



Public Authority Reporting Duty on Children's Rights

APRIL, 2020

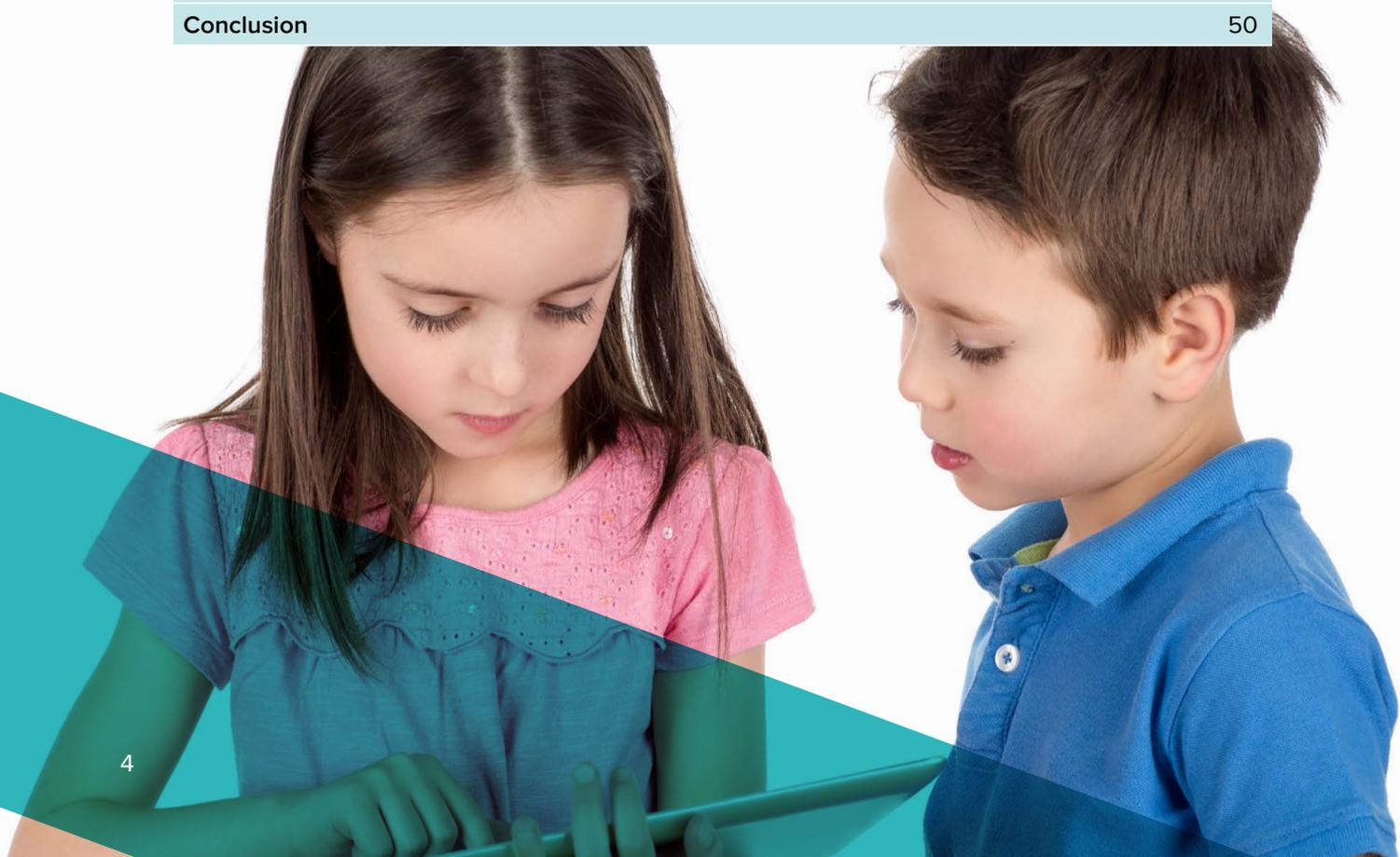




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Public Authority Reporting Duty on Children's Rights

Over the last 3 years Aberdeen City Council has worked hard to uphold children's rights evidenced by the promotion of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in Partnership and Service Improvement Plans from 2016. Work has extended beyond services delivering 'traditional' children's services as knowledge of the UNCRC has grown across the organisation. Aberdeen City Council welcomes the Scottish Government announcement in November 2019 to embed the UNCRC into Scots Law.

