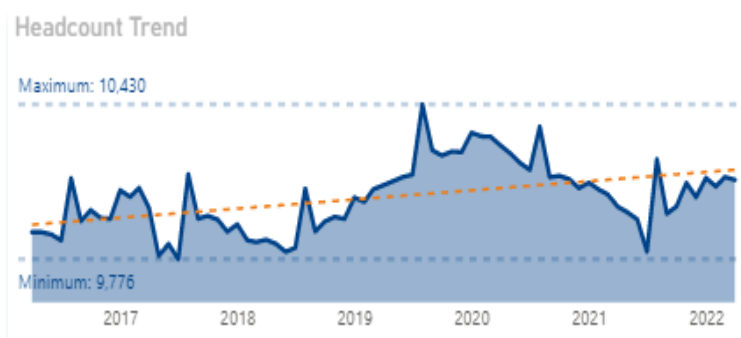
Staffing and Workforce Planning

Staffing

Staff Proportions in Education & Children's Service by Full Time Equivalent (FTE)



The Education and Children's Services workforce has been stable in recent years with a steady growth in headcount.



Recruitment and turnover activity have been high; however, the turnover rate has reduced from 18% to 11% for Teachers and remained stable for all other employees.

In 2021 ECS advertised 1948 vacancies (of which 1563 were external, 90 were internal and 295 instances of Rapid Recruitment). This resulted in a total of 1741 appointments across the service. 41% the vacancies advertised were for teaching posts, 75% of which resulted in an appointment.

Teacher recruitment continues to be more difficult across some Secondary Subjects (Technical, Maths, Home Economics and some Science posts), however, it does not appear that there are the issues seen previously around recruitment of Primary Teachers.

Modern Apprenticeships are offered in a number of positions and Education and Children's Services currently have 12 Modern Apprenticeships in Early Years and

Leisure. There are also 8 Graduate Apprentices in Early Years and Business Management. During 2022 Early Years intend to recruit a further 10-25 Modern Apprentices.

A breakdown of Education and Children's Services employees can be found in the following table:

Employment Status – Teaching posts				
Contract Status	Male		Female	
	Headcount*	Full Time Equivalent	Headcount*	Full Time Equivalent
Permanent	562	528.2	2,383	1,839.7
Fixed-Term	92	70.5	399	284.7
Supply	109	-	1,293	-
Total	682	598.7	2,958	2,124.4

Employment Status – All other posts

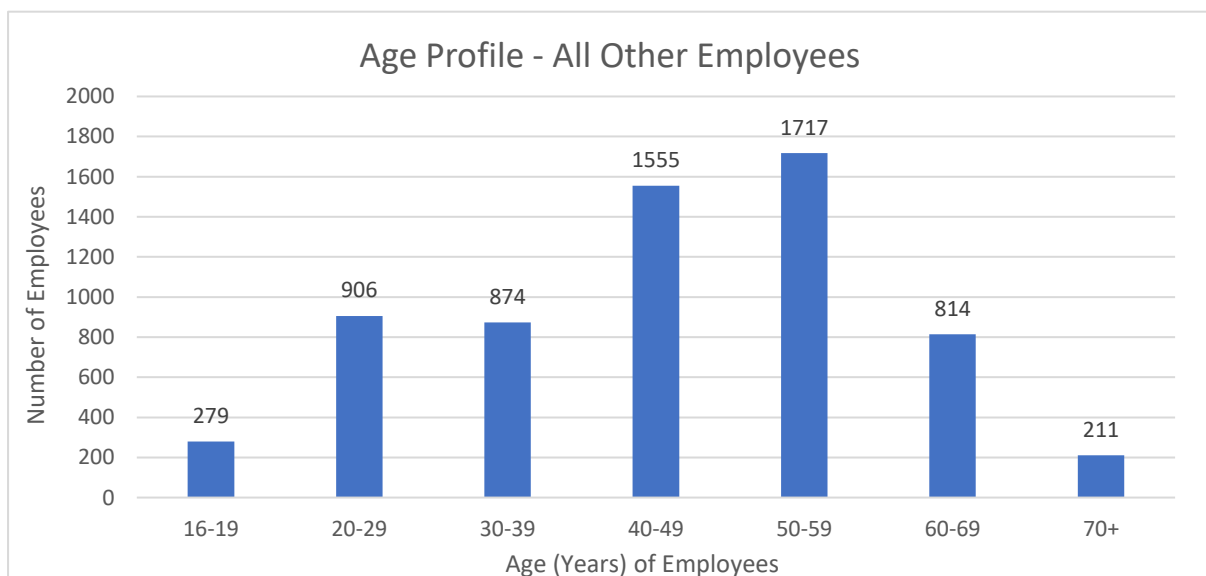
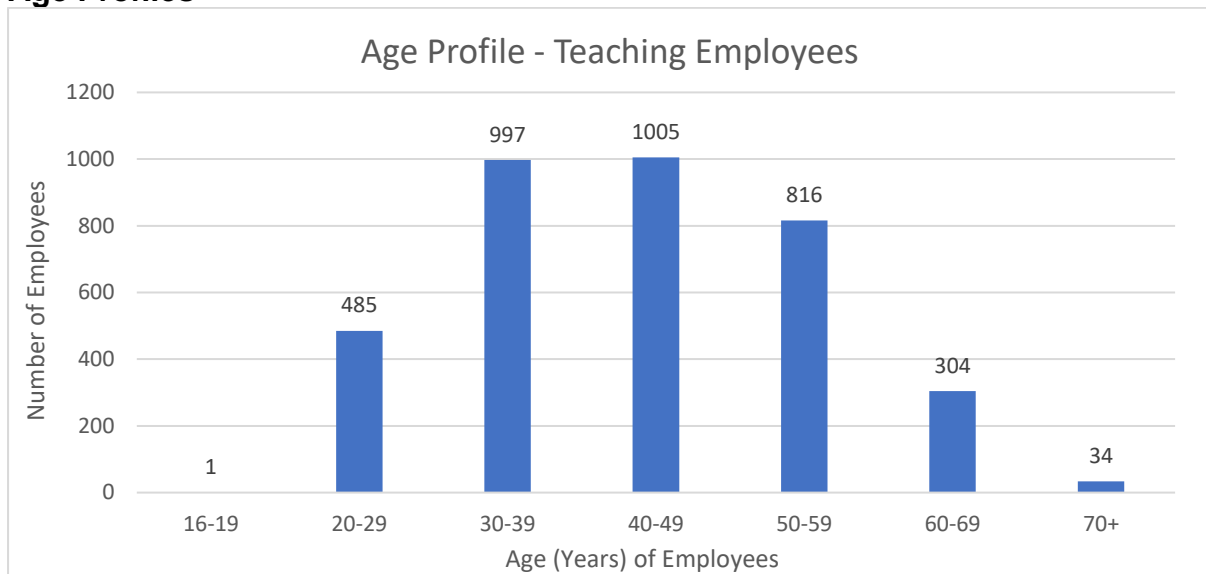
Contract Status	Male		Female	
	Headcount*	Full Time Equivalent	Headcount*	Full Time Equivalent
Permanent	394	318.7	3,540	2,318.2
Fixed-Term	67	45.0	639	324.4
Relief	714	-	2,258	-
Total	992	363.7	5,360	2,642.6

Total Headcount	6,351
Total Full Time Equivalent	3,006.4

* = Total Headcount in each category may come to less than the sum of the Contract Status sub-categories due to the fact that some individuals will hold posts on more than one Contract Status

Other top line indicators such as average age and length of service also point to a healthy overall picture of the workforce. Further analysis suggests that the Education and Children's Services workforce is traditionally a largely female workforce.

