# Appendix A: Multi-Agency Action Plan Progress

Updates in respect of each Thematic Subgroup Multi-Agency Action Plan are detailed in Appendix A.

This reflects partnership activity progressed over 2018/19; and provides an update on multi-agency action progressed with the aim of supporting improved wellbeing for children and young people against each Strategic Priority:

## Children's Services Plan Strategic Priorities:

- Early Years
- Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Children with a Disability
- Substance Use
- Corporate Parenting

## Additional Multi-Agency Action Plans:

- Whole Systems Approach/Youth Justice
- Young Carers

In addition to general high-level wellbeing indicators and performance measures detailed in the main body of the annual report, additional indicators/measures have been collated for each strategic priority of the Children's Services Plan (overleaf).

Considered together, these help us to review what impact we have each year on improving outcomes for Aberdeenshire's children and young people.

*KEY:* *Requires improvement* *Satisfactory or in progress* *Performing well* *Developing measure*

| EARLY YEARS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wellbeing Indicators** | **Outcome Indicator / Performance Measure** | **Baseline (national comparator)** | **Progress** |
| Healthy Nurtured | **% P1 children at a healthy weight**[1] | **77.3%** *(76.5%)* *[2017/18]* | |
| Healthy Nurtured | **% eligible children identified as having 1 or more concerns at the 27-30 month review**[2] | **9.12%** (27.8%) *[2017/18]* | |
| Nurtured Included | **% Early Years Forums with Active Improvement Plans**[3] | **47%** *[2018/19]* | |
| Achieving Nurtured Included | **Engagement with Bookbug** (Children/Adults attending Bookbug Sessions/Bookbug Bags/Bookbug Library Challenge[4] | • **856 Bookbug Sessions: (10,824** Children/**8762** Adults)<br>• **57 Bookbug Makaton Sessions: (646** children/**432** Adults)<br>• **4779** Bookbug Baby Bags<br>• **4990** Bookbug Toddler Bags<br>• **3074** Bookbug Explorer Bags<br>• **Library Challenge**: **919** children (**2795** visits) *[2018/19]* | |
| Nurtured Included | **Triple P Groupwork Outcomes** (engagement, and % children with an improved SDQ score)[5] | **133** families \| **148** caregivers \|<br>**96%** improvement *[2018]* | |
| Achieving Nurtured<br>Active Included | **Engagement in Pop-Up Play sessions**[6] | **47** sessions delivered<br>**1674** parents/carers *[2018/19]* | |

| CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wellbeing Indicators** | **Outcome Indicator / Performance Measure** | **Baseline (national comparator)** | **Progress** |
| | **Waiting time: NHS Grampian CAMHS Performance against 18 week waiting time target** [7] | **35-45%** fluctuation over the year *[2017/18]* (not currently available for Aberdeenshire specifically) | |
| | **SALSUS: Scottish Adolescent Substance and Lifestyle Survey**[8] | *Data not currently available at local authority level. Awaiting 2018 SALSUS data [last data 2015]* | |
| | **Number of children and young people with ASN where the reason recorded for support is 'mental health problem'**[9] | **530** children/young people *[2018]* | |

| *CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wellbeing Indicators** | **Outcome Indicator / Performance Measure** | **Baseline (national comparator)** | **Progress** |
| | **% school leavers with ASN in a positive destination**[10] | **93.7%** (90.5%) *[2018]* | |
| | **Number of children in receipt of a Self-Directed Support Package**[11] | **359** *[2018/19]* | |
| | **Engagement and impact of Understanding Sensory Behaviours ALDO Course**[12] (% who would recommend the course) | Practitioners registered: **500+**<br>Module evaluations: *[2018/19]*<br>M1: **100%** M2:**100%,** M3:**100%** M4:**97%**<br>Self-reported improvement post-course in practitioner confidence levels **20%** | |

| SUBSTANCE USE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wellbeing Indicators** | **Outcome Indicator / Performance Measure** | **Baseline (national comparator)** | **Progress** |
| | **Rate of maternities with drug use (per 1000 maternities)**[13] | **14 per 1000** (14.5 per 1000) *[2015/16-2017/18]* | |
| | **Rate of drug-related hospital stays for 11-25 year olds**[14] | **40 per 100,000** (just over 100 per 100,000) *[2014/15-2016/17]* | |
| | **Rate of alcohol-related hospital stays for 11-25 year olds**[15] | **Under 200** *[2014/15-2016/17]* | |
| | **Referral to SCRA where young person's alcohol/substance misuse is a factor**[16] | Alcohol **<5**<br>Substance misuse **<5** *[2018]* | |
| | **Number of children/young people excluded for reasons related to substance misuse**[17] | Alcohol **12**<br>Not Alcohol **19** *[2017/18]* | |

| CORPORATE PARENTING | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wellbeing Indicators** | **Outcome Indicator / Performance Measure** | **Baseline (national comparator)** | **Progress** |
| | **% attendance/unauthorised absence of looked after children**[18] | Attendance **90.4%**<br>Unauthorised absence **3.5%** *[2017/18]* | |
| | **% School-leavers Looked After (for the whole year) achieving 1+ awards at SCQF level 4**[19] | **96%** (76%) *[2017/18]* | |
| | **% of looked after school leavers in a positive destination**[20] | **80.9%** (80.4%) *[2018]* | |

| CORPORATE PARENTING | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wellbeing Indicators** | **Outcome Indicator / Performance Measure** | **Baseline (national comparator)** | **Progress** |
| Safe Nurtured | **% of care leavers accessing supported accommodation together via T/C team**[21] | ***20%*** *[2018]* | |
| Safe Nurtured | **Number and % of care leavers sustaining their own tenancies engaged with the service**[22] | **30 (53%)** *[2018]* | |
| Safe Nurtured | **Number of new carers approved for adoption**[23] | **8** *[2018]* | |
| Safe Nurtured | **Number of new carers approved for fostering**[24] | **15** *[2018]* | |
| Safe Nurtured | **Number and % of looked after children with an allocated social worker**[25] | **416** children/young people<br>**98.8%** *[2018]* | |
| Healthy | **% of young people leaving care with a plan addressing health needs**[26] | **100%** *[2018]* | |
| Achieving | **% of young people leaving care engaged in education and employment**[27] | **57%** *[2018]* | |
| Safe Nurtured | **Number and % of young people over 17 remaining in their placement**[28] | **23%** (25 young people) *[2018]* | |
| Safe Nurtured | **Number and % of young people over 18 remaining in their placement**[29] | **10%** (11 young people) *[2018]* | |
| Safe Nurtured | **% of CEYP actively engaged with the TC/AC Team and who have a Pathways Plan**[30] | **80%** *[2018]* | |
| Achieving Nurtured | **% of looked after young people who can identify their key contact in school**[31] | **100%** *[2018]* | |
| Achieving | **% of care experienced young people who have received coaching guidance (SDS) in S4, 5 & 6**[32] | **95%** *[2018]* | |

| CORPORATE PARENTING | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wellbeing Indicators** | **Outcome Indicator / Performance Measure** | **Baseline (national comparator)** | **Progress** |
| Achieving | **% of Looked After children engaged with SDS prior to leaving school**[33] | **96%** *[2018]* | |
| Active | **Participation levels of LAAC young people in Active Schools activities**[34] | **23.3%** *[2018]* | |
| Active Responsible Included | **Participation levels of LAAC young people in volunteering activities**[35] | **5%** *[2018]* | |
| Achieving Included | **Number of referrals to Our Family Firm**[36] | **73** *[2018]* | |
| Nurtured Included | **Number of Our Family Firm Champions**[37] | **11** *[2018]* | |
| Safe Nurtured | **% Care inspectorate quality gradings for Children's and Young People's Homes at Good or above** (Grading 4-6)[38] | **100%** (25% Good/75% Very Good) *[2018/19]* | |
| Respected | **% LAC Reviews where child's views are clearly available to the Review Manager**[39] | ***80%*** *[2018/19]* *(12% Child too young/7% other reason)* | |
| Healthy | **% children who received an initial LAC Health Assessment as a result of becoming Looked After**[40] | **94%** *[2018]* | |
| Healthy | **% of initial health assessments taking place within 8 weeks**[41] | **47%** *[2018]* | |

| WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH/YOUTH JUSTICE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wellbeing Indicators** | **Outcome Indicator / Performance Measure** | **Baseline** | **Progress** |
| Responsible | **Number of young people (aged 8-15/age 16-17) committing crimes**[42] **Number of offences** | **551/428** **1277** offences *[2018/19]* | |
| Responsible | **% Young people who appear on 5 or less crimefiles** | **95%** *[2018/19]* | |

| WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH/YOUTH JUSTICE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wellbeing Indicators** | **Outcome Indicator / Performance Measure** | **Baseline** | **Progress** |
| Responsible | **Young people referred to SCRA on offence grounds, where the reporter made a decision to proceed to a Hearing** | **7** *[2018/19]* | |
| Responsible | **Young people's cases remitted from court to Children's Hearing for advice/disposal** | **<5** (increased) *[2018/19]* | |
| Responsible | **Young people offered court support** | ***62** (increased)* *[2018/19]* | |

| YOUNG CARERS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wellbeing Indicators** | **Outcome Indicator / Performance Measure** | **Baseline** | **Progress** |
| Achieving, Nurtured, Respected, Included | **Number of young carers recorded in SEEMiS**[43] | **148** *[2018/19]* | |
| Nurtured | **Number of young carers supported by Quarriers Young Carers Support Service**[44] | **208** *[2018/19]* | |
| Achieving, Respected, Included | **Number of young carers participating in Quarriers events/learning sessions**[45] | **152** *[2018/19]* | |
| Respected, Included | **% of requests for a young carers statement met**[46] | **100%** (**180** young people) *[2018/19]* | |

[1] ISD Scotland Dec 2018 https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Child-Health/Publications/2018-12-11/2018-12-11-P1-BMI-Statistics-Publication-Report.pdf
[2] ISD 2017 https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Child-Health/Publications/data-tables2017.asp?id=2136#2136
[3] Early Years Strategic Group
[4] Live Life Aberdeenshire Library Service
[5] Early Years Strategic Group

[6] ECS Early Years' Service
[7] NHS Grampian
[8] SALSUS Aberdeenshire http://committees.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/committees.aspx?commid=302&meetid=18671
[9] Scottish Government Pupil Census Supplementary data 2018
[10] Insight 2018
[11] Aberdeenshire Children's Services Social Work
[12] Understanding Sensory Behaviours online ALDO course
[13] IDS https://www.isdscotland.org/A-to-Z-Index/index.asp
[14] IDS https://www.isdscotland.org/A-to-Z-Index/index.asp
[15] IDS https://www.isdscotland.org/A-to-Z-Index/index.asp
[16] Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA)
[17] ECS AAE Return 2016/17, 2017/18
[18] ECS AAE Return 2016/17, 2017/18
[19] Scottish Government publication https://www.gov.scot/publications/education-outcomes-looked-children-2017-18/pages/3/
[20] Insight, Committee Report Analysis of Attainment 10/10/19 http://committeesinternal.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/committees.aspx?commid=494&meetid=19404
[21] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
[22] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
[23] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
[24] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
[25] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
[26] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
[27] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
[28] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
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[31] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
[32] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
[33] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
[34] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
[35] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
[36] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
[37] Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2019
[38] Care Inspectorate
[39] Aberdeenshire Council Children's Services Social Work
[40] NHS Grampian Looked After Child Service
[41] NHS Grampian Looked After Child Service
[42] Youth Justice Management Unit 2018/19
[43] Young Carer Strategy Group (data from SEEMiS)
[44] Quarriers Young Carers Support Service,
[45] Quarriers Young Carers Support Service
[46] Quarriers Young Carers Support Service

# Early Years

| Early Years | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Aim** | | **Wellbeing Indicators** | **UNCRC Articles** |
| 1 | **Develop and Support Early Years Forums (EYF's) to deliver Improvement Plans (IP's) based on the 5 EYSG Aims** | Nurtured, Active, Healthy, Achieving, Included | 3, 5, 18, 24, 31 |
| 2 | **By the time children start school, they will have developed the language and communication skills to support them become confident communicators and successful learners (Building children's communication and language to close the gap)** | Nurtured, Achieving | 3, 5, 18 |
| 3 | **Families are connected into local support, groups and activities within their community to promote their child's wellbeing and develop lifelong learning (Community Connectiveness)** | Healthy, Included, Nurtured, Achieving | 3, 5, 18, 27 |
| 4 | **Parents/Carers are able to develop loving, secure and reliable relationships with their children (Parenting Support)** | Healthy, Nurtured, Included, Respected | 3, 5, 18, 24 |
| 5 | **All children are able to play daily (Play)** | Healthy, Active, Nurtured | 3, 5, 18, 31 |

The Early Years Strategy Group (EYSG) is a Thematic Subgroup of the GIRFEC Strategic Group, and oversees delivery of the 5 Early Years strategic aims set out in the Children's Service Plan 2017-2020 P*arenting Support, Play, Closing the Early Language & Communication Gap, Connected Communities,* and *Supporting the Early Years Forums*).

The Early Years Strategy Group (EYSG) leads multi-agency action (focussed on pre-birth to 8 years old) which helps to create resilient families. The group provides guidance and support to Early Years practitioners, services and forums, to ensure consistency, evidence-based practice, synergy with strategic aims, and to recognise and share good practice. The EYSG is responsible for continuous improvement and transformational change to improve Early Years outcomes, through delivering on the 5 agreed Early Years Strategic Aims.

The group is currently made up of representatives from:

- Health & Social Care Partnership (Public Health, Child Health, Speech & Language)
- Education & Children's Services (Social Work, Early Years, Educational Psychology, Sport & Leisure, Communities & Partnerships)
- Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action (AVA)
- Early Years Forum Chairs Representatives

At a locality level, there are 17 Early Years Forums across Aberdeenshire, which are aligned to key settlements and the school clusters. The Early Years Forums deliver actions within their local community, focussed on the 5 Early Years strategic aims. Early Years Forums support multi-agency Early Years practitioners to work together to develop and deliver local joint Early Years Improvement Plans.

Early Years Forums are open for all practitioners who support families with young children, with membership varied across the forums dependent on local arrangements. The range of practitioners involved across Aberdeenshire includes early years development workers, Primary Head/Depute Head Teachers, Nursery staff, Librarians, Family Support Workers, Health Visitors, Nursery Nurses, Childminders, Homestart, other Third Sector services, Speech & Language Therapists, Playgroup Leaders, and Educational Psychologists.

The group is responsible for continuous improvement and transformational change to improve early years outcomes, by delivering on 5 Early Years Strategic Aims (themes): *parenting support, play, early language & communication, connected communities,* and *supporting 17 Early Years Forums*. These have been identified and shaped by national drivers and an evidence base, which shows us that supporting parents to develop positive and loving home environments alongside effective early education, will support children to have the best start in life.

Good parenting and the opportunities for learning and development in those crucial years, alongside family background and parental education, matter more to children than money, in determining whether their potential is realised in adult life [(1).] There is a critical window in these formative years where interventions will have the greatest impact so it is essential we support all children to build the foundation skills upon which their later learning and development can develop.

## The National Context

The following national drivers have shaped our approach to improving Early Years outcomes in Aberdeenshire:

The *Universal Health Visitor Pathway* is central to local implementation of the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. It integrates the Named Person role and provides a minimum home visiting programme to promote, support and safeguard the wellbeing of all children from pre-birth to pre-school.

The *Early Years Collaborative* and The *Raising Attainment for All* Programme are now collectively known as the Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative,. They support public services to be effective and responsive in tackling inequality and improving children's outcomes and aims to deliver quality improvement throughout a child's journey by adopting the Model for Improvement methodology to improve Early Years outcomes, attainment, and achievement.

*Learning Together, Scotland's National Action Plan on Parental Involvement, Parental Engagement, Family Learning and Learning at Home (2018-2021)* sets out a vision that every parent and family should be supported to be involved and engaged in their child's education, throughout their learning journey. The underpinning principals of this plan are that our priorities and approach should be guided by the needs and interests of the child and their family. Parents are the primary educators of children, and it is only through positive *relationships (*between families, and those working with children and young people) that we will achieve our aims.

Locally, the *Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2021: Learning Together in Aberdeenshire* was developed to deliver on this policy.

*Every Child, Every Chance: The Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan (2018)* sets out action to address the proportionally higher cost of living for families on low incomes and to support parents into, stay in and progress in work. This is reflected within the *Reducing Child Poverty* priority of *Aberdeenshire's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan*.

*A Healthier Future: Scotland's Diet and Healthy Weight Delivery Plan (2018)*, and *A More Active Scotland: Scotland Physical Activity Delivery Plan (2018)* highlight the importance of parents being supported to make healthier choices for themselves and their children.

This requires all practitioners who work with families to be armed with the knowledge and skills to be able to talk about being healthy, healthy weight, and encouraging active play.

The *National Play Strategy for Scotland (2013)* aims to improve play experiences for all children, and address our obligations in relation to children's right to play as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Play is an essential part of a happy, healthy childhood, and when children play, their brains develop. Play promotes wellbeing and supports children to achieve their full potential.

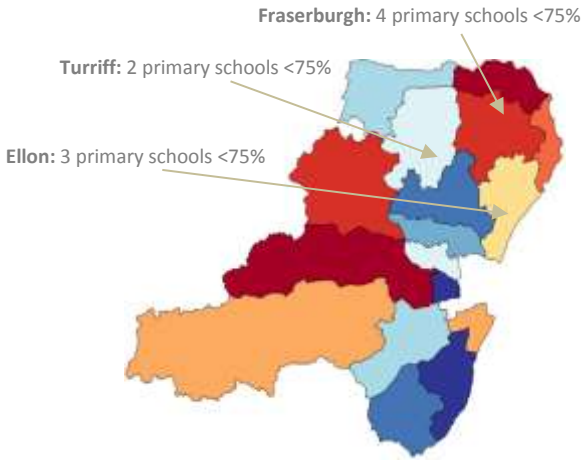
The National Parenting Strategy *Making a Positive Difference to Children & Young People Through Parenting (2012)* sets out to strengthen the support on offer for parents and make this easier to access, so that parents can positively make a difference to their child's development and are fully able to care for their children.

**National Standardised Assessment Primary 1 (P1)**

The maps and tables below present 2018 data on early level P1 achievement in terms of literacy, numeracy and reading gathered as part of the national standard assessment process. This is based on the professional judgement of teachers within each school. The percentages are derived from the average per school within each respective cluster (an academy and its feeder primary schools).

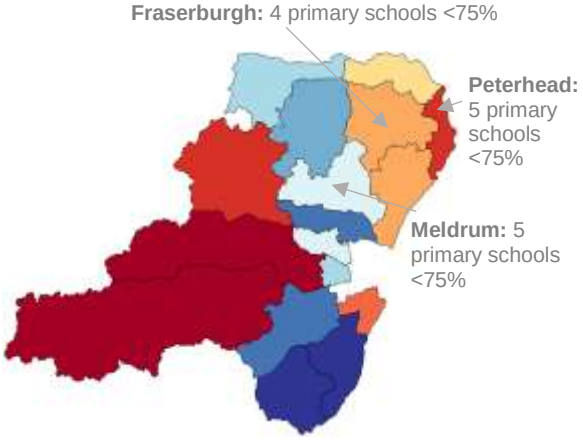
The maps also highlight the number of schools per cluster that recorded a score of below 75%. (It should be noted that three schools were associated with zero percentage figures. This has the effect of bringing the relevant Cluster average percentage figure down (Alford, Aboyne, Huntly).

**Literacy % of P1 Achieving Early Level by School**




| Key | % of P1 Pupils | Total No. of P1 Pupils |
|---|---|---|
| Stonehaven | 94.8% | 218 |
| Westhill | 93.2% | 150 |
| Meldrum | 92.2% | 172 |
| Laurencekirk | 91.9% | 85 |
| Inverurie | 91.2% | 297 |
| Banff | 89.9% | 174 |
| Banchory | 88.3% | 106 |
| Turriff | 87.5% | 132 |
| Kemnay | 86.4% | 167 |
| Ellon | 84.2% | 220 |
| Portlethen | 83.9% | 189 |
| Aboyne | 82.7% | 112 |
| Peterhead | 82.7% | 255 |
| Mintlaw | 81.9% | 156 |
| Huntly | 81.9% | 139 |
| Fraserburgh | 81.9% | 180 |
| Alford | 78.1% | 81 |

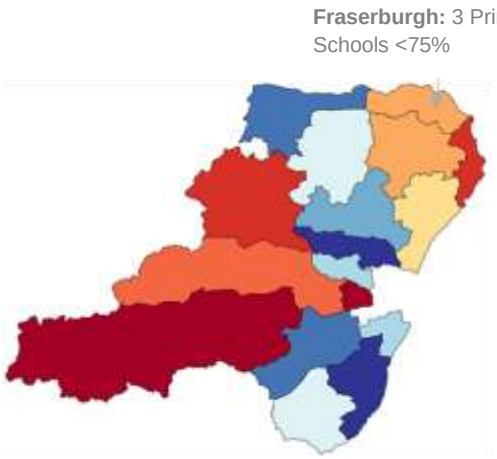
**Literacy % of P1 Achieving Early Level by School**




| Key | % of Pupils Early Achieved (Reading)* |
|---|---|
| Stonehaven | 91.8% |
| Laurencekirk | 91.0% |
| Banchory | 90.9% |
| Inverurie | 86.0% |
| Turriff | 85.4% |
| Westhill | 85.2% |
| Banff | 84.7% |
| Meldrum | 82.0% |
| Kemnay | 81.5% |
| Fraserburgh | 81.0% |
| Ellon | 79.9% |
| Mintlaw | 79.7% |
| Portlethen | 79.0% |
| Huntly | 76.4% |
| Peterhead | 74.0% |
| Aboyne | 70.9% |
| Alford | 68.8% |

*School average, based on teachers' professional judgement

**Numeracy % P1 Achieving Early Level By School Cluster**




| Key | % of Pupils Early Achieved (Numeracy)* |
|---|---|
| Stonehaven | 94.6% |
| Inverurie | 91.2% |
| Banff | 91.1% |
| Banchory | 90.9% |
| Meldrum | 90.6% |
| Kemnay | 89.5% |
| Portlethen | 88.9% |
| Laurencekirk | 88.6% |
| Turriff | 86.8% |
| Ellon | 86.6% |
| Fraserburgh | 84.2% |
| Mintlaw | 83.3% |
| Alford | 80.5% |
| Huntly | 80.5% |
| Peterhead | 78.9% |
| Westhill | 77.6% |
| Aboyne | 76.1% |

*School average, based on teachers' professional judgement

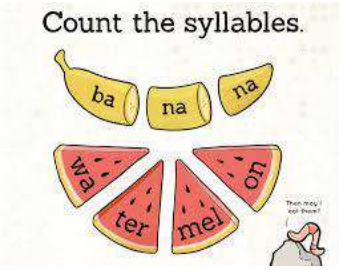
**Northern Alliance Primary 1 Emerging Literacy Data (2018-2019)**

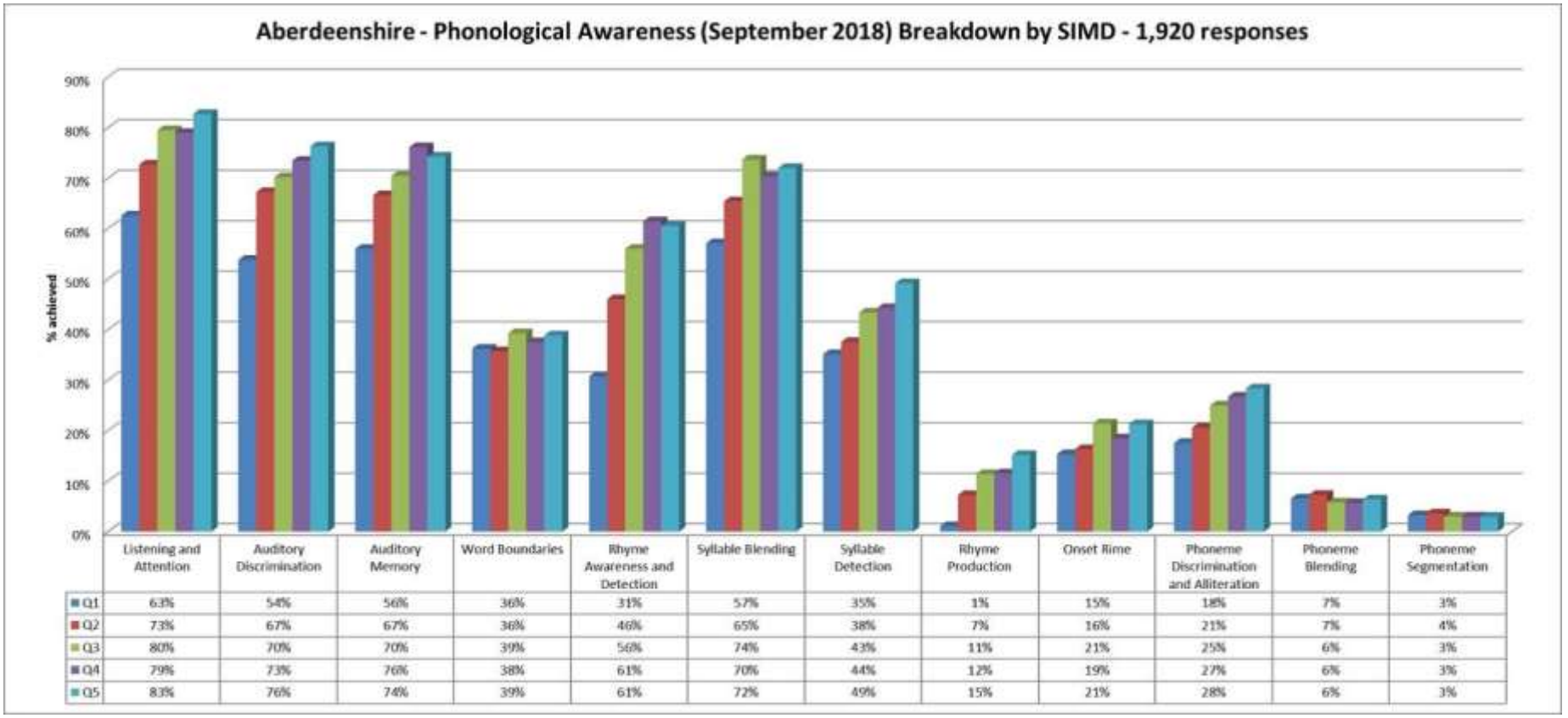
Primary School practitioners from participating schools in Aberdeenshire undertook a Phonological Awareness Screen and Continuum, and the Pre-Handwriting Continuum to identify a baseline of their children's foundational skills in reading and writing in P1.

The graph overleaf details the outcomes for P1 children, linked to deprivation (using Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD quintiles) information). What this data evidences, is an inequality gap between children from the most deprived and least deprived quintiles in Aberdeenshire across the phonological awareness skill set at the start of primary school.

There is a 20% (or greater) gap for listening and attention, auditory discrimination and rhyme awareness and detection.

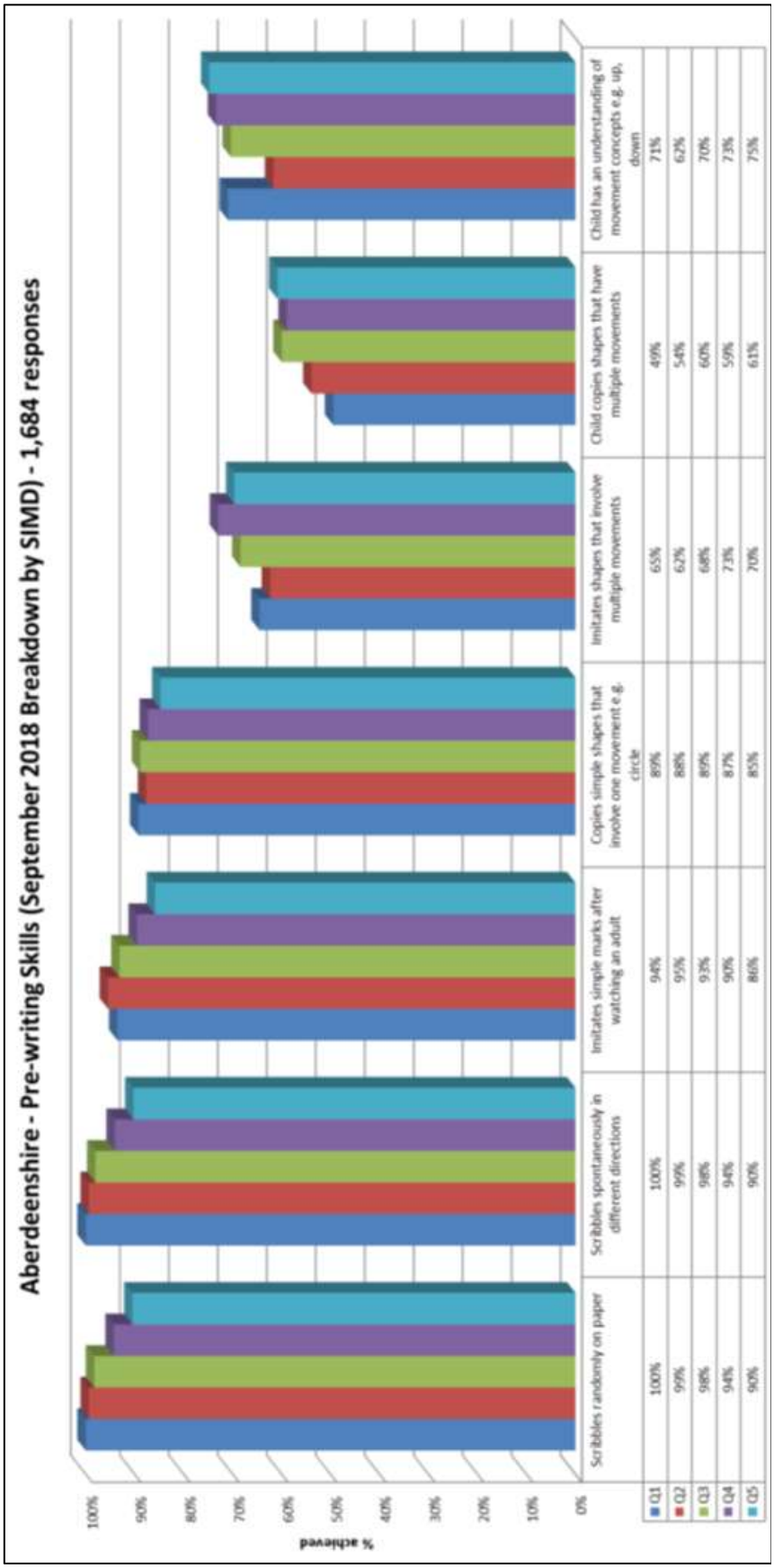
The Northern Alliance has recommended that priority should be given the development of earlier phonological awareness skills through developmentally appropriate play experiences, rhymes, songs and stories. Aberdeenshire's Early Years Strategy Group will further consider and develop a multi-agency response to ensure families are supported in these areas.