Aberdeen City Council and Community Planning Partners are currently collaborating to become a UNICEF Child Friendly City and this work features as one of the 6 stretch outcomes for children and young people in the [Local Outcome Improvement Plan \(LOIP\)](#). Over the last three years Aberdeen City Council has worked hard to increase children and young people's involvement in planning for improvement in order to support our youngest citizens to realise improvement. Children and young people have influenced our approach to all 6 of the stretch outcomes which direct the work of the Community Planning Partnership.

Many services have well-established links with children and young people, these include Education Services, Children's Social Work, Environmental, Library and Cultural Services. A wider range of services now value and promote engagement with children, young people and care leavers and this change in practice is helping to ensure that our youngest residents have a genuine opportunity to shape the place and services of Aberdeen.

Children and young people have been involved in the development of this report which summarises our journey over the last three years and gives a sense of our direction of travel.

BY 2026

95% OF CHILDREN aged 0-5 will reach their expected developmental milestones on time

90% of children and YOUNG PEOPLE will report that they feel mentally well

Aberdeen will be a child friendly city which supports ALL CHILDREN TO PROSPER



25% fewer YOUNG PEOPLE under 18 will be charged WITH AN OFFENCE

95% of care experienced children AND YOUNG PEOPLE will achieve the same levels OF EDUCATION, emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations AS THEIR PEERS

95% of young people living in our priority localities will move on to education, EMPLOYMENT or TRAINING when they leave school

Mental Health

The Imaginairs acknowledged that we all have mental health. When a child has good mental health, they can pay attention at school, have good relationships and play. When a child has poor mental health, it gets in the way of doing their best at school, making friends, and doing the things they enjoy.

Help adults understand that their actions matter. Divorce, parents working too much or not having time for us, abuse, someone dying, teachers being negative, parents drinking or using drugs or arguing can all make a child feel sad and depressed.

Adults' behaviour can have a positive impact on our mental health too. Sometimes adults need help so they can help us eat healthy. Compliments and encourage us.

Take time to understand us instead of punishing us when we are not coping. Self-harming behaviour is more than cutting yourself. It can be damaging relationships, getting into fights, not doing well at school or not attending school. Try and understand what is going on in our life and in our heads instead of automatically giving out detention or worse, abuse.

Every child should have space at home. Children need time to think, chill, do homework and be on our own for a while, away from siblings.

Equip children with the right skills and tools so they can care for themselves. Things that help keep us calm include: breathing, meditation, getting enough sleep, being active, doing something we love.

All children need to be loved. If we don't feel loved, then we can become lonely.

Love is what kids need most.

Our Hopes & Dreams for the Future

The Imaginairs believe very strongly that every child should be encouraged by the people in their lives and given opportunities to help them flourish. Adults can do this by praising, including children, and speaking up for them if a child doesn't feel like their voice is heard. If their teachers, parents and carers say "I believe in you," it makes children feel self-confident and able to achieve their dreams.

Let us be more flexible around our choices. We should be able to change our mind and change subjects. Sometimes we don't know what we want to be.

If you are good at something or enjoy doing it, you should not have this taken off you when you are struggling to cope or not doing your best at school. This is what makes a child feel positive and have good self-confidence. It is important that teachers always let children participate.

Make sure ALL of our schools are supportive and fun, so we can feel positive about going. If you go to a school that isn't doing well and everyone knows that, it makes you feel negative about going and learning. It makes you embarrassed.