Age Profiles

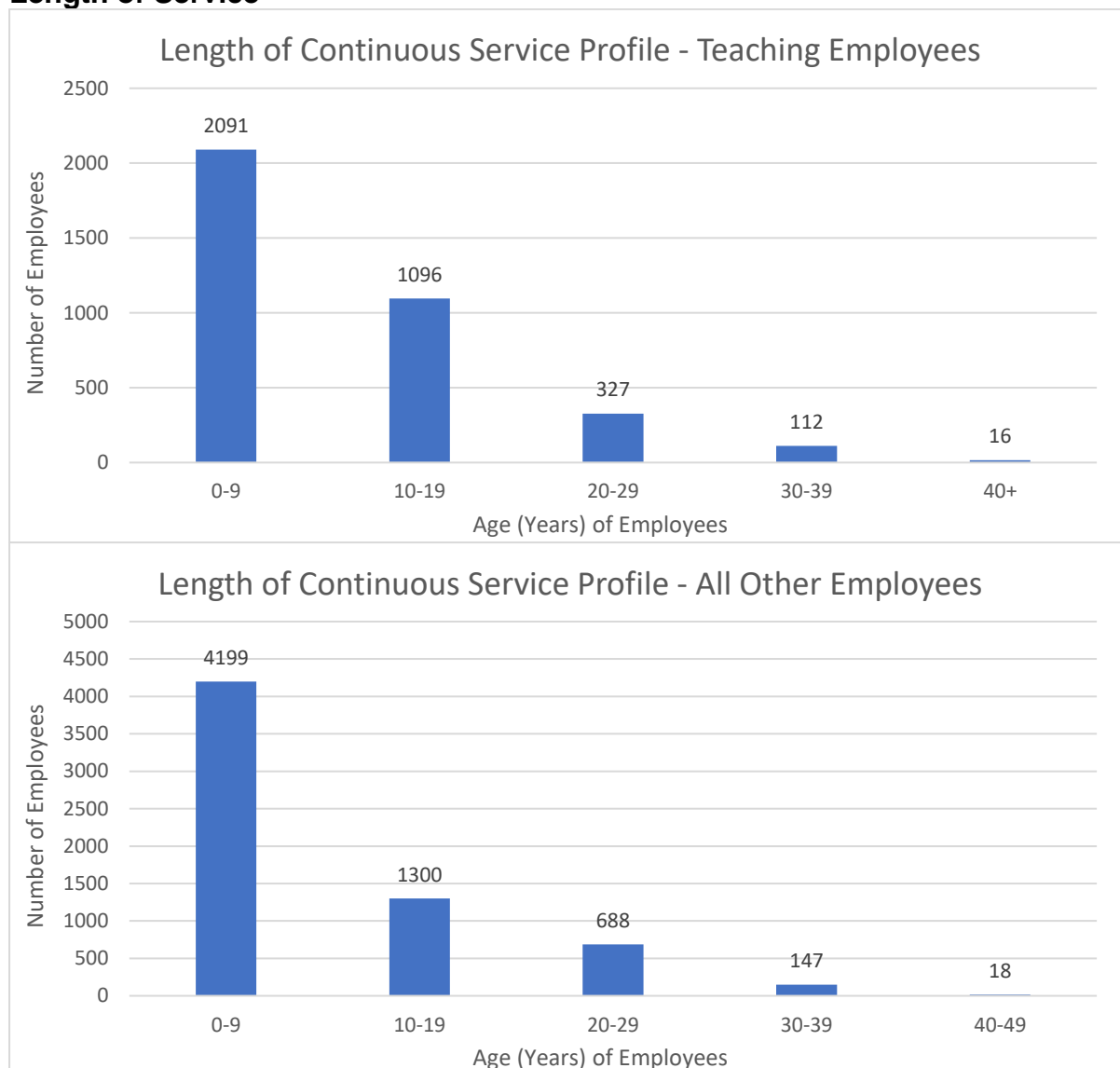


The average age of the teaching workforce is 43.5 years of age and the average age of all other employees is 44.2 years of age.

Within this:

- 9.3% of the teaching workforce and 16.1% of all other employees are aged 60 or over
- 13.4% of the teaching workforce and 18.7% of all other employees are aged under 30

Length of Service



The average length of service for the teaching workforce is 10.3 years and 9.4 years for all other employees. Relief and Supply posts are excluded from Turnover, and only reasons categorised as Voluntary Turnover are counted.

The turnover rate during 2021/22 for the teaching workforce was 11.8% and 15.4% for all other employees.

Disability

Across Education and Children's Services, 11 teaching employees and 25 other employees have self-declared a disability, representing 0.3% of teachers and 0.4% of all other employees. It should however be noted that, following a change to the categories used there are more employees currently holding a status of 'no declaration' than was previously the case. During 2022, Employees are being encouraged to record and maintain these details directly through their Employee Self Service Accounts.

Sickness Absence

Sickness rates in 2021/22 for teachers were 4.61 days per employee and 7.35 days for all other employees.

Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 has impacted on staff deployment during 2021/22. Staff remobilisation work was undertaken as services resumed during spring and summer 2021. This was particularly the case in Live Life Aberdeenshire where a small number of staff also continued to provide direct support to Health & Social Care services. Staff absences and staff isolation due to COVID-19 had an ongoing impact on service delivery across Education and Children's Services throughout 2021/22. In schools, there were a very limited number of full school closures but there were more partial school closures with year groups learning from home. Ongoing daily activity to cover staff absences in schools has placed additional pressures on the school system. Children's Services have continued to operate in a hybrid service model. Office based staff have continued to work from home pending the implementation of Workstyle hybrid working arrangements.

The health and wellbeing of all staff within Education and Children's Services during the pandemic and in the future will be closely monitored.

Workforce Planning

The Education and Children's Services Vision, Values, Directorate Plan and Priorities influences the shape of the workforce and the skills requirements across the service.

Given the depth and breadth of services that are delivered within Education and Children's Services workforce planning needs to be undertaken at team level. In association with HR, each service area has built a better understanding of team workforce profiles and incorporated workforce actions into all team plans.

Although stable for many years, the Education and Children's Services workforce has entered a period of change with service area redesign and restructuring in progress, voluntary severance offered to some groups of employees as well as budget rationalisation and/or reduction, the schools empowerment agenda and changes to labour supply.

The workforce planning actions identify the number of employees and the skill sets required to meet strategic and service objectives and set out the actions required to ensure there is a skilled workforce available to deliver those objectives.

There are three themes that are reflected in all workforce planning within Education and Children's Services.

1. Digital Skills

A skill which has become evident during the COVID-19 pandemic is digital skills and Education and Children's Services are committed to ensuring our workforce are highly skilled and agile to new demands. Staff have adapted to using Microsoft Office365 packages such as Teams for online meetings, Forms for collecting information and Sharepoint for sharing of documents. Within schools digital now has an embedded place in education provision. It will be

important to ensure that digital skills continue to keep pace with the environment with ongoing continuing professional development in this area.

2. Wellbeing

The fluctuation in the workforce coupled with the ongoing pandemic response means the wellbeing of the service will be monitored closely. There was a slightly heightened absence rate in 2020, although understandable during a pandemic, and action will be taken to monitor and improve attendance and wellbeing across the service. Actions to improve pockets of higher absence will be reflected in individual service and team plans. A wellbeing indicator will be added to the employee attitude survey being issued across the service in late 2021 to provide a wellbeing baseline for annual measurement.

3. Succession Planning

Succession planning and talent management will be prioritised due to potential loss of experience and skills in the next few years with staff leaving the service.