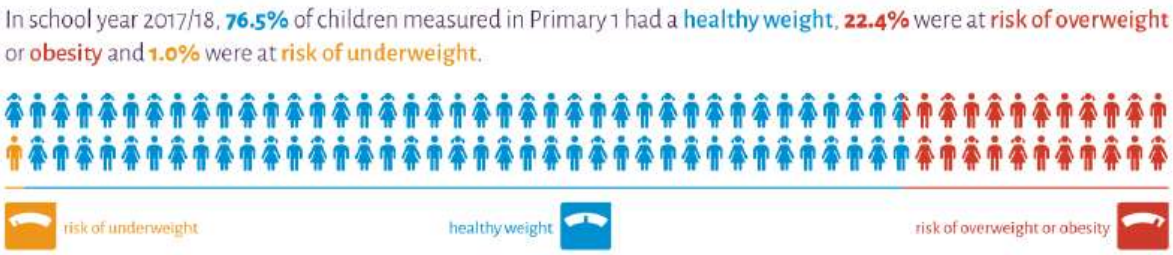

| | Listening and Attention | Auditory Discrimination | Auditory Memory | Word Boundaries | Rhyme Awareness and Detection | Syllable Blending | Syllable Detection | Rhyme Production | Onset Rime | Phoneme Discrimination and Alliteration | Phoneme Blending | Phoneme Segmentation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q1 | 63% | 54% | 56% | 36% | 31% | 57% | 35% | 1% | 15% | 18% | 7% | 3% |
| Q2 | 73% | 67% | 67% | 36% | 46% | 65% | 38% | 7% | 16% | 21% | 7% | 4% |
| Q3 | 80% | 70% | 70% | 39% | 56% | 74% | 43% | 11% | 21% | 25% | 6% | 3% |
| Q4 | 79% | 73% | 76% | 38% | 61% | 70% | 44% | 12% | 19% | 27% | 6% | 3% |
| Q5 | 83% | 76% | 74% | 39% | 61% | 72% | 49% | 15% | 21% | 28% | 6% | 3% |

Pre-writing skills are assessed looking at fine motor skills, scissor skills, and pre-handwriting pencil control. A variance in pre-writing skills can be seen between children from the most deprived and least deprived quintiles, and the table below demonstrates a 10% gap for 3 of the 7 measures.



**Child Healthy Weight P1: ISD Body Mass Index Report of P1 Children (2017-18**

The graphic below shows the overall proportion of P1 Children in Scotland (2017/2018) assessed as being underweight, at a healthy weight (between the 2nd and 85th BMI centile), or at risk of being overweight/obese. (ISD Scotland Dec 2018)




In 2017-2018, **77.3%** of P1 children in Aberdeenshire had a healthy weight. In Aberdeenshire, this figure has fluctuated since the surveillance system was introduced in Grampian in 2009/2010 (ranging from 75.6% to 79.6% during this period). These changes have not been statistically significant however.

**Child Health Surveillance Programme Pre-School**

The Universal health-visiting pathway requires three health and wellbeing reviews for every child (at age 13-15 months, 27-30 months and 4-5yrs). A standardised tool *Ages and Stages 3* has now been introduced to assess communication, gross and fine motor skills, problem solving and personal/social skills. However, this tool has only been recently in use in Aberdeenshire and so is not reflected in the figures below.

Health Visitors assess if a child has any areas of concern which require early intervention. The table below summarises the percentage of children identified as having one or more concerns (new and previously identified) at their *27-30 Month Review* in 2017/2018, with a comparison between Aberdeenshire statistics and the national average.

**ISD 27-30 Month Child Health Review Statistics: % of Children identified as having 1 or more concerns (2017/2018)**

| Review Domain | Aberdeenshire | Scotland |
|---|---|---|
| All Domains | 9.12% | 27.79% |
| Social | 1.06% | 0.86% |
| Emotional/Behavioural | 1.16% | 5.28% |
| Problem Solving | 0.73% | 2.36% |
| Vision | 0.62% | 1.86% |
| Speech, language and communication | 3.31% | 10.72% |
| Gross Motor | 0.72% | 2.31% |
| Fine Motor | 0.98% | 2.88% |
| Speech, language, communication | 1.8% | 10.8% |

The data shows that in Aberdeenshire, the 3 highest reported areas of identified concerns for young children are for emotional and behavioural concerns, social concerns, and in relation to their speech, language, and communication skills.

Caution is needed in comparing Aberdeenshire and Scotland data until the *Age and Stages 3* is fully rolled out and there is confidence in completion rates. It is proposed that an investigation into the variances in the data between Aberdeenshire and Scotland will be undertaken on behalf of the Early Years Strategy Group in 2019 to more fully understand these differences.

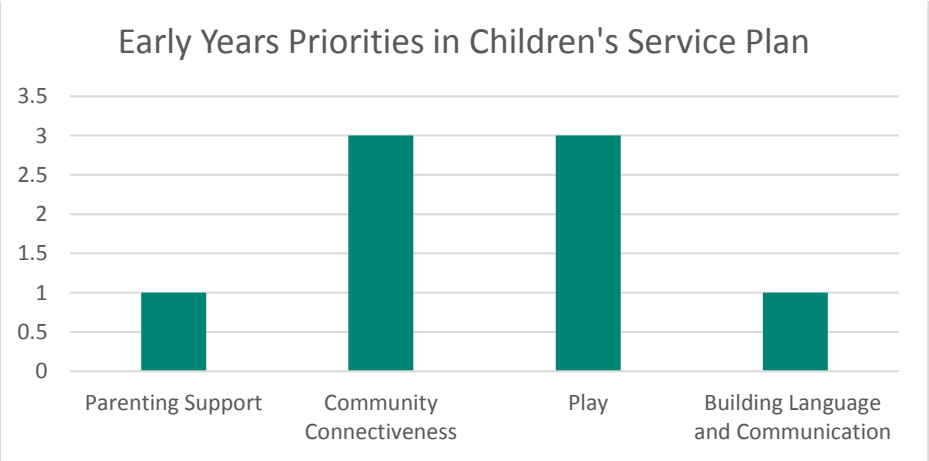
## Year 1 Progress

**Aim 1: Develop and Support Early Years Forums to Deliver Improvement Plans based on the Early Years Strategic Group Themes**

There have been ongoing challenges throughout 2018/2019 to provide an appropriate level of support and guidance to further develop and strengthen Early Years Forums (EYF). Due to budget pressures, the fixed term Continuous Improvement Officer capacity supporting the 17 Early Years Forums came to an end. This is reflected in the reduction of Early Years Forums with an active Improvement Plan for 2018.

Eight Early Years Forums currently have active improvement plans (47%) compared to 88% of Forums the previous year. The graph below shows the Improvement Plan focus for the 8 EYF's.

**Early Years Forums Improvement Plan Themes (2018/2019)**




Joint meetings have been established, bringing the Early Years Forum Chairs together with the Early Years Strategy Group every quarter as a response to not having dedicated support capacity for the forums.

This had an aim of developing a shared agenda bridging the gap between strategic thinking and operational delivery, and to improve communication and ensure multi-agency action on the agreed early years priorities. These meetings have been positive.

An Early Years information leaflet was produced, to improve knowledge and understanding of the Early Years groups in Aberdeenshire, the joint Early Years priorities, and agreed actions. A celebration event was hosted in Summer 2018, which shared good practice across the Early Years Forums. This event highlighted the breadth of multi-agency work happening across Aberdeenshire by early years practitioners.

Leadership of the forums has continued to be a challenge, and has restricted local progress with improvement plans. This situation is improving with continued commitment from services and the introduction of Early Years Senior Practitioner Posts (to increase Early Learning and Childcare provision), as they take on leadership roles within their local Early Years Forums.

Joint work to develop a Learning and Development Programme for the Early Years Forums has been progressing, utilising support from Aberdeenshire's Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative Improvement Advisor. This programme aims to support forum members to use Improvement methodology to develop and deliver their improvement plans and to enable shared learning across the forums. Capacity issues within the Early Years Strategy Group membership has slowed the implementation of this programme.

**Aim 2: Build Children's Early Communication and Language Skills**

Aberdeenshire has continued to participate in the Northern Alliance Literacy Project looking at the communication skills attainment gap in young children beginning school. Through termly network sessions Speech and Language Therapists, Senior Early Years practitioners and Senior Managers from primary schools have implemented a broad range of improvement actions focussed on children's foundation writing skills and phonological awareness.

The Northern Alliance as a whole has reported a closing of the gap in children's average Phonological Awareness scores between children living in the most deprived areas compared with children living in the medium and least deprived areas by the end of the P1 school year. The average "gaps" in children's tripod grasp and pencil control skills, which are foundations of handwriting, have been eliminated.

Focus on earlier intervention for pre-school children is now a priority to reduce the gaps between children when starting in P1.

A range of good practice guidance and training has been made available to Early Years settings**.** Pupil Equity Funding has been used to purchase high quality intervention programmes from the Speech and Language Therapy Service.

82 early years practitioners from 8 schools have been trained and supported to use Talk Boost. This is a targeted intervention that narrows the gap in identified children with language delay and their peers. It is a 10-week programme delivered by trained teaching assistants that can boost a child's communication by up to 18 months.

To ensure consistent advice is available to parents/carers, the *Babble to Banter* Facebook page was launched by the Speech and Language Therapy Service.

This contains high quality advice for parents/carers and professionals on developing speech, language, and communication skills.

The *Babble to Banter* Facebook page now has 1500 followers.

To Support the development of communication and language rich environments; guidance and audit tools have been jointly developed by Speech and Language Therapists and Educational Psychologists. This work is currently on hold at the request of Aberdeenshire Council's Additional Support Needs Team.

The Scottish Book Trust's Bookbug Programme continues to be maintained and developed across Aberdeenshire. The aim is to encourage parents/carers to share stories, songs and rhymes with their children to develop a lifelong love of reading.

The programme consists of several strands:

- **Bookbug Bags:** Free bags of books for children at 4 stages of their development from 6 weeks to P1. The baby and toddler bags are gifted by health visitors; Explorer bags for 3 year olds are gifted at nurseries; and the P1 bags are gifted in schools. Libraries also gift bags to families as required.

- **Bookbug Sessions**: Free story, song and rhyme sessions run in libraries and other community spaces. This encourages parents to continue to sing, say rhymes and read books to their children at home, to increase literacy and numeracy skills

- **Bookbug's Library Challenge**: This initiative encourages parents to join their children to the library and collect stamps on their Bookbug card to gain certificates. It runs in all Aberdeenshire libraries from January to April each year with an aim of encouraging regular family visits to the library, and book-sharing.

- **Scottish Bookbug Trust Training**: This provided free to those in early years, health, social work, third sector and library services. It trains staff in gifting the bags, leading Bookbug Sessions and Story times, and methods to successfully introduce Bookbug to vulnerable families.

From April 2018 to March 2019, a total of **4779** Bookbug Baby (and 14 Gaelic Baby), 4990 Toddler (and 4 Gaelic Toddler) and 3074 Explorer (2 Gaelic Explorer) bags were gifted to children in Aberdeenshire.

This is a significant increase in the number of Bookbug Bags gifted to families, when compared to 2017/2018.

138 multi-agency practitioners in Aberdeenshire were trained in Scottish Bookbug Trust Training over 2018/2019.

Bookbug sessions give parents/carers and children the opportunity to participate in groups singing and saying nursery songs and rhymes, refreshing their memories of the traditional ones they may be familiar with, and providing an opportunity to learn new ones. Bookbug Session Leaders read a story aloud, which makes sessions as interactive as possible, modelling ways to engage young children, and suggesting other titles available in libraries, which families might enjoy together.

Attendance at Aberdeenshire Bookbug Sessions have increased year-on-year, as reflected in the table below:

| **Bookbug Sessions Delivered in Aberdeenshire** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Year (1 April-31 March)** | **Bookbug Sessions Held** | **Children attending** | **Adults attending** |
| **2014/2015** | 447 | 6066 | 4893 |
| **2015/2016** | 630 | 8927 | 7290 |
| **2016/2017** | 631 | 9802 | 8128 |
| **2017/2018** | 696 | 10,153 | 8561 |
| **2018/2019** | 856 | 10,824 | 8762 |

In 2019, **919** children took part in the Bookbug Library Challenge in Aberdeenshire, with **165** new library members, and **2795** library visits by participants. Children had to make 4 visits to the library to complete the Challenge and receive a certificate, with 469 certificates issued indicating that 1876 return visits were made during this period.

An Elphinstone Institute/Aberdeenshire Council partnership project was delivered in 2 rural schools (Drumblade and Cairnie) with a pre-school group and primary pupils. This introduced families to traditional rhymes, songs, and playground games, with some in Doric or Scots and involved parents and children in developing language, literacy and vocal skills.

Bookbug Makaton sessions (which use symbols and signing for children with communication difficulties) were launched as planned over 2018/2019. **57** Bookbug Makaton Sessions were delivered by a volunteer in North Aberdeenshire, with **646 children** and **432 adults** attending these sessions. These sessions will continue over 2019/2020, and there are plans to offer some signed Bookbug Sessions in other areas of Aberdeenshire, following training of Bookbug Session Leaders.

**Aim 3: Community Connectiveness**

The ALISS Programme is funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) as a way to connect people, communities, professionals and organisations, with an online service directory of what services are available in a local area.

As a result of work with Aberdeenshire, development of *Aberdeenshire Family information Service* (AFIS) and ALISS (A Local Information System for Scotland) has been progressed to newly include Children & Families Services.

Further changes have been made as a result of feedback, and include a search function in relation to distance from a particular postcode, and ability to search a community area (such as Banchory or Peterhead) rather than just by postcode.

Aberdeenshire Family Information Service (AFIS) will continue to use ALISS as a key source of information, when signposting parents/carers to activities or support beyond Childcare (found via families.scot.uk). AFIS have been promoting and delivering training on the purpose and use of ALISS to Early Years Development Workers and Out of School Club Staff to also support them in signposting Parents/Carers where this is appropriate, and to encourage other services to add their information to ALISS, and signpost via AFIS if appropriate. When information or suitable services/ activities are not available, AFIS will highlight this to the relevant person/group and support targeted promotion of ALISS where relevant.

AVA (Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action) has also delivered a range of training and support to Third Sector community groups and organisations, to encourage them to add their services and activities to ALISS.

The Family Learning Team have identified four Aberdeenshire schools with which to begin delivery of the Family Learning approach (Johnshaven, Fraserburgh North, New Pitsligo and Meethill in Peterhead).

Schools were identified using criteria based on rural isolation and/or indicators of SIMD, and include a range of school sizes. Initial meetings with each Head Teacher and Parent Council Chair have been followed up with meetings together with the wider parent body in each school community, to define what is meant by Family Learning and identify what support they may need to embed this.

**Aim 4: Parenting Support**

The Early Years Strategic Group has an aim at implementing a tiered model of evidenced-based locally available parenting support, which ensures the right level of support is provided at the right time.

Over the past two years the Early Years Strategy Group has overseen provision of training for Early Years practitioners and delivery of specific parenting programmes, namely Triple P, PEEP and Infant Massage. The funding and support arrangements has been a mixture of time limited national support and funding through the Psychology of Parenting Programme, local partnership capacity, and ad hoc funding. Evaluations have demonstrated positive outcomes for families participating in these programmes.

In recognition of the need to have a sustainable delivery model to continue to provide evidenced based parenting support programmes a scoping exercise is being overseen by the Early Years Strategy Group. To date this work has gathered existing multi-agency service data and qualitative feedback from families to quantify the demand and need across Aberdeenshire, reviewed the effectiveness evidence of current programmes used, and identified delivery models adopted elsewhere in Scotland.

The next stage of scoping is to match identified needs to specific programme outcomes and to propose the delivery model/s to be adopted in Aberdeenshire. It is hoped that the preferred delivery model will be implemented by 2020 – which is when the short term funding secured ceases.

**Triple P Groupwork**

Over 2018, The Early Years Strategy Group has continued to work with NHS Education Scotland (NES) to provide Triple P Groupwork to families of young children experiencing behavioural difficulties.

A standardised tool known as the *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* (SDQ) is used to assess a child's behaviour pre and post programme, with Triple P group work aimed at children with an SDQ score of 17 or more.

67% of families enrolled in Aberdeenshire Triple P Groups in 2018, presented with an initial SDQ of 17 or over, which is comparable to the national average of (67%).

As shown in the table below, **133 families** participated in Aberdeenshire Triple P Groups in 2018, with the greatest number of referrals (45%) made by Health Visitors.

**148 caregivers** (34 male, 114 female) were supported through delivery of the programme, which is an increase of 2.5 times from participant numbers in 2017.

| Triple P Groupwork Delivery (Aberdeenshire) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **Families** | **Participating Caregivers** |
| 2017 | 56 | 73 |
| 2018 | 133 | 148 |

Of the 133 families enrolled, 75 completed pre and post SDQs. Of this sample, 96% showed an improved SDQ score at the end of Triple P Groupwork intervention, which reflects better outcomes than the national average (81%).

Caregivers Post SDQ feedback showed that following completion of Triple P Groupwork, 57 children (76%) had moved out of the high risk category, 36 children 63%) had moved into the normal range, and 13 children (23%) had moved to borderline.

| Aberdeenshire Triple P Groupwork Outcomes (2018) | Set Size | Number | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of children with improved SDQ score | 77 | 72 | 96% |
| Out of all children enrolled | 133 | 72 | 54% |
| Number of children moved out of high risk category by end of intervention | 57 | 49 | 86% |
| Moved into normal range | 57 | 36 | 63% |

| Summary of Aberdeenshire Parenting Support Provision (2017) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Type of Support** | **Practitioners trained** | **Parenting Support Delivered** |
| Triple P (PoPP) | 20 | 56 Families (73 Caregivers) |
| PEEP | 20 | 61 Caregivers (63 children) |
| Infant Massage | 20 | 214 Families |

**Aim 5: Play**

***Development of Aberdeenshire's Play Policy***

A multi-agency Aberdeenshire Play Policy developed by the EYSG was launched in 2018, and is now used across Aberdeenshire to promote high quality play which supports all children in Aberdeenshire to enjoy accessible and inclusive everyday play opportunities.

Early Years Development Workers and Early Years Senior Practitioners are supporting Early Years Forums to consider the importance of providing and promoting play opportunities in their local community.

There has been a focus on developing a high quality play-based curriculum in Schools, Early Years settings, Playgroups, and with Childminders.

A tracking tool has been developed which enables staff in settings to assess the progress of children within a high quality play based environment. This is due to be trialled in settings over 2019/2020 to provide evidence of the impact on children's attainment and outcomes, and the extent to which the attainment gap is being narrowed.

NESOLG is a formal association of outdoors learning partners with a key objective of advancing education for all, in and through the use of the outdoors. 15 Early Years practitioners have been trained on North East Scotland Outdoor Learning Group's (NESOLG) Early Years in Nature course over 2018/2019.

8 Principal Teachers/Early Years Senior Practitioners also attended Froebel training at the University of Edinburgh.

This enhanced Early Years skills and knowledge base is now being shared and implemented through practitioner support provided to Schools, which helps them to develop high quality indoor and outdoor play environments. Funding has been agreed to support this as part of a rolling programme of improvements over 2018-2020.

PEEP programme/sessions which have been delivered, also support parents to understand their role in supporting high quality play. (2018 data not available).

Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement processes are being developed and supported by Principal Teachers and Early years Development Workers in their work across schools, partner providers, Childminders and groups within the community. This ensures increased awareness and understanding both of the importance of providing high quality play environments, and expectations of this being delivered across the partnership.

**Pop-Up Play**

Pop up Play sessions have been provided by partners during school holiday times. These help parents to understand the importance of play and spending time together with children in and outside the home. Sessions promote the importance of speech and language development and time to talk. Participating parents develop an understanding of the importance of giving their time and ideas of low/no cost activities which help children to develop skills in readiness for school.

Over 2018/2019 47 Pop-Up Play Sessions were delivered at 46 locations across Aberdeenshire. Participating parents developed an understanding of the importance of giving their time to children, learned about low/no cost activities which help children develop skills in readiness for school.

| **Aberdeenshire Pop-Up Play Sessions (2018/2019)** | |
|---|---|
| Number of Sessions Delivered | 47 |
| Number of Parents/Carers | 1674** |

**Data based on responses to Facebook Events - Revised attendance recording will be in place for 2019/2020

As part of Family Nurture approaches delivered within Aberdeenshire Schools and Early Years settings, staff and family members have been provided with training, with an increase in Stay and Play sessions provided.

A training audit is currently being undertaken to support the provision of play-based interventions across Aberdeenshire.

A training facility is being developed at Midmill School and this is anticipated to open in 2019/2020. This will include an Early Years play and learning space for practitioners to visit.

### *Collaborative Working in the Early Years*

As a result of discussion with Aberdeenshire Council's New Syrian Scot Resettlement Team on service delivery improvement for families with young children, a multi-agency event has been planned for June 2019. This seminar will be co-hosted by the Early Years Strategy Group and Resettlement Team and is aimed at Early Years practitioners, educators, health professionals, and New Scot young families themselves, to highlight and discuss a number of ongoing challenges. These are primarily around, language, communication, engaging in early years' activities. The event is intended to co-produce solutions to achieve improved outcomes through these discussions.

Liaison between the Chairs and members of the Early Years Strategy Group and Mental health and Wellbeing Thematic Group acknowledged the benefit of developing a multi-agency position statement and agreed approach towards Adverse Childhood Experiences. Initial scoping work has been initiated and will be overseen by a short-life working group with membership from both Thematic Groups. This builds on previous discussion around joint work to improve multi-agency awareness and approaches to families affected by living with experiences of the 'Toxic Trio' (Domestic Abuse, Substance Misuse, Mental Health).

### *Parental Involvement and Voice of the Child*

In 2018 a broad range of parental and family engagement has been undertaken to develop the approach to Family Learning In Aberdeenshire. Discussion sessions have been taken forward in Fraserburgh North Primary, New Pitsligo and Johnshaven. Meethill, and Turriff with representatives of the parent councils, to explore their understanding and experience of family learning.

In New Pitsligo and Johnshaven sessions were held with a wider group of parents to look at the same. Sessions with parents from the remaining schools are arranged. A session is also being held in HMP Grampian to understand parent's expectations of family learning who are in prison.

Families are routinely involved in providing active feedback across our services informing how early years services and programmes are shaped to meet families' needs. For example Book Bug, parenting programmes, family nurture approaches. Going forward this good practice will be built on to ensure parents and their child's voice shape early years services, activities and programmes.

### *Good Practice Examples*

- Portlethen Early Years Forum presented work at the Royal College of SLT Speech Sound Disorders Clinical Excellence network on their multi- agency work supporting Phonological awareness.

- Aberdeenshire PoPP continues to deliver high quality parenting support to families with children with behavioural issues. Improvements reported by Aberdeenshire families are better than the national average.

- Following the parenting support subgroup meetings to look at data from different services to inform what parenting programmes we need to deliver, the Educational Psychology Service has now looked at their own data collation across their service regarding reasons for EPS involvement- this was for a broader purpose than early years. However this will now allow for specific data for children under 5 to be collated going forward and this data will become part of the wider multi-agency data set for early years

## Areas for Development

**Sustaining Early Years Forums**: Attendance and leadership of the local Early Years Forums (EYF) has continued to be a challenge. Over the last year the focus has been on building good communication with Forum Chairs, providing clear direction, and shared priorities. Through the provision of the proposed EYF learning and development programme, it is hoped that all forums will develop an improvement plan focussed on the agreed Early Years priorities and develop the skills to measure progress.

**Development of Early Phonological Awareness Skills:** The Northern Alliance has recommended that priority should be given the development of earlier phonological awareness skills through developmentally appropriate play experiences, rhymes, songs and stories. The Early Years Strategy Group will further consider and develop a multi-agency response to ensure families are supported and to reduce gap between children living in the most deprived and least deprived areas.

**Performance Measures and Data:** Further support to identify appropriate performance data is required, including further involvement of families in helping to measuring performance, and plan processes.

**Early Years Strategy Group Capacity and Resources:** Limited progress has been made on some Early Years Priorities due to limited capacity to lead developments, e.g. the play forum. The scale of transformation and change has been limited by access to resources to deliver on the agreed priorities.

**Multi-Agency Added Value to the 1140 Hours Expansion:** Implications and opportunities associated with the expansion of 1140 hours and enhanced provisions have not been fully appreciated or realised, due to lack of representation/engagement.

**Parents and Children Voices inform Service Developments:** Building on good practice, further emphasis will be placed on ensuring that parents and children are actively involved in shaping Early Years services and programmes.

## Focus for Year 3

**Over 2019/2020, the Early Years Strategy group will:**

- Improve engagement and participation by key services in the Early Years Strategy Group, and provide leadership on agreed actions including a review and refresh of the Early Years Strategy Group Action Plan
- Provide support for Early Years forum to develop and deliver improvement plans
- Consider and enhance the multi-agency support available to families to develop early phonological skills before their child starts school
- Ensure sustainable model of delivering agreed Parenting support programmes is in place
- Establish the Play Forum to oversee multi-agency actions to support appropriate play experiences for children 0-8yrs
- Consider multi-agency opportunities to support Family Learning for families with young children
- Fully consider the opportunities that the 1140 expansion offers to work together to meet the needs of families with young children

# Children & Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing

| Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **No** | **Aim** | **Wellbeing Indicators** | **UNCRC Articles** |
| 1 | Children and young people have a voice in improvements that impact on their mental health and wellbeing | Respected, Responsible Included | 3, 12, 13, 17 |
| 2 | To work in partnership with parents and carers to promote positive mental health and wellbeing | Healthy, Nurtured, Respected Included | 3, 4, 6, 18, 24, 25 |
| 3 | There is a culture of Capacity Building and Continuous Professional Development for all those supporting children and young people in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing | Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Respected, Responsible Included | 3, 4, 6, 18, 24, 25,39 |
| 4 | There is strong and purposeful leadership around the development of mental health and wellbeing demonstrated at all levels | Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Active, Responsible Included | 3, 4, 6, 18, 19, 24,25,29 |
| 5 | The culture of self-evaluation is embedded in practice to bring about continuous improvement in mental health and wellbeing | Safe, Healthy, Nurtured, Respected Included | 3, 4, 5, 12, 18, 19, 25. |
| 6 | Appropriate services and supports are available through a staged intervention process to promote positive mental health and wellbeing | Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible Included | 3, 4, 6, 12, 18, 19, 24, 25, 31, 39 |
| 7 | Monitor the impact / outcomes of the actions at population level. | Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible Included | 3, 4, 6, 12, 18, 19, 24, 25, 31, 39 |

The GIRFEC Mental Health Thematic Group reports to the GIRFEC Strategic Group, making recommendations about multi-agency improvement activity designed to improve mental health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people in Aberdeenshire.

Membership of the GIRFEC Mental Health Thematic Group is comprised of representation from Educational Psychology, Primary and Secondary Schools, Community Learning & Development, Children's Services Social Work, Active Schools, Police, Public Health, CAMHS and the Third Sector. A Local GIRFEC Group chairperson has now joined the GIRFEC Mental Health Thematic Group in order to strengthen the bond between strategic planning and operational practice.

The vision of the Mental Health Group is that: *Aberdeenshire's Children and Young people are mentally flourishing.*

The broad aims of the group are outlined in Aberdeenshire's Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy (2016-2019) and are to:

- Improve outcomes in all children and young people's mental health and wellbeing (with particular consideration of the most vulnerable, such as care experienced children)
- Ensure children and young people's voices are listened to when planning services
- Support increased confidence in the multi-agency workforce, parents and carers, in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, and when supporting children and young people experiencing difficulties

- Improve awareness of mental health and wellbeing provision for children and young people, and how to access this
- Improve outcomes in all children and young people's mental health and wellbeing (with particular consideration of the most vulnerable, such as care experienced children)
- Ensure children and young people's voices are listened to when planning services
- Support increased confidence in the multi-agency workforce, parents and carers, in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, and when supporting children and young people experiencing difficulties
- Improve awareness of mental health and wellbeing provision for children and young people, and how to access this
- Remove and overcome any barriers and stigma encountered by children and young people who experience mental health problems
- Ensure lifelong learning, and engagement at key stages, supports children and young people's development of skills and knowledge, with increased capacity to face the challenges of life which can impact mental health

The Mental Health Thematic Group recognises that mental health is not simply the absence of mental illness. Rather, it is a wide continuum ranging from optimal wellbeing to poor mental health to diagnosable mental illness, with many states in between which can fluctuate over time.

In 2014, Knapp and Lemmi found that approximately 75% of young people with mental health problems were not in contact with specialist mental health services, and a significant proportion of mental health issues were more likely to come to light through conduct disorder and criminal justice routes.

Since that time the pressure on specialist services such as CAMHS has increased further still, with referrals increasing by 22% between 2013 and 2018 (Audit Scotland, 2018).

It is therefore unlikely that supply of specialist services will ever meet demand without significant investment in preventative practices that promote good mental health, and targeted early intervention approaches which prevent the need for specialist mental health support. As such, prevention and early intervention is the key focus of the Mental Health Thematic Group.

## National Context

The following national drivers provide a context within which our approach to improving mental health and wellbeing outcomes in Aberdeenshire is shaped:

- *Getting it Right for Every Child* sets out the national policy ambition to improve outcomes and support all children and young people's wellbeing, doing so through prevention, early intervention, and timely targeted support where extra help is needed

- The *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014* is moving to legislatively secure coordinated support for children and young people through a Child's Plan, based on assessment of wellbeing

- Education Scotland's *Health and Wellbeing 3-18 Curricular Impact Report* (2013) highlights how effective learning supports positive health and wellbeing, and vice versa with the impact of this inter-dependency most acute during the crucial early childhood to adolescent developmental period. It emphasises the role of all staff in early years, schools, and their community partners in working together to tackle health issues and inequalities facing children, young people and their families

- *Mental Health Strategy: 2017-2027* outlines the Scottish Government ambition for prevention and treatment of mental health problems to be treated with the same commitment, passion and drive as physical health problems. It focuses on better support for prevention and early intervention services (tiers 1 and 2); increasing the mental health workforce, improved access to treatment and information, and service user voices in planning support. The role of counselling in schools is being reviewed, with a forum of key mental health stakeholders established to help guide implementation of the strategy's actions over the coming years.

- Scotland's Year of Young People #YOYOP2018 identified six key themes, which were developed by young people. One of these themes was Health and Wellbeing with an aim of making sure young people have the chance to lead healthy, active lives and understand the importance of mental health and resilience

- The *2018-19 Programme for Government* included a commitment to invest in school counselling support services across education in Scotland, ensuring that every secondary school will be able to access counselling services, with availability to local primary and special schools. This enhances the work schools already do to support children and young people to learn about mental wellbeing as part of health and wellbeing in Curriculum for Excellence.