Support the adults we love, so they can be people who will inspire us and be positive role models. These could be our parents and people who care for us or someone who looks after us at the school gate.

"Compliments on things we are good at"

We need your encouragement. If you are told comments like "you are never going to get where you want," then you feel like you can't do it. Be positive and support us to get better at things.

Whose Rights are we Upholding?

Children's Rights apply to every child and young person under the age of 18 and to adults who are still eligible to receive a 'children's service'. This includes all care leavers aged 18 to 26.



General Measures of Implementation - Do we have the structures and resources to implement the UNCRC? (Articles 4, 41,42 and 44(6))

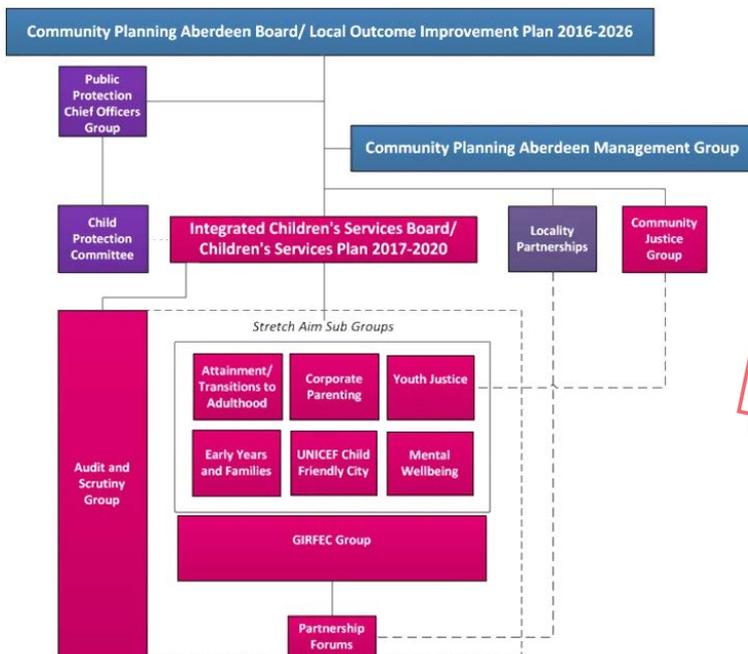
Partnership Systems to Promote Children's Rights

Work to become a Child Friendly City features in the LOIP and multi-agency governance arrangements and resources are in place to support delivery. This demonstrates that Council and Community Planning leaders recognise the importance and value of incorporating children's rights and views in decision making.

Partnership improvement work is overseen by the Integrated Children's Services Board to ensure that the work of single agencies maximises our collective impact on children and young people. Work is currently progressing to explore how best to integrate children's services beyond education and children's social work in order to respond to wellbeing needs more swiftly.

The Children and Young People's Act 2014 has guided much of our work over the last three years and considerable time has been spent collaborating with partners to refine our multi-agency approaches. The Partnership GIRFEC Operational Guidance sets out expectations of all multi-agency practitioners and promotes working practices that uphold the UNCRC. The Guidance is kept under review, with vulnerabilities quickly identified and addressed through multi-agency collaboration.

As we work with partners to become a Child Friendly City, we report progress to the Community Planning Board. This ensures that Elected Members and Leaders from across the Partnership are kept informed of progress.



Rights, Wellbeing and the Child's Plan

GIRFEC
For Children and Young people

Local Authority Systems to Promote Children's Rights

Over the reporting period, the Local Authority has moved to a new organisational structure as part of a new Target Operating Model. This change has helped the Council develop more collaborative, 'One Council' working practices. This change is increasing the influence of children and young people. A wider range of functions now actively engage with children and young people when planning improvement and we are currently working to introduce a standardised approach to consultation with children and young people.