Directorate Profile Education and Children's Services

Our Vision and Values

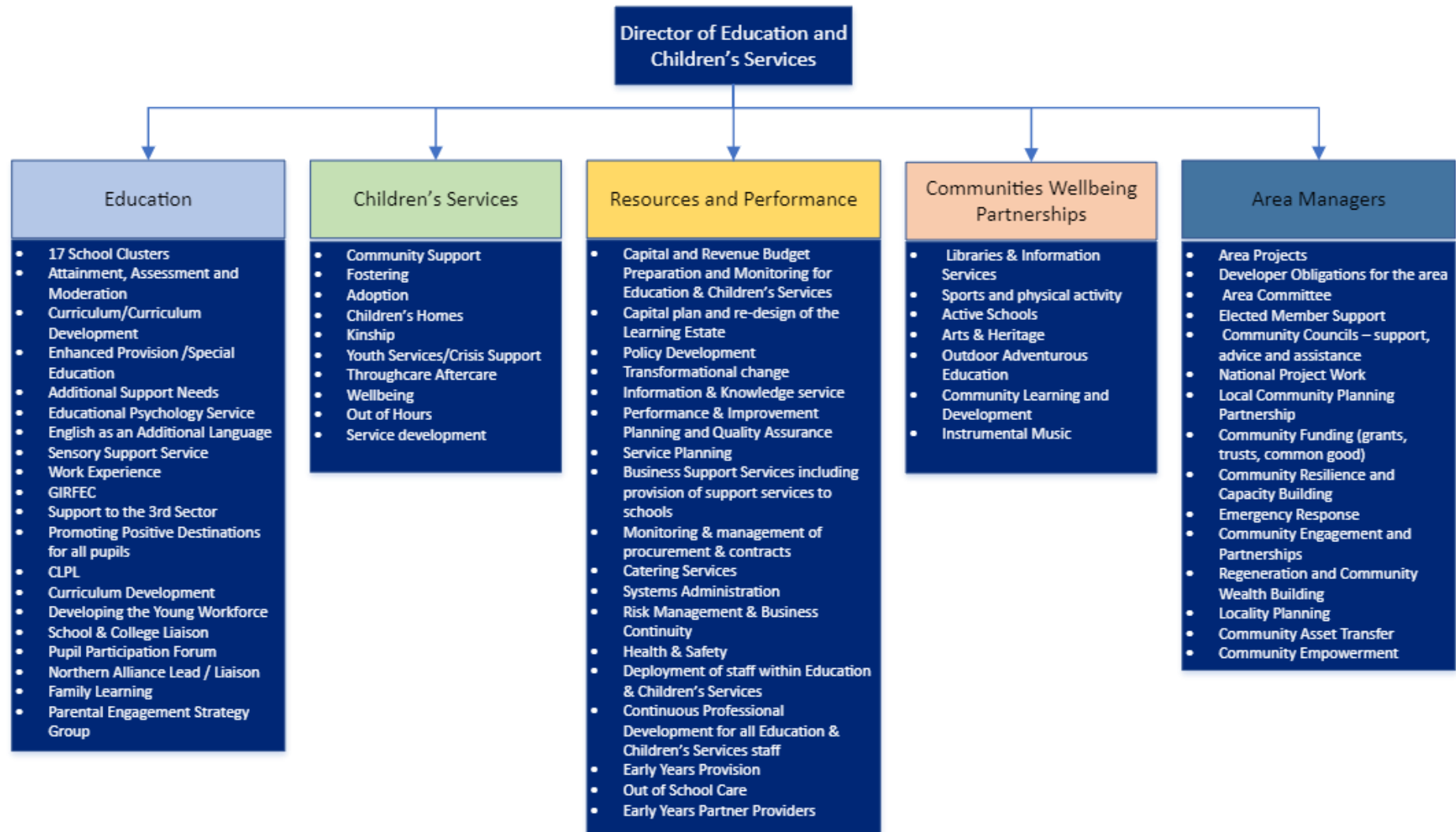
Working together for fairer and better lives



Our Service values reflect the One Aberdeenshire Principles that were developed with all Aberdeenshire Services

- Everyone brings their “best self” to work every day
- We are clear about what is expected of us and ask for clarity if unsure
- We take informed decisions as close to the action as possible

Organisational Chart



Our Teams and what we do

Education	
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Schools team offer support and challenge to all schools across the authority ensuring all settings have developed effective systems to secure continuous improvement with a focus on achieving excellence an equity for all children and young people. • Improve standards in education in line with national priorities. • All functions are performed In line with the Local government in Scotland Act 2003 where it is stated that council officers have a duty to continuously improve the performance of their services, and effectively manage performance and improvement.
Inclusion Equity and Wellbeing	<p>The Inclusion, Equity & Wellbeing Team is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statutory Additional Support Needs (ASN) requirements of the local authority, • Policy development and implementation, practice framework development, resourcing, and capacity building in relation to ASN, Inclusion, Equity & Wellbeing, • Provision of specialist education support services, including Educational Psychology, English as an Additional Language, Sensory Support, and School Counselling Services. • Child Protection and GIRFEC in Education • Strategic Review of the structures, systems and services that underpin Aberdeenshire's approach to meeting additional support needs • Implementation of Community Mental Health Supports & Services
Developing the Young Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the 3-18 DYW Curriculum offer including embedding the Career Education Standard Entitlements and the further development of BGE pathways and Foundation Apprenticeships in the senior phase. • Promote, support and deliver Foundation Apprenticeships to pupils across Aberdeenshire leading to improvement in employability skills, sustained positive school-leaver destinations and raised attainment for all young people. • Improve skills development across Aberdeenshire schools by embedding skills for learning, life and work (Metaskills) and skills profiling • Partnership development, including partnership with SDS (Skills development Scotland), Education Scotland, Colleges, Universities, and effective employer - school links through DYW North East

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased opportunity of effective and sustained pathways for young people to achieve and access labour market opportunities both regionally and nationally, including with Aberdeenshire Council as an employer. Support every pupil to access at least one work placement during the school senior phase. Support for Equalities and the promotion of diverse learner pathways across Aberdeenshire schools with a particular focus on the areas of sex and gender; ASN and disabilities; ethnicity and those young people who are Care Experienced.
Children's Services	
Children's Services Social Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted service to over 2,000 families in need as part of the Getting it Right for Every Child approach. The Children's Services Plan identifies 5 priority areas that informs the delivery of Children's Services. Statutory duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of children, young people, and their families We have 12 Community Teams throughout Aberdeenshire working with children: looked after; have a disability; young carers Out of Hours service and teams providing crisis and wellbeing support. Registered services of Adoption, Kinship, Fostering and Residential Homes provide support to children, families and carers. Throughcare Aftercare team support care experienced young people up to the age of 26. We aspire to reduce offending through diversionary and early and effective intervention activities. This targets individual offending by advancing the Whole Systems Approach (WSA) and improving life chances. Through our community support, we do provide specific services through a Youth Services Team.
Resources and Performance	
Learning Estates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the learning estate is fit for purpose and advise the council accordingly. Following the 10 guiding principles of the Scotland LE Strategy: Connecting People, Places and Learning. Supporting the council target for carbon reduction. Create and maintain annual School Roll Forecasts and project utilisation of school buildings maximising occupancy where possible Determine secondary school admission limits Responding and processing of all placing requests in line with the policy and providing the case for the authority for appeals

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead statutory consultations for changes to the Learning Estates • Respond to planning applications, inform the Local Development Plan and Developer Obligation process • Provide support and collaboration to the Northern Alliance collaborative. • Liaison between ECS teams and Property & Facilities Management teams to ensure smooth delivery of relevant projects and efficient utilisation of budget, wherever possible.
Catering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a high-quality service to all Aberdeenshire's schools and pupils whilst complying with Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drinks in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2008. • Provision of a hot school meals – on average 20,000 meals per day • Provide a service in 5 Community Cafes, day care and luncheon clubs • Providing meals that are prepared by well-trained catering staff to ensure the highest of quality whilst adhering to Environmental Health legislation and health and safety regulations.
Business Support and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide business support to teams across Education & Children's Services to ensure efficient operation of services and to support Head Teachers in an empowered school system. The main functions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administration ○ Financial administration ○ Budget monitoring ○ Staff deployment ○ Systems support ○ Health and safety support ○ Procurement and contract management support ○ Support on improvement, performance management and service planning ○ Janitorial and technician services.
Early Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELC settings are all those which offer education and childcare to children up to school age. These include settings known as family centres, nursery schools, nursery classes attached to primary schools, and childminders. ELC settings can be operated by local authorities, private businesses, voluntary sector organisations, and in the case of childminders, self-employed individuals. • Support the Scottish Government aims to increase the hours of free ELC for entitled children from 600 to 1,140 hours pa by ensuring that the capacity to deliver funded entitlement (eligible 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds) of 1140 hours (by August 2021) is sufficient through ongoing monitoring of the sector.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with providers of funded entitlement (schools, day-care, childminders, playgroup, 'pop up' provision) to ensure that they meet the national standards defined by (Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland) to continue to deliver this service and to raise developmental and educational outcomes. • Providing training and development opportunities to ensure that all settings meet service legal requirements and to improve, knowledge and understanding of the ELC workforce. • Providing opportunities for workforce development in partnership with other agencies and services/professionals. • Providing and supporting wrap around care for school age children across Aberdeenshire. • Supporting third sector in working with families to support educational outcomes for children aged 0 to 5 and to support early intervention.
Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships	
CWP	<p>Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships is a customer facing service which offers easily accessible, high-quality Culture and Sport experiences delivering improved mental and physical health and wellbeing, fun and learning from mountain to sea for everyone living in, working in or visiting Aberdeenshire.</p> <p>Our purpose is -</p> <p>To provide data-informed and local intelligence-led responsive opportunities for participation in arts, libraries, heritage, learning and physical activity.</p> <p>To deliver improved health & wellbeing and develop a sense of belonging to place and community.</p> <p>Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships staff work across all networks in a range of facilities. We also deliver high quality outreach, virtual online programmes, and partnership delivery. We offer a quality membership scheme which is available to all residents which encourages participation in a wide range of culture and sports activity. The service offers experiences to visitors through a range of high profile partnership sports events and facilities, outdoor experiences, online Arts and Heritage offer and visitor attractions.</p> <p>The Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships work contributes to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved mental health and physical health and wellbeing • Support employability and skills • Personal and family support and resilience