In June 2018, an independent Children and Young People's Mental Health Taskforce was jointly commissioned by the Scottish Government and COSLA; with an aim that children, young people, their families, and carers, should feel supported in good mental health and able to access services which are local, responsive, and delivered by people with the right skills.

The Taskforce views preventative approaches as central to transformational change, with equal importance placed on a whole systems approach underpinned by *Getting it Right for Every Child* (GIRFEC).

Key areas of focus and a proposed delivery plan were published in December 2018.

This signalled that improvement and reform of the system of children and young people's mental health services was required through:

- Stronger focus on prevention, social support and early intervention;
- A wider range of more generic, less specialist interventions to free up specialist services to see those in most need of them; and
- Better information and understanding for the public, and all agencies and services, of where emotional distress, mental health and mental wellbeing problems are best supported.

The Taskforce's concluding recommendations to the Scottish Government and COSLA are due to be published in July 2019.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing in Aberdeenshire

It is estimated that one in ten children need support or treatment for a mental health condition, ranging from short spells of depression or anxiety through to severe and persistent conditions that are massively disruptive, frightening and life threatening for those who experience them.

By age 16, roughly 3 children in every Scottish classroom will have experienced a mental health problem (Gordon & Platt 2017).

Mental health outcomes are poorer for those living in less affluent circumstances, and there is a higher prevalence of mental health problems for care experienced young people (Gordon & Platt, 2017). Generally speaking, older boys and girls (S4) have poorer mental health than younger boys and girls (S2) (Gordon & Platt, 2017).

Children and young people with emotional and mental health difficulties are more likely to have disrupted education, behavioural issues, school attendance issues, and lower educational attainments and achievements. Mental health problems in childhood can also have significant consequences in later life, including anti-social and criminal behaviour, substance misuse, unemployment, social exclusion, mental health problems and poor quality of life (Knapp & Lemmi, 2014; Department of Health, 2014)

Developing a clear picture of the mental health of Aberdeenshire's children and young people at a population level, is complex and difficult.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) data is only available at Grampian-wide level, and cannot currently be broken down into Aberdeenshire-specific information at this time. Further challenges relate to information-sharing legislation, and organisational governance in relation to sharing population-level information between partner agencies.

Currently available data has significant limitations both due to small numbers of data points, which do not support identification of trends, and the most recent Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey SALSUS data is out of date (2015). The Scottish Government commissioned Ipsos MORI to conduct the 2018 wave of SALSUS with fieldwork taking place between November 2018 and January 2019. This collected responses from over 30 000 young people, and will provide both national and local level data once it becomes available.

The Scottish Government national *Scottish Schools Health & Wellbeing Census* will also support Aberdeenshire to gather, process and analyse its own mental health data to drive improvements.

There will be seven questionnaires undertaken at different school stages (P5/6, P7, S1, S2, S3, S4 and S5/6). Each Local Authority will gather the same information across a broad range of topics, in a consistent, reliable and robust way. This will ensure each Local Authority holds the same local information, which once shared with the Scottish Government will enable them to create a national picture of the health and wellbeing of children and young people across Scotland.

Gathering this evidence at a local level will also allow Local Authorities to identify and drive forward improvement activity where it is needed, and to monitor whether improved outcomes can be seen as a result of this.

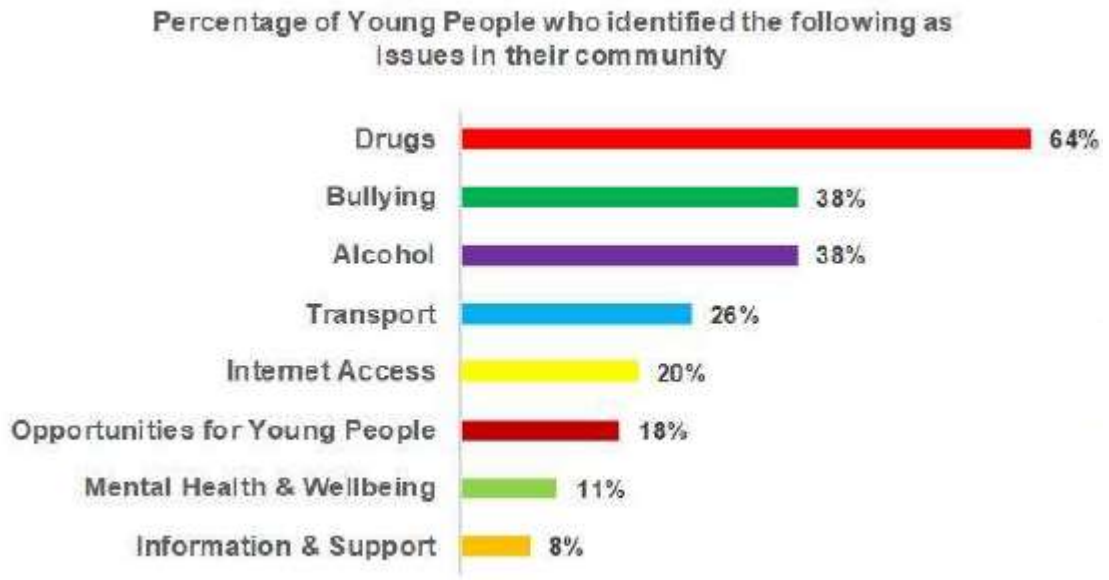
The Census is anticipated to go live from Autumn 2019, with local authorities choosing to carry out their census locally between September 2019 and March 2020. The Scottish Government will expect to receive initial data in June 2020 and aims to publish the first set of national results in December 2020.

**Young People's Views**

In spring 2019. Aberdeenshire Youth Forum (AYF) in partnership with the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Service Work With Young People (WWYP) Team, undertook a survey completed by 2401 young people. This represents 16% of all Aberdeenshire secondary school pupils.

The survey consisted of 5 questions and sought to find out what young people in Aberdeenshire think about their communities, what they liked, what they were concerned about, and what their interest was in working with others to improve their local communities.

As can be seen from the graph below, Mental Health & Wellbeing was identified as an issue in the community by a relatively small proportion of young people in Aberdeenshire (11%).




However, it is important to note that a variety factors known to correlate with poor mental health were identified as areas of concern for young people.

For example, substance misuse can lead to long-term mental health problems, and people with poor mental health may use drugs or alcohol to attempt self-medication. Studies have demonstrated that being a victim of bullying is associated with a wide range of mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, suicide attempts and substance misuse (Moore et al, 2017). Researchers at the University College London found that heavy use of social media was linked to negative self-image, low self-esteem and depression in young teens.

The findings of this study have implications for the future focus of Aberdeenshire's Mental Health and Wellbeing Thematic Group, and this will be explored further during planned stakeholder consultations in Year 3 of the Plan.

## Year 2 Progress

**Aims: (4) There is strong and purposeful leadership around the development of mental health and wellbeing demonstrated at all levels; and (1) Children and young people have a voice in improvements that impact on their mental health and wellbeing**

Four senior pupils from Inverurie Academy played a key role in the creation of a film that aims to highlight the importance of Leadership in improving mental health outcomes.

Young people were filmed alongside senior leaders from Education and Children's Services, Police Scotland, NHS Grampian, and the Third Sector, promoting the message that everyone has an important role to play in supporting good mental health. The film will be promoted across Aberdeenshire during 2019/2020.

Young people who are involved in Aberdeenshire's Pupil Participation Forum, have indicated that they would like to develop mental health resources for young people.

During 2019/2020 the Pupil Participation Forum will be invited to review and provide feedback on the content and format of the Mental Health E-learning Modules being developed as part of the professional learning matrix. These modules will then be made available for the Pupil Participation Forum to adapt and use as they feel appropriate to inform development of their own mental health resources.

Young people from Mearns Youth Forum co-produced a Year of Young People #YOYP218 Signature Event with a theme of Mental Health and Wellbeing Awareness.

This took place as planned at Mearns Community Campus in June 2018.

**Aim 3: There is a culture of Capacity Building and Continuous Professional Development for all staff supporting children and young people in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing**

**Multi-Agency Mental Health & Wellbeing Professional Learning Matrix**

Development of the multi-agency professional learning matrix has continued over Year 2. This will identify minimum levels of mental health training for all adults who come into contact with children and young people as part of their jobs.

The aim is to increase workforce confidence and competence in promoting good mental health and responding appropriately to signs of mental ill-health in children and young people.
Drawing on Aberdeenshire's existing Child Protection Training framework, the multi-agency workforce will be divided into three main categories, each with access to a specified core level of mental health training, as outlined below:

| **Aberdeenshire Multi-agency Mental Health & Wellbeing Professional Learning Matrix** | |
|---|---|
| **Workforce Category** | **Description** |
| **Category 1: General Contact Workforce** | Defined as those who are likely to come into contact with children and young people as part of their everyday job, but do not carry out personal or in-depth work with them. |
| **Category 2: Specific Contact Workforce** | Defined as those who carry out direct work with children and young people and form more in-depth relationships with them. Category 2 workers will access a blend of face-to-face and e-learning. |
| **Category 3: Targeted Contact Workforce** | Defined as those who have a direct role in carrying out targeted interventions with children and young people for whom there is a mental health concern. |

**Category 1:** An online Mental Health & Wellbeing Training Module for the *General Contact Workforc*e is currently in production, and will be launched during 2019/2020.

**Category 2:** Plans are underway to provide single and multi-agency access to Mental Health First Aid training for the *Specific Contact Workforce*. This is an NHS-accredited course, which provides a skills-based programme for adults who support young people between the ages of 11 and 17.

A suite of e-learning modules is also being developed to raise awareness of everyday support strategies in the following areas:

- Depression and low mood
- Bereavement
- Anxiety
- Self-harm

**Category 3:** A range of bespoke professional learning opportunities will be developed to enhance skills, knowledge and confidence within the *Targeted Contact Workforce* to provide targeted mental health support. Category 3 training opportunities will be signposted through Aberdeenshire's GIRFEC Website.

Participation in Category 3 training will be agreed through appropriate line management and supervision structures, with decisions based on the priorities of individual services. Professionals carrying out targeted mental health assessment and intervention work with children and young people will work within the scope of their job description, professional competency frameworks, professional standards and codes of practice.

**Aim 5: The culture of self-evaluation is embedded in practice to bring about continuous improvement in mental health and wellbeing**

A presentation on *Aberdeenshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy* and piloting of the self-evaluation tool, was delivered at the Education and Children's Services *Big Picture Day* in April 2018.

With approximately 250 cross-service managers and leaders in attendance, this helped to raise awareness of the Strategy, the tool, and the wider work of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Thematic Subgroup.

***Aim 6:*** **Appropriate services and supports are available through a staged intervention process to promote positive mental health and wellbeing**

**LIAM Project**

During 2018/2019, the main focus of activity has been on the piloting the *Let's Introduce Anxiety Management* (*LIAM) Project*. The aim of LIAM is to develop practitioner skills in supporting children and young people who are experiencing anxiety that does not meet the criteria for a CAMHS referral, by using a Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) informed approach. Research suggests CBT has an approximate 50-60% success rate (CAMHS Matrix, 2015).

LIAM Project training includes an on-line module, and 2 days of face-to-face direct learning delivered by CAMHS. 6-8 individual sessions take place between the practitioner and the child or young person. Follow-up skills coaching and case review sessions are provided by NHSG CAMHS, to support staff to develop the required skills and ensure the intervention is delivered safely and effectively.

To-date, the LIAM Project has been piloted in three areas of Aberdeenshire; Portlethen, Inverurie and Banchory. Each area has adopted a slightly different model based on the needs/requirements of their local area. 44 professionals have been trained in Aberdeenshire, including Pupil Support Workers, Community Learning and Development Workers, School Nurses, Teachers, and Pupil Support Assistants.

Early Aberdeenshire data has provided an indication of the extent to which these pilots have achieved the outcomes set out by the LIAM Project.

**Practitioner Feedback**

Feedback from practitioners involved in the Aberdeenshire LIAM Project Pilot reflected:

Successes

- Observations suggested that a number of children who had received the intervention appeared to be less anxious.
- Participating practitioners have indicated that the training has been useful and allowed them to provide an intervention the young person may not otherwise have had access to.
- LIAM was viewed as being a valuable resource to have available by the majority of practitioners

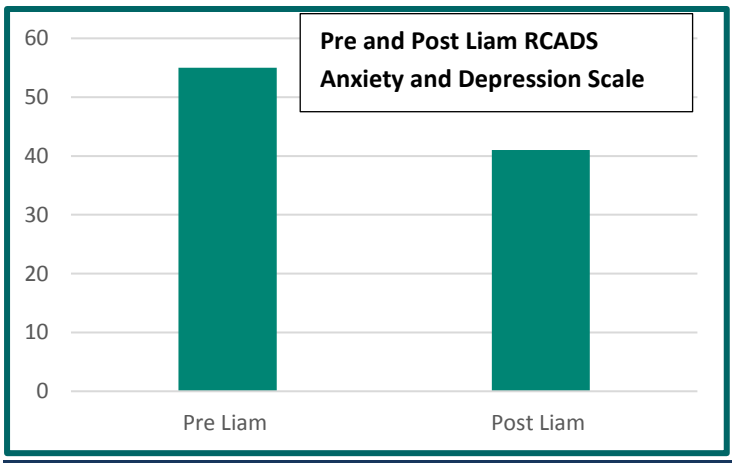
Challenges

- Some practitioners who were trained in LIAM, had not had time to deliver the intervention to children and young people.
- Not all practioners had attended the follow-up coaching sessions with CAMHS, which is an integral part of the training.
- Not all referrals for LIAM were appropriate. Further training has been developed to improve understanding of the LIAM criteria and it is intended that further work will be carried out over 2019/2020 to ensure that LIAM interventions are embedded within single or multi-agency Child's Planning processes.

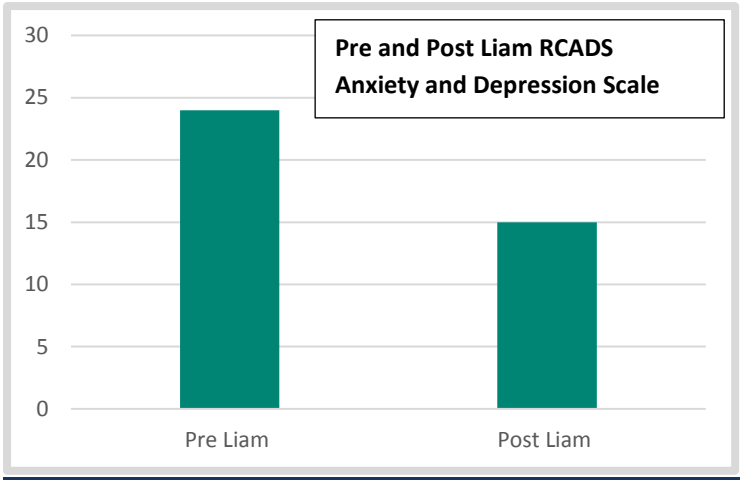
**LIAM Pilot Participation**

- 24 children/young people completed the programme and returned post-LIAM feedback. A further 10 young people (aprox) have completed the programme (feedback awaited).
- 13 Secondary School young people completed the *Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale* (RCADS) and *Young Person CORE* (measuring current global psychological distress), and 11 Primary School children completed the RCADS.

**Impact of LIAM Intervention - Pilot Evaluation Data (NHS Grampian)**

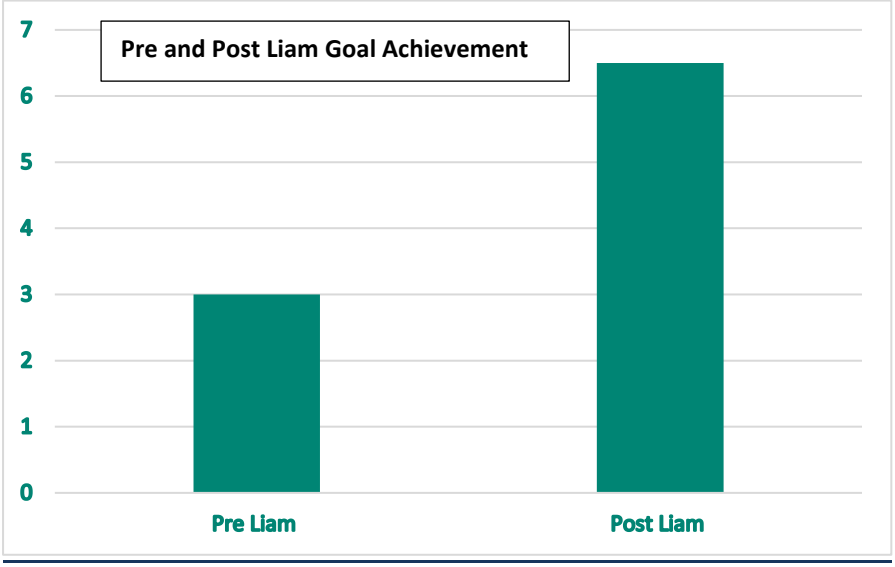



Based on feedback data, the graph (left) shows a reduction in reported anxiety and depression following completion of the LIAM Programme.




Feedback indicated anxiety and depression ratings had moved from the moderate-severe, to mild range of symptoms following completion of the LIAM Programme.

Participating children and young people were also asked to rate how close they felt to achieving their individual goals (56 goals rated overall).




The above graph shows an increase in reported goal achievement following completion of the LIAM Programme.

**Next Steps**

NHS Grampian have indicated they have additional capacity to continue this work, and would be keen to support additional clusters in delivering the LIAM Programme over the 2019/2020 academic year.

The GIRFEC Mental Health and Wellbeing Thematic Group are awaiting the national review of LIAM being completed by NES which will provide further data on its effectiveness.

**Service Mapping**

ALISS (A Local Information System for Scotland) is an online programme funded by the Scottish Government and administered by the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland. Work is underway to utilise ALISS to ensure that Aberdeenshire families and professionals are able to search for services that promote good mental health, and/or provide support to those who are experiencing poor mental health, within their locality.

During 2019/2020 the GIRFEC Mental Health Group will work in partnership with service providers and ALISS Administrators to map services across one Aberdeenshire locality, with a view to rolling the process out across the remaining 16 localities during 2020-21.

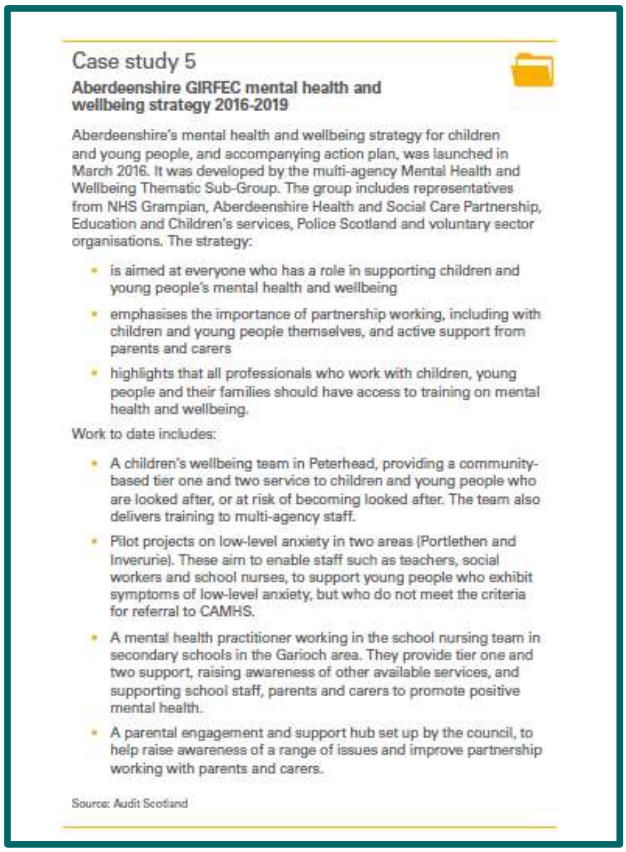
**Aim 7: Monitor the impact/outcomes of actions of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan at the population level.**

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Thematic Subgroup continues to explore and establish measures which are meaningful and relevant. As was acknowledged in the 2017/2018 Annual Report, gathering data is an ongoing challenge, as this type of information is not possible to routinely collate as part of the staged intervention approach at present.

Data from processes relating to individuals is always subject to limitations including data protection considerations, accuracy of recording, and limitations of organisational recording systems. Information such as the updated SALSUS (2019) results, alongside other measures outlined in the Schools Health and Wellbeing Census should help to build further on this picture over 2019/2020.

## Good Practice Example: Aberdeenshire Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy

Aberdeenshire's Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy was highlighted as a case study, by Audit Scotland in the *Policy and Strategic Direction* section of Audit Scotland's *Children and Young People's Mental Health Report* (September 2018).



Case study 5

**Aberdeenshire GIRFEC mental health and wellbeing strategy 2016-2019**

Aberdeenshire's mental health and wellbeing strategy for children and young people, and accompanying action plan, was launched in March 2016. It was developed by the multi-agency Mental Health and Wellbeing Thematic Sub-Group. The group includes representatives from NHS Grampian, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Education and Children's services, Police Scotland and voluntary sector organisations. The strategy:

- is aimed at everyone who has a role in supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing
- emphasises the importance of partnership working, including with children and young people themselves, and active support from parents and carers
- highlights that all professionals who work with children, young people and their families should have access to training on mental health and wellbeing.

Work to date includes:

- A children's wellbeing team in Peterhead, providing a community-based tier one and two service to children and young people who are looked after, or at risk of becoming looked after. The team also delivers training to multi-agency staff.
- Pilot projects on low-level anxiety in two areas (Portlethen and Inverurie). These aim to enable staff such as teachers, social workers and school nurses, to support young people who exhibit symptoms of low-level anxiety, but who do not meet the criteria for referral to CAMHS.
- A mental health practitioner working in the school nursing team in secondary schools in the Garioch area. They provide tier one and two support, raising awareness of other available services, and supporting school staff, parents and carers to promote positive mental health.
- A parental engagement and support hub set up by the council, to help raise awareness of a range of issues and improve partnership working with parents and carers.

Source: Audit Scotland

# Children with a Disability

| Children with a Disability | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **No** | **Aim** | **Wellbeing Indicators** | **UNCRC Articles** |
| 1.1 | Increase awareness of key stakeholders around issues of child protection and disability | Safe, Nurtured Respected | 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 25, 27, 33, 34, 36 |
| 1.2 | Strengthen skills of frontline practitioners and managers to identify and respond to concerns of children protection and disability | Safe, Nurtured Respected | 2, 3, 4, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 25, 27, 33, 34 ,36 |
| 1.3 | Review partnership policy and practice to ensure key principles of child protection and disability are addressed | Safe, Nurtured Respected | 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 25, 27, 33, 34, 36 |
| 1.4 | To ensure the voice of the child and young person with disabilities is heard in child protection processes | Safe Responsible Respected Included | 2, 3, 4, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 23, 33, 34, 36 |
| 2.1 | To map current identification, diagnostic and care/support processes and pathways for ASD (at individual and systemic levels), identifying commonalities, variations, gaps and changes required | Healthy Nurtured | 3, 5, 6, 24. |
| 2.2 | To develop multi-agency pathway framework for ASD (at individual and systemic levels): early identification; assessment; intervention/support; ongoing monitoring and review. | Healthy Nurtured Included | 3, 5, 6, 23, 24 |
| 2.3 | To develop awareness and capacity of universal and targeted/specialist service practitioners to support children and young people with ASD and their families through training and information sharing | Healthy, Nurtured, Respected Included | 2, 3, 5, 6, 17, 23, 24 |

The Children with a Disability Thematic Subgroup has a focus on actively seeking, promoting and supporting high quality outcomes for disabled children and young people in Aberdeenshire.

It's 3 aims are:

- Child Protection and Disability
- Multi-agency Pathways and processes for Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)
- Post-School Transitions for Young People with Disabilities

The group is currently made up of representatives from:

- NHS Grampian/ Health & Social Care Partnership (Allied Health Professionals)
- Education (ASN Manager, Educational Psychology, Transitions Officer)
- Social Work (Social Work Manager, Project Coordinator (Disabilities))

Thematic Subgroup members are connected with national improvement activity, for example the Child Protection and Disability Network, and the Scottish Government Improvement Team (Autism Improvement Programme).

## National Context

The following national drivers have shaped approaches to improving outcomes for children and young people with a disability in Aberdeenshire:

- *The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004)* (as amended 2009) This Act was structured around the concept of support being needed for any reason, for short or long term periods determined by the individual learning needs of a child or young person. The key duties on education authorities are to identify, make provision for, and review provision for the additional support needs of children and young people for whose education they are responsible.

- The Equality Act (2010) imposed a duty on authority employees to make reasonable adjustments where someone with a disability is at substantial disadvantage compared to someone without a disability, to provide an auxiliary aid if this would reduce the disadvantage, and to take steps to ensure information is presented in an accessible format.

- *The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*

- *National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014)*

## Children with a Disability in Aberdeenshire

Children's Services continue to strengthen approaches in meeting Additional Support Needs in health and education services and beyond, through providing universal, targeted and specialist supports for children and young people.

This both delivers on, and is informed by, a number of Aberdeenshire strategic priorities and Plans, including:

- Aberdeenshire Council Priorities

  *Provide the best life chances for all our children and young people by raising levels of attainment and achievement,*

  *Work with parents and carers to support children through every stage of their development*

- National Improvement Framework Plan

- Educational Psychology Service Improvement Plan

- Young Carer Strategy and Adult Carer Strategy
- Social Work Continuous Improvement for Children's Services Plan
- Aberdeenshire Autism Strategy

Approaches to devolving budgets and resources have continued to be explored over2018/2019, in order to promote local flexibility and responsiveness in meeting Additional Support Needs of children and young people, and to empower school leaders and their partners in strengthening the local service offer available to families.

NHS Grampian have continued to work together with school settings over 2018/2019 to develop centres of excellence in total communication, and outreach service models for Specific Language Impairment.

The Wrap-Around Care Model is implemented in 5 of the 9 areas of Aberdeenshire. This has improved the range of support available to young people with complex needs in a safe environment.

The number of children supported through a Self-Directed Support package has continued to grow, providing flexibility in the way in which families are empowered to access a range of support which meets individual need:

| **Number of Aberdeenshire Children in receipt of a Self-Directed Support Package** | |
|---|---|
| **Year** | **Number of Children** |
| **2017/2018** | 259 |
| **2018/2019** | 359 |

## Year 2 Progress against the Children with a Disability Multi-Agency Action Plan

**Aim 1: Child Protection and Disability**

***1.2 Strengthen skills of frontline practitioners and managers to identify and respond to concerns of child protection and disability***

This action addresses the concern from Scottish Government concern that children with disabilities are under represented on child protection registers, despite their increased vulnerability. Children with disabilities are more than three times more likely to be abused than their non-disabled peers.

A multi-agency Child Protection & Children with Disabilities Group was established in September 2017 to progress this work locally. Membership of this group reflected the wide variety of services and groups who support children with disabilities, and Additional Support Needs.

Two main strands of work were identified by the group:

- The need for greater recognition of the vulnerability of these children/young people
- Capacity to improve the resources available to support children with disabilities within the child protection system.

In addition, consideration was given to improving the resources available for parents, in recognition that they can often find the process of Child Protection Investigations an upsetting experience.

At the beginning stages of this work, it was thought that workshops could be delivered by staff with expertise in specific communication tools, with electronic learning and other resources also developed. The North East Child Protection Partnership's *Keeping Our Children Safe: Disability and Child Protection Conference* held in June 2017, introduced the National Disability Toolkit. This was filmed to make it widely available to all, however it was noted that there was a particular emphasis within that presentation on children with hearing impairment.

The initial focus of the group looked at how existing resources used to communicate with children could be developed for use within a child protection situation. It became quickly evident this would be an enormous task, and a renewed focus was agreed on:

- *Awareness-raising of the considerations for children with disabilities within Child Protection processes*
- *Development of extra resources for practitioners to use in supporting children and young people through the Child Protection process.*

Similarly, it was agreed that rather than the group delivering these workshops, it would be more effective to create a multi-agency resource which could be delivered by individual services through their usual learning and development mechanisms. This would both reach a wider audience, and create a more sustainable approach.

A multi-agency Presentation *Raising Awareness of Child Protection with Regard to Children with Disabilities* was created.

This includes a range of linked resources.

The resource provides information regarding potential underreporting of abuse for children with disabilities, and follows the child protection process from identification of a concern through to the Joint Investigative Interview, including :

- *The Evidence - Facts and figures*
- *Raising awareness/Recognition of a concern*
- *Reporting/Sharing Child Protection concerns*
- *Supporting children and young people with disabilities through the process*
- *Joint Investigative Interview*

Group representatives have shared the presentation with colleagues in their respective services, commissioned service providers, and Third Sector/voluntary groups. It was delivered in every Aberdeenshire school in August 2018, at the start of the academic year.

This group worked with strong links to the Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) Working Group, which reports to the Operations and Practice sub group of Aberdeenshire Child Protection Committee, and had been tasked with creating a multi-agency pathway for raising Child Protection concerns, and reviewing the IRD Proforma.

**Revised IRD Approach**

The revised IRD form has been operational from September 2018, and there is now consideration of additional needs and disability issues at each stage of the IRD process. More detail is requested in relation to a child or young person's where these arise from disability and the IRD Proforma is accompanied by the newly developed guidance, such as *Support offered by the Speech and Language Service,* and points to consider during an investigation where a child or young person has a disability or additional support need.

Through subsequent IRD Audit, good practice in relation to children with disabilities has been identified and evidenced. This includes:

- Recognition within an IRD teleconference of additional needs and the impact this might have on a child's ability to take part in a Joint Investigative Interview (JII)
- Utilisation of the new guidance and supports for planning investigations for children with disabilities and additional support needs within an IRD
- Use of a mock interview with a Speech and Language Therapist and the child's Personal Assistant to inform decision-making as to whether a child would manage to take part in a JII.

Through creation of a multiagency resource which mirrored the child protection process and considered the additional supports needed by children, young people, families and carers a sustainable approach to highlighting awareness and response to the needs of children with a disability within the child protection process has been achieved. The resource created is not only a product of collective knowledge and expertise but of a high level of enthusiasm and commitment from all partners.

**Aim 2: Multi-agency pathways and processes for Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)**

**Building Capacity**

Over 2018/2109, a range of actions have been progressed across partner agencies to promote capacity building in support for children and young people with ASD, within Universal and Targeted/Specialist services.

This has included promoting the suite of guidance, policies available for schools, which include support strategies for children and young people, supported by online learning and face-to-face training from NHS Grampian.

Autism Spectrum Disorder and Asperger Syndrome: Guidance for teachers and support staff

The Total Communication Policy promotes a whole-school approach supporting both the child and the school. Delivered in conjunction with Education Services, Speech and Language Therapists assess the needs of children and school staff, in order to tailor their intervention and training accordingly.