Aberdeen City Council is keen to ensure that Senior Leaders reach out to children and young people and hear their voices before taking strategic decisions. Recruitment processes for all Head Teacher and Chief Officer posts now include engagement with a panel of young people. This process ensures that young people help to assess the candidate's confidence and capacity whilst engaging our young citizens. Appointments to Senior Roles including Chief Officer – Integrated Children and Family Services, Chief Education Officer and Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning have been made in this way.

There has been a steady increase in the number of Committee Reports considering Children's Rights over the reporting period. As we work to become a Child Friendly City, we have developed a Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) which will be undertaken as part of the Committee reporting process from April 2020. This will ensure that all Council decisions are informed by the extent to which they help uphold children's rights. Data from the CRIA will help inform our planning by determining the extent to which children's rights influence decision making.

"I have been in the pupil council and helped the current pupil council to help make decisions on what should happen to our school and I have helped Aberdeen City Council with choosing our new head mistress."

Terms of reference for Council, its committees and sub-committees were amended in March 2020, as part of the Council's review of our Scheme of Governance, to include a commitment to hear the voices of children when taking decisions across the Council. The phrase, **'in accordance with UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities and Communities Programme, ensure that children are allowed a voice in decisions which affect both them and their city.'** is now included in all Terms of Reference. This change will ensure that the decision-making forums of the Council take into account the voices of children and young people when making decisions which directly affect them and their lives. As we move forward, annual committee effectiveness reports will specifically consider the extent to which this has been discharged.



Supporting the Workforce to Promote and Uphold Children's Rights

As a Local Authority we are fortunate to have a range of staff dedicated to the promotion of children's rights, for example Education Support Officers, a Children's Rights Service and staff in our communities and libraries. These key individuals model and champion positive engagement and participation with children, young people and those who are care experienced and help ensure that working practices are challenged to support improvement.

We take opportunities to promote children's rights with the workforce, an example being when a group of children and young people were welcomed into Marischal College on World Children's Day in 2019. The group took part in a podcast where they shared how they affect change in their local school communities with members of the Corporate Management Team. The podcast was promoted internally through our intranet and celebrated externally through social media and we plan to continue to use technology to share and promote work in this area.

A range of professional learning opportunities on the UNCRC has taken place over the last three years and those directly supporting children and young people now take better account of Children's Rights in daily practices. We plan to extend the offer across the wider workforce by collaborating with UNICEF to develop an accessible professional learning programme which tracks impact on practice.

People and Organisational Development have developed a range of opportunities for young people to gain work experience or employment opportunities within the Council and this focus is reflected in the Council Workforce Plan which was approved in June 2019.

An apprenticeship programme has been developed which enables young people to undertake Foundation, Modern or Graduate Apprenticeships. S5 and S6 pupils can undertake Foundation Apprenticeships as part of their timetable, spending a day per week in the workplace. In session 2019/20, the Council is supporting 32 Foundation Apprenticeship placements across a range of functions/clusters including Early Years, Accounting, Business Admin, Digital Marketing and Social Care.



There is a guaranteed interview scheme in place for young people (aged 16 to 24 (and 29 for care experienced young people) applying for Modern Apprenticeship (MA) roles within the Council. These programmes provide the opportunity to undertake a recognised qualification whilst gaining employment experience in an established role in the Early Years, Social Care, Trades, Business Admin, Customer Service, Finance and Housing.

There is work ongoing to develop an internship for Care Experienced Young People. This will provide a supportive approach for young people coming into the workplace and ensure that our 'One Council' approach maximises opportunity and positively discriminates on behalf of those for whom we have Corporate Parenting responsibility.

As a partnership we are considering the implications of the Children (Equal Protection) (Scotland) Act 2019 and the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019. Both Acts are significant landmarks in how we view and treat children. They will not only require a shift in practice for our workforce, but they will also require a wider engagement and conversation with the citizens of Aberdeen City to achieve a cultural shift in attitudes.