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community capacity building and resilience • Tackling poverty and equality
Communities and Partnerships	<p>Community Learning and Development (CLD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLD staff work to reduce inequalities in Aberdeenshire by improving life chances for individuals and families and by supporting community groups and organisations in building strong and resilient communities. We do this through three different work strands of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with Young People ○ Work with Adults ○ Work with Communities • CLD work is targeted support to where it is needed most. • Working with adults and families - supporting adults through improving skills and confidence • Working to support and strengthen communities - supporting volunteers, developing new groups; working with community groups to strengthen organisational and operational development, delivering learning • Working with young people - supporting young people to overcome challenges by developing life skills
Area Managers Team	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Area Manager provides leadership, vision and strategic direction to the Council and its Services in partnership with the Corporate Leadership Group and elected members. The Area Manager is a key interface between Elected Members and officers, they support the democratic processes and provide advice on policy and professional matters • The Area Managers' Offices manage the Area Committee cycle, this enables and supports local decision making in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Governance. The Area Managers support the local Elected Members and ensure that they are involved in local decision making. • Full Council requires that every elected Member is a member of an Area Committee and also serves on a policy committee or the Audit Committee. Area Managers are Chief Officers, and they are members of the Council's Corporate Leadership Group. Each Area Manager is also part of a Council Directorate team with two in Business Services, two in Education and Children's Services and two in Infrastructure Services. Area Committees are therefore able to influence policy making within the context of local grass roots requirements. This principle is embedded in the Scheme of Governance, specifically in the delegations in Part 2A and in Part 4B the Policy Development and Review Framework. the Policy Development and Review Framework.

- Each Area Manager convenes and leads an Area Management Team (AMT). The AMT is made up of representatives from across the services. It is this team that will be collectively responsible for the development, delivery, and monitoring performance of the Area Plan.
- Community Planning and Partnership Working - Each Area has a Local Community Planning Group that is chaired by the Area Manager. This group has the responsibility for the production of the Community Plan for the Area. This plan reflects local needs, and each community partner takes responsibility for implementation and delivery. In addition, this plan provides the required input from the community to the development and review of the Council's and partners policies and programmes. Community Planning is an essential element to area focused council work. It ensures that the community have a voice and creates the foundation of the 'bottom-up approach'.
- The Area Teams work closely and collaboratively with communities and partners to ensure effective plans are developed and delivered, including Community Plans, Locality Plans, Community Action Plans, Resilience Plans, Regeneration plans, Teams also work with communities and partners to increase community capacity along with community wealth building. as well as supporting the translation and incorporation of community objectives into corporate objectives within Council Plans and Priorities.
- Area Projects – Area based project officers work with local communities and third sector organisations as well as Council services and partners to build relationships between the public, private and voluntary sectors and support the delivery of placemaking activity and other projects in communities across the area. This includes support for parts of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 such as asset transfers, agreeing projects for council spend and participation requests. Advice, support, and assistance is also provided on governance, funding opportunities for a range of local projects being undertaken by community groups and organisations.
- Finance - A system of area budgets is under development. Area Managers are responsible for community budgets. Area Committees disburse the allocated Area Committees Budget to local community projects and organisations. They also administer Local Trusts and Common Good Funds.
- Developer Obligations - Substantial sums can be collected via development in the local area and the use of funds received from developer contributions must be in line with the original agreement under which they were secured. The Developer Obligations Team in Legal and People is responsible for the administration, but the Area Manager is responsible for co-ordination, collaboration and communication with services, communities and elected members. An essential role is ensuring the monies can be spent within agreed timescales and to the benefit of communities and delivery of the Council Priorities.

Financial Profile

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL REVENUE BUDGET 2022/2027

	Base Budget 2022/23 £000	Base Budget 2023/24 £000	Base Budget 2024/25 £000	Base Budget 2025/26 £000	Base Budget 2026/27 £000
Education & Children's Services					
01a.Administration & Management	7,697	7,892	8,092	8,298	8,511
01b.School Crossing Patrollers	385	396	408	420	432
02.Area Managers - Banff & Buchan and Garioch	816	837	857	878	900
03.Early Years - Nurseries	20,072	22,790	23,418	24,065	24,729
04.Early Years - Central Costs	20,267	20,518	20,772	21,031	21,294
05.Out of School Care	(273)	(282)	(292)	(302)	(312)
06a.Primary Schools	114,559	117,080	120,130	123,266	126,491
06b.Primary Support and Initiatives	4,571	4,609	4,648	4,688	4,729
06c.Instrumental Music Service	1,105	1,136	1,169	1,202	1,237
07a.Secondary Schools	115,728	118,839	122,035	125,317	128,689
07b.Secondary Support and Initiatives	2,994	3,035	3,076	3,118	3,160
08a.Special Schools	7,053	7,243	7,438	7,638	7,844
08b.Support For Learners Cluster	20,552	21,130	21,725	22,336	22,965
08c.Inclusion,Equity & Wellbeing, Capacity Building & Resources	1,720	1,780	1,842	1,906	1,971
08d.Additional Support Needs Specialists	2,238	2,302	2,368	2,436	2,506
08e.Physchologists	1,624	1,670	1,718	1,767	1,818
08f.Special - Out of Authority	225	234	243	252	262
09.Community Learning and Development	3,939	4,033	4,128	4,227	4,327
10.Active Schools	169	190	211	233	256
11.Catering - General	854	871	889	908	927
12.Catering - Primary & Early Years	4,189	4,260	4,333	4,407	4,482
13.Catering - Secondary & Vending	1,497	1,504	1,511	1,518	1,525
14.Catering - Special	105	107	110	112	115
15.Catering - Support Staff	479	492	506	520	534
16.Children - Community Care	13,609	13,957	14,314	14,682	15,061
17.Children - Self Directed Support	1,683	1,699	1,716	1,733	1,749
18.Children - Family Placement	9,262	9,397	9,535	9,676	9,819
19.Children - Residential Care	2,413	2,479	2,548	2,618	2,690
20.Children - Out of Authority Placements	14,098	14,239	14,381	14,525	14,670
	373,630	384,437	393,829	403,475	413,381
Live Life Aberdeenshire					
21.Arts Development	454	466	478	491	504
22.Macduff Aquarium	168	169	170	171	172
23.Grant Aid	104	105	106	107	108
24.Libraries	3,482	3,566	3,652	3,740	3,831
25.Museums	654	666	678	690	703
26.Outdoor and Adventurous Activities	189	192	195	198	201
27.Halls	417	420	424	428	432
28.Sport and Leisure	4,172	4,222	4,269	4,318	4,366
	9,640	9,806	9,972	10,143	10,317
29.Expenditure to be funded from Borrowing - ECS	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)
EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES TOTAL	381,270	392,243	401,801	411,618	421,698