Alternative visual communication approaches such as, symbolisation, TEACCH and PECS are commonly used in schools across Aberdeenshire.

- Widget Symbols are used in all schools, and workforce development is supported by online learning courses.
- Schools can apply for a Bronze Award, for symbolisation of the Environment.
- Aberdeenshire Children and Young People's Charter has been made widely available in Widget Symbol version.

**Learning and Development**

Over 2018/2019, some staff have been accessing training on SCERTS. SCERTS® focuses on building competence in Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support as the highest priorities.

This is a research-based educational approach and multidisciplinary framework that directly addresses the core challenges faced by children and young people with ASD and related disabilities, and their families.

Development of a range of ALDO Online Learning and Development Modules has included:

- Understanding Sensory Behaviours (4 modules)
- Autism for Pupil Support Assistants
- Health and Social Care courses on Autism

A number of staff have enrolled on the Post-Graduate Certificate in Autism and Learning, with regular training provided by the Educational Psychology Services (EPS) at both an individual school and cluster level. This covers aspects of supporting autistic learners and includes training on use of the national Autism Toolbox.

An Educational Psychology Working Group together with colleagues from Speech & Language Therapy, CAMHS and school-based staff, are currently working on a Universal, Targeted and Specialist Professional Learning offer exploring a number of aspects of autism, including anxiety.

Parental engagement is informing development of this Professional learning programme with parent focus groups being set up to consult on the content of this.

**Autism Friendly Schools**

No two children with autism will have the same experiences and wellbeing needs, and provision of support continues to be based on relationship-based practice. As professionals get to know children and young people as individuals, support is put in place by working alongside children and families to find out 'what works' best.

Partner agencies continue to collaborate in taking forward a number of workstreams which support the ongoing development of Autism Friendly Schools in Aberdeenshire.

For example:

- Promoting use of the National Autism Toolbox - a resource developed by the Scottish Government in partnership with Scottish Autism and support from Autism Network Scotland

- Online and face-to-face autism awareness raising sessions including all probationary teachers attending a one-day workshop
- Training opportunities for staff on practical support strategies, such as Visual Timetables and Social Stories
- Setting up professional mentoring opportunities, to share good practice and experience
- Development of bespoke professional learning opportunities focusing on particular aspects of Autism - for example, *Understanding Sensory Behaviours*

All new Primary and Secondary Schools being built in Aberdeenshire are fully accessible to all children, including those with a non-physical disability. For example, all new schools include a low sensory stimulation area, and designated sensory spaces.

Within the existing school estate, at least one primary school in each cluster is designated as the location of enhanced provision, and includes the following additional spaces: Sensory Room, Therapy Room, and Life Skills Room.

**Crombie Primary Sensory Room**

**Dales Park Therapy Room**

**Peterhead Academy Lifeskills Room**

**Wrap-around Care:** Aberdeenshire Council also provide wrap-around care (afternoon/weekend clubs and respite) which supports Aberdeenshire families where a child has a disability, many of whom have a child with autism.

**Out of Authority Placements**

An Education and Children's Services Rapid Improvement Event was held in September 2018, to consider use of Out of Authority placements, including for children with complex health needs and Autism.

An audit of cases was undertaken and Project Charters were agreed, to address specific areas of practice and service delivery raised by both the Rapid Improvement Event and subsequent audit. Each Project Charter is being taken forward by Project Groups comprised of key professionals from relevant services and agencies.

The 4 Project Groups are:

- **Collaborative Working Children with Disabilities:** Strengthen collaborative working
- **Framework of Interventions:** Develop a core set of intervention approaches and programmes to strengthen the quality and range of targeted support with a view to meeting need locally
- **Young People with Disabilities Respite:** To expand provision of appropriate and timely overnight respite for children with disabilities/Additional Support Needs within Aberdeenshire
- **OOAP Assessment in Crisis Situations:** Explore options and evidence benefits of a method of robust assessment in a crisis situation

**Aim 3: Post-School Transitions for Young People with Disabilities**

Development of the Children's Services to Adult Services Framework and Post-16 Transitions Framework in 2017, brought together single and multi-agency policies and procedures, to provide an important foundation for future activity.

The *National Improvement Framework* for schools identified "*Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people*" as one of its key themes. Within this aim, young people in Aberdeenshire are being supported to make decisions regarding post-school destinations, with transitions planning for children with additional support needs identified on an individual basis, and at the earliest opportunity.

Supports which have continued to be in place for young people with disabilities include:

- Extended Work Experience
- Inclusion Project
- Confidence to Cook
- SQA Assessment Arrangements
- Visits to college
- Life skills
- Peer mentors in class
- Several academies with timetabled class support (e.g. Post-16 ASD Transition Project)

There has been limited further progress against this aim during 2018/2109 due to challenges around service capacity and partner representation on the group.

## Focus for Year 3

The Children with a Disability Thematic Group have identified the following areas of focus for 2019/2020:

**Representation and Engagement:** Review and evaluation of group representation has identified a need to target and engage further with the Third Sector, and to address barriers to participation by key agencies for example NHS CAMHS.

**Collation of existing ASD resources:** to ensure access to a cohesive, user-friendly suite and to make more explicit links between Autism-Friendly Schools and other related areas of work, such as the Total Communication Policy, sensory assessment, and intervention

**Longitudinal Training Evaluation**: Continued promotion of online ALDO Sensory Training Modules will take place in partnership with the Occupational Therapy Service. A longitudinal evaluation of this training is currently underway, to assess its impact on practice.

**Parent Focus Groups:** These are being planned in conjunction with Autism Parent Support-Groups, to get their views on what an Autism-Friendly Aberdeenshire School should look like

**Autism-Friendly Schools - Self-Assessment Quality Indicators:** Establishment of a quality indicator framework will support schools to reflect on how autism-friendly they currently are, and support school improvement planning. A working group which includes Head Teachers has already been established, and this work will progress over 2019/2020.

**Explore the Autism and Anxiety interventions research-base:** At present young people with autism cannot access some of the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) interventions that CAMHS offer other young people, and the current research-base will help to inform provision of supports.

**Views of the Child:** Increased focus on engagement of children, young people, around service development and delivery. Engagement with the Social Work Continuous Improvement in Children's Services Project Group on participation, and with NHS Grampian colleagues through from the Protecting Children Improvement Plan will help to progress this activity.

**Explore development of peer-to-peer models of support**: Involvement of the Third Sector will support exploration of this type of support for children, young people and parents/carers. It is intended that this will enhance the existing face-to-face and online support available at a local and national level.

**Streamlining Autism Diagnostic Pathways:** Multi-agency participation in NHS-led improvement activity which aims to streamline Autism Diagnostic Pathways will continue over Year 3.

**Aim 3: Post-16 Transitions** – This will be an area of renewed focus for the group over 2019/2020

## Good Practice Case Study: Understanding Sensory Behaviours ALDO Course

The Understanding Sensory Behaviors online ALDO Course was created to enhance practitioners' understanding of children and young people with sensory needs, and to raise awareness of how these needs can be supported in education. Since its launch in August 2018, over 500 people have registered for the course, with a range of teaching and non-teaching staff from Early Years, Primary, Secondary, and Cross-sector.

4 Modules in the course move from the Universal Level (helping to develop an understanding of how everyone has sensory needs and preferences) and Adaptation of the Curriculum, through to Targeted Support (focusing on interventions and adaptations which address sensory needs) and considering utilisation of sensory spaces in the learning environment.

**Evaluation**

Each module was evaluated through a SurveyMonkey questionnaire, which gathered data on immediate feedback, and longer term impact (via a 3 month follow-up). Of those who completed the survey, 61% were from the Primary sector, 25% from Early Years, 14% from the Secondary sector, and 5% cross-sector.

100% of respondents providing feedback following completion of the *Universal Support*, *Targeted Support,* and *Adapting the Curriculum* modules, reported that they would recommend these courses to a colleague.

97% of respondent feedback said they would recommend the *Using Sensory Spaces* module. Following completion of the course, practitioners reported making changes to physical environments including creation of quiet spaces and sensory pathways, changes to classroom layout (furniture and displays), creation of sensory baskets, and setting up a sensory room in a secondary school.

Evaluation data indicates this course has been valuable in enhancing practioners knowledge and understanding of sensory behaviours, and increased workforce confidence levels in supporting young people with sensory needs. Confidence ratings reported immediately following the course increased by an average of 20% from baselines measures (moving from an average of 5 to 7 out of 10), with reported confidence gains sustained at the 3 month follow-up.

**Next Steps**

There has been expressed interest in widening the accessibility of the course to Education and NHS colleagues throughout the Northern Alliance and other authorities. The group are exploring how best to share this resource, using different platforms to allow the course to be accessed on a multi-agency and pan-authority basis. Widened access will not only increase workforce awareness, knowledge, and skills in addressing sensory needs, but will help to identify additional good practice examples, through sharing feedback from those who have completed the course.

# Substance Use

| Substance Misuse | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **No** | **Aim** | **Wellbeing Indicators** | **UNCRC Articles** |
| 1 | Enhance our risk assessment practices, particularly through informed use of the National Risk Framework (NRF) | *Safe, Respected & Nurtured* | 3, 4, 6, 12, 19, 27, 33, 34, 36, 37 |
| 2 | Better understand the incidence of and our response where domestic abuse, mental distress or drink and drug dependency are prevalent, particularly on the service for infants | *Safe* | 3, 4, 6,12, 19, 27, 33, 34, 36, 37 |
| 3 | Increase understanding of the toxic trio* risk factors (domestic violence, mental health, substance misuse) and the interaction between children's services and those that are now governed within the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) | *Safe* | 3, 4, 6, 12, 19, 27, 33, 34, 36, 37 |
| 4 | Ensure ADP commissioned services ensure a balance between Prevention/Early Intervention and support and recovery, compatible with GIRFEC and the Children's Services Plan | *Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible & Included* | 3, 5, 6, 18, 19, 24, 27, 31, 33, 34 |
| 5 | Ensure staff possess the knowledge and skills required to work addressing the effects of parental substance misuse, and children and young people's use of substances | *Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible & Included* | 3, 5, 6, 18, 19, 24, 27, 31, 33, 34 |
| 6 | Improve outcomes for Children and Young People whose Wellbeing is affected by alcohol or other drug use by ensuring access to services and interventions designed to support and divert them from harm | *Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible & Included* | 3, 5, 6, 18, 19, 24, 27, 31, 33, 34 |
| 7 | Ensure Parents/Carers have access to contemporary evidence-based guidance on how to keep their children safe from alcohol and other drugs | *Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible & Included* | 3, 4, 5, 6, 18, 24, 33, |
| 8 | Ensure family inclusive approaches by substance misuse services, identify and minimise risk to children and young people by always considering/ assessing potential Wellbeing needs | *Safe, Healthy, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible & Included* | 2, 3, 5, 6, 18, 19, 24, 27, 31, 33, 34 |
| 9 | Families affected by substance misuse will be able to access support, and have a voice and opportunity to contribute to service development | *Safe, Healthy, Nurtured Active, Respected, Responsible & Included* | 2,3,5,6, 18,19,24 ,27,31, 33,34 |

Action to address this strategic priority is led by the Aberdeenshire Child Protection Committee (CPC), and Substance Misuse Thematic Group, which represents Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership. The Thematic Group leads on development of early intervention and prevention activity to support families and promote children and young people's wellbeing; with the Child Protection Committee addressing issues of high risk and significant harm as their core remit.

Together these 2 forums are progressing a range of action to improve outcomes for children or young people adversely affected by their own or another family member's substance use.

The Thematic Group is chaired by Aberdeenshire ADP's Lead Officer, with the Health and Social Care Partnership Service Manager for Substance Misuse and Criminal Justice Social Work as Vicechair. Membership of the group includes Police Scotland, Health Improvement Officer (Alcohol and Drugs), Third Sector (Aberdeenshire Drugs Action and turning Point Scotland) Community Learning and Development, Children's Services Social Work, and a Specialist Midwife.

The Group progresses relevant actions within Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan, with an aim of:

- Improving supports available to children, young people, and families
- Supporting collaboration between adult and children's services to address the impact of substance use on families
- Addressing workforce development needs

## National Context

Key legislative drivers over 2018/2019 have included:

The new *Rights, Respect and Recovery: Scottish Strategy to improve health by preventing and reducing alcohol and drug use, harm and related deaths* was published in November 2018, and the views of Aberdeenshire's Substance Misuse Thematic Group contributed towards its development.

This strategy includes a substantive section on *Getting it Right for children, young people and families* which will inform development of Aberdeenshire's Drug and Alcohol Strategy, and future work of the Thematic Group.

The strategy outlines 3 main commitments (below):

- Family inclusive approaches to treatment and support
- Access to Statutory/Third Sector service provision, delivered in line with the GIRFEC Approach
- Involvement of children, parents, and family members in planning, development and delivery of services

**Outcome: Children and families affected by alcohol and drug use will be safe, healthy, included and supported**

| Commitments to achieve the outcome | |
|---|---|
| Ensure family members will have access to support in their own right and, where appropriate, will be included in their loved one's treatment and support. | C1 |
| Ensure all families will have access to services (both statutory and third sector) provided through a whole family approach, in line with the values, principles and core components of GIRFEC. | C2 |
| Involve children, parents and other family members in the planning, development and delivery of services at local, regional and national level. | C3 |

SIGN 156: Children and young people exposed prenatally to alcohol – A national clinical guidance was published in January 2019 and provides evidence-based recommendations on measurement of alcohol consumption in pregnancy. It makes recommendations on:

- Identification of children at risk of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorders (FASD)
- Criteria for diagnosis, and use of FASD as a descriptor
- Medical assessment and physical examination
- Neurodevelopmental assessment
- Multidisciplinary assessment teams
- Special considerations, management, and follow up of children and young people affected by Prenatal Alcohol Exposure

**Drug Use Trends**

The CREW Drugs Trends 2017-18 Report (2019) provides an overview of recent drug trends in Scotland.

This report highlighted:

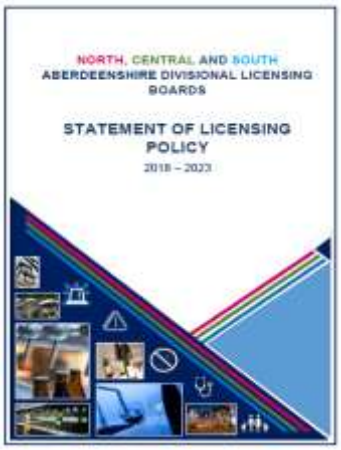
- More drugs are in circulation, with higher purity substances available at the same price
- Heroin and cocaine remain prevalent amongst street drug-dealers
- Increased demand for support to address use of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)
- Less widespread use of NPS, but continued use despite legislative efforts to curb their availability
- Social Media, and online availability of MDMA, NPS, and Ecstasy, has had a significant impact on young people in particular
- A rise in problematic cocaine use is attributable to users switching from use of NPS
- Street benzodiazepine causes considerable concern.
- Whilst the majority of Scotland's illicit Xanax tablets contain alprazolam/etizolam, an emerging European trend has become evident. Xanax tablets are increasingly found to contain flualprazolam (a very potent benzodiazepine with greater risk of overdose).
- County lines continues to dominate, selling mainly heroin and crack cocaine

The report concludes that substance use has become, "*normal, available, accessible, and cheap*."

## Substance Misuse in Aberdeenshire

National trends would be very similar to the experiences and local picture described by individuals, communities, and support services across Aberdeenshire.

Changing Aberdeenshire's Relationship with Alcohol is a priority within Aberdeenshire's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan; with actions from the Children's Services Plan helping to deliver on this aim, and vice versa.




Publication of new 5-year Licensing Policy from the three Licensing Boards in Aberdeenshire was published in November 2018.

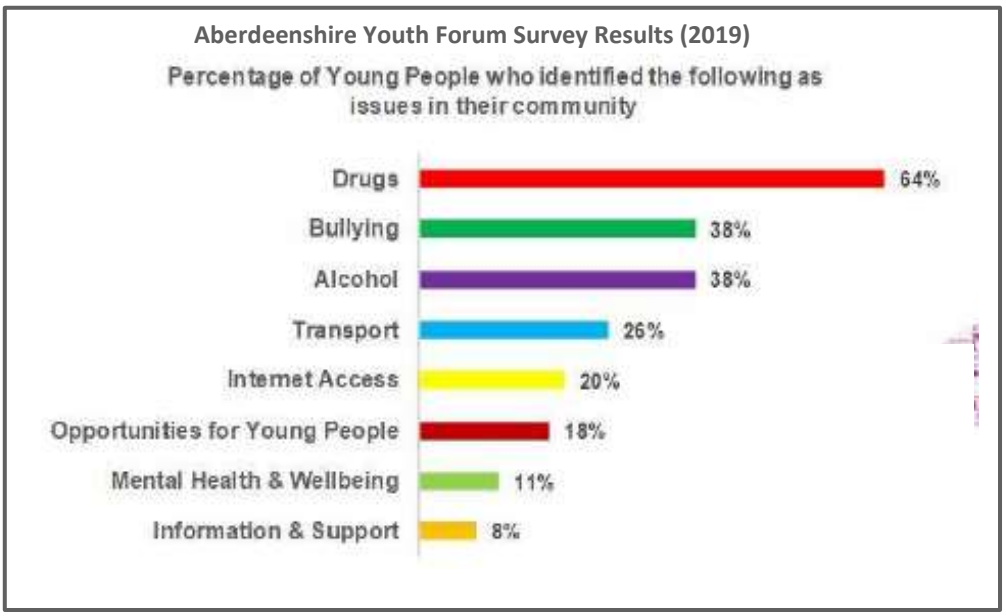
One of the licensing objectives is, '*protecting children and young people from harm*' and of note in the new policy was the presumption against awarding occasional licenses for events associated with children.

Aberdeenshire's current Strategy for Alcohol and other Drugs is under revision, and a wide range of public consultation and engagement has been undertaken to inform development of a new strategy.

A mind-map has been created which collated key issues around drugs and alcohol, which have been raised as important by children, families, individuals, communities and professionals in Aberdeenshire.

**Young People's Views**

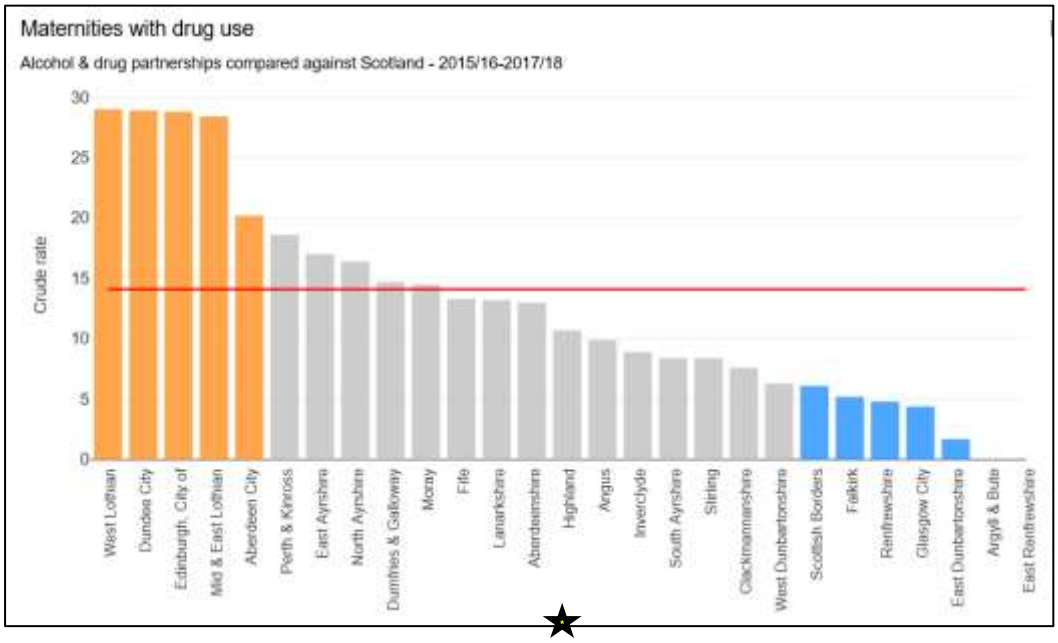
In Spring 2019, Aberdeenshire's Youth Forum Survey developed and conducted a survey with peers. This resulted in responses from 2400 young people across Aberdeenshire, and concluded that drugs and alcohol were in the top 3 issues of concern for young people. Drugs was the top recorded concern (64% of respondents), with alcohol joint second with bullying (38% of respondents).



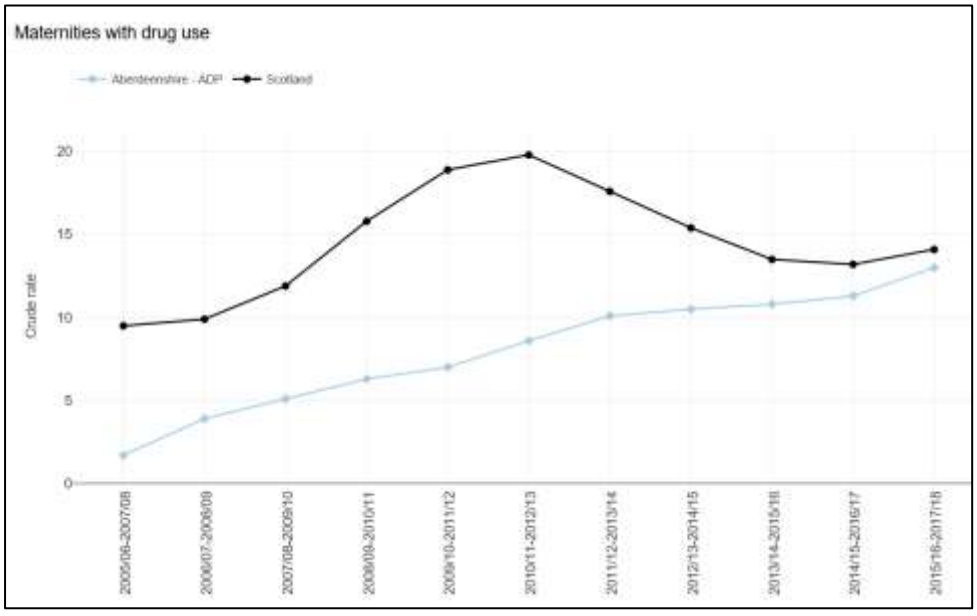
2018 saw one of the highest rates of (all ages) drug and alcohol-related deaths recorded in Aberdeenshire (20 deaths and 29 deaths respectively). Drugs appeared as the top concern in all 17 localities which responded to the Youth Forum Survey. This reinforces the importance of partnership working to tackle substance misuse, as a continued strategic priority.

**Maternities with Drug Use**

In considering Scotland-wide data, Aberdeenshire is mid-table for maternities with drug use by local authority area, as shown below. Aberdeenshire is similar to the overall Scottish average.




The graph below shows a steady increase in the rate of Aberdeenshire maternities with drug use, whilst Scotland has seen an overall decline. An increase in maternities with drug use was noted between 2017-2018, which may reflect availability of specialist services, and improved engagement pathways for pregnant women.



**Young People and Drug Use**

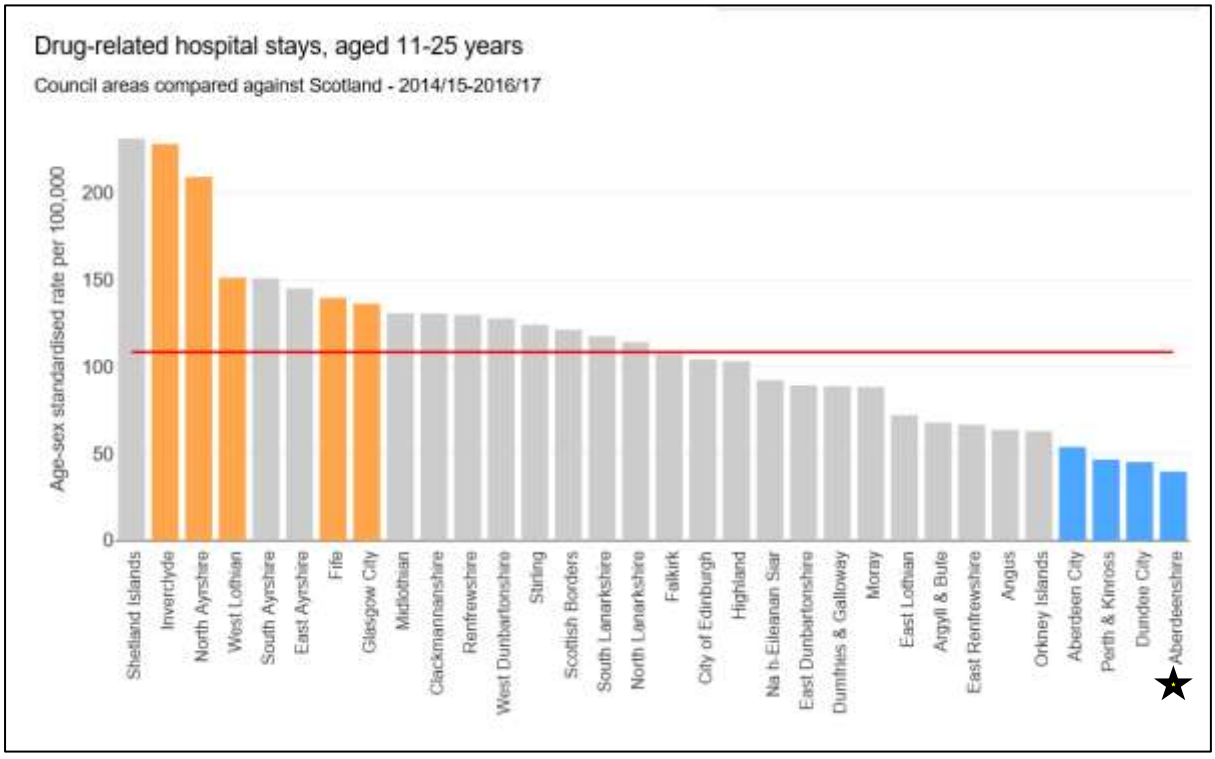
For the previous 15 years, alcohol and drug-use trends in 13 and 15 year olds have showed a decline, as measured by the Scottish Adolescent Lifestyle Substance Use Survey. From 2013, the decline reduced and remained relatively stable. The 2018 SALSUS results are due to be released later in 2019, and will provide more current data on trends in young people's alcohol and drug use - nationally and for Aberdeenshire.

Recent changes in drug supply through 'County Lines' and online availability of substances may have influenced this trend, with an associated normalisation of substance use. Country Lines is where criminal gangs set up a drug dealing operation in places outside their usual operating area, moving from big cities such as Manchester and Liverpool to smaller towns, in order to make more money.

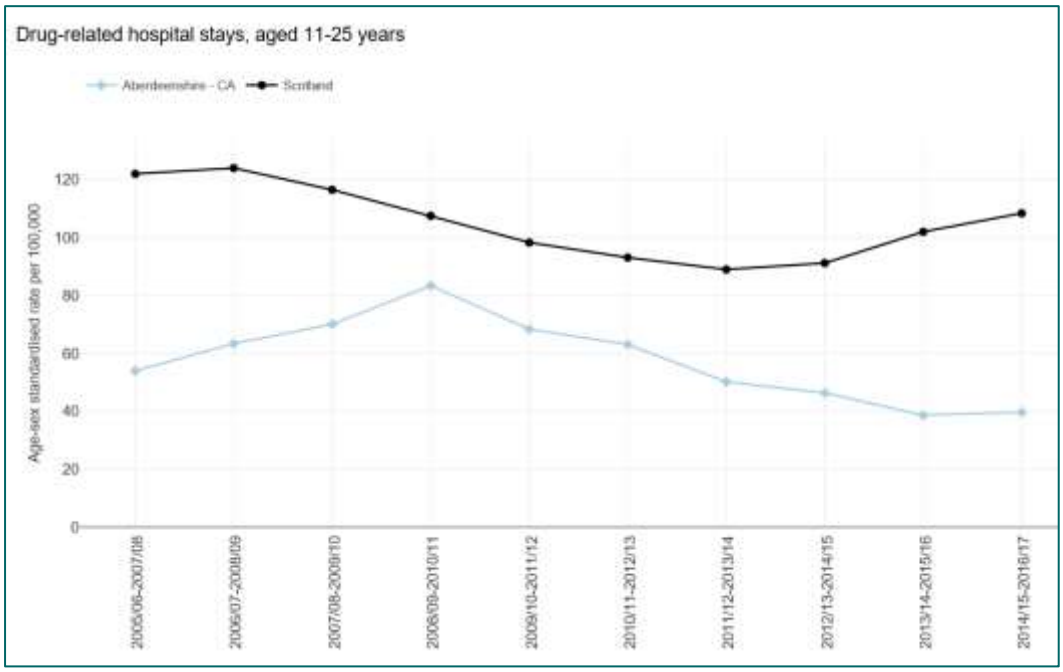
The Peterhead area has been a focus of concern regarding instances of 'cuckooing' (where drug dealers exploit vulnerable individuals and take over their accommodation) and County Lines exploitation of young people. This underpinned Police Scotland's 'Operation Corner' which led to a number of arrests for drug related offences, and supported partnership working which helped to identify vulnerable adults and young people who were in need of support, connecting them with appropriate services.

**Hospital Admissions Data: Drugs**

The average national rate of drug-related hospital stays for 11-25 year olds in Scotland is just over 100 young people per 100,000. The graph below shows that Aberdeenshire has less than half the national rate of drug-related hospital stays for 11-25 year olds (at around 40 young people per 100,000), and the lowest rate of all Scottish local authority areas.