Using the UNCRC to shape Policy and Services

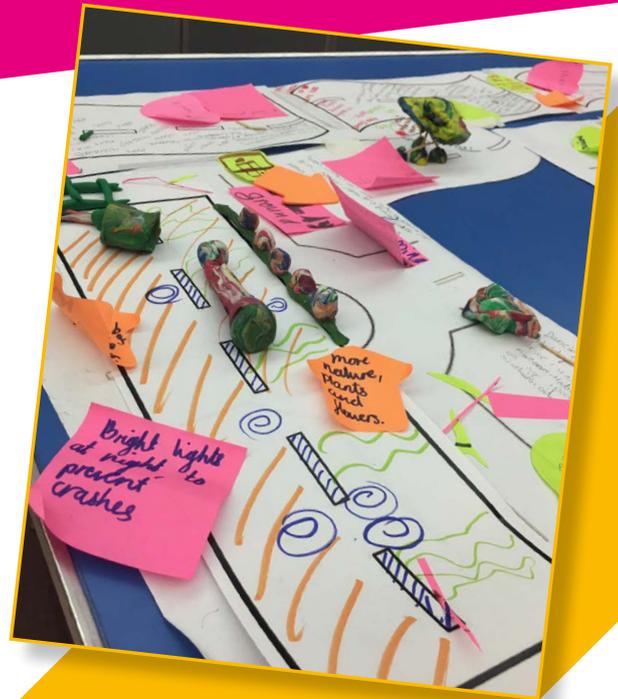
As a Local Authority, we operate within national legislation and consider children's rights when developing local policies to support our work with children. All policies developed for children over the reporting period include the consideration of children's rights and by December 2020 all children's policies will have been refreshed to ensure our local system is well placed for the incorporation of children's rights into domestic law. Systems are currently being put in place to ensure that this approach extends beyond just consideration to actual meaningful consultation and engagement.

As part of the Council's planning to review the services it commissions for children with disabilities a number of engagement events were held with young people and their families in 2017. These were structured to allow children with complex needs, including communication needs, to give their views. Their views have been at the core of setting out our commissioning intentions, even though their views sometimes differed from that of their parents/carers.

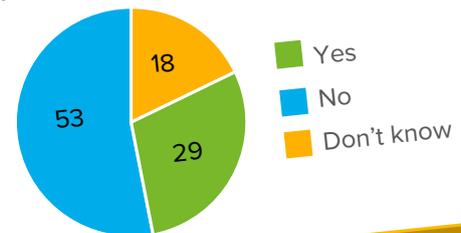
Children and young people were keen to respond to a recent consultation in preparation for setting a new school holiday pattern. **3343** children and young people exercised their rights when asked for views, the opinion of children and young people directly influenced the committee decision taken.

The Council decision to ban plastic drinking straws was taken in response to a request from pupils in one of our Primary Schools who sought support from Elected Members to address their concern around single use plastic

Care experienced representation on our Corporate Parenting Improvement Group ensures children and young people directly inform improvement across the partnership. It is anticipated that as we continue to work to become a Child Friendly City this practice will become the norm.



Children and Young People Response (%)

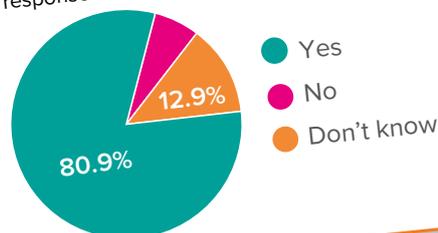


Children and Young People Response



'Participation' means taking part in decisions. It is about having the chance to say what you think should happen and being listened to by adults. Do you feel that you have opportunities to share your views and have them listened to?

450 responses



Promoting Children's Rights to the Citizens of Aberdeen

The Local Authority has continued to promote children's rights through the council Twitter feed and through the local media. Our children and young people were Evening Express guest editors on World Children's Day in 2019 which helped to raise the profile of children's rights across the city.

Our school pupils continue to have an opportunity to share their successes through regular contributions made to the termly Chalk Talk supplement created in collaboration with the local press. This engagement with the local press will now be extended to include a section from our Care Experienced children and young people to ensure that knowledge of their needs and aspirations are better understood by all.