2021-2036 Capital Plan									
		Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	Total
		2022/2023 £000	2023/2024 £000	2024/2025 £000	2025/2026 £000	2026-2027 £000	2027-2032 £000	2032-2037 £000	Total £000
COMMUNITIES									
Live Life Aberdeenshire		567	550	175	0	0	0	0	1,292
Live Life Aberdeenshire Pitch & Outdoor Physical Activity Space Strategy		0	460	1,035	875	500	0	0	2,870
Communities Total		567	1010	1210	875	500	0	0	4,162
EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES									
Early Learning Childcare (1140 Hours Projects)		4,535	2,200	0	0	0	0	0	6,735
Early Learning Childcare (Children & Young Peoples Bill)		200	0	0	0	0	0	0	200
ECS Enhancements		3,850	4,288	2,850	2,850	2,850	14,250	14,250	45,188
ECS PC/Laptops		600	0	0	0	0	0	0	600
Capitalisation of Other Projects		2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	10,000	10,000	30,000
Improved Disabled Access (Education)		550	550	550	550	550	2,750	2,750	8,250
Inverurie Community Campus		326	0	0	0	0	0	0	326
Kintore Primary School (Midmill)		333	0	0	0	0	0	0	333
Learning Estates Improvements		50	0	0	0	0	0	0	50
New Build Primary - Fraserburgh		699	500	8426	8492	104	0	0	18,221
New Build Primary and Special School - Stonehaven		604	550	10,227	7,362	108	0	0	18,851
Peterhead Community Campus		1,942	17,527	31,444	31,356	16,330	0	0	98,599
PFI Lifecycle Replacement		2,226	1,754	2,032	1,629	816	6,320	6,157	20,934
Education & Children's Services Total		17,915	29,369	57,529	54,239	22,758	33,320	33,157	248,287

Directorate Performance Framework

Performance

Progress and Performance is monitored using the Council's Strategic Performance Monitoring System (Pentana Risk). The information is sourced from various internal information systems with satisfaction information collected via the Aberdeenshire Council reputation tracker. The information from Pentana is used to produce reports for Policy Committees, Area Committees, Leadership Teams, Boards and for external scrutiny. In 2020/2021 there were 170 quarterly, biannual, or annual measures for Education & Children's Services.

More detail on what measures we use and how they are performing can be found in the performance committee reports and Best Value Assurance Report on Aberdeenshire Council's website

[Education and Children's Services Committee](#)

[Communities Committee](#)

[Best Value Assurance Report 2020](#)

Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF)

In addition to outcome measures that help demonstrate how the Service is working towards the council priorities it leads on and scrutinises, Education & Children's Services (ECS) also contribute to the Aberdeenshire Council response to key national trends against the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) annual statutory performance indicators. Some of these indicators are also reported as part of the Education and Children's Services Performance Management Framework and are included in the Directorate Improvement Action Plan.

Comparative performance information can help the public gauge better the performance of their council, and helps councils identify how they can shape and improve its services and outcomes for communities. Audit Scotland issue a [Direction](#) which sets out the performance information that the Commission requires councils to publish. The Direction encourages the use of the LGBF which is run by the local government community through [SOLACE](#) and the [Improvement Service](#), and adds value to the Commissions powers of auditing Best Value, particularly in relation to public performance reporting.

To support benchmarking across councils that are similar in terms of the *type* of population that they serve (e.g., relative deprivation and affluence) and the *type* of area in which they serve them (e.g., urban, semi-rural, rural), the LGBF have utilised 'family groups' of councils for comparison.

Our comparison Family Group of councils differ for benchmarking depending on the context:

- For Children, Social Work and Housing indicators: Family Group 1 - East Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire, Aberdeenshire, Edinburgh, City of, Perth & Kinross, Aberdeen City, Shetland Islands, Orkney Islands
- For Environmental, Culture & Leisure, Economic Development, Corporate and Property indicators: Family Group 1 - Eilean Siar, Argyll & Bute, Shetland Islands, Highland, Orkney Islands, Scottish Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Aberdeenshire

The latest LGBF report published by the Improvement Service is the 2020/21 LGBF Overview Report: [Reports | Benchmarking \(improvementservice.org.uk\)](https://improvementservice.org.uk/reports/benchmarking)

Internal reports prepared and held on the Council's Strategic Performance Monitoring System (Pentana Risk) are scrutinised and monitored by Corporate Strategic Team, the Directorate Leadership Team, Area Committees as well as Education and Children's Services Policy and Communities Policy Committees. Operational Teams benefit from access to Local Government Benchmarking data (LGBF) for evidenced based decision making.

The latest report that was prepared by corporate performance for Full Council for 2020/21 performance contained LGBF data based on 2019/20, and was considered at Full Council on 23rd September 2021 (Item 11): [Aberdeenshire Council - Committees and Meetings](#) (Annual Performance Report 2020-21).

Where are we now?

Activity review and key successes

Education	
Schools	<p>The new structure for Schools Support has become embedded since its introduction on 19 April 2021. It has allowed a three area model to work to the advantage of the schools and the team and has picked up some positive feedback from Head Teachers.</p> <p>The model has enabled QIMs to work more closely together and strengthen the approach towards our NIF plan and four education priorities.</p> <p>The model also enabled the correct level of resource to focus on the Alternative Certification Model, a process that went very well within Aberdeenshire and was commented on during the Education Scotland review and at Education and Children's Services Committee.</p> <p>Since the introduction of the new structure, five Education Scotland follow through inspections have taken place with all but one being signed off due to confidence in recent progress. This is another significant indication of success.</p> <p>Key areas of work have been taken forward over the last year. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of an Aberdeenshire framework and support in relation to high quality learning, teaching, and assessment.• Development of Power Bi tools to support the analysis of data leading to more evidence-based planning for improvement in all settings.• Development of the empowerment agenda through ongoing progress within our Self-Improving Schools Partnerships.• Action planning to support targeted interventions in closing the poverty related attainment gap.• Support for all schools in developing more robust practices in assessment and moderation, supporting more valid and reliable teacher professional judgements.
Inclusion Equity and Wellbeing	<p>A Strategic Review of Additional Support Needs is underway. A number of workstreams have been established to strengthen universal inclusive practice, with a current focus on autism, inclusive communication, multi-cultural schools, and whole school mental health. Stakeholder engagement is underway in order to inform a review of the Enhanced Provision / Community Resource Hub Model. In</p>

	<p>addition, minimum standards of professional knowledge and skills in relation to ASN are being developed for a variety of disciplinary groups across the education workforce.</p> <p>The School Counselling Service continues to develop and is on schedule to be operating at full capacity by January 2023.</p> <p>The Inclusion Equity and Wellbeing team continues to work in partnership with Children's Services Social Work, Community Learning & Development, Police Scotland, NHS Scotland and the third sector to plan and implement the Community Mental Health Supports and Services Framework. Initiatives to-date to improve mental health outcomes have included the commissioning of two digital mental health services (Kooth for age 11-18 years, and Togetherall for age 16+), the appointment of an LGBTQ+ Inclusion Advisor, investment in capacity within CAMHS to support the roll-out of LIAM (Low Level Anxiety Management) training for frontline staff, and the development of a Nature Nurture Practitioner post in each school cluster to provide targeted prevention and early intervention support for children aged 5-11 years.</p>
Developing the Young Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 2021-22 Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) delivery commenced on 1st June 2021. There has been a considerable increase in numbers choosing to study an FA. Currently there over 400 Level 6 and over 230 Level 4/5 Foundation Apprenticeships pupils across 12 FA frameworks undertaking an FA through the Aberdeenshire Council model. There is also a total of 37 Level 4/5 and Level 6 FAs being delivered this session by NESCOL. • Very successful completion rates and increase in pupil attainment, including having a clear impact on closing the poverty related attainment gap, due to pupil FA achievement. • Very successful HMIE review inspection of Aberdeenshire Council's Foundation Apprenticeship delivery with very positive feedback. Also, positive media feedback following articles in TES and The Herald highlighting our FA delivery. • On-going development of meta skills through FA delivery, including a pilot in Level 6 Children & Young People. • COVID-19 has again had an impact on delivery and strategic planning. Successful delivery so far has involved the development of virtual and remote learning and the development of suitable teaching and learning resources. • Successful bid made to Skills Development Scotland to deliver Level 4&5, Level 6 and Flexible Delivery Model Foundation Apprenticeships across all available frameworks.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'relaunch' of the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) 3-18 curriculum refresh and Career Education delivery in our schools has been delayed again due to COVID-19.
Children's Services	
Children's Services Social Work	<p>Community Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality assurance framework implemented and embedded in practice. Throughout the past two years, the service has strengthened the self-evaluation approach and undertaken peer self-evaluation exercises around key social work processes from referral to closure and including response to duty referrals. Within this period, the service has undertaken 8 peer self-evaluation activities. Feedback from the process has led to improvements which have then been substantiated in the next cycle of self-evaluation. Learning is shared across the service to support whole service improvement and learning and we have seen an increase from 80-99% of duty referrals being concluded within 12 weeks. Improvement activity around writing SMART plans now shows that 85% of plans are SMART and further support provided to continue to improve this. Other improvement activities undertaken in 2020/21 include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of the Children & Young Person's Assessment with positive feedback from SCRA, children and young people and their families Modernising our use of language in formal reporting in line with recommendations from The Promise Increased Wrap Around Care Provision for children with a disability Co-produced regular team manager/practitioner forums and Time to Talk Service wide workshops Developed emotional resilience learning and specifically tailored development resources Agile delivery of service including successful adaptation to using technologies/virtual working and gathered feedback on how well this works for the children, young people and families the service supports to ensure continuous improvement. Raising awareness of the profile of young carers resulting in an increase in the number of young carers receiving an assessment and support package to support them in their caring role. Developing and enhancing a Trauma Informed and Responsive Workforce. <p>Looked After Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered services continue to receive positive inspection grades, recognising ongoing improvement activities to ensure the best outcome for families. Within our Children's Homes for example, there is clear

engagement and participation with children and their families with measurement of improvement in their individual wellbeing undertaken.