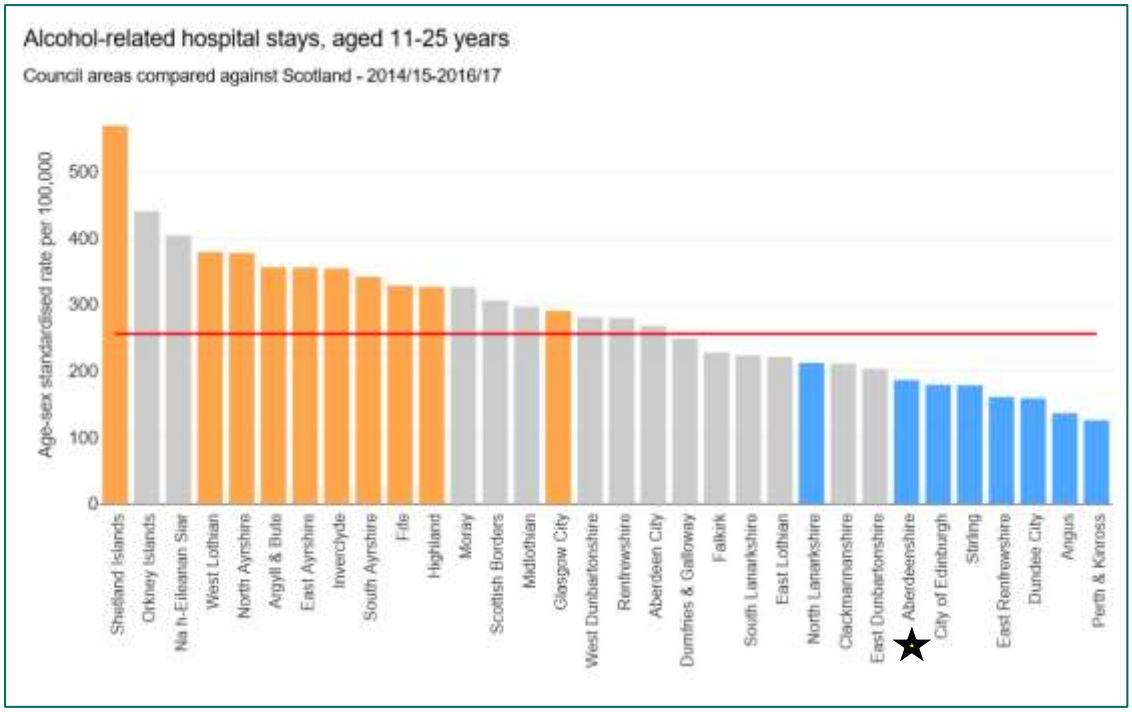


Looking specifically at Aberdeenshire data over the past decade, the graph below shows an decrease in drug-related hospital admissions of young people aged 11-25 years old between 2008 and 2017. Aberdeenshire has consistently been below the national average for drug-related hospital stays. There was a 5 year decrease in Aberdeenshire between 2011 and 2016, and this plateaued from 2016-2017.

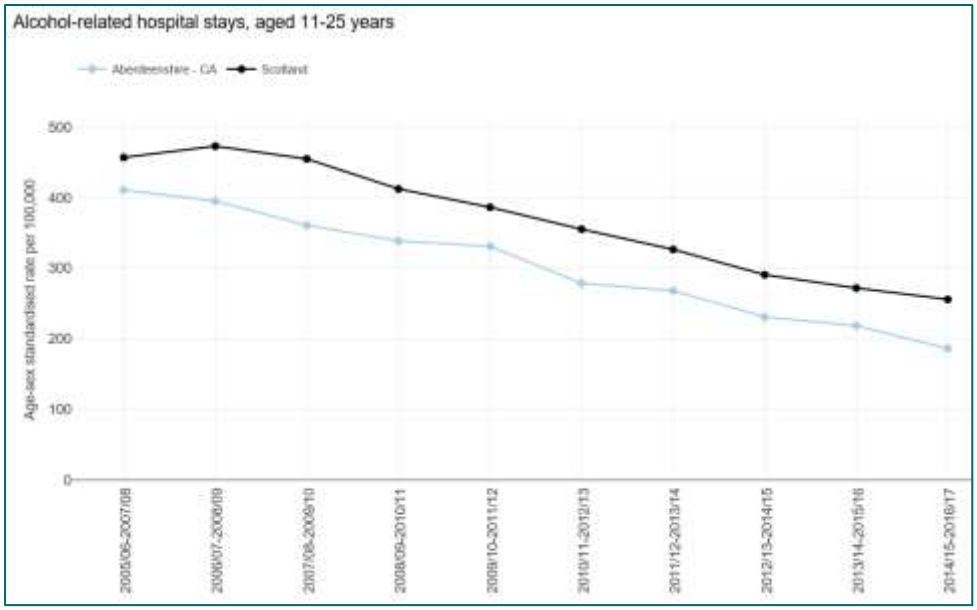



**Alcohol: Hospital Admissions Data**

Out of 32 local authority areas, Aberdeenshire has the 7th lowest rate of alcohol-related hospital stays for 11-25 year olds.

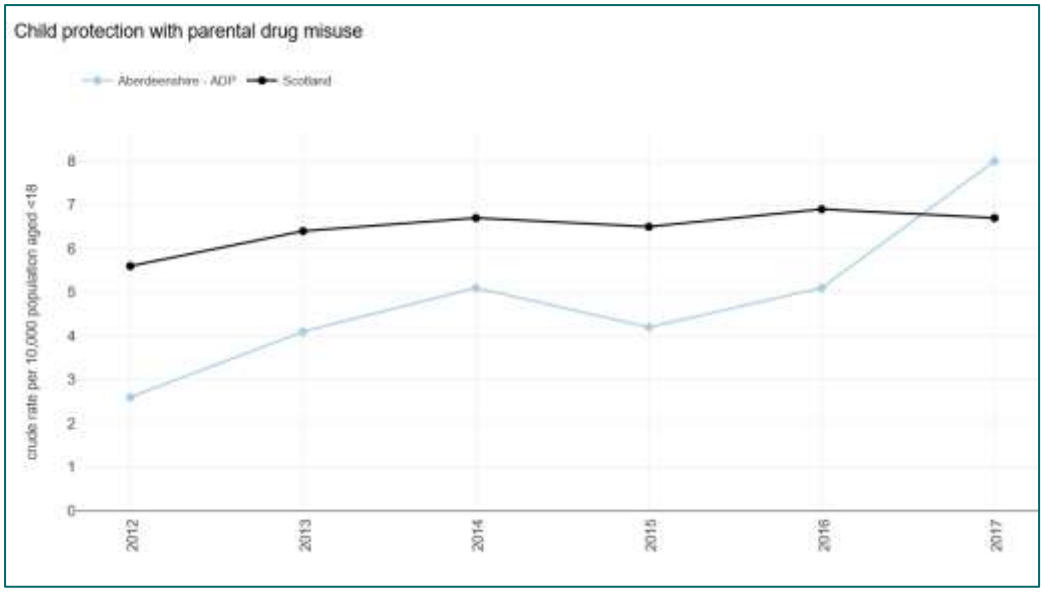


Looking more specifically at the Aberdeenshire data, there is a continuous downwards trend in alcohol-related hospital stays for 11-25 year olds; down from a rate of over 400 in 2008, to under 200 in 2017.




**Child Protection and Parental Drug Use**

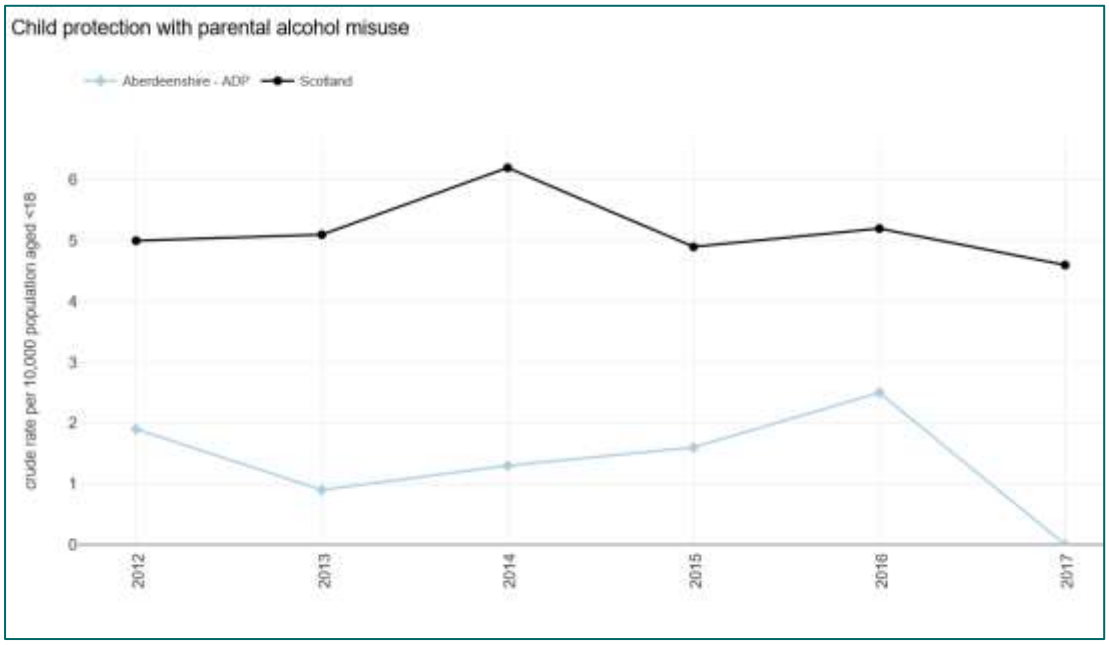
An increase in registrations due to parental drug use can be seen over the past 3-4 years in Aberdeenshire.




The number of children registered within Aberdeenshire overall is low, so interpretation of this increase should be made with a note of caution. For example, registration of a family with 4 children can have a significant impact on statistics.

**Child Protection and Parental Alcohol Use**

As at 31 March 2019 there were no child protection registrations in Aberdeenshire where parental alcohol misuse was the identified risk factor.




As the number of children registered within Aberdeenshire is low, any interpretation should be done with a note of caution, as registration or de-registration of a family can have a significant impact on statistics. The low rate of child protection due to parental alcohol misuse, may be attributable to effective use of the GIRFEC approach and early intervention, as reflected within annual information from the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration.

Aberdeenshire Child Protection Committee continues to consider relevant information, and takes action as required to address identified risk of harm to children and young people. Action which continues to raise awareness of the impact of problematic and harmful parental alcohol use will support early identification of any children and young people affected. Planned needs assessment and mapping work will be progressed over 2019/2020 to ensure provision of the right type of support to children and families affected by drugs and/or alcohol use.

**SCRA Data**

Data from Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA) data, shows referrals by grounds relating to the last 4 quarters to October each year (table below) with low levels of referrals of young people on grounds of substance or alcohol misuse in Aberdeenshire.

| Referral to SCRA where young person's alcohol/substance misuse has been a factor | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| Ground of referral | | | |
| k. Misuse of alcohol | >5 | >5 | >5 |
| l. Misuse of a drug | >5 | >5 | >5 |

SCRA data notes a continued high conversion rate in Aberdeenshire (meaning the number of referrals which lead to the Reporter agreeing to convene a Children's Hearing), at almost double the national average. This suggests agencies are well versed on appropriate referral criteria.

**Exclusions due to Substance Use**

Numbers of young people excluded from Aberdeenshire schools on the basis of Substance Misuse have reduced over 2017/2018, down to levels recorded in 2015/2016.

The number of young peopled excluded for alcohol-related reasons fell from 17 to 12, and notably, the number of young people excluded where the reasons was non-alcohol-related (ie substances) fell from 43 to 19.

| **Number of Children/Young People Excluded in relation to Substance Misuse (exclusion incidents in brackets)** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **School Sector** | | **Primary** | | **Secondary** | | **Special Schools** |
| **Year** | | All Years | **2015/16** | **2016/17** | **2017/18** | All Years |
| **Reason for exclusion** | Substance misuse: Alcohol | 0 | 11 (11) | 17 (18) | 12 (12) | 0 |
| | Substance misuse: Not Alcohol | 0 | 24 (25) | 43 (46) | 19 (20) | 0 |
| **Total** | | **0** | **35 (36)** | **60 (64)** | **31 (32)** | **0** |

We would hope to see this trend continue with further reduction of this figure for 2019/2020, through an approach which delivers prevention and early intervention activity in schools, and supports for young people who need help to address alcohol/drug use, with efforts to maintain their continued engagement in education.

## Year 1 Progress against the Substance Misuse Multi-Agency Action Plan

Aims 1 to 3 have been delivered by Aberdeenshire Child Protection Committee, with more detail of this in the Child Protection Section and the 2017/18 Annual Report.

Over 2018/19, a series of multi-agency *National Risk Framework* (NRF) workshops were delivered across Aberdeenshire, with an aim of increasing practitioner knowledge, skills and confidence in using the NRF tools. These coincided with *Grow Your Local Knowledge Drop-In Events* delivered via AVA and Local GIRFEC Groups, which aimed to bolster local capacity through Public/Third Sector collaboration.

A National Joint Investigative Interview working group has been established to work on a Joint Investigative Interview Training that is equitable across Scotland with this work having been progressed over 2018/2019 and pilot areas providing initial feedback. Police Scotland and Social Work representation on Aberdeenshire's Child Protection Committee, remain sighted on any developments.

Self-evaluation work by the Child Protection Committee over 2019/2020, will have a focus on experiences of children throughout the child protection process, and will include situations where parental drug and alcohol use is an identified risk factor.

***Aim 3 Increase understanding of the toxic trio* risk factors (domestic violence, mental health, substance misuse) and the interaction between children's services and those that are now governed within the Integrated Joint Board (IJB)***

This self-evaluation activity has been completed, as reflected in the 2017/2018 Annual Report.

Key updates are shared by Child Protection Committee members with their respective services, and also with the GIRFEC Strategic Group, Integration Joint Board, and Executive Group for Public Protection.

The Child Protection Committee's Multi-Agency Learning and Development Strategy focuses on development and delivery of Child Protection training, with acknowledgement that continued support for GIRFEC implementation is the foundation for early identification of wellbeing needs. Developments over 2018/2019 have included development of guidance and training to address Violence Against Women.

***Aim 4: Ensure ADP-Commissioned Services ensure a balance between Prevention/Early Intervention and Recovery/Support, compatible with GIRFEC and the Children's Services Plan***

Turning Point Scotland are commissioned to provide Third Sector Alcohol & Drugs Services in Aberdeenshire, partnered by Aberdeenshire Drugs Action (ADA). The Gateway Service is available across Aberdeenshire and considers the needs of children and young people within the context of service delivery to adults. Gateway Services will refer to statutory substance misuse services in all situations where wellbeing concerns for a child or young person have been identified through an initial screening assessment.

Consideration of *Getting It Right* requirements will inform ongoing development of commissioned services. This will be progressed over 2019/2020 to further assess what support may be required and ensure services are working to national GIRFEC approaches, and locally agreed Aberdeenshire guidance.

***Aim 5: Ensure staff possess the knowledge and skills required to work addressing the effects of parental substance misuse, and children and young people's use of substances***

A variety of training was delivered over 2018/2019, including the two-day: *Listening and Responding to children Affected by Substance Use* course. This was delivered by the Scottish Drugs Forum 5 times in 2018, and 4 times in 2019 to March 31st.

This course supports practitioners working with people who might have, do have, or have had problems with their alcohol or drug use, and explores child protection and wellbeing in relation to substance use in a multi-disciplinary context. It supports use of the child's change cycle tool, to understand how this relates to the trans-theoretical model of change for substance using adults.

A range of resources and information on alcohol and substance misuse is shared by the Thematic Subgroup via Local GIRFEC Groups; in addition to communication by service representatives on the Thematic Subgroup. This action has been met and will continue for 2019/2020. Development needs are also addressed through embedding local practice through participation in multi-agency hubs.

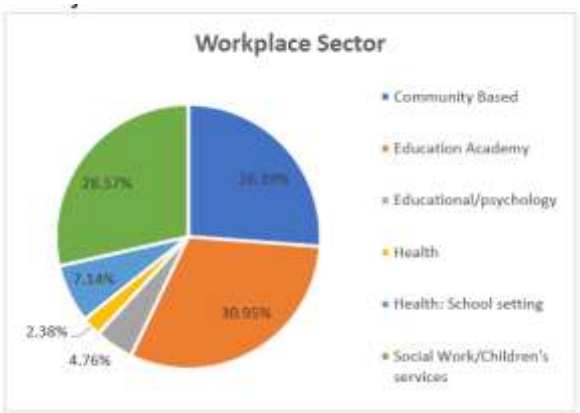
Work is ongoing to develop and deliver a comprehensive training needs analysis of the adult and children's services workforce, with consideration of use of the GIRFEC approach in tackling Substance Misuse (to include drugs and alcohol). This was initially going to be carried out as part of a wider multi-agency training needs analysis, however on reflection it was felt there was a need to consider workforce learning and development needs specifically related to the impact on families of drug and alcohol use.

The Substance Misuse Thematic group established a new sub-group in early 2019, with an aim of progressing the training needs analysis over 2019/2020.

**Workforce Knowledge and Skills – Pilot Survey**

Peterhead Local GIRFEC Group developed a local knowledge/skills survey on drugs and alcohol, which was conducted with local colleagues in the area across a range of children's services. This took place in 2019, and had been initiated in light of concerns around substance misuse in the local community, and recognition that frontline workers were typically the first point of contact for young people affected.

The survey aimed to explore local workforce perceptions of their knowledge and understanding of substance misuse, and to identify experiences of training which had supported or increased workforce capacity to identify and respond to the children, young people, and families they support. Members of Peterhead Local GIRFEC Group circulated the survey within their organisation locally, and collated responses to present an overview of the types of learning and development needs identified.




The ability to recognise and respond to signs and symptoms of substance misuse is crucial, to make sure the right type of support is put in place for a child, young person and family.

Survey results emphasised that there is a significant demand for training in this area, to improve the underpinning knowledge and skills of frontline workers in responding to substance misuse.

78% of respondents had received no training on alcohol-related issues in the previous 3 years, and 65% had received no training on drug-related issues over that same time period. 78% of respondents had had no training in prevention approaches to alcohol use, and 90% had no training in drugs prevention approaches (in the last 3 years).

The main source of training was largely informal, or related to administration of oral screening tests.

Respondents identified that a mix of learning and development opportunities were effective, as shown in the graph (left).

The Peterhead survey acted as a valuable pilot activity, and learning from this will inform an update of the survey tool led by the newly established working group.

A revised survey will be replicated across Aberdeenshire with the support of Local GIRFEC Groups, providing data to inform an up to date training needs analysis.

Inclusion of Guidance teachers in the survey was recognised as important going forward, alongside ensuring the needs of substance misuse workers in relation to use of the GIRFEC approach in addressing the impact of substance misuse on children and young people's wellbeing. Survey results for Aberdeenshire as a whole, will help to inform effective future planning to meet workforce learning and development needs.

**Drugs in Schools: Prevention and Early Intervention**

A review of Aberdeenshire's School Substance Misuse Policy is currently underway. This will be completed over 2019/2020 and its relaunch will raise awareness of the process for responding to incidents in school where drug and alcohol use has been a factor. This sits alongside a broader aim to support all schools to be safe places, free of the impact of drugs, drug use and drug harms and to use a public health approach to achieve this.

A range of interim action and support to be delivered via schools has been developed on a partnership basis, through collaboration between staff in Police Scotland, Education, Drugs Services, Social Work, CLD and Public Health.

**The SLIDE:** Police Scotland have agreed to support delivery of the SLIDE in schools across Aberdeenshire. This resource raises awareness of the risks of drug use and involvement in Serious and Organised Crime. The programme is delivered by Police Schools Liaison Officers and includes a series of videos. Each video charts a young person's 'slide' from a promising future to involvement with drugs, and teaching packs support its delivery.

**Fearless:** Use of the Fearless helpline is being promoted amongst school pupils and parents. Fearless is a new confidential line for children to report information, and is akin to a version of CrimeStoppers. For young people.

**Crew 2000:** Input from the ADP Development Worker, Education Service Health and Wellbeing officer, and Community Police Officers, has been scheduled for delivery at the Pupil Support/Guidance Teachers Meeting in May 2019. This will raise awareness of CREW, with an aim of promoting education staff attendance at 3 ADP-funded training sessions in North, Central and South Localities over June 2019.

Delivered in partnership with schools, these preventative supports will both inform, and be influenced by findings from the strategic training needs analysis, and drug and alcohol needs assessment. This will also include a review of ALEC interventions, to consider whether ALEC capacity for secondary schools would be better directed towards staff development.

**Aim 6 Improve outcomes for Children and Young People whose wellbeing is affected by alcohol or other drug use by ensuring access to services and interventions designed to support and divert them from harm**

Guidance and information is readily available to support frontline staff to signpost and/or refer parents to drug and alcohol services. Information literature for alcohol and drugs services has been provided to children's services social work, and is outlined during training for health visitors and school nurses.

**Needs Assessment**

A draft specification for a Needs Assessment, and mapping available supports, interventions and services for children and families affected by alcohol/drugs in Aberdeenshire, has been developed by the Thematic Subgroup over 2018/2019.

Funds have been provided by the ADP in order to commission this piece of work, with an aim it will be completed over 2019/2020 and inform future service developments.

The need for revision of Aberdeenshire's existing multi-agency *Guidance on Substance Misuse* (2014) will be considered by the Thematic Group, and informed by learning and findings from the training needs analysis, needs assessment, and mapping activities.

**Aim 7 Ensure Parents/Carers have access to contemporary evidence-based guidance on how to keep their children safe from alcohol and other drugs**

Community concern is high regarding substance misuse. A well-attended Peterhead 'Drugs Awareness' event for parents in Peterhead Academy was held in March 2019, initiated by the Local GIRFEC Group. This event highlighted that parents described and exhibited a desire to address and be involved in being of the solution in addressing substance misuse in their local community.

Further Peterhead GIRFEC Local Group events are planned with support from relevant services, to promote parents awareness of substances, and to explore community led supports. From the March 2019 event, collaboration has occurred between Police Scotland and Peterhead Academy to progress delivery of SLIDE in schools.

Discussion with the senior leadership team at Alford Academy and appointment of the DHT as the new Local GIRFEC Group Chair, resulted in partnership delivery of a parents Substance Misuse Information Session in March 2019. Over 60 parents attended this event with very positive feedback provided.

Various resources have been purchased with ADP funds, including resources from the Alcohol Education Trust and Scottish Families Against Drugs. These have been disseminated in local communities via custom alcohol drug notice boards in public places, and also utilised by Local GIRFEC Groups hosting parent information evenings.

A review of the range of information and advice offered to parents and carers will be progressed over 2019/2020 and will be taken forward based on the learning from engagement with parents to identify their views on the most appropriate forms of support.

**Aim 8 Ensure family inclusive approaches by substance misuse services, identify and minimise risk to children and young people by always considering/ assessing potential Wellbeing needs**

An audit of ADP-commissioned service case files, was conducted by the Child Protection Committee, Substance Misuse Services, and Children's Services Social Work in April 2018. This assessed quality and consistency of case recording to gain assurance that children and young people's Wellbeing needs are considered in every case.

***b. We will review the effectiveness of contraception advice and provision to female substance misuse service users.***

Two midwives are trained in substance misuse support, with this service now offered to all substance using women and inpatients. Initial feedback indicates this service has been well received. Data on the effectiveness of contraception advice has been newly established and gathered. This will be monitored over time to measure progress and impact.

From January to end March 2019, 12 women with substance misuse delivered babies in Aberdeenshire. Contraception was discussed with 100% of these women, and 67% chose to receive long-acting contraception in the form of the implant which lasts for 3 years.

In 2018/2019 a new vulnerable women's team at Aberdeen Maternity Hospital was also established. UNITY draws together substance use, public protection and perinatal mental health in a multi-disciplinary health approach.

***c. We will review the provision of antenatal and postnatal support to women using alcohol or drugs to ensure baby gets the best start in life.***

A briefing paper is under development to raise the profile of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) across Aberdeenshire. The SMS Thematic Group will ensure this is reflected within revised practice guidance and consider the need for any further recommendations.

Information publicising the new SIGN Guidelines on FASD has been shared with services and Local GIRFEC Groups.

***d. Following introduction of the DAISy (Drug & Alcohol Information System) system, an annual report on the rate of improved outcomes for the Recovery Outcome 'Children' will be provided.***

Nationally, the DAISy project has been delayed until April 2020 implementation. The Recovery Outcome components will be delayed further pending consideration of a new business case. The draft tool is used local to ensure current data recording is as robust as possible.

**Aim 9 Families affected by substance misuse will be able to access support, and have a voice and opportunity to contribute to service development**

The ADP redesigned website launched in December 2018, with support of local media coverage. This includes a range of national and local support services for families affected by substance use. Development work will be progressed over 2019/2020 to support improved connectivity and consistency across practice guidance, learning and development and the ADP/GIRFEC Websites.

***b. We will ensure the existence of peer support groups for families affected by alcohol or drug misuse in Aberdeenshire***.

Following a successful bid for national funds in 2018, Scottish Families Against Alcohol and Drugs (SFAAD) have appointed a new team member to work in Aberdeenshire as a family support development worker. This post will start in July 2019 and is based within Inverurie. They will play a key role in sustaining existing Family Support Groups, and to develop, coordinate, and support peer support networks as part of support for families and significant others affected by a loved one's alcohol or drug use.

## Young People's Views and Children's Rights

A survey conducted by the Aberdeenshire Youth Forum gained 2400 responses and concluded that drugs and alcohol are the top two issues of concern for young people in Aberdeenshire. Peer-lead engagement by and with young people, has been an impetus to establish Aberdeenshire Youth Forum's new Alcohol and Drugs Committee.

Through Aberdeenshire Youth Forum, 22 young people were asked their views on drug and alcohol use in more depth. Feedback highlighted that:

- Young people said alcohol and drug are easily accessible.
- Young people think schools could provide more support and education around drug use
- Young people expressed a view that parents aren't always good role models in use of alcohol

The views of young people will directly inform development of Aberdeenshire's new Alcohol and Drug Strategy.

Article 3 of the UNCRC has been used to good effect, in increasing the status of the statutory licensing objective "*protecting children and young people from harm.*" It has done this by ensuring this objective has prominence over all other considerations, including commercial imperative, and has resulted in modifications of Aberdeenshire's Licensing Policy.

## Focus for Year 3

A continued focus on progressing current actions will take place over 2019/2020, alongside consideration of new actions for the 2020-2023 Children's Services Plan.

This will consider how delivery transformation can best be achieved through:

- *Primary Prevention*
- *Diversion and Early Intervention*
- *Targeted Support*
- *Parental support*

Aberdeenshire has a very low rate of child protection with parental alcohol misuse. Improving our collective awareness of the impact of alcohol on child and adolescent wellbeing through changing Aberdeenshire's relationship with alcohol, will support vigilance and awareness of young people adversely affected by their own, or a parent/carer's alcohol consumption.

## Good Practice Examples:

**Co-located Support Services**

A Pilot Project has run in Banff Family Centre, where a Community Substance Misuse Worker is co-located at the Family Centre alongside Children's Services Social Work. This aims to promote engagement with parents who may be reluctant to approach services, or are concerned that involvement with SMS Services will reflect negatively. The pilot aims to encourage parents to engage in activity with children around attendance at SMS or Social Work, with a hope of reducing resistance/avoidance.

Dedicated time has been set aside to promote and to evaluate this pilot over 2019/2020, with a view to considering if this could be extended. Involvement of the Family Nurse Partnership is also being explored.

**Parental Engagement**

The Peterhead Local GIRFEC Group Drugs Awareness Event for parents in March 2019 highlighted high levels of parental concern. This event supported and evidenced a shift in perception from local substance issues being something schools should resolve, to viewing difficulties as a shared responsibility, with parents as a valuable resource in community responses to substance misuse and associated risks.

Further consideration is being given as to how to best utilise support from parents by offering regular awareness raising sessions. Peterhead Local GIRFEC Group are aware that this event raised interest from other areas in Aberdeenshire, who have replicated this approach to good effect.

# Corporate Parenting

Corporate Parenting is the responsibility Aberdeenshire Council and other public services have for children and young people who are or have been Looked After by definition of the *Children (Scotland) Act 1995*.

The Corporate Parenting Leads Group, chaired by the Interim Head of Service for Children's Services, is a Thematic Group of the GIRFEC Strategic Group and is responsible for continuously improving the service experience of looked after children, young people, and care leavers (care experienced young people).

The Leads Group consists of representatives from:

- Health
- Education & Children's Services (including Children's Rights, Social Work, Education, Educational Psychology, and Sport & Leisure)
- Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA)
- North East Scotland College (NESCOL)
- Police Scotland
- Skills Development Scotland
- Housing
- Children's Hearings Scotland (representing Children's Panel members)
- Grampian Fire & Rescue Service

The group is committed to responding to the challenges faced by care experienced young people to improve outcomes for this particular group. The work is underpinned by the priorities of *Getting it Right for Every Child*.

Being a good Corporate Parent means that the Council and other public bodies will; accept and embrace the responsibility for Aberdeenshire's care experienced young people, make their needs a priority, and seek for them the same outcomes as any good parent would want for their own children.

## Children's Rights, Engagement & Participation

Children's Rights, Engagement & Participation themes are woven throughout this report. Our care experienced young people told us that a good corporate parent is;

*"When Aberdeenshire Council and people who work there act as our parent and take responsibility for doing everything that a good parent should do, for looked after children and care leavers."*

This forms the focus and vision of the Corporate Parenting Leads Group, and in line with the Wellbeing Indicators, the Leads Group work together to achieve the promises Aberdeenshire Council and partner agencies have made to our young people.

In January 2017, the Corporate Parenting Leads Group launched a three-year Corporate Parenting Action Plan (2017 -2020) which contains both the promises made to our care experienced young people following consultation on what they needed from their Corporate Parents. This report reflects on the progress made in Year Two.

In 2018/19, meaningful engagement has been further enhanced with our care experienced young people through Twilight Sessions whereby care experienced young people and Corporate Parenting Leads meet to discuss and identify 'what works well' and 'even better if….' These discussions inform the direction and priority setting in developing Aberdeenshire's' Corporate Parenting Plan. The Corporate Parenting Leads Group have listened, responded to and made pledges to our care experienced young people. Our young people then hold the leads accountable for their actions and they are required to report back progress at subsequent meetings.

## National Context

On 27 March 2014, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) became law.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 detailed which public bodies are considered to be Corporate Parents and defined Corporate Parenting as:

*"The formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers".*

Part 9 of the Act outlined a range of duties for corporate parents across Scotland. These duties signify that corporate parents should **listen to the needs, fears and wishes** of children and young people, and **be proactive and determined** in their collective efforts to address these. These duties are annotated to actions within Aberdeenshire's Corporate Parenting Action Plan.

## The Aberdeenshire Context: Understanding the Data

**How Good Are We Now and How Do We Know?**

The work of the Corporate Parenting Leads group is informed by our own data (qualitative and quantitative) alongside nationally collected data to understand the needs of our care experienced young people, and identify strengths and weaknesses in our partnership approach to meeting our corporate parenting responsibilities.

The Leads Group have developed a RAG report (Red, Amber Green) to set targets and measure performance against these. This then informs workstream priorities for the group. The use of this data has informed workstreams on Continuing Care, a Housing Forum for care experienced young people, a celebration event, training and the very recent application for funding for a Virtual Head Teacher for Aberdeenshire's Looked After young people.

**Data on Looked After Children**

Understanding and benchmarking our data is key to understanding need and capacity. At 31 December 2018, records indicate that there were **432** looked after children in Aberdeenshire.

This is a significant increase (of 38 young people) in the number of looked after children over the last year Local Government Benchmarking Framework the rate for 2018 (per 1000 pop 0-17) was 7.2 for Aberdeenshire. This remains significantly less than the comparator average of 11, and less than the Scotland average of 14.3* *(* Scottish Government CLAS Returns)*

**Characteristics**

There has been no significant change in recent years, to the age and gender profile of looked after children in Aberdeenshire (see tables below).