National Care Day and Care Experienced Week provide opportunities to raise awareness and promote the rights and participation of our care experienced children, young people and young adults and our celebrations have gradually become more ambitious over the reporting period.

On National Care Day on 21 February 2020 the Council focused on our Corporate Parenting activities and how we currently care for young people in the city, highlighting the care roles we have across the workforce and how this is delivered and designed with love at its centre. Young People welcomed colleagues from across the partnership to an event where there were opportunities to speak to families and professionals about further education, job, vocational and volunteering opportunities.

Despite an increase in the use of social media to share how our children and young people are affecting change, reporting arrangements are often managed by individual teams leading to a lack of cohesion. The planned communication plan will help to co-ordinate messaging from across the council and wider partnership and include messages around the Children (Equal Protection) (Scotland) Act 2019 and the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019. An agreed mechanism will also enable more formal measurement of impact.



"I don't have Facebook and feel like a miss a lot due to this so maybe different advertisement through the school would help."

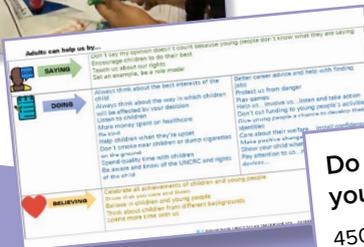


General Principles of the UNCRC - Do we take decisions in the best interests of children in order to maximise their development and enable them to have their say? (Articles 2,3,6 and 12)

Staff across Integrated Children and Family Services and beyond continue to work hard to ensure that children and young people are aware of their rights and are given opportunities to participate in taking decisions which affect them. An increasingly diverse range of approaches are being taken to support delivery of the UNCRC including a stronger focus on the interrogation of quantitative and qualitative data to inform planning.

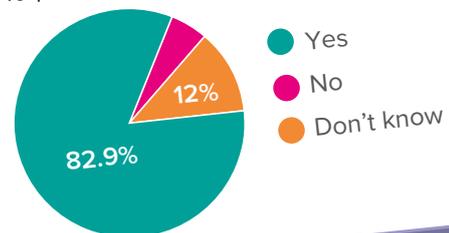
Exploring Children's Rights with Decision Makers

In collaboration with UNICEF, staff from across the Council and Elected Members have taken part in 9 workshops to help raise awareness of children's rights. Elected Members have welcomed children and young people to the chamber to help determine how best children can influence the strategic decision making of the Council. These workshops have informed the development of our Child Friendly Cities Plan and raised awareness of children's rights with decision makers.



Do you have opportunities to say what you think about an issue/issues?

450 responses



Listening to Children and Young People to Inform Strategic Planning

Some groups find it harder to be heard and the Children's Parliament was commissioned to help us better hear the voices of children and young people living in our priority areas as part of the 'Imagining Aberdeen' project. This project began in early 2016 with 300 children from Bramble Brae, Manor Park, Riverbank and Tullos Primary Schools. These children were asked to imagine what we can do or change so that Aberdeen can be a city where all children are healthy, happy and safe. At this stage, 20 children were nominated to become Imagineers. These Imagineers captured the ideas and important messages from their schools and went on to create a large-scale mural and short film to help share these city-wide. Meetings between the Imagineers and leaders from across the City further enabled them to share their vision. This work enabled key messages to be shared with decision makers and went on to influence the [City's Integrated Children's Services Plan](#) and [Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#). This piece of work provided a foundation which highlighted the importance of giving children and young people opportunities to share their thoughts, views and opinions to inform and shape strategic decision-making.