- There is a continued increase in care experienced young people having a positive destination, including continuing care, living independently, and accessing support where required. Work also continues with Adult Services in the transition from Children's Services, particularly for those young people who experience a high level of risk due to their experiences.
- The service continues to lead on the work of the Corporate Parenting Thematic Group and also chairs the newly formed Aberdeenshire Promise Implementation Board which will drive forward delivery on the recommendations of The Promise.
- In line with The Promise, the Service undertook self evaluation activity around support provided to brothers and sisters who require to become looked after. The activity highlighted some excellent examples of good practice which have been incorporated in national guidance.
- Review of our secure care processes led to a plan of improvement activity which has improved practice for children and families led by listening to the voices of young people with lived experience.

Child Protection

- The service leads a multi-agency Data and Self Evaluation Group which oversees the implementation of a robust multi agency cycle of self-evaluation which has included evaluation of; the child's journey through key child protection processes, support provided to children re-registered on the child protection register, Initial Referral Discussions, child protection case conference, child protection medicals and Joint Investigative Interviews.
- The service also leads on the collation and analysis of the multi-agency child protection data set which has been embedded for a year and is used to support the Child Protection Committee in understanding need, trends, risk and learning and development.
- The service continues to participate in all Child Protection Committee quality assurance activities and lead the Operations and Practice Group which is key to supporting child protection delivery across services. This group will also play an instrumental role in implementing the new National Child Protection Guidance.

Holistic Family Support

- Review of the whole systems approach to youth justice led to the development of two specific workstreams: 'Support for Local Families' provides early intervention and support within Buchanhaven School aiming to prevent families reaching crisis where there are early indicators of vulnerability and risk and: Intensive Family Support which works with families in crises who have experienced intergenerational trauma to prevent a young person being accommodated or breakdown of alternative family care.

Resources and Performance

Learning Estates

Aberdeenshire Wide Priorities - Education

- Review of New Building Primary School Brief.
- Completed an audit of accessibility to Schools.
- Updating suitability core facts.
- Responding to all placing requests

Consultations and Engagements

- The conclusion of the rezone of Hillside School.
- Conclusion and reporting on Strachan School consultations and formal closure of school
- Engagement with the Longhaven Community regarding the future of Longhaven School.
- Completed consultations for Peterhead Academy, Anna Ritchie and for the merger of Dales Park and Meethill.
- Gartly full options appraisal completed
- Balmedie options appraisal completed

Inverurie Community Campus was opened in October 2020.

Peterhead Community Campus has progressed to project management Gateway Stage 2, with appointment of the full design team anticipated in early May 2022, with Royal Institute of British Architects Concept Design work to begin immediately thereafter. The programme has been reviewed and re-baselined, with handover scheduled for March 2026 and an operational start from Term 4 of the 2025/26 academic session. A master planning exercise, led by Henning Larsen, is being undertaken in advance of

	<p>the Campus design to consider the opportunities, challenges and impacts of the project in the wider context of the whole town.</p> <p>Secondary and Primary School Enhancements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of works to The Gordon Schools Huntly ,Fraserburgh Academy and phase 1 at Turriff Academy • Hillside School extension is complete • Premnay School completion of the extension and the removal of the temporary accommodation • Kellands School – phase 1 complete • Cluny School – completed work • Gordon Primary School Nursery, Fishermoss School Nursery, Dales Park School Nursery and New Machar School Nursery all completed
Catering	<p>Continuing delivery of a quality service throughout challenging changing circumstances. We have delivered the requirements of the Food and drink in schools regulations and Natasha's law. Supporting services as required with a flexible approach. The School Catering service has supported the team to provide meals recently when people and homes in Aberdeenshire have suffered during Storm Arwen, Malik and Corrie</p>
Business Support and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Aberdeenshire Council Devolved School Management (DSM) Scheme (2022-25) completed and approved by ECS Committee with a range of ongoing/planned workstreams to progress implementation • Phase 1 of the Business Support and Performance Review concluded with new structure embedded. • Undertaken planning for Phases 2 and 3 of the Business Support and Performance Review. • Led on the implementation of a revised structure to support the management of health, safety, and risk in educational establishments, and more widely in the directorate. • Established closer links with the corporate Health and Safety team to revise strategy and procedural documents, with the emphasis on embedding a more supportive quality assurance system, governance, and training, for colleagues with specific remits for health and safety within our schools. • Initial planning for revised processes for managing of risk, including review of Emergency Response and Business Continuity plans. • Expansion of the work of the Education and Children's Services Finance Team from supporting Children's Services to supporting the other Services within Education and Children's Services ensuring

	<p>Financial Regulations and processes are dealt with accurately and consistently. Work continues to streamline and improve processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of the work of the Education and Children's Services Contracts Team to now include support for contract management of procurements over £10,000 in the service, in addition to work surrounding the PPP contracts. • The Education and Children's Services Lets Team administers and manages in the region of 900 lets annual in educational establishments throughout Aberdeenshire. The team has undergone restructuring, and processes have been updated during 2021/2 to enable lets to be booked by members of the public online. Work is ongoing in the development of a 'one stop shop' for the administration of lets across Education and Live Life Aberdeenshire. • Supported schools with the introduction of the new Parent's Portal app which allows parents to easily access and update their child's school information online. To date 65% of parents have signed up to this modern communication and transactional tool which frees school staff to work on higher value tasks. • Provision of systems training moved online cutting down travel time and making training more accessible to staff. The volume of training sessions has doubled, and 50% more staff can be trained per session. • Providing continuous data to Scottish Government for COVID response planning. • Worked with schools to develop and implement data packs to allow schools to manage performance.
Early Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in funded providers from 180 to 182, it expected that this will be the norm as most eligible providers are in partnership with the LA now. • New start point for entry to funded ELC in LA settings in October – 4 term model Funded 2's provision '2 nurture' has been recognised by the Scottish Government as intake is high and approaches to engaging families through multi agency working are effective Prior to 1140 commencing, Aberdeenshire Council delivered ELC through 88 term time settings that operated on a 9am to 3pm model. The changes are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 62 settings are open 8am to 6pm. ○ 46 settings are open all year, excluding the two weeks over Christmas and New Year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASN Enhanced rate ranging from £9.30 to £10.31 introduced for funded provider settings. To date, there have been over 37 successful applications. • £670K funding for resources, training and additionality in staffing for children with ASN in LA provision. • 7 out of 27 settings not meeting National Standards in September 2020 have now achieved this. Inspections are expected for the remainder over the next 12 months.
Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships	
	<p>The overarching strategic priorities for FY22/23 continue from FY21/22.</p> <p>Develop and deliver a revised LLA Business Plan focused on the three pillars of Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Live @ Home</p> <p>Transform the Live Life Aberdeenshire service for long term success in delivery again business plan outcomes.</p> <p>Live Life Aberdeenshire completed a key strategic objective with the service-wide restructure in 21/22. The Service Manager level of the new structure was implemented in Q1, with two new Service Managers joining the leadership team. The Manager level structure was complete at the end of Q2; the management team have now delivered the restructured library, museums and sport & physical activity elements. Q4, the Service will embed these changes and update its business plan for FY22/23.</p> <p>Implement a new membership scheme which will increase participation and improve access for residents of Aberdeenshire.</p> <p>Due to the impact of the pandemic, a decision was taken to delay the implementation of the membership scheme. Planning is in place, a paper is at Committee, and a Member Officer Working Group will be formed in Q4 to deliver this key strategic objective in FY22/23.</p> <p>Implement a new membership scheme which will increase participation and improve access for residents of Aberdeenshire.</p> <p>Participation in 21/22 has been challenging; people have adjusted their behaviours due to the pandemic, and social distancing measures reduced service capacity. Summer of Play, Tattie Holiday Programmes, and Winter Promotions helped mitigate. The new membership scheme, programming and promotion will help the Service return to pre-pandemic membership and participation levels.</p> <p>Increase commercial opportunities.</p>