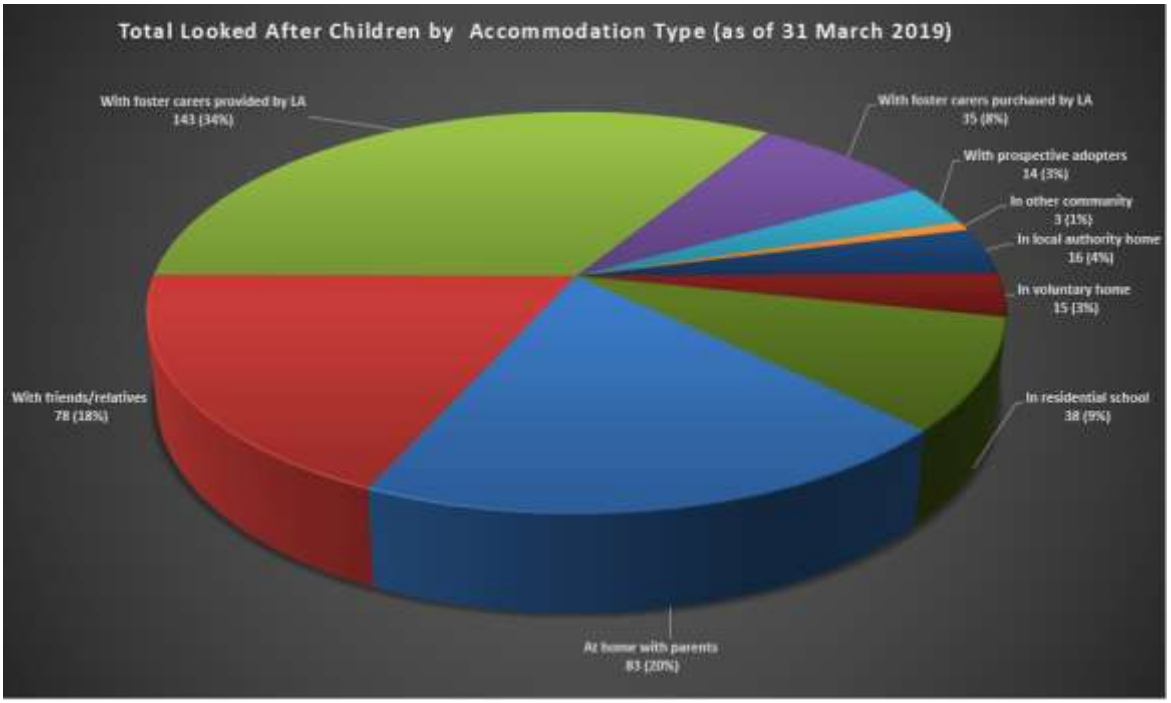
| Looked After Children By Gender | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| **Boys** | 228 | 229 | 241 | 237 |
| **Girls** | 191 | 179 | 181 | 188 |
| **Total** | 419 | 408 | 422 | 425 |

| Looked After Children By Age (31 March 2019 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| **Under 1** | 13 | 11 | 11 | 6 |
| **1-4** | 61 | 66 | 69 | 82 |
| **5-11** | 154 | 152 | 155 | 145 |
| **12-15** | 132 | 131 | 127 | 133 |
| **16-17** | 49 | 40 | 50 | 52 |
| **18** | 10 | 7 | 9 | 4 |
| **19-21** | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| **Total** | *419* | *408* | *422* | *425* |

The majority of Aberdeenshire's looked after children and young people are successfully supported to live within the community. This is either at home with parents, with friends or relatives (known as kinship care), or in foster placements provided or purchased by the local authority.

| Breakdown by Overall Placement Type (As at 31 March 2019) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| **In the Community** | 359 | 347 | 351 | 356 |
| **Residential** | 60 | 61 | 71 | 71 |
| **Total** | *419* | *408* | *422* | *425* |

| Breakdown by type of placement at 31 March 2019 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **YEAR** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| **In the Community** | | | | |
| *At home with parents* | 98 | 73 | 82 | 83 |
| *With friends/relatives* | 64 | 65 | 81 | 78 |
| *With foster carers* | 181 | 177 | 180 | 178 |
| *With prospective adopters* | 11 | 12 | 14 | 10 |
| *In other community* | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| **Residential Accommodation** | | | | |
| *In local authority home* | 13 | 16 | 18 | 16 |
| *In voluntary home* | 12 | 11 | 17 | 15 |
| *In residential school* | 32 | 36 | 35 | 38 |
| *In secure accommodation* | 2 | - | 1 | 0 |
| Total Looked After Children | 416 | 394 | 432 | 422 |




Aberdeenshire's CLAS return (2018) indicates that in the community, 20% of looked after children in Aberdeenshire were living at home with parents, which is an increase of 0.2%-points over the previous year.

The percentage of children living at home with parents (20%) is less than both the comparator average (30%), and the estimated national average (26%).

**Looked After Children in Foster Care**

Over the past three years, the Service has been working hard to reduce the number of children becoming accommodated on an emergency basis and has reduced the percentage from **48 % to 29% in 2018**. The momentum to drive this change was firmly based on children's feedback that the emergency had led to increased trauma and anxiety.

We have a good understanding on the composition of new children requiring foster placements as follows, which supports foster carer recruitment campaigns:

| **Children by Age (at 31/01/2019)** | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age Range | Under 1 | 1-4 | 5-11 | 12-15 | 16-17 | 18 | 19-21 | Total |
| Boys | 6 | 37 | 79 | 75 | 35 | 4 | 3 | **239** |
| Girls | 4 | 41 | 75 | 54 | 18 | 1 | 0 | **193** |
| Total | 4 | 41 | 75 | 54 | 18 | 1 | 0 | **193** |

**Looked After Children in Kinship Care**

A significant rise was noted in relation to the number of young people in kinship care. The Kinship Team have seen a steady rise in requests for kinship support throughout 2018 which may be attributed to greater promotion of the support available following the *Children & Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014* and a focus by the Social Work Service on promoting family-based solutions for children on the edge of care.

**Looked After Children at Home**

Further work is currently being undertaken to understand the needs of Aberdeenshire's Looked After Children at home, with the view to developing a specific improvement workstream in this area.

**Looked After Children with a Disability**

In 2018, the percentage of Aberdeenshire looked after children recorded as having a disability was 21%, an increase of 2%-points over the previous year. The percentage Aberdeenshire looked after children with a disability (21%) is greater than both the comparator average (12%), and the estimated Scotland average (11%).

The recording of ASN/Disability across local authorities, and across Aberdeenshire as an authority, is not consistent. What we do know, is that around 50% of our looked after young people in residential schools are children with complex health and care needs. This equates to around 4.5% of Aberdeenshire's looked after population.

Children and Young people are reported as having an additional support need for a number of reasons, as per table 5 below:

| T5: Aberdeenshire's Looked After Children by Additional Support Needs | |
|---|---|
| **ASN Classification** | **Number of Children** |
| No Disability | 266 |
| Not Known | 62 |
| Autistic Spectrum Disorder | 31 |
| Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties | 22 |
| Other Chronic Illness/Disabilities | 18 |
| Significant learning disabilities | 12 |
| Affected by disability of family members | 11 |
| Specific Learning Difficulties e.g. Dyslexia | 7 |
| Significant physical disabilities/motor impairment | 4 |
| Significant hearing impairment | 3 |
| Significant language/communication disorder | 3 |
| Mental health problem (Mental Health (Scot) Act84) | 1 |
| **Total** | **440**** |

** Total numbers do not match the total number of Looked After Children, as some children will be reported under more than one ASN classification

Further work is required in this area, and the introduction of a Virtual School and Head Teacher for Looked After Children will enable us to explore and respond to this need in a more meaningful manner.

## Support through the Children's Hearing System

Annual data provided by the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA), helps to provide a picture as to the extent and nature of children and young people's involvement with the Children's Hearing system locally.

Between May 2018 and April 2019, 243 referrals were made to the Children's Reporter on non-offence grounds, with the main reason for referrals over that period, ground a) 'Lack of Parental Care'. 137 referrals were made on this basis.

There has been an increased number of non-offence referrals to the Children's Reporter in Aberdeenshire over since 2017, as shown in the table below.

| Total number of Non-Offence referrals to SCRA | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2009/2010 | 2013/2014 | 2015/2016 | 2016/2017 | 2017/2018 | 2018/2019 |
| Referrals | 1,124 | 333 | 231 | 190 | --- | 243 |

Aberdeenshire's rate of conversion (meaning referrals which lead to the Reporter convening a Hearing) has increased slightly again to 45.3% (as against a national figure of 24.7%). This remains one of the highest in Scotland.

Information from SCRA also shows a relatively steady number of Compulsory Supervision Orders (CSO's) in effect over 2018/2019, with 223 children and young people in Aberdeenshire subject to CSO's as at 31 March 2019. The number of children on a CSO at home in Aberdeenshire has continued to reduce incrementally, falling from 190 children in 2010 to 81 children and young people as of 31 March 2019.

Considered together, these statistics suggest that practitioners in Aberdeenshire are skilled and knowledgeable in using the Children's Hearings System, with agencies overall making appropriate referrals to the Reporter in line with multi-agency guidance.

Through commitment to prevention and early intervention, and effective use of Child's Plan meetings, support for individual children can often be put in place on a voluntary basis where families engage positively with services. Nevertheless, there will always remain a number of children and young people for whom statutory measures of supervision remain essential to ensure their care and protection.

## Year 1 Progress against the Corporate Parenting Multi-Agency Action Plan

| Corporate Parenting – Safe & Nurtured | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **No** | **Aim** | **Wellbeing Indicators** | **UNCRC Articles** |
| 1.1 | Looked After Young People will have a safe place to live | *Safe & Nurtured* | 19 |
| 1.2 | Young people will be supported to move on from care at the right time to appropriate accommodation which will reduce homelessness and offending behaviour and improve opportunities for employment and better health and well-being | *Safe & Nurtured* | 19, 27 |
| 1.3 | Young people will be cared for by competent, confident skilled carers who are able to meet their needs | *Safe & Nurtured* | 3, 5, 18, 19 |
| 1.4 | All looked after children and young people will have access to someone they trust, children's rights, social worker, teacher etc. | *Safe & Nurtured* | 1, 3, 4, 12 |
| 1.5 | Reduce the number of care leavers experiencing homelessness, poor health and substance misuse | *Safe & Nurtured* | 3, 19, 27 |
| 1.6 | To enable young people to remain in continuing care arrangements up until 21 years of age | *Safe & Nurtured* | 4, 5, 19, 27 |
| 1.7 | Care leavers will know how to access support and what will be available to them particularly when they have disengaged from services | Safe & Nurtured | 3, 4 17, 18 |
| 1.8 | Care leavers will have access to After Care support up until 26 years of age | Safe & Nurtured | 4, 18 |

**Aim 1.1: Looked After young people will have a safe place to live**

**How Good Are We Now and How Do We Know?**

Aberdeenshire's Looked After Children are provided with a very safe and supportive place to live. We know this because our young people and their families tell us.

Children's Homes regularly seek feedback from young people, families and professionals whilst the young person is living with them and after they leave. They also work with the young people in relation to a Wellbeing Survey which enables young people to rate how they are feeling against the wellbeing indicators.

Across the three Children's Homes, the average of 88% of young people living there reported to feeling safe. Of the 12% who did not report to feeling safe, this reported to their experiences in the community.

Across all three Children's Homes, the quality of care and support has consistently been graded as 'Very Good' by the Care Inspectorate.

**Views of Young People and their Families:**

Our young people and their families have commented as follows:

**Parent's comments:**

**Safe:** *'I have no concerns'*

**Nurtured:** *'We know that staff work hard to support (our child)*

**Do you feel actively involved in the care of your child?**

*'Yes, J (keyworker) updates me regularly, no concerns'*

*'Yes'*

**What do you feel about the levels of communication with yourself and staff?**

*'No concerns, (key worker) updates me regularly'*

*'Very good'*

**Young People's comments**

*'I feel like I get treated very well and people treat me as my age and i respect that and therefore I am the same back.'*

*'I get on well with the other kids and staff, which helps to build up relationship skills and opening up to staff about if there is something that I feel uneasy about.'*

Children's views are used to inform the Children & Young Person's Assessment Report and Child's Plan, and appropriate action is taken to address any concerns.

All looked After Young people over the last few years have been asked to comment on how safe they feel where they live through the My Voice Tool, which is completed prior to Pathway Reviews, Looked After Child Reviews and Children's Hearings as per Table 6.

**T6: Percentage of children who said they felt safe where they live (My Voice)**

| Key Performance Measure | Achieved 2015/16 | Achieved 2016/17 | Achieved 2017/18 | Achieved 2018/19 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1a) Percentage of children who said they felt safe where they live (My Voice) | 97% (294 children) | 96% (149 children) | 96% (45 children) | N/A |

We have been unable to collect meaningful data for 2018/19 as usage of 'My Voice' has rapidly dropped, which provided us with data in previous years.

Care experienced young people's views are still collected and inform their Child's Plan, but the means to collect this is not sophisticated enough at this time to report on. Further work is required to find alternative ways to capture this information.

Foster Carers, Adopters and Kinship Carers are all rigorously assessed in line with legislative requirements. Our Permanence Panel and Fostering, Supported Lodgings and Kinship Panel have independent chairs who provide scrutiny to our assessments and processes. Foster Carers and approved Kinship Carers are also subject to annual reviews and the views of looked after children, their families and the professionals supporting them are gathered to inform the review and identify both strengths of the placement and areas for improvement.

Feedback from Foster Carer Reviews also indicate our young people in foster care feel safe and cared for.

A suite of accommodation options has been developed to support care leavers in collaboration with their views and assessed needs. This will be further explored in the next section.

**Aim 1.2: Young people will be supported to move on from care at the right time to appropriate accommodation, which will reduce homelessness and offending behaviour, and improve opportunities for employment and better health and wellbeing.**

**How Good Are We Now and How Do We Know?**

Young people are very well supported to move on from care. We know this because our young people tell us and we have seen a consistent level of engagement with our Through Care Team and an increase in the number of young people coming back to our Service for help or support when they need it. A Pathways assessment is undertaken with everyone young person to identify their appropriate care plan and support.

**Throughcare**

31 March 2019, 80% of young people actively engaged with the Through Care Service and working towards independence had Pathways Plans and reviews in place. Of the 20% (17) who did not have a Pathways Plan, a small number are supported by Adult Services as the lead agency and have a different type of review; other young people choose to dip in and out of the service on a discretionary basis. This flexibility is positive for young people who wish to manage their own lives but recognise that there are times when they do need some support.

When a young person is ready to think about leaving care, we provide safe and supportive accommodation and support for young people making the transition from Care to Independence which is a particularly vulnerable time for care experienced young people.

One of the ways we support care experienced young people with independent living skills, is through the Through Care Service Taster flat in Peterhead. Our young people have found this to be very helpful, and we have replicated the project in Inverurie.

**Homelessness**

Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service prioritise young people leaving care for accommodation, allocating them the maximum number of points. The Youth Housing Forum to prevent homelessness for care leavers is highly successful and has resulted in careful planning and accommodation allocation. Since 2017, no young person leaving care in Aberdeenshire has been required to register as homeless in order to access accommodation.

We have developed a suite of accommodation and support options which include Langstane Supported Tenancies, Supported Lodgings and Taizali, a resource developed in the Fraserburgh area where many of our young people have significant relationships and attachments. The data below confirms that 31% of our CEYP open to the Through Care Team are being supported to manage to a permanent tenancy (table 7). We have also completely eradicated CEYP leaving care and moving into B&B or homeless accommodation in 2018 (in 2017, we had 2 CEYP in B&B accommodation).

**Re-engaging Young People**

When a young person leaves care and makes a choice not to be supported by the Through Care Service, the Through Care Team send a 6 monthly letter reminding them of the Service and support available. This includes details of contact numbers, Facebook details, and signposts young people to Skills Development Scotland.

We know this is successful as in 2018, 27 young people came back to the Service: 9 were reallocated a worker, and 18 young people were supported with short term intervention to address a particular need.

| Number of Young People open to the Through Care Team by Accommodation Type (as at 31/3/19) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Type of Accommodation** | **Number of Young People of YP** | **% Open to Through Care Team** |
| Foster Care/Kinship | 25 | 23% |
| Continuing Care | 7 | 6% |
| Supported Lodgings | 5 | 4% |
| Family | 14 | 13% |
| Supported Tenancies | 5 | 4% |
| Supported Acommodation* | 9 | 8% |
| Permanent Tenancies | 34 | 31% |
| Temp Accommodation | 6 | 5% |
| B&B | 0 | 0 |
| YOI | 2 | 2% |
| Student Halls | 1 | 1% |
| Sofa Surfing | 2 | 2% |
| Total | 110 | 110% |

*Supported Accommodation includes Taizali and Foyer accommodation.

**Taizali**

Taizali opened in March 2016, and offers accommodation and support to young people leaving care between the ages of 16-18 with a view to supporting their transition into independence. The accommodation is offered with the expectation that young people will actively participate in an independent living programme.

To date, the staff at Taizali have supported 24 young people to access the right supports and move on to independence. (10 in 2016, 8 in 2017, and 6 in 2018/2019).

Taizali has had several examples of successfully working with young people to support positive outcomes:

M came to Taizali from foster care, keen to begin living independently but at risk of a negative destination.

M has been supported by Taizali to undertake an Activity Agreement with a local work placement, which led to her securing paid employment.

M is now ready to be move into a supported tenancy, feeling much more ready and equipped to manage this next stage.

B came to Taizali with low confidence, poor health, and low education outcomes.

Supported by Taizali, B has undertaken a college course, improved their health, and grown significantly in confidence.

B is now at the point where they are ready to begin planning for their future.

**Other Accommodation Options**

**Supported Lodgings:** We currently have 8 Supported Lodgings providers in Aberdeenshire, and over the course of 2018, 5 care leavers accessed the Supported Lodgings Scheme prior to moving to live more independently (5 in 2017). There is an ongoing challenge to recruit Supported Lodgings providers within Aberdeenshire's major settlements. Many of our providers are more rural, which influences a young person's choice to take up this option, and ongoing recruitment continues.

**1.3: Young people will be cared for by competent, confident skilled carers who are able to meet their needs**.

Children's Services Social Work is committed to safe recruitment policies, and Aberdeenshire's Residential Children's Homes, Fostering Service and Adoption Service are also regulated Services which are regularly inspected by the Scottish Care Inspectorate. Our staff are competent, confident and skilled to meet the needs of our care experienced young people, with a rolling training program ensuring continuous learning opportunities are available to carers and staff.

An excellent recruitment strategy and process is essential to being able to ensure young people are care for by competent, confident skilled carers who are able to meet their needs.

**Children's Homes**

Across Aberdeenshire's Children's Homes, the workforce is stable and staff remain in the Service for significant periods of time. This provides consistency and a skilled and experienced workforce to meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable young people. The Children's Homes actively involve their young people and ex-residents in recruitment, and their insight and views have been invaluable to the process.

**Foster Carers**

Between 1st January 2018 and 31st December 2018, 23 prospective households attended *Skills to Foster* Training. 20 families proceeded to assessment following the training and applied to foster for Aberdeenshire. These figures reflect the national picture across the UK.

Aberdeenshire's Fostering Panel made recommendations on **15** new applications for approval as foster carers from 1 January to 31 December 2018. This is an increase from 2017 as shown in the table below.

| **Recommendations for Foster Carer Approval in Aberdeenshire** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Year** | 2017 | 2018 |
| **Number recommendations for approval** | 9 | 15 |

All Fostering households are required to complete 30 hours of learning and development annually, which also encompasses e-learning. 100 e-learning modules were completed by Aberdeenshire's Foster Carers during 2018, which includes foster carers reflecting on what they have learnt, and how this will be put into practice supporting children and young people.

Six Skills uplifts were presented to and recommended by the Fostering Panel during the year. **5** fostering households moved from Skills Level 1 to Skills Level 2, and **1** fostering household moved from Skills Level 2 to Skills Level 3. This demonstrates further our commitment to growing foster carers to meet the at times very complex needs of the care experienced young people they care for.

Peer support is strongly encouraged, and **233** Foster Carers attended these groups over 2018.

**Young People's Views**

Feedback from care experienced young people is integral to evaluating services.

Some examples of what young people have told us are:

*"I want to continue living with my foster carer because I am part of that family."*
***(12-year-old)***

*"I feel that my relationship with my foster carers is fully natural. I have enjoyed every second with them as they have provided a safe and stable environment for me over the years. They have never failed to meet my needs as they have ensured that I have had a decent education and a good social life. They have encouraged me to reach the best of my ability."*
***(17 year old)***

*"I am Cared about, looked after properly, rules are reasonable. Plenty freedom."*
***(17-year-old)***

*"I have a good relationship with my foster carers and like living there because I can tell them about things that worry me."*
***(14 year old)***

*"She (foster carer) believed in me when no one did, not even myself."*
***(15 year old)***

**Adoption**

Until around 2015, Aberdeenshire's Adoption Service received a very high level of interest in Adoption. However, since 2015, the Service has seen a significant drop with 2017 seeing the lowest level of interest in adoption to date.

In 2015 we successfully recruited and assessed **13** families, in 2017 **4**, however we saw an increase in 2018 to **8** families, following a concerted and targeted campaign of recruitment through the media and social media online.

Between January and December 2018, **9** couples participated in and completed the adoption preparation courses, and **4** progressed onto full assessment and approval. The remaining families withdrew for varying personal reasons.

In 2018 the Permanence Panel made recommendations for Adoption Plans in relation to **16** children and 15 children were matched with adoptive families.

Adopters are also supported to continue to grow and develop their skills recognising that the needs of a care experienced young person change throughout the age and stages of their lives. A rolling programme of workshops and learning opportunities for adoptive parents continues and the service has taken positive steps forward in 2018 to engage with online media and workshops, that adoptive parents can join in with either individually at home or with a group of other parents in a local venue.

**Adoption Support**

In 2018 the Service received **76** referrals for a range of aspects of Adoption Support. Requests included birth records access and counselling from adopted adults, tracing and reunion support with birth family members, adoption support for families with children of all ages, supporting teenagers, assisting birth family members with Letterbox Scheme letters, and stepparent adoptions. This was an increase on 2017, during which 49 referrals were received.

Feedback collated from Looked After Child Reviews confirmed that throughout 2018/2019, 99 % of placements were agreed to be meeting the child's individual needs. This is an increase of 2 % from 2017/2018. Where the placement was not meeting a child's needs, alternative plans were being explored.

**1.4: All looked after children and young people will have access to someone they trust, children's rights, social worker, teacher etc.**

All care experienced young people have access to someone they trust. We know this because during 2018/2019, **98%** of looked after children had an allocated social worker. The 1.5% who didn't (5 children) were allocated to a Local Area Coordinator/Family Support Worker due to their social worker leaving, and whilst a recruitment process was underway. Further work is required to evaluate the quality of relationships between care experienced young people and their social worker/key professional.

Aberdeenshire Council continue to offer a Children's Rights Service to care experienced young people by our own Children's Rights Officers, and by a dedicated Who Cares? Scotland worker.

In 2018/2019, 100 children (age 5+) have used the Children's Rights Service (an increase of 6 from 2017/2018) . Of those 100, 45 new children accessed the service between January 2018 and 31 March 2019 (45% of all individual children receiving a service). All children and young people receive information about the Children's Rights Service available to them, when initially accommodated.

Care experienced young people told us their views, in a survey undertaken by the Children's Rights Service in March 2019:

**How easy was it to get in contact with the Children's Rights Officer?**

*Very easy* ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
*Quite easy* ✓✓✓✓
*Quite hard*
*Very hard*

**What kind of help did you get? (**please tick all the help you got)

*Help to give my views at meetings* ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
*Help to write down my views* ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
*Help to sort out a worry or concern* ✓✓✓✓
*Help to sort out a problem* ✓✓✓✓✓
*Advice on my rights* ✓✓✓✓✓

A trusting relationship is vital to a young person being able to share their views.

Information on children and young people's views is also collated from Looked After Child Reviews, as per table 8 below.

| **T8: Are the Child's Views clearly available to the Review Manager?** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 228 | 80% |
| No, child too young (under 5) | 40 | 12% |
| No, other reason | 17 | 7% |
| Total | 285 | 100% |

Where views are not available and the child was over 5 years of age, the main reasons related to the child having complex health/disabilities. However, an audit (July 2018) of Children & Young Person's Reports indicated that in the sample of cases audited, any issue of disability was considered, and reference made to appropriate materials to gain further understanding of a young person's views.

For example, this included direct reference to communication tools including My Life workbooks to enable the young person to share their views in a more appropriate manner.

**1.6: To enable young people to remain in continuing care arrangements up to 21 years of age.**

We have been successful in promoting and enabling our young people to remain in continuing care in Aberdeenshire. In 2017, 23 young people were eligible for continuing care and of those 23, 14 remained in their placement i.e. took up this option. However, in 2018 we have seen a significant increase., with 25 young people remaining in placement over 17 years of age, and a further 11 over 18 years of age.

The main reason for leaving the placement is the young person's personal choice and whilst Aberdeenshire has always been committed to the 'Staying Put' Agenda, the introduction of continuing care has clearly had a positive impact on our young people and their carers.

A significant number of young people over the age of 16 years, do return to their families. Where they don't, we have developed a suite of accommodation and support options already highlighted in this report, and have in 2018, eradicated young people leaving care and ending up in homeless or B&B accommodation.

**1.7: Care leavers will know how to access support and what will be available to them particularly where they have disengaged from services.**

We proactively write out to all non-engaged care experienced young people who have left care every 6 months, to 'keep in touch' and signpost them to support as required. This information reminds young people of the service available to them, and provides details of the Facebook Page/Duty Telephone number, together with *Skills Development Scotland* contact details.

During 2018/2019, 31 young people who had left care and previously disengaged from the Service, re-engaged following receipt of the letter informing them that the service remains available to them. This is an increase from 2017/2018 where 17 young people re-engaged.

**1.8: Care leavers will have access to After Care support up until 26 years of age**

Care leavers are offered and can access support up until 26 years of age. We know this is happening through tracking the profile of young people open to the service, and those returning. During 2018, the Through Care and After Care Team were supporting 110 young people, (120 in 2017). In the first quarter of 2018/19, this increased to 114, with 83 young people aged between 15-19 years of age, and 31 young people aged between 20-26 years of age. This has also seen an increase in access to After Care support in the 20-26 age group, up from 26 young people in 2017.

| **Corporate Parenting - Healthy** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| No | **Aim** | **Wellbeing Indicators** | **UNCRC Articles** |
| 2.1 | Health needs of looked after children and young people are prioritised | Healthy | 3, 6, 24 |
| 2.2 | Mental health needs of LAC are identified and prioritised | Healthy | 3, 6, 24 |

### 2.1 Health needs of looked after children and young people are prioritised

In 2018, **141** referrals were made to NHS Grampian's Looked After Children's Service. We know that the health needs of looked after children in Aberdeenshire are prioritised, because **94%** of those children received an initial health assessment as a result of becoming looked after, which informed support provided as part of their Child's Plan.

Of those 135 children, 47% received an initial health assessment within 8 weeks. This compares to 40% in 2016, and 42% in 2017 – a rise of 7% over the past 2 years. The setting up of a small working group to improve this process has begun to see improvement in this area. The reasons for delay are mixed across Health and Social Work Services, as shown in table 9 below.

**T9: Reasons for Delay/Non Completion of Initial Health Assessment for Looked After Children**

| Year | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|
| Reason for delay in completion | | |
| *Paperwork - SW* | 10% | 6% |
| *Paperwork - NHS* | 13% | 16% |
| *Paperwork - NHS & SW* | 14% | 8% |
| *LAC (NHS) Team* | 8% | 2% |
| *Moved Placement* | 0% | 4% |
| *Out of Area* | 4% | 11% |
| Reason for Non-assessment | | |
| *Non-engagement (NHS)* | 2% | 1% |
| *No Consent* | 2% | 4% |
| *Discharged* | 4% | 1% |

Table 9 indicates a 7% increase in the number of children being placed outwith the Grampian area during 2018, which has an impact on timescales, as the Looked After Children Health Team are then required to locate professionals outwith Grampian to complete the health assessment (who may also have different local processes).

Of the 6% of Looked After Children who were not assessed (9 out of 141 children) the main reasons cited were non engagement, non-consent, and discharged from care before the assessment was progressed. Whilst 6% equates to a small number of children, this is an area for improvement, and it is anticipated that development of the School Nurse Pathway (CEL 13) in Aberdeenshire may improve opportunities to better engage families in this process.

In January 2018, Trakcare was introduced to NHS Grampian, to enable Looked After Child Status to be flagged on hospital health records and ensure medical practitioners are better informed of a young person's circumstances. Within Aberdeenshire, Health Visiting/School Nursing Teams are being encouraged to register with Trakcare, and a briefing for Health will be circulated to practitioners informing them of the agreed processes to be followed when Looked After Children/Young People do not attend health appointments.

The Aberdeenshire *Audit of Child Protection in General Practice Report (*January 19*)* showed that 90% (28 out of 31) of GP practices use Read coding for Looked After Children.

Dental services are also changing their registration forms to ensure care experienced/looked after children's details are added.

### 2.2 Mental health needs of Looked After Children are identified and prioritised

All school-aged children who become Looked After, are offered a mental health assessment (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire or (SDQ)), which is completed with consent. During 2018, 72 % of Aberdeenshire's looked after children completed this assessment.

12% of young people who completed the SDQs were already attending CAMHS (11 young people) and 6% (5 young people) were referred to CAMHS as a result of the SDQ assessment.

Of the 28% who did not have a SDQ completed, the reasons for this included:

- *Child/young person moved out of area**
- *refusal*
- *discharged from care prior to completion*
- *7 questionnaires were not returned from school nurses*

*14 children were not offered the opportunity to participate in the SDQ because they had moved out with the area, and this requires further exploration. The potential to develop the School Nursing Pathway (CEL 13) in Aberdeenshire, may improve figures for non-completed SDQs. Some health boards across Scotland have elected not to use the SDQ assessments at all.

| Corporate Parenting – Achieving | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **No** | **Aim** | **Wellbeing Indicators** | **UNCRC Articles** |
| 3.1 | Looked After Children and Young People will have one key adult in school who will protect, promote and safeguard their needs | Achieving | 4, 18, 28, 29 |
| 3.2 | Looked After Children and Young People are aware of the supports accessible through school in their local area | Achieving | 4, 18, 28, 29 |
| 3.3 | Regular planning takes place for care experienced young people to determine whether a CSP is required and to ensure that their educational needs are met | Achieving | 4, 18, 28, 29 |
| 3.4 | Key information is prepared and shared at times of transition between schools for all care experienced young people | Achieving | 4, 18, 28, 29 |
| 3.5 | High expectation of attendance rates of Looked After Children and Young People is promoted and safeguarded | Achieving | 4, 18, 28, 29 |
| 3.6 | Attainment data of care experienced young people is not significantly different to that of their peers | Achieving | 4, 18, 28, 29 |
| 3.7 | Care experienced young people will make a successful transition into post school life | Achieving | 4, 17, 18, 28, 29 |
| 3.8 | Care leavers will have a wider range of options in accessing learning institutions that are local to them or that suit their ambitions without compromising on support needs | Achieving | 4, 18, 28, 29 |

**3.1 Looked After Children and Young People will have one key adult in school who will protect, promote and safeguard their needs**

All Care experienced young people can identify their key adult in school, and are offered ring-fenced time with that person in school, to build a trusting relationship and ensure that cognisance is taken of their needs and circumstances in planning support.