In 2019 the group of Imagineers expanded to help mainstream the highly effective approach to participation and included children from Airyhall, Danestone, Fernielea, Forehill and Greenbrae Primary Schools. The Children's Parliament undertook a series of investigations to support delivery of several of our LOIP stretch outcomes. Investigations centred around:

- Mental health
- Attainment ('Doing Our Best')
- Alcohol and drugs
- Transition to adulthood ('Our Hopes and Dreams for the Future')

The investigations helped inform delivery of each of the stretch outcomes of the LOIP and provided opportunities for our Imagineers to link directly with senior staff across the partnership and with Elected Members. Work with the Children's Parliament has helped to raise the profile of children's rights with children, families and staff and the education service are now working to widen this best practice in order to promote consistent high-quality participation across the city.

Children's Parliament
Imagining Aberdeen



Children's Parliament has been working with 300 children from Bramble Brae, Manor Park, Riverbank and Tullos primary schools, as they imagine Aberdeen as a place where every child is healthy, happy, safe and doing their best.

Twenty of the 300 children have become Imagineers. They have worked to represent all the imaginings on a multi-panelled mural. This mural is their vision for Aberdeen. On the flip side of this leaflet you can read what each part of the mural means to the Imagineers.

Our blog has been used by children throughout the project <https://bit.ly/ImaginingAberdeen>. The Imagining Aberdeen film is also available on the blog.

Reports on phase 1 of the work with the children are published on the **Imagining Aberdeen** blog; they report on children's insight about what human dignity means to children, and describe what children, families and communities need to flourish.

Imagining Aberdeen Reports:
bit.ly/aberndeenprojectreports

Imagining Aberdeen project on behalf of



ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

Children's Parliament
Children's Parliament
Imagining Aberdeen
0122 558 9030
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Are you sitting comfortably? This is our story.

Panel 1
Twenty Imagineers from 4 schools have imagined Aberdeen as a safe, healthy, happy place for children. Each child is represented as an Imagineer - located in a place or doing something which represents them at their most creative. They find themselves in places as diverse as a jungle of instruments, riding a stripey tiger, being catapulted high, performing a song or rap...

In this panel the community is a place where children can be outside, playing and picnicking. They can climb trees and pick apples. The boy is saying "I like spending time with my Mum, we are going to the shows". The bus makes it easy to get around the city.

Panel 2
Children imagine the happy home. The family sit together and eat together. The Dad is reading to his children. In the sitting room the Granny is looking after the toddler and everyone is watching a movie together eating popcorn. In the bathroom Mum is having a bit of peace and quiet in the bubble bath. In the hallway the writing says: "This is a kind family and they all respect each other. They are not afraid to show that they love each other".

Panel 3
Aberdeen is the silver city by the sea. Along the top of the Mural we see the city skyline, shimmering in the sun.

The bus continues its journey through brightly lit safe streets. No-one is smoking. The lollipop person helps children cross safely. The local shops mean you can buy everything you need. The shopkeeper is happy and sings to the children. People are playing on the beach, enjoying watching the dolphins and fish. One person says, "Can I get a hug?". The other replies: "Of course you don't have to ask".

Lighthouse Panel
The lighthouse keeper says: **"Adults come see what we think is important for all children"**

- Tell children you love them
- Be kind to us
- Give us support when we need it
- All children need enough to eat
- School should be a joyful place
- Families should spend time together
- There should be enough trees and flowers everywhere
- Everyone needs to be respected
- Remember we love to play
- We all need to have our say at home and at school
- No-one should feel left out or unwanted
- All playgrounds and parks should be dog-poo free
- All families need to live in a lovely street with nice neighbours

Panel 4
The bus continues its journey through the community. The bus advert says: "Respect people for who they are".

The Fun Club is a place for all children and young people to go throughout the day to dance, play sports and do art. The art shop means children can get everything they need to do art at home and school.

The dog owner picks up the dog poo.

There are trees and flowers everywhere. There is a safe place for wee ones to play. A girl says: "Thanks for listening and taking care of me". Her Mum says: "If you don't feel well I'll take you home".

Panel 5
This is the joyful school. In the school there are lots of opportunities to do art, yoga and music. The children are reading books. There are tablets to help do work. Children are good at maths and the teacher says "well done!" and rewards them with trips.