	<p>The Service continues to develop commercial relationships to expand the funded programmes delivered. Q4 FY21/22 will see the restart of vending at venues and a tender exercise for operators of catering services at LLA venues.</p>
	<p>Build on the positive experience of virtual/online delivery to increase access and range of opportunities through Live Life @Home.</p> <p>Virtual/online delivery is an important channel for the Service that helps achieve increased participation objectives and will be included in the new membership offer in FY22/23.</p>
	<p>Expand the Live Life outdoor offer to celebrate the rich environment of Aberdeenshire to increase health and wellbeing, economic growth and tourist economy.</p> <p>The Life Life Outdoor team was further resourced within the Service restructure and are developing an extended programme for Q4 FY21/22 and FY22/23. In addition, the Service delivered the planned capital investment with the resurfacing of the ski slope at Alford.</p>
	<p>Support physical and mental wellbeing, community capacity and partnership work through the delivery of Live Life Well.</p> <p>The Service has successfully delivered programmes funded by the NHS and other partners. The success of these programmes helps build confidence with partners and develop strong commercial relationships to expand the funded programmes the Service delivers.</p>
	<p>Deliver in Partnership with HSCP and other partners support for targeted work with identified communities of need.</p> <p>The Service has successfully delivered targeted programmes with HSCP and other partners through FY21/22 and it plans to expand the number and scale of these programmes in FY22/23.</p>

Opportunities

This is a Directorate plan for Education and Children's Services; the focus is on moving forward to continue to deliver high quality services. It also allows us to reflect on what opportunities lie ahead. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on how we have worked in the last 2 years with many positive changes put in place to manage the ever-changing landscape. We need to maintain and develop the positive ways of working we have had to embrace.

Digital technologies have been crucial to the continuity of Education and Children's Services, allowing the work of Education, Social Work and Resources and Performance teams to continue uninterrupted, and for some service provision to continue in Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships. Some examples include:

- Free school meals – utilising payments directly into bank accounts for those with
- Collaborative problem solving and new system design across internal and external partners e.g., outbreak management of COVID-19 with Health partners
- Flexibility of employees to adapt to new roles in an emergency
- Challenging old ways of working and breaking down barriers
- Online learning
- Implementing an in-school pupil assessment system to replace the cancelled exam programme
- Reduction of cost and travel time through digital virtual solutions
- Working in a hybrid way, where team members may be working from different locations and perhaps at different times

Part of our planning process is to take our learning forward to influence future ways of working

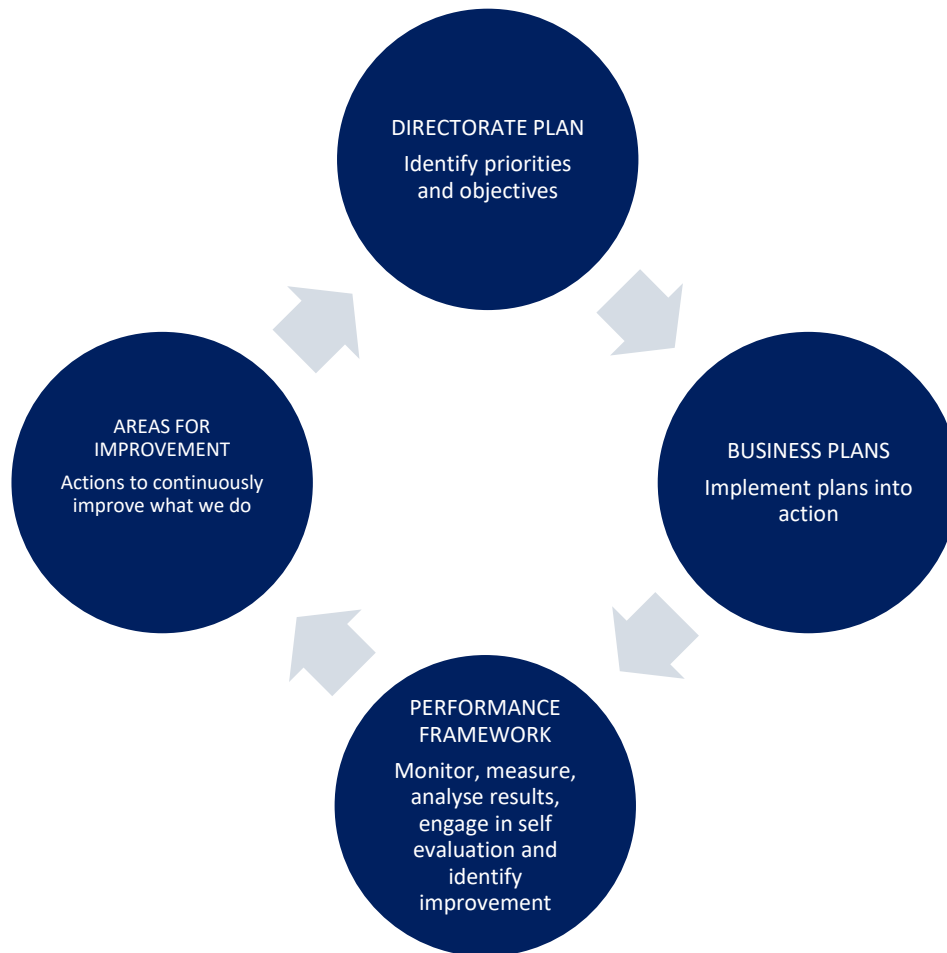
Risk

Aberdeenshire Council operates a three-tier level of risk identification. The Corporate level and Directorate level risk registers are published and highlight the risks against priorities. Below that sit operational risk registers which are internal documents. All risk registers are being reviewed in light of the new Council priorities and COVID-19.

[Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers](#)

Areas for Improvement

Improvement is integrated in the Service's planning cycle. The overall purpose of improvement is to ensure the Organisation delivers maximum value whilst ensuring a reliable and repeatable approach to delivering services.



Service Transformation Board

An Education and Children's Service Transformation Board exists to oversee the organisational, cultural, and structural changes required to improve and prepare the service for the future. The objectives of the Board are:

- To create self-improving and sustainable ECS services through cultural change
- To deliver the agreed vision and improvement objectives for the ECS service
- To continuously review the functions and the operating structure of ECS to ensure fit for future delivery
- To monitor and support the effective delivery of the workstreams, linked to the Council plan and priorities and the Council's strategic change projects
- To reduce expenditure through effective delivery with quality financial management, while providing best value and delivering service outcomes.

Service Self Evaluation

The purpose of self-evaluation is to know how the Service is performing against its strategic aims and to identify and action areas for improvement. Education and Children's Service have a cycle of self-evaluation. The previous cycle of self-evaluation looked at the themes of:

- Q1 How well do we use intelligence and data to improve outcomes for children, families and communities in ECS?
- Q2 How good is our leadership, direction and management of change?

The action plan was delivered in 2021 and included the introduction of new ECS performance management and continuous improvement frameworks, a project prioritisation process and a new internal course on using data to improve services.

The current cycle of self-evaluation is looking at the themes of:

- Q1 How well are we supporting the resilience and wellbeing of staff in ECS?
- Q2 How well do we use the voice of the customer to improve services in ECS?

Work is underway to assess how well the service is performing in these areas and what improvements are required. An action plan will then be developed.

Where do we need to be?

What are our priorities moving forward?