Further work is required to promote specific induction supports for care experienced young people.

A Named Person is made available to every child in Aberdeenshire until they reach 18, or 19 where they remain in secondary education. It is acknowledged that a young person's preferred key adult in school may be someone other than their Named Person.

**3.2 Looked After Children and Young People are aware of the supports accessible through school in their local area.**

We have been unable to collate specific data on this area, and this PI requires reviewing.

**3.3 Regular planning takes place for care experienced young people to determine whether a CSP is required, and to ensure that their educational needs are being met.**

In 2018/2019, 92% of our looked after children had a Child's Plan that was regularly reviewed, and confirmed that their education needs were currently being met.

Plans to address the disparity, were in place for the 8% of care experienced children and young people whose education plan did not meet their needs. This included facilitation of a Flexible Pathway, or for some children the identification of education plan as part of a residential school provision, or alternative day-school provision for some of our children with complex additional support needs.

**3.4 Key information is prepared and shared at times of transition between schools for all care experienced young people.**

At times of transition, we know that partners are committed to facilitating formal and informal meetings with the young people/parents/carers/partners to ensure best practice and that young people and their carers are supported with any transition. Transitions checklists are not being used consistently across schools in Aberdeenshire and further work is required to bring consistency to this approach.

Planning support to ensure smooth transitions would be considered as part of a Child's Plan.

**3.5: Looked After Children's Attendance/Absence in Aberdeenshire Schools**

Aberdeenshire's overall attendance rates for looked after children compares well to the national picture.

Attendance rates for children who are looked after at home are more concerning, and this is being addressed through a particular workstream focusing on improving outcomes for looked after children at home. Attendance figures for Looked After children attending Aberdeenshire Schools in 2016/2017 compared well to 'all pupils' attendance, as per Table 3.

| **Attendance and Absence Rates for Looked After Children (in Aberdeenshire Schools)** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **2016/2017** | **2017/2018** |
| % Attendance: Looked After Children | 93.12% | 90.38% |
| % Unauthorised Absence: Looked After Children | 2.35% | 3.51% |
| % Attendance: All Aberdeenshire Pupils | 94.86% | 94.44% |
| % Attendance: All pupils (National) | 93.30% | tbc |

Sources: Aberdeenshire Council ECS Committee Paper Analysis of Initial school leavers destination 2017/18 report; Educational Outcomes for LAC 2016/2017 (Table 3.4); ScotXed: Attendance/ Absence at Schools

Whilst the figures have dropped slightly for 2017/2018 (by 3%), this relates to a very small number of looked after children. The ScotXed Attendance and Absence at Scottish Schools Return is completed biennially and does not include Looked After Children separately. Aberdeenshire figures in the table above are based on internal data.

All looked after children will have a Child's Plan, where education is a key feature and will include consideration of attendance.

**3.6 Attainment data of care experienced young people is not significantly different to that of their peers.**

Since 2013/2014 school-leavers in Scotland have been classified by identifying the highest Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level at which they achieved one or more passes by the time they leave school. This includes SQA attainment at SCQF levels 3 to 7.

81.8% of Aberdeenshire's care experienced young people (looked after for the full year by the local authority and who left school during session 2016/2017), achieved one or more qualifications at SCQF level 4. This compared to an average of 78.1% across Scotland (table below).

| **Aberdeenshire Looked After Children School Leavers Highest Level of Attainment (2016/2017)** *(young people looked after for the full year by the local authority)* | |
|---|---|
| **No. of LAC school leavers** | **11** |
| **% of LAC school-leavers with 1+ awards at SCQF level 3** | **81.82%** |
| National LAC Comparator with 1+ awards at SCQF level 3 | 86.17% |
| Aberdeenshire Non-LAC Comparator with 1+ awards at SCQF level 3 | *98.81%* |
| **% of LAC school-leavers with 1+ awards at SCQF level 4** | **81.82%** |
| National LAC Comparator with 1+ awards at SCQF level 4 | 78.06% |
| *Non-LAC Comparator with 1+ awards at SCQF level 4* | 98.28% |

Whilst Aberdeenshire compares well against the national average, looked after and care experienced school-leavers are still behind their non-looked after Aberdeenshire peers.

### 3.7 Positive Post-school Destinations for Looked After Children

Over 10% more care experienced young people in Aberdeenshire went on to positive destinations in 2017/2018 compared to 2016/2017 (very similar to the national average), although this is not statistically significant due to the relatively small numbers of pupils.

2018/19 leavers data is due to become available in Insight in February 2020.

| **Positive Post-school Destinations for Looked After Children** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Year** | 2016/2017 | 2017/2018 |
| No of Aberdeenshire looked after young people who left school with a positive destination | 41 | 47 |
| % of Aberdeenshire looked after young people who left school with positive destination | 70.7% | 80.9% |
| % of looked after young people who left school with positive destination (national average) | 76.4% | 80.4% |
| % of all Aberdeenshire pupils who left school with a positive destination | 95.5% | 96.3% |
| % of all pupils who left school with positive destination (national figure) | 93.7% | 94.4% |

**Sources:** Aberdeenshire Council ECS Committee Paper Analysis of Initial school leavers destination 2017/18 report and National All-Pupils data: ScotXed Attainment & Initial Leavers 2017/18 Supplementary Data

| **Corporate Parenting - Active** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **No** | **Aim** | **Wellbeing Indicators** | **UNCRC Articles** |
| 4.1 | Looked after children and care leavers have access to leisure activities, promoting wellbeing and good physical health up until 21 years of age | Active | 3, 23, 51 |

### 4.1 Looked after children and care leavers have access to leisure activities, promoting wellbeing and good physical health up until 21 years of age.

All Looked after children and young people, including those looked after at home, are eligible to access free sporting activities across all of Aberdeenshire's local authority's sport centres. This includes swimming lessons and Active Aberdeenshire Sports Team.

In 2018, we also successfully secured free access to Sport & Leisure Facilities for young people leaving care, for up to one year between leaving care and reaching the age of 26 years. Whilst it is too early to collect data on usage, this is something we will use to track the effectiveness of this project, and will report on in future.

In establishing participation levels of looked after young people in Active Schools activities, we are able to report that in 2018/19, 57 looked after children attended Active School Activities. Care experienced young people currently make up around 23% of those attending such activities, which is an increase of 10% on the previous year.

There has also been a noted increase in the number of care experienced young people volunteering with Active Schools, increasing from 2 young people in 2017/2018, to 5 young people in 2018/19. This equates to 0.02% of the total care experienced young people population in secondary schools, in comparison to 0.07% of non-looked after secondary pupils volunteering.

Through information collated at Looked After Child Reviews, 98% of children and young people identified that they were regularly participating in hobbies and interests including active activities.

| Corporate Parenting - Respected & Responsible | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **No** | **Aim** | **Wellbeing Indicators** | **UNCRC Articles** |
| 5.1 | Looked after children and care leavers will have their successes celebrated and promoted | Respected Responsible | 3, 12 |
| 5.2 | Looked after children and care leavers will be supported in their communities by corporate parents who understand their duties and responsibilities as well as the needs of looked after children | Respected, Responsible | 3, 4, 5, 12, 18, 19 |

**5.1 Looked after children and care leavers will have their successes celebrated and promoted**

Our Corporate Parenting Website was launched spring 2016, and is available to the public via Aberdeenshire's GIRFEC Website.

This provides further opportunity to raise awareness of corporate parenting duties and responsibilities and celebrate success.

Our care experienced young people told us that they wanted their achievement stories acknowledged and celebrated. An Achievement Wall has been included in the website containing anonymous success stories directly from our care experienced young people who have been delighted with the outcome

The wall is updated quarterly with new stories, with some of these achievements for 2018/2019 shown below:

Data is also collected from Looked After Child Reviews to inform as to whether reports contain information relating to a looked after young person's achievement. We collect this information on a quarterly basis, and over the last year have seen a steady increase following the promotion of this across services, from 82% in Quarter-1 to 99% in Quarter-3.

**Celebrating Success Awards Ceremony**

In September 2018, Aberdeenshire held its first ever bespoke awards evening for care experienced young people. This event provided young people with an opportunity to be nominated for a number of categories including:

- Aberdeenshire Volunteering Award
- Academic Achievement Award (primary & secondary categories)
- Cultural & Sporting Achievement Award
- Making a difference for care experienced young people
- Personal Development Award
- Inspirational Young Person Award

The evening was a resounding success, hosted by Olympic gold Medallist Hannah Miley and attended by nominated young people, their friends, family, social workers and teachers; along with elected members, senior leaders, and Aberdeenshire Council's Chief Executive

Aberdeenshire's care experienced children and young people told us what they thought about *Celebrating Success*:

*"I really liked it and it was exciting but part of me wanted one of the other nominees to win. I really like her and she's been doing really well."*

**Winner of the Academic Achievement Award, Primary.**

*"It is important to give care experienced young people the opportunity to attend an event this like because they may not get the opportunity otherwise. It's also very important to care experienced young people for our corporate parents to recognise us and be proud! The night was amazing….to be a winner also felt very rewarding as if felt like people recognised what I do and how passionate I am about making a difference."*

**Winner of Inspirational Young Person Award.**

*"Being nominated for the award was great even though I was surprised. We were all treated as though we were really special. There was a piper to welcome us and a photographer - it was a bit like being at a wedding. Everybody was nice and I met lots of new people. The meal was pretty cool too, little burgers and mini macaroni pies. I will never forget meeting Hannah Miley, she was so nice and not at all what I expected."*

**Young Person Nominated for Volunteering Award**

It is intended to run the *Celebrating Success Awards* event every 3 years, to continue to value and nurture our young people, eradicate stigma, and promote our care experienced children and young people's amazing achievements.

**5.2 Looked After children & care leavers will be supported in their communities by corporate parents who understand their duties and responsibilities, as well as the needs of Looked After children**.

Our Corporate Parenting Website provides further opportunity to raise awareness of corporate parenting duties and responsibilities and to celebrate success.

Further development work is required on the website to ensure it contains the right information, and this will be progressed over 2019.

Some examples of how we have raised awareness of responsibilities and duties are:

Aberdeenshire Council has now introduced an introduction to Corporate Parenting into the Council's generic induction programme and is currently developing e-training which will be able to be accessed by all council employees. The Robert Gordon University are also us supporting to develop a short video clip being created by students as part of their project work on a Media Degree.

Police Scotland have recently recruited three Corporate Parenting 'Champions' across NE Division, who are in the process of compiling a NE Division Corporate Parenting Plan. This will tie in at local level, with delivery of Police Scotland's National Corporate Parenting Plan. They are awaiting national training, which it is hoped will roll out later this year to all Officers.

Meantime, NE Division officers are continuing to roll out Introductory face-to-face briefings to front-line Officers about Corporate Parenting across the Division to raise awareness about Corporate Parenting. To date the local NE Division Command Team (approximately 20 Officers) have received formal multi-agency training. All officers have received an electronic briefing and face-to-face briefings have been carried out with a further 104 Officers, and 6 civilian members of staff.

We believe that by being proactive in delivering corporate parenting training, we will increase awareness and will further aid signposting and support should partners come into contact with care experienced children and young people.

The development of Twilight sessions with the Corporate Parenting Leads group has been a key milestone in direct engagement between care experienced young people and Corporate Parenting Leads across local partnership organisations. This has resulted in a number of pledges being made which will inform next steps in reviewing the Corporate Parenting Plan.

Some of these pledges are:

"I pledge to be available, accessible and approachable to the young folk and keep my fellow Councillors informed and involved."

***Cllr Anouk Kloppert* & Looked After Children Champion**

"To work to eliminate the attainment gap between Care Experienced & non- Care Experienced students at NESCoL"

***Robin McGregor***, NESCOL

"To continue to raise the profile of our family firm and create interesting work experience and opportunities."

***Jacqueline Dinnes, SDO, Our Family Firm***

"To ensure NHS Grampian employees know what Corporate Parenting is and what being Looked After or Care Experienced means"

**Linda Gray, LAC Nurse**

"I pledge to do all that I and my school can to prevent changes of school unless this is what the young person wants."

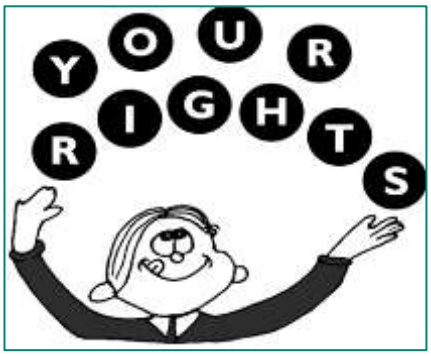
***Dawn Lynch, Depute Head Teacher***

"I will raise awareness about the work within North East division of Police Scotland about Police Officers' responsibilities and the need to listen to and engage with CEYP."

***Sheila McDermott, Police Scotland***

| Corporate Parenting - Included | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **No** | **Aim** | **Wellbeing Indicators** | **UNCRC Articles** |
| 6.1 | Children and young people help to design services by sharing their own experiences of being looked after and what could have been better to ensure they achieved better outcomes for all looked after children and young people in Aberdeenshire | Included | 3, 4, 5, 12, 18, 19 |
| 6.2 | Key, skilled Champions will promote, advocate for and support workplace opportunities within the council | Included | 3, 4, 6, 18 |

**Aim 6.1 Children and young people help to design services by sharing their own experiences of being Looked After and what could have been better to ensure they achieved better outcomes for all Looked After children and young people in Aberdeenshire**




The YPOC Group have continued to meet over 2018/2019, facilitated by two Children's Rights Officer and the Who Cares? Scotland young person's worker.

YPOC's young people are looking at innovative ways to recruit more members to the group over 2019/2020.

Having spent 2016/2017 working on their *Don't Judge, We're No Different From You* campaign, launched in early 2017; YPOC members were asked to present a workshop at the *Children in Scotland* Conference in Edinburgh in November 2018.

This workshop was led by two of Aberdeenshire's care experienced young people, and supported by Children's Rights Officers. It was well attended, and the girls were able to answer many questions from the audience.

Members of the YPOC Group gave a presentation in September 2018 to Children's Panel members, where an audience of 40 panel members watched their campaign *Don't Judge, We're No Different From You* DVD and asked lots of questions about their experiences at school and at Children's Hearings. Panel member feedback was very positive and highlighted that the YPOC Group's input had made them as Panel Members reflect on how they might do things differently to support care experienced young people.

In February 2019, members of the YPOC Group hosted a stall at Meldrum Academy as part of the *#YOYP Legacy Event*; which was attended by young people, their families, people working across services for children, and invited dignitaries. This ceremony marked an end to Aberdeenshire's *Year of Young People 2018*, and showcased young people's accomplishments with performances and presentations, and include highlighting the contribution of the YPOC Group.

The YPOC Group's next campaign is focussing on what happens when young people first come into care. The group have been working on the guide for their latest campaign, *Coming into Care and Moving Placements - Getting it Right.* They are also developing a DVD to accompany the Guide, based on a story of two children, and the YPOC Group are looking to film this in early August 2019.

**Aims 6.2, 6.3 & 6.4 Key, skilled Champions will promote, advocate for and support workplace opportunities within the council enabling young people to access support and flexibility in bespoke placements.**

In October 2018, some young people from the YPOC Group met with members of Aberdeenshire Council's Human Resources Team, who facilitated interview training. This included assistance with interview skills and some mock interviews, which not only helped the young people develop skills for their own lives, but also provided them with the skills to recruit Aberdeenshire's new Looked After Children Champion.

Councillor Anouk Kloppert was successfully recruited to join Councillor Anne Stirling as Looked After Champion, following Councillor Evison's successful period in this role.

Launched by the Scottish Government in January 2011 the intention of *Our Family Firm* is to provide experience of the workplace in order to help ensure that care leavers are better equipped for adulthood. *Our Family Firm* works closely with the Employability Partnership and Developing the Young Workforce.

Aberdeenshire's *Our Family Firm* information has been available on the Corporate Parenting pages of Aberdeenshire's GIRFEC website since 2016, and *Our Family Firm* training information is available as an e-learn on ALDO.

*Our Family Firm* currently has 11 Aberdeenshire Council Service Champions, in the following areas: Business Services (4), Infrastructure Services (2), Education and Children's services (3) Health and Social Care Partnership (2). We are in the process of sourcing 2 further Champions within Education and Children's Services.

Referrals to *Our Family Firm* have significantly increased since its relaunch in 2016, rising from 5 young people in 2015, to 73 young people in 2018.

| Aberdeenshire Our Family Firm Referrals | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| **Number of Young People** | 5 | 37 | 54* | 73 |

*+4 re-referrals

Of the 73 referrals, 71% young people to date have progressed to actual work experience, which varies from one-day-per week, to full weeks for a mutually agreed period of time based on the needs and circumstances of each individual young person. Placements include mechanical engineering, admin, catering, Care, pharmacy, landscape services, beauty therapy, animal care, facilities, ICT, construction, nursing, sport and leisure and Media.

Towards the end of 2016, Aberdeenshire Council funded a pilot project offering two care experienced young people paid work experience, and support with navigating the workplace and applying for jobs. The pilot came to an end in March 2017, and was reported to have been successful with one young person offered further work, and the other having gained enough confidence to go on and apply for college.

In October-December 2017 the programme (now named *WorkPlus*) ran again with five young people. Once again it was reported as successful, with three young people achieving offers of employment and going on to further education. Unfortunately, further funding has not been secured to continue this project.

Our care experienced young people have told us that their *Family Firm* work experience has significantly increased their confidence, and supported them to apply for both part-time and full time employment.

## Achievements and Good Practice

The progress of Aberdeenshire's corporate parenting plan has been highlighted throughout this report, with strong collaboration between local partners continuing to secure improved outcomes for care experienced children and young people.

There have been many successes over 2018/2019, and this has included:

- Young people's participation in service improvement, recruitment and training
- National recognition for materials produced by the YPOC Group

- Twilight Sessions involving care experienced young people & Corporate Parenting Leads
- The highly successful *Celebrating Success* Awards Evening
- Good inspection outcomes for Residential Homes and Fostering Services
- No young people placed in B&B accommodation on leaving care
- Increased numbers of young people sustaining their own tenancies
- Increased choice through a suite of supportive local accommodation for care leavers
- Increased numbers of care leavers returning to access a service, at times support is most needed
- Greater awareness and up-take of Continuing Care
- A significant increase in *Our Family Firm* work placements

Celebrating successes is a key role for corporate parents, and whilst some of the success stories are woven throughout this report, feedback from children and young people themselves is particularly vital in evaluating our impact. The following are quotes collated from some of Aberdeenshire's care experienced young people:

*"I am an ambassador for The Year of Young People 2018 for Young Scot."*

*"I have gained confidence to consider my own issues with mental health, and have undertaken an additional online course exploring mental health issues with an aim to supporting other young people in the future."*

*"I presented the DVD 'Don't Judge - we're no different from you,' to 2nd-year up to 6th-year of Meldrum Academy in assemblies, with the help of Children's Rights Officers."*

*"I took part in giving a workshop in Glasgow, to a CELCIS conference for residential staff and showed the YPOC's DVD."*

*"It helped visiting the place before moving there, knowing who you're staying with, understanding what is going on, having people to support you."*

*"It helped having met my Social Worker before the move, having my own room, having my teddies, having my own clothes."*

*"I was asked to be involved in the 1000 voices campaign. I wanted to do it because I want things to change. It was hard to tell my story but for people to understand what needs to change I had to. It's not my fault I ended up in care and I understand that now but all that happened made it difficult for me to behave in a way other people understand. I always found school or activities or holidays and even having friends difficult. Being in care doesn't mean I don't want to be like everybody else, I do! I have done lots of presentations for school year groups and parents and teachers and social workers and cadets to help tell my story and I went to Edinburgh and Glasgow to meet Nicola Sturgeon and John Swinney, I even spoke on a massive stage in front of hundreds of people, which was terrifying!!*

Further examples can be found on the *Achievements Wall*

## Focus for Year 3

2018 was year two of a three-year plan. Whilst embedding the progress made by Corporate Parenting Leads, along with our care experienced young people, we have identified the following areas of further improvement.

These are to:

- Improve regularity of Twilight Sessions
- Embed some of the Corporate Leads pledges into specific improvement actions
- Recruit a Virtual Head Teacher for care experienced young people in education in Aberdeenshire (to improve educational outcomes and help us better understand our care experienced young people with Additional Support Needs).
- Adopt key priorities as agreed by our young people from the Stop/Go research undertaken by the national Care Review
- Understand what is working well, alongside identifying the barriers to care experienced young people accessing mental health support
- Engage with care experienced young people to identify whether their relationships with key professionals are experienced as nurturing and helpful

The Corporate Parenting Leads group are a highly committed group of representatives who have created an aspirational plan, and have been dedicated in enabling their service/agency to contribute towards the aims and ambitions reported on within this annual report.

It highlights both key achievements and challenges experienced by corporate parents throughout the past three years. Of significant importance is the day-to-day work all partners undertake to build relationships with, support, and enhance opportunities for looked after children and young people across Aberdeenshire – It is this commitment which makes a direct difference to children's lives.

# Improving Life Chances for Children & Young People: Preventing Offending

| Whole System Approach/Youth Justice | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **No** | **Aim** | **Wellbeing Indicators** | **UNCRC Articles** |
| 1 | To work with youth justice partners (in both Children's and Related Services) to raise awareness and support staff skills around WSA, wellbeing and preventative approaches to youth justice in line with the national strategy for Community Justice and early effective intervention to children and young people involved with or at risk of offending behavior. | *Safe, Nurtured, Included, Respected* | 2, 3, 5, 6, 37, 40, 42 |
| 2 | To keep children and young people out of the criminal justice system where possible | *Included, Responsible* | 1, 3, 9, 17, 18, 37, 40, 42 |
| 3 | Increase positive destinations post-school for young people involved in youth offending | *Achieving, Included* | 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 15, 17, 28, 29, 30, 32, 40,42 |
| 4 | Continued implementation and advancement of the Whole System Approach in Aberdeenshire to reduce reoffending | *Included, Nurtured, Responsible* | 2, 3, 5, 6, 37, 40, 42 |
| 5 | Increase opportunities for children & young people to express views on service planning and provision | *Included, Respected* | 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 12, 13, 14, 18, 26, 40, 42 |

The Youth Services Strategic Group (YSSG) has a core membership, with members who have been dedicated to and involved in the Group for a significant number of years.

YSSG originated with a Youth Justice emphasis in around 2000, and has continued to meet regularly since that time. Its name changed to broaden the approach to Youth Services in recognition of GIRFEC approaches, and becoming the group leading on *Whole Systems Approach* in 2012, keeping a multi-agency emphasis on youth offending within the Children's Services Plan.

**Key Aims are:**

- To ensure young people receive the services they need, at the time they need them, and that these services identify and address the support those young people require
- To ensure all services work together to support young people and their families, and have clear processes which ensure timely and effective support
- To ensure there are robust key processes for young people who are committing more serious offences
- To identify any gaps or improvement areas, where we need to work together to ensure young people receive a holistic service
- To promote practice consistent with *GIRFEC* and the *Whole Systems Approach*
- To promoting the development of a skilled, confident workforce, particularly with practitioners delivering services directly to young people and their families

Over 2018/2019, regular participation in the YSSG came from the following services:

- Youth Justice Management Unit (Police Scotland NE Division)
- Criminal Justice Social Work (Health & Social Care Partnership)
- Community Justice Partnership
- Barnardos
- Children's Social Work Services/Youth Services
- Community Learning and Development
- Educational Psychology

Membership of YSSG has evolved since the 2017/2018 annual report, as has frequency of the group meeting – with core attendance and engagement with the YSSG Action Plan continuing from a number of services as shown above. Engagement from more Universal Services, particularly health and mainstream education had reduced, with both services finding it incredibly difficult to identify an appropriate key representative to liaise with and cascade relevant information to/from their wider service.

SCRA and CAMHS no longer attend the YSSG, however this has not proved problematic to the YSSG, as representatives frequently changed or gave apologies, and arguably it is easier to have a shared understanding in discussions.

The Youth Service Strategic Group has continued to share information relevant to the Whole Systems Approach and CARM with Local GIRFEC Groups.

Communication has also been maintained to ensure a joined up approach with colleagues from the Opportunities for All Team, and Community Safety Partnership which supports the priority of advancing the Whole System Approach to Youth Justice locally. There is also an established link with the Serious and Organised Crime Unit (Police Scotland).

The Community Justice Partnership and Community Safety Partnership have committed to working with the Aberdeenshire Youth Services Strategic Group to support its priority of Advancing the Whole System Approach to Youth Justice, as set out in our Children's Services Plan, with regular communication between these groups on progress of actions.

## National Context

***The Whole Systems Approach* (2011):** is the Scottish Government's approach aimed at better addressing the needs of young people involved in offending in a way which makes sure services providing support, put a child and their family at the centre. WSA provides early and effective multi-agency intervention, aiming to divert young people away from statutory measures, court prosecution and custody.

***Preventing Offending: Getting it Right for Children and Young People 2015-2020:*** The Youth Justice Strategy for Scotland (2015) took a strategic focus in advancing the Whole System Approach, improving life chances for young people, and developing capacity and improvement. Partnership working is viewed as integral to delivery of the strategy.

***The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016:*** prompted a redesign of Community Justice across Scotland during 2017/2018, highlighting the importance of prevention, and early and effective intervention for young people at risk of involvement in the adult criminal justice system.

Aberdeenshire's Community Justice Partnership was formed to develop and lead implementation of the new model for Community Justice Services in Aberdeenshire, as outlined in the local ***Community Justice Outcomes Improvement Plan***.

**The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Bill** was introduced by the Deputy First Minister in March 2018, and proposed that the Scottish Parliament raise the age of criminal responsibility to 12 years old. The Bill also proposed changes to the law on disclosure of criminal records and information about individuals, and changes to police procedures on taking children to a place of safety, searching children, police interviews, and taking of forensic samples from certain children. Members of the YSSG collectively responded to the national consultation on the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility

## Whole Systems Approach in Aberdeenshire

There is a long-running commitment to working together in Aberdeenshire to address youth offending, and to address such issues in a timeous way. The YSSG believe it is important to see young people who offend in their widest context, with needs beyond offending that also require to be assessed and addressed as necessary.

At times the national political and media emphasis has focussed on serious offending and criminalising young people, however local culture and practice is to target the earlier end of offending (as an indicator of wider need), and the focus of local shared resourcing would primarily fit with Early and Effective Interventions.

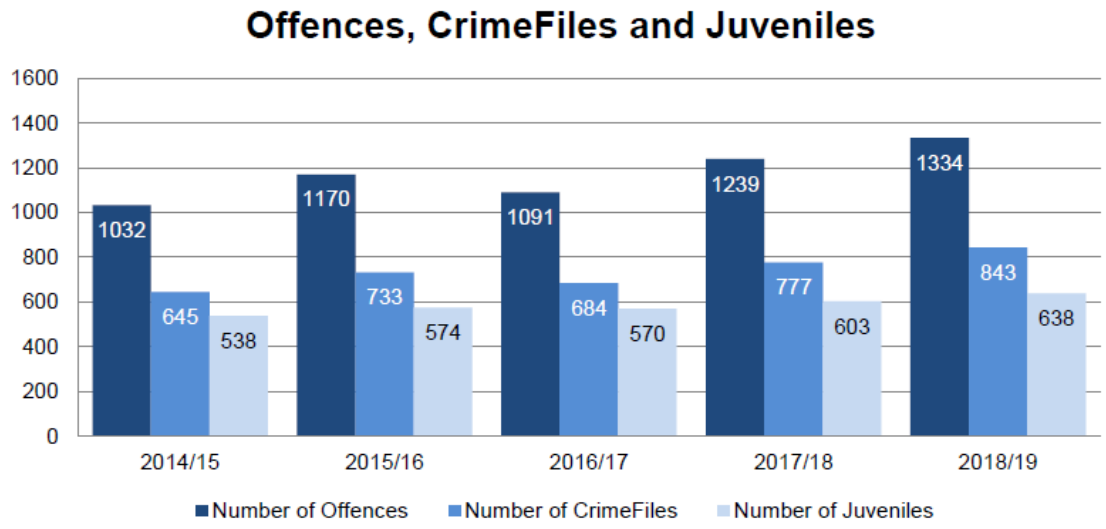
This is particularly true for supports offered through Barnardos, Community Learning and Development/Opportunities for All, and Children's Services Social Work Youth Services Team.

Services have also been provided for more serious offending, made available through Criminal Justice Social Work, Sexual Behaviour Service, Court Support for young people, and the YSSG take steps to monitor activity and effectiveness of interventions across the board.

The aim is that services can deliver time-limited and focused interventions, which result in young people desisting from offending behaviour. All practitioners work hard to provide a service which is young person-focussed, particularly when working with those young people who are at risk of entering the adult Criminal Justice System.

## Aberdeenshire Context

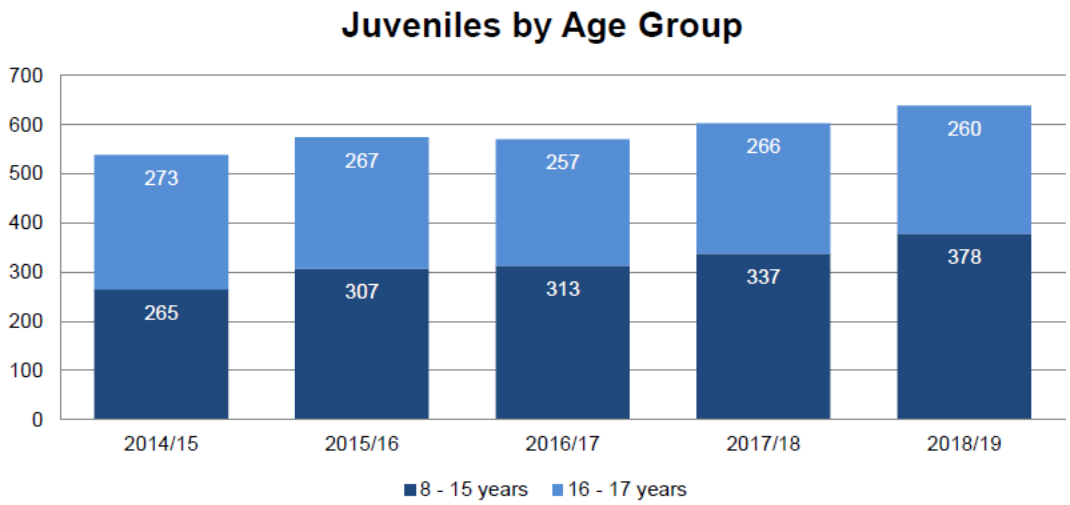
Annual data from the Youth Justice Management Unit for 2018/2019 provides an overview of the statistics on children and young people involved in offending behaviour in Aberdeenshire.