Directorate Improvement Action Plan 2022/23

Council Priority/ Service Priority	Key Action	Performance Measure	Anticipated Outcome	Responsible Person	Timescale
STRATEGIC					
To have better, integrated working arrangements within ECS in pursuit of improved outcomes for children and young people	Contribute to delivering a high- quality Multi agency Children's Services Plan focusing on supporting, safeguarding, and improving health and wellbeing in children and young people	Actions and Performance Measures in Children's Services Plan <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing help for care experienced children & young people (Corporate Parenting) 2. Drive early intervention and prevention to support children and young people affected by their own, or someone else's drug or alcohol use. 3. Supporting children with a disability and their families 4. Making sure children get the best start in life by giving the best support to families in the early years (children aged 0 to 8 years old) 5. Helping children & young people enjoy great mental health and wellbeing. 	All children are Supported, Safe and wellbeing improved	Head of Service CS	Continuous Improvement
	Strengthening GIRFEC approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Baseline data collection underway and will determine target for improvement of quality of GIRFEC multi agency planning process 2. 100% engagement of multi-agency Local GIIRFEC Groups in local improvement activity. 	Improved multi-agency working	Strategic Development Officer GIRFEC	31 st March 2023
	Deliver on the key recommendations as outlined by the Care Review and subsequent "Promise" to Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 87% of children looked after away from home experience 3 or fewer placements - also SPI • 45% of Children/Young People engaged with Throughcare and Aftercare service are in Training, Education or Employment - also SPI 	Children at risk of being accommodated are supported to remain safely with their	Head of Service CS	31 st March 2023

Council Priority/ Service Priority	Key Action	Performance Measure	Anticipated Outcome	Responsible Person	Timescale
	Experienced Young People.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 88% of Care Experience Young school leavers secure a positive school destination SCQF average tariff score of Care Experienced Young People school leavers Further performance measures in development 	families and communities and achieve improved outcomes		
	Work collaboratively with partners and families to meet local need through the delivery of holistic family support based on the principles of early intervention and prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful delivery of project within timescales Project Measures apply 	Vulnerable families in the Peterhead pilot will experience increased resilience, reduced vulnerability and parenting will improve	Strategic Development Officer Youth Services	31 st March 2023
To secure continuous improvement in outcomes for children and young people	Deliver a high quality NIF Plan, focusing on literacy, numeracy and Health and Wellbeing as key priorities.	<p>Actions and Performance Measures in National Improvement Framework Plan</p> <p>NIF Theme 1 Improvement and Attainment</p> <p>Attainment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> % S4 5+ SCQF awards at level 5 % S5 3+ SCQF awards at level 5 BGE primary attainment levels for Reading, Writing, Listening/Talking and Numeracy QI Grading ESQI learning, teaching and assessment in schools QI Grading ESQI Raising attainment and achievement in schools <p>NIF Theme 2 Closing the Gap Between the Most and Least Disadvantaged Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCQF Average tariff score of CEYP school leavers % CEYP school leavers securing positive post school destination The difference in average tariff score of all S4 in SIMD Quintile 5 and Quintile 1 also SPI 	School attainment data will reflect continuous and sustained improvement across all aspects of learning, at all levels	Head of Education	Continuous Improvement

Council Priority/ Service Priority	Key Action	Performance Measure	Anticipated Outcome	Responsible Person	Timescale
		<p>NIF Theme 3 Improvement in Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % children looked after away from home who experience 3 or fewer placements also SPI • Number of volunteer hours CWP has provided/benefited from • CWP Customer satisfaction rates • Impact of CWP Activities/experiences on people's physical and mental health <p>NIF Theme 4 Improvement in Employability Skills and Sustained, Positive School Leaver Destinations for All Young People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % school leavers securing positive post school destination also SPI • Number of young people in Foundation Apprenticeship programmes • % young people successfully completing Foundation Apprenticeship programme <p>Initial Response to Supporting Children, Families and School Communities Throughout the Covid-19 Crisis</p> <p>Provision of Child Care Hubs Provision of IT equipment</p> <p>Early Years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % registered children in LA pre-schools in 1140 settings • % 2-, 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds accessing funded place who receive >600 hours ELC 			
	Scottish Attainment Challenge - Through the use of Strategic Equity funding from Scottish Government, support the recovery from the pandemic and accelerate	<p>In development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally agreed stretch aims (to be set April-May 2022) • BGE and Senior phase attainment data showing improvement for identified cohorts. • Positive destinations achieved for identified cohorts. 	Data will reflect continuous and sustained improvement in line with identified stretch aims.	Head of Education	2022-2026

Council Priority/ Service Priority	Key Action	Performance Measure	Anticipated Outcome	Responsible Person	Timescale
	progress in closing the gap. High expectations and locally agreed stretch aims will drive improvement and ensure progress in improving outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements in five key areas for identified cohorts: Key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attainment Attendance Inclusion Engagement Participation 			
	Strengthen HT EY induction processes to ensure that there is a clear understand of the HT's role to work in partnership with the Early Years Team to quality assure the work of the ELC setting in their school/impact of this on school results at P1 and in closing the gap/impact on quality of practice and provision to meet CI and ES requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % LA ELC settings achieving good or better across all CI QI areas also SPI 	Secure greater understanding of the importance of high-quality Early Years provision in settings with new HT/HT who have not led a school with an EY setting.	EY QIM	31 st March 2023
	Review of Aberdeenshire ASN in line with national ASN support needs review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful delivery of review project within timescales Review Measures apply 	A complete review will identify the ASN needs across Aberdeenshire and provide a system that will meet them.	Head of Wellbeing, Equity and Inclusion	30 th June 2023
	Delivery of our Children's Social Work Service Future Delivery Plan	Key Performance Indicators based on the Wellbeing Indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% of children are seen within 15 days of a new supervision requirement being made also SPI 	Safe, Healthy, Achieving and Active, Nurturing,	Head of Children's Services	Continuous Improvement

Council Priority/ Service Priority	Key Action	Performance Measure	Anticipated Outcome	Responsible Person	Timescale
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% of reports are submitted to Children's Reporter within target timescale also SPI 87% of children looked after away from home experience 3 or fewer placements also SPI 45% of Children/Young People engaged with Throughcare and Aftercare service are in Training, Education or Employment also SPI 88% of Care Experience Young school leavers secure a positive school destination SCQF average tariff score of Care Experienced Young People school leavers 	Respected & Responsible, Included		
To have improved business support and resource management arrangements in place across ECS	Transform the ECS Business Support function in line with long term business requirements, ensuring appropriate support arrangements are in place for all areas of the Directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer satisfaction improved from baseline Continuous Improvement project outcomes measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Information Performance Management Framework Improvement Framework Support arrangements 	A high performing team that enables the services we support to improve outcomes for children, young people and communities	Business Support & Performance Manager	31 st March 2024
	Deliver the Peterhead Community Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful delivery of project within timescales and budget 	Improved integrated Service Delivery	Cross Service Leads	Phase 1 – Community Campus Handover: March 2026, with an operational start from Term 4 of the 2025/26 session.
	Implement the approved devolved school management scheme that supports greater empowerment of Head Teachers and local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % all school budgets devolved % of Additional Support Needs budgets devolved to clusters % of Parent / Pupil Councils participation in capacity building activity 			30 th April 2025

Council Priority/ Service Priority	Key Action	Performance Measure	Anticipated Outcome	Responsible Person	Timescale
	Review Catering Services to ensure service meets needs of pupils and nutritional guidelines, while adopting a “commercial outlook”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful delivery of review project within timescales • Review Measures apply 	Our catering service meets needs of pupils and nutritional guidelines, while adopting a modern ‘commercial outlook’.		30 th April 2023
	Enhance the pace of Estate review with particular reference to the place-based model including utilisation of outdoor space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced Carbon footprint • Reduced whole life costs • Estate matching demand • Improved suitability and condition grades 		QIM (Learning Estates)	30 th April 2023
To develop and deliver a revised CWP Business Plan focused on the three pillars of Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Live @ Home	Deliver the CWP Business Plan	Actions and measures in CWP Business Plan			2024
	Redesign our Instrumental Music delivery model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful delivery of redesign project within timescales. Project Measures apply	An efficient, modern service which maximises digital opportunity	Instrumental Music Manager	16 th August 2022