** Juveniles in this context refers to children and young people aged 17 or under

The majority of these children and young people (78%) appear on only one CrimeFile, and 95% appear on 3 or less CrimeFiles. This shows that in Aberdeenshire, we mainly encounter young people who have committed 3 or less offences, with numbers of more serious and persistent offenders remaining very low.

The graph overleaf shows that the number of juveniles involved in offending behaviour have decreased year on year for 16 and 17 year olds (excepting a marginal increase in 2017/18). An increase in relation to 8 - 15 year olds can be seen, however these numbers remain low.




## Year 2 Progress against the WSA Multi-Agency Action Plan

**Aim 1: To work with Youth Justice partners to raise awareness and support staff skills around WSA, wellbeing, and preventative approaches to youth justice in line with the national strategy for Community Justice and early effective intervention to children and young people involved with or at risk of offending behaviour.**

Whole Systems Approach familiarisation materials have been available as an e-learn package on ALDO since 2017.

Completion data for 2018/2019 shows that this course has been completed by a range of staff across Education and Children's Services, other Council Services, Health and Social Care Partnership, and Third Sector.

**CARM**

Following successful delivery of CARM workshops in 2017, leaflets were developed via the Sexual Behaviour Services Social Worker which provide information to parents and young people involved with the CARM process.

Leaflets explain how services will support families and work to support children and young people displaying harmful sexual behaviours assists through the early identification, assessment, and management of children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviours.

**Reconfiguring Services**

Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership

Aberdeenshire's Criminal Justice Social Work Service has reconfigured over 2018/19 to enable workers to specifically work with young people on their caseload (up to age 25 but with the majority being under 22years).

This has enabled those workers to develop and increase their knowledge of the needs and issues experienced for that age-group of young people, as well as enabling good connections with other relevant services.

In October 2018, the Scottish Government announced that they would make two awards of funding to support regeneration and expansion of the Whole Systems Approach in Scotland. These awards were £25,000 for 2018/2019, and 2019/2020. The YSSG submitted a proposal detailing how the group would wish to target these monies via the creation of a Strategic Development Officer post:

- Review/refresh current documentation and materials including potential extension of the age of young people to be supported by WSA up to 21 years
- Review of training materials used across services to familiarise them with WSA so that we can maintain WSA awareness in Aberdeenshire
- Support work around case reviews to enable a multi-agency group to look at where WSA has worked effectively and where practice/process requires improvement
- Creation of a prioritised action plan for the duration of the post
- Identification of gaps in the support we can offer young people involved in offending and research/progression of ways to address any gaps

However, unfortunately significant difficulties have been experienced in progressing this post as quickly as was hoped. This may now mean the funding is not fully utilised, nor all the above ambitions achieved as originally intended.

**Aim 2 To keep children and young people out of the criminal justice system where possible**

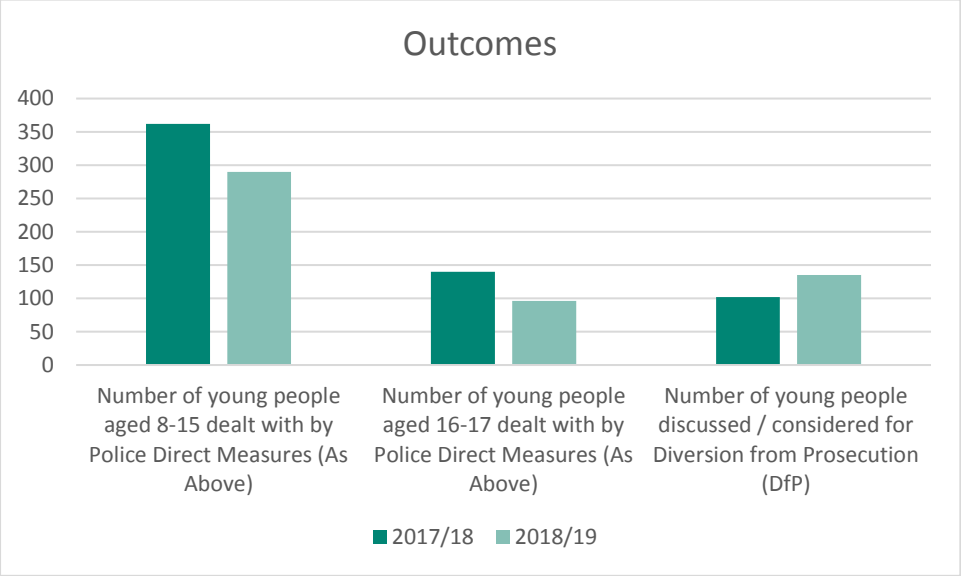
In 2018, 7 children/young people were referred to SCRA on offence grounds that were not already on a Compulsory Supervision Order where the Reporter made a decision to proceed to a Hearing.

Youth Justice Management Unit information for 2018 indicates continued use, and in some areas increased evidence, of Effective and Early Intervention in Aberdeenshire (table below).

| Performance Measure | 2017/2018 | 2018/2019 |
|---|---|---|
| Children/young people referred to SCRA on offence grounds, where the reporter made a decision to proceed to a Hearing | <5 | 7 |
| Young people each quarter Supported by Care & Risk Management (CARM) Plans* (and Exiting) | Q1 - 6 (0)<br>Q2 - 10 (0)<br>Q3 – 12 (1)<br>Q4 – 10 (1) | Q1 – 8 (3)<br>Q2 – 9 (1)<br>Q3 – 8 (1)<br>Q4 – 7 (2) |
| Young people 16+ receiving Direct Police Measures | 140 | 96 |
| Young people aged 16-17 dealt with by formal adult warning/fixed penalty notice | 85 | 67 |
| Number of yp discussed/ considered for diversion | 102 | 135 |
| Children aged 8-15 dealt with by Police Direct measures | 362 | 290 |

** Where children and young people display harmful sexual or seriously violent behaviour, the CARM Process identifies safety factors which reduce risk, provides opportunities which support the child or young person, and ensures effective risk management strategies are in place. Young people exit CARM as a result of assessed reduction of potential risk to others.*

Police Direct Measures for ages 8 to 15 include the following: a restorative Justice letter, restorative justice warning, recorded verbal juvenile warning; or multiagency requests for support agreed with either Social Work, Education, Fire & Rescue Service or Barnardos. Police Direct Measures for 16 and 17 year olds include a Formal Warning, or referral to either Social Work or Barnardos.




The increase in number of young people discussed/ considered for diversion is seen as a positive as young people are offered an alternative to prosecution in the criminal courts.

In 2018/2019, 42 children and young people were referred to Barnardo's BAYI Service by the Police. This supports young people to reduce their risk of offending and anti-social behaviour, through 1:1 intensive support, mentoring, diversionary and preventative activities. Children and families social workers can also refer directly to Barnardos where they are concerned about a young person's offending behaviour.

**Aim 3 Increase positive destinations post-school for young people involved in youth offending**

Broader Performance Indicators (PI's) had been included in our plan such as *% of school leavers involved in offending, with a positive post-school destination* and *number of activity agreements* in place. It was unfortunately not possible to gather some of this data, as it required tracking individual young people against the universal population, meaning these indicators were removed.

However, what whole population data does tell us, is that Aberdeenshire has higher than average positive post-school leaver destinations and this has continued over 2019. Work to reduce exclusions and provide increased flexible opportunities for engagement with education, learning, and wider achievement is an important aspect of this work.

Community Learning and Development (CLD) Teams also engage in wider programmes to support positive transitions with a range of young people who may be involved, or at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour and potential exclusion from school.

Police Scotland NE Division and the Criminal Justice/Community Safety Partnerships have also been working together to address payday alcohol/substance misuse at weekends, with a view to reducing risk of offending and anti-social behaviour.

**Aim 4 Continued implementation and advancement of the Whole System Approach in Aberdeenshire to reduce reoffending**

Work continued over 2018/19, to make sure all services consider diversionary and preventative approaches wherever appropriate, to minimise the number of young people going to Hearings or Court for having committed an offence.

In 2018 some of the data gathered against Whole Systems Approach actions was reduced, however a significant number of Performance Indicators remain, which outline key performance information and helps measure the effectiveness of interventions. Information from the Youth Justice Management Unit (YJMU) and Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA) further provides an overview of the extent of children and young people's involvement in offending behaviour in Aberdeenshire.

| **Youth Justice Management Unit/SCRA Data on Effective & Early Intervention in Aberdeenshire** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Performance Measure** | **2015/16** | **2016/17** | **2017/18** | **2018/19** |
| Young people aged 8-15 committing crimes | 412 | 422 | 524 | 551 |
| Young people aged 16-17 committing crimes | 355 | 379 | 455 | 428 |
| Number of Crimes (Young people aged 8-15) | - | - | 700 | 658 |
| Number of Crimes (Young people aged 16-17) | - | - | 675 | 619 |
| Young people offered Court Support | 30 | 34 | 57 | 62 |
| Reporter decision to arrange Hearing on offence grounds | - | - | <5 | 7 |
| Young people's cases remitted from court to Children's Hearing for advice/disposal | <5 | <5 | <5 | <5 |

The reconfiguration of Criminal Justice resources in South Aberdeenshire by the Health And Social Care Partnership has enabled more consistent Court Support to be provided for young people via Aberdeen City Court. There is also a dedicated court support worker in North Aberdeenshire, managed by the Youth Services Team. There has been an increase in the number of young people who have been offered court support in 2018/19 (see table above).

**Aim 5 Increase opportunities for children & young people to express views on service planning and provision**

Every Aberdeenshire service working with young people collates individual feedback from young people they are involved with. The Youth Services Team routinely gets feedback from the young people involved with any groups they run and will use that to inform practice improvement in their group programmes.

However, as there is not have a static population of service users, it is therefore difficult to involve them in for example comprehensive service re-design, as many young people are time-limited rather than ongoing service users. The emphasis is on realising that young people require additional support if they find themselves in criminal justice forums, and that they need to be assessed carefully to provide the right support which helps them towards independent adulthood.

Young people cease receiving services at the point at which it is assessed required work has been completed, and additional support is no longer required by them. The YSSG will continue to keep this approach to engagement in service development under review.

The Youth Services Social Work Team routinely seeks qualitative groupwork feedback from young people and members of the Team Around the Child; using this data to inform practice improvement in developing group programmes. (See Good Practice Casestudy)

## Focus for Year 3

**Data**

Some of the original Performance Indicators, have been reviewed to ensure that appropriate monitoring of progress is realistic and meaningful. It is anticipated that new and revised indicators and data-gathering processes will evolve over time, while other indicators may be removed where partnership information systems do not support their collection at present.

A small number of young people will find themselves in the adult criminal justice system each year. The YSSG are exploring capacity to reliably record the number of young people on remand and in custody within its data-set, to ensure an awareness of this figure. This is not something that has been previously collated and recorded, thought there is confidence that we would always be aware of these young people through Criminal Justice Social Work, Court Support, and other Social Work involvement.

**Audit and Research**

The YYSG Group also plan to undertake some Audit and Case Review activity over 2019/2020. This will help to explore what is and isn't currently working in relation to the Whole Systems Approach, and identify any improvement activity required.

Some relevant case examples have been identified, with an aim of identifying useful learning across the variety of services supporting young people involved in offending behaviour, and with case review findings informing a follow-up action plan.

A further piece of exploratory case research is going to focus on thresholds around use of CARM in Aberdeenshire. As a specialist intervention and risk management framework for those young people who present very high risk behaviours, it is hoped findings from this will inform learning for all services and ensure appropriate use of CARM within that wider continuum of assessment and support provided to children and young people.

# Good Practice Casestudy – Youth Services Climbing Groups

The Youth Services Social Work Team developed and delivered a successful climbing group pilot in July 2018. Funding was secured to purchase climbing equipment, which meant the team could deliver a further climbing group in November 2018. As from 2019, this is a regular part of support provided to young people by the Youth Services Team.

Groups were facilitated by a Social Worker and Support Worker from the Youth Services Team. Both hold the National Climbing Wall Award (now known as Climbing Wall Instructors). They maintained regular contact during planning and delivery of the group to support consistency, continuity, and a range of activities.

As a targeted/specialist support, the Youth Services team sought referrals from Children and Families Social Work teams in Inverurie, Huntly, Kemnay/Westhill and Deeside, as well as local Residential Children's Homes. 69% of young people successfully completed all sessions of the group.

Sessions were held at Transition Extreme (a public climbing facility located in Aberdeen) as alternative walls were unavailable for use and less cost effective. Transition Extreme provides a wide variety of climbing walls and a bouldering area. Activities included: team challenges, warm-up activities, traversing activities (climbing across a climbing wall), climbing techniques, skills tying knots and safely roping in, and belaying (Where peers hold the rope to keep a fellow climber safe, and halt any falls).

Young People participating in the Climbing Groups developed skills around:

- Communication
- Working with others
- Self esteem
- Responsibility
- Sense of achievement
- Self-worth
- Confidence
- Practical skills
- Commitment
- Problem solving
- Trust building
- Goal setting
- Social skills
- Physical wellbeing
- Mental wellbeing
- Attempting something new

Overall the group was another successful programme with there being little changes to the content and delivery required. Climbing is showing to be an effective tool to bring about some change with the clients.

**Feedback from participating young people:**

**What have you enjoyed over the sessions?**

*"Being able to do something I didn't think I could. I have enjoyed everything"*

*"Climbing and getting to the top and touching the ceiling."*

**How do you feel the worker(s) have been with you at the group?**

*"Excellent – really helpful and good to talk to, trustworthy"*

*"Excellent- supporting, fun/funny"*

**Have you noticed any changes/progress in yourself while attending the group?**

*"More confidence in trying new things"*

*"Thinking about things more"*

**Examples of Feedback from Professionals:**

**What impact has the group had on your young person?**

*"This young person had been struggling with education and the climbing group has been the highlight of her week for the 6 weeks that she took part. She speaks positively about her time there and has enjoyed learning a new skill in a supported environment."*

*"I was able to see that they had the ability to relate to peers, that they behaved in an appropriate manner towards other young people and adults, displayed empathy, able to encourage other young people, form friendships and was a positive group member."*

*"They seemed very much to be part of the group and that is something they do not appear to always experience. The young person was very determined to achieve goals set in the group…and participated in all activities"*

**What were the desired outcomes achieved by the climbing group?**

*"Being part of a group. Making new friends Following instructions and building trust"*

*"Group members were able to take direction from and develop trust in adults, all within a safe and secure environment."*

*"YP appeared to gain so much confidence socially over the time the group ran."*

**What one achievement stands out from your young person of their time at the group?**

*"When a team member was working one to one with a young person to reach the photograph on the climbing wall. He managed to reach and touch the picture, the look on the young man's face of achievement was amazing."*

The climbing group is now a regular part of services offered to young people in Aberdeenshire.

Devising a flyer or leaflet to provide information for referrers and young people for future groups is in progress, with some thought required as to how to improve the referral process, and support future steps/opportunities after the end of the group.

Workers are now exploring opportunities for young people to achieve formal qualifications for those young people who show particular aptitude.

# Young Carers

| Young Carers | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| No | Aim | Wellbeing Indicators | UNCRC Articles |
| 1 | To provide a coordinated approach to Young Carers | Respected, Included | 4, 7, 18 |
| 2 | To improve identification of Young Carers and enhance service provision to enable statutory services to meet their obligations in relation to the Carers Act | Included, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected | 3, 4, 8, 18, 27 |
| 3 | To ensure the voices of Young Carers are actively engaged with and heard | Included, Respected, Achieving | 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 17, 30 |

In Aberdeenshire, the Young Carers Strategy Group locally implements the *Carer (Scotland) Act 2016* and Aberdeenshire Young Carer Strategy, *We are young carers, Who cares for Us?* (2018-2020), working in partnership to achieve the best results for our young carers.

Through the implementation of this strategy, the group aim to ensure that all young carers receive appropriate information and support to allow them to feel valued and confident in their caring situation and have achievable aspirations which they are supported to work towards and that young carers have a voice.

Key aims of the group are to:

- Implement *Aberdeenshire Young Carers Strategy 2018-2020*
- Raise awareness of young carers
- Increase identification of young carers
- Ensure all young carers can access appropriate information, advice and support
- Ensure that all young carers who request or accept the offer of a Young Carers Statement are supported to complete one
- Ensure that those young carers who require an individual budget to meet their personal outcomes, are supported through the Self Directed Support process
- Ensure systems for gathering and collating information on young carers are in place
- Provide leadership which supports services to meet Young Carers need
- Ensure that young carers have a voice and are involved in shaping services which support them

The group is currently made up of representatives from NHS Grampian, Health and Social Care Partnership, Education and Children's Services, Quarriers Young Carers Support Service.

The Young Carers Strategy Group has links with several groups including the Carers Strategy Outcome Group, Carers Strategy Working Group, Carers Act Implementation Group, and Quarriers Young Carers Service.

## National Context

The *Carers (Scotland) Act 2016* was implemented on 1 April 2018. This placed several new duties on all local authorities, including the duty to develop and publish a local Carers Strategy.

In Aberdeenshire we decided to develop a separate strategy for Young carers: Aberdeenshire Young Carers Strategy *We are young carers, Who Cares for Us? (2018-2020),* and this was developed in consultation with young carers.

The Act included other duties such as:

- Provision of Young Carers Statements
- Supporting carers by having local carers eligibility criteria
- Providing information and advice
- Publishing a Short Breaks Services statement
- Involving carers in hospital discharge planning for the people they care for

## Young Carers in Aberdeenshire

It can be difficult to get accurate figures which determine the exact number of Young Carers.

However, figures provided by Scottish Government suggest that there are approximately 2000 young carers living in Aberdeenshire.

Photo shared with kind permission by an Aberdeenshire young carer and family (2018)

The Aberdeenshire Young Carers Toolkit aims to guide professionals in identifying and supporting young carers to achieve their potential and attend school. In Aberdeenshire, young carers are recorded by schools on the Education SEEMiS system.

| **Number of Young Carers recorded on SEEMiS** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| **Recorded Young Carers** | 164 | 135 | 148 |

At the end of March 2019, 148 young carers were recorded on SEEMiS. While this is an increase of 13 on the previous year's figures, a significant under-reporting of numbers of young carers has been identified in Aberdeenshire.

In order to support schools to identify and support young carers, a new post has been created within the Quarriers Young Carer Support Service. This post will support work alongside schools on the review, refresh and implementation of the Young Carers Toolkit.

Quarriers Young Carer Support Service actively support 208 young carers, an increase of 38 new young carers on 2017/2018. This has been in part due to the change in definition of a young carer within the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, and the extension of the contract with Quarriers which has enabled them to provide support to all young carers, and not just those with a significant caring role.

| **Number of Young Carers supported by Quarriers Young Carers Support Service** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Year** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| **Number of Young Carers** | 121 | 180 | 208 |

Quarriers Young Carer Support Service provide young people with regular breaks and support them to have a life alongside their caring role. The service have ensured the support, activities, events and learning opportunities on offer to young carers, meet identified needs and outcomes for those children and young people registered with the service.

The Service also supports young carers to feel less isolated and that they are included in their community, having access to concessions/discounts locally e.g. Live Life Aberdeenshire are now providing the 'carers' discount to young carers which promotes health and wellbeing.

## Year 1 Progress against the Young Carers Multi-Agency Action Plan

**Aim 1: To provide a coordinated approach to Young Carers**

Aberdeenshire's local Young Carer Strategy was implemented on 01 April 2018, which details the support available to all young carers and how this support can be accessed. A Carer Practitioner has been employed to support those young carers who have a Young Carer Statement where their personal outcomes require an individual budget via Self Directed Support. This post will ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to young carers receiving the support they require in order to meet their personal outcomes.

The Quarriers Aberdeenshire Young Carers Service contract was varied in April 2019 to provide additional funding to provide capacity within the team for the provision of Young Carers Statements and to enable the service to work with all young carers. Previously the service had been commissioned to support those young carers with a significant caring role, however the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 changed the definition of a young carer and the duties placed on local authorities with regards to the provision on Young Carers Statements.

Aberdeenshire's local Young Carers Strategy has been developed with full involvement of young carers and stakeholders, in preparation for the implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 on 1 April 2018. A group of young carers were involved in writing the vision statement and aims of Aberdeenshire's Young Carers Strategy, with Young Carers consulted throughout its development. The strategy was publically consulted on during February 2018, with an aim of being presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee in March for their endorsement.

In June 2017 the Aberdeenshire Unpaid Carers' Information Pack was launched as a downloadable information pack aimed at both adult, and young (under the age of 16) unpaid carers. The pack contains information that unpaid carers in Aberdeenshire and professionals working with them, had fed back would be useful to have in one place.

**Aim 2 To improve identification of Young Carers and enhance service provision to enable statutory services to meet their obligations in relation to the Carers Act**

A number of service developments and initiatives for young carers have taken place during the last year:

**152 young carers** have participated in learning opportunities or events facilitated by Quarriers Young Carers Services over 2018, which is an increase of 81 (114%)from the previous year. These sessions have included Creative Cooking, Mindfulness, Tech Fun Build, Retro Gaming, Puppet Making and Bowling. Wellbeing sessions are held during the school holidays, which include fun activity sessions and the opportunity to explore methods of relaxation, meditation and mindfulness.

In line with the needs and preferences of our young carers, a new smart phone App has been developed through consultation with groups of young carers. This App will be launched during Carers Week in June 2019 and will be available to download through the Play Store. The App includes information on emergency first aid, different conditions such as autism and epilepsy, recipes, GP and hospital contact numbers, and stress management and relaxation techniques.

In order to increase awareness of young carers in our schools and local communities as suite of posters and information leaflets are being developed in consultation with young carers.

One young carer is participating in the Career Ready Programme, with support from Quarriers Young Carers Service, which has ensured that any barriers to their attending the programme have been reduced.

Two young carers have been supported to undertake SVQ 2 and one young carer has completed their award during the reporting period.

The Young Carers Strategy Group approached Live Life Aberdeenshire to negotiate a discount to membership costs in line with the discount provided to adult carers who are in receipt of Carers

Allowance as young carers are not able to claim this benefit and often live in households where financial resources are tight.

Live Life Aberdeenshire have agreed to the same discount being applied to young carers membership applications where the young person has identified attending swimming, gym session or other activities would help meet their outcomes.

**Aim 3: To ensure the voices of Young Carers are actively engaged with and heard**

The Young Carers Focus group continues to meet on a regular basis to discuss services to young carers and highlight any potential areas for development. These meetings are incorporated into the events planned throughout the year to reduce the barriers to young people being able to attend e.g. lack of transport, time away from their cared-for person. Short term groups have also been developed to address the particular needs of small groups of young carers in different locations across Aberdeenshire.

In 2018, 12 young carers were supported to attend the Scottish Young Carers Festival, which was a 2-day event run by Carers Trust Scotland. In 2018 the Festival took place in Badaguish, Aviemore and those involved were able to take part in a range of activities.

Young carers have been involved in the development of awareness raising materials and the development of the Young Carers App. This App will be launched during Carers Week in June 2019 and will be available to all young carers in Aberdeenshire.

Young carers have been involved in developing the Young Carer Statement, through consultation via an independent facilitator commissioned by Quarriers and their feedback has been incorporated into the new format.

A group of young carers with an interest in technology and use of social media applications were brought together as a focus group to look at developing an App for young carers. The group were asked to identify the types of information that young people would like to be able to access on the App and they highlighted that information about specific conditions, emergency first aid hints and tips recipes (supported by Confidence to Cook materials) and useful contact information for other support services would be helpful. All these topics have been included on the App along with Mindfulness/de-stressing guidance and local GP and health service contact details.

A Young Carers focus group was established in 2017, and this group now meet on a quarterly basis to discuss services to young carers, and highlight any potential areas for development. Short term young carer groups have also been developed to address the particular needs of small groups of young carers in different locations across Aberdeenshire.

Young carers have also been involved in a short-film project, with the production of movie-clips which capture young carers stories, as part of a DVD. The DVD is now completed and is a resource which can be used as part of any Young Carer awareness-raising events being held across Aberdeenshire.

The Quarriers Young Carers Support Service in both Aberdeenshire and Moray, are working together with young carers and their families to develop their approach to use of the *How Good Is Our Carers Service?* Self-evaluation tool, across both these areas.

## Achievements in Year 2

The Young Carers Strategy Group has worked hard to ensure that the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 has been implemented consistently across Aberdeenshire and in accordance with guidance provided by the Scottish Government. This has involved testing out and revising the Young Carer Statement in response to feedback from young people and included the development tools to support young carers in the completion of their Young Carer Statement.

The original format had been viewed as too formal and did not take account of the varying roles undertaken by young carers or how they really felt about their caring role. The review of the Young Carer Statement and provision of tools has led to more young carers meeting the eligibility criteria for a budget via the 4 Options of Self Directed Support.

This has been a very busy year in terms of young carers with the implementation of the *Carers (Scotland) Act* 2016 being the main focus of the work undertaken by the Young Carers Strategy Group and the Quarriers Aberdeenshire Young Carers Support Service.

Quarriers Aberdeenshire Young Carer Support Service has achieved the provision of a Young Carer Statement to **all 180 young carers** who were previously registered with the service.

In addition, all new young carers requesting a Young Carer Statement have been supported to develop one.

## Focus for Year 3

- Review and refresh the Young Carers Toolkit to reflect implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016
- Pilot a Respitality Project for adult and young carers in Central Aberdeenshire
- Develop a range of awareness raising materials for schools and local communities

## Good Practice Case Study

**Partnership project with Quest - Realise your Potential**

Young carers from across Scotland were invited to take part in a range of programmes and activities as part of the Realise your Potential Project. This Project is supported by The Community Interest Company, which is funded by Transforming Self-Management in Scotland Fund and works in partnership with Carers Trust Scotland. The aim of the Project is to inspire, support and enable children and young people to realise their own unique potential social development.

It's a creative, inspiring and flexible programme of self-management training and activities aimed at Young Carers and Young Adult Carers who are needing support with identifying where they feel they are presently at in life:

- What skills, talents and qualities they have;
- What they would like to do and how to get there;
- Overcoming challenges and obstacles that may be in the way.

Quarriers organised for Young Carers to go along and attend a residential event as part of the project which took place in Edzell, at the Burn, where they spent 2 days and one night together with other young carers. Feedback from the young people who attended has been very inspiring and continues to support the ongoing development and expansion of delivering self-management skills to as many Young Adult Carers as possible.

A Quarriers Family Wellbeing Worker facilitated a session, to look at theory of multiple intelligences with a view to the young people recognising that there are different areas in which you can be smart, not just the academics amongst us.

They will be looking at their aspirations/goals for the future & the practicalities of how to break that down into achievable chunks, this will be supported by their Family Wellbeing Worker.

The young carers created a vision board writing around their Hand on the piece of paper. The idea was to discuss and write down ideas and prioritise goals, values & intentions……keeping in mind through discussion this was at times drawn out of the young people. Feedback from Young Adult Carers who have participated so far include:

*"More confident in dealing with hardship"*
*"Helped me feel more excited for the future"*
*"It has helped me to come out of my shell and more willing to challenge myself"*
*"Increased my confidence and like YES…I want to live"*
*"Experiencing the world in a way I never thought I would"*
*"After engaging with the group, I feel more independent: I am now able to take the bus by myself which has proven to be an immense convenience to myself and my family"*
*"I am now very confident and active and have lots of new friends"*

# Key Contacts

| Executive Group for Public Protection | |
|---|---|
| Jim Savege (Chair) | Chief Executive, Aberdeenshire Council |
| Campbell Thomson | Chief Superintendent, North East Division, Police Scotland |
| Amanda Croft | Chief Executive, NHS Grampian |
| Susan Webb | Director of Public Health, NHS Grampian |
| Laurence Findlay | Director of Education and Children's Services, Aberdeenshire Council |
| Dan Shaw | Chief Executive, Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action |
| Ritchie Johnson | Director Business Services |
| Angie Wood | Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) |
| Ian Findlay | Area Manager for Aberdeenshire & Moray, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service |
| Leigh Jolly | Interim Head of Service, Children's Services Social Work, Aberdeenshire Council, |
| Vincent Docherty | Head of Education, Aberdeenshire Council |
| Sheena Gault | Independent Chair, Adult Support and Protection Committee/Child Protection Committee |
| Iain Ramsay | Chief Social Work Officer, Aberdeenshire |

| GIRFEC Strategic Group | |
|---|---|
| Laurence Findlay (Chair) | Director of Education and Children's Services, Aberdeenshire Council |
| Vincent Docherty | Head of Education, Aberdeenshire Council |
| Leigh Jolly | Interim Head of Service, Children's Services Social Work |
| Mike Ogg | Strategy & Business Services Partnership Manager, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership |
| Kate Stephen | Superintendent Operations, North East Division, Police Scotland |
| Avril Nicol | Interim Head of Service – Life Life Aberdeenshire |
| Carron Douglas | Principal Educational Psychologist, Aberdeenshire Council |
| Audrey Hendry | Lead Officer, Primary Education, Aberdeenshire Council |
| Kim Penman | Health and Wellbeing Lead, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership |
| Dr Simon Hilton | Consultant in Public Health, NHS Grampian |
| Dan Shaw | Chief Executive, Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action (AVA) |
| Bryony Revell | Service Transformation Officer (GIRFEC) Aberdeenshire Council |

| Chairperson/Thematic Lead | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dr Simon Hilton | Consultant in Public Health, NHS Grampian | Intelligence, Data and Planning Group |
| Mike Ogg | Strategy & Business Services Partnership Manager, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership | Co-ordination and Support Hub |
| Emma Toner | Lead Officer & Learning and Development Subgroup | Child Protection Committee |
| Bryony Revell | Service Transformation Officer (GIRFEC) Aberdeenshire Council | GIRFEC L&D Group |
| Leigh Jolly | Interim Head of Service, Children's Services Social Work | Corporate Parenting |
| Wayne Gault | Lead Officer, Aberdeenshire Alcohol & Drugs Partnership | Substance Misuse |
| Carron Douglas | Principal Educational Psychologist, Aberdeenshire Council | Mental Health & Wellbeing |
| Kim Penman | Health and Wellbeing Lead, AHSCP | Early Years |
| Anne Marie Davies | Quality Improvement Manager ASN, Aberdeenshire Council | Children with a Disability |
| Kirsty Theodoreson | Social Work Manager, Aberdeenshire Council | Youth Services/Whole Systems Approach |
| Sharon Napier | Project Coordinator, Children's Services Social Work | Young Carers |

www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org