Children and adults speak many different languages and everyone gets along. The boy says to the girl: "I will always look out for you".

In the school things get fixed when they are broken.

Near the school there are things to do. Children go swimming, there are places to feel free and relax. A man hands out fruit for all the children.

Panel 6
More of our Imagineers are around the mural - happy and creative.

In the community girls and boys play together. There are pitches and places to go to take part in different activities and sports. Children are encouraged to do their best. The coach says: "Nice work, keep going!"

One of the Imagineers raps: Aberdeen should be a great place to be/Needles flying above the city/This ain't for me/Fighting on the streets/Clubs open way to late/The Nums need a break/To hang out with their mates/Money is short, you need to save/For everyday things, other people throw away.

Children's Parliament: Imagining Aberdeen // Children's Parliament's Scotland's Centre for Excellence for Children's Participation and Engagement // www.childrens-parliament.org.uk // © Children's Parliament 2020



About the project

Children have a right to take part in and influence how adults plan and run services for them in the areas where they live and learn. Aberdeen City Council is looking to the long-term future to ensure that Aberdeen is not just a Child-Friendly City, but a Rights-Respecting City. The Imagineers Investigates Programme is helping to make this a reality by investigating four priorities set out in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan:

This programme builds on the last four years' work that Children's Parliament has been doing to support children to play a key and meaningful role in shaping the city of Aberdeen.

What we did

Between January - December 2019, the Imagineers carried out investigations into **mental health attainment (doing our best), transition to adulthood (our hopes and dreams for the future) and alcohol and drugs**. From these, some additional key issues emerged - **having an adult to trust, bullying and the importance of sleep**. In each investigation, the Imagineers were charged with identifying challenges and opportunities for making services better. The Imagineers then met with City Champions - key decision-makers and duty-bearers in the City and from across services - to share their thoughts and explore how their issues and ideas could be taken forward.

Children's Parliament uses a rights-based approach. We work with children to explore their rights in the environments of home, school and community. Through workshops and creative activities, we encourage children to discuss their needs and help them to share their views and experiences in order that they can influence decisions made with and for them.



This magazine shares the key messages from the Imagineer investigations and asks that you, the reader, help turn their views into positive change!

Our Champions

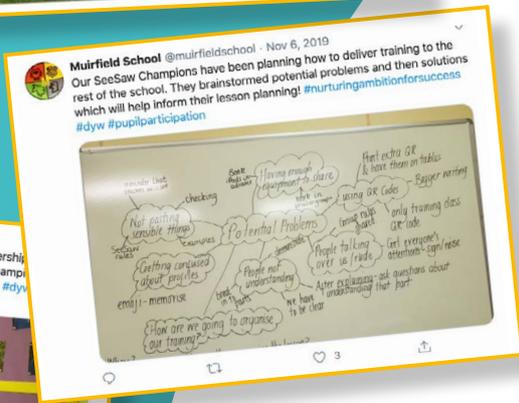
Our Champions are a selection of key personnel from Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian and Police Scotland (North East). The role of the Champion is to listen to the Imagineers, share what they have heard and take direct action so that tangible improvements are made for children across Aberdeen. A further expectation is that each Champion takes what they have learned and explores how they can embed a children's rights approach in their department and organisation.

Children and Young People Influencing Change in their School Community

All schools have continued to develop pupil leadership as a means of promoting children's rights with a range of approaches evident across the city. In some cases, children and young people are sharing information on their rights with parents through film and face to face engagement, this practice will be further promoted.

All schools continue to have representative pupil groups who drive improvement and inform practice at school and community level with children and young people taking a leading role in delivering training and supporting their peers. In the majority of cases, children and young people set agendas and record decisions and many are now organising and hosting community events.

Over the last three years, the majority of Aberdeen City schools (73%) have engaged in the Right Respecting Schools Programme and the city now boasts 7 Gold RRSA award schools, 9 Silver RRSA award schools and 22 Bronze RRSA award schools. Involvement in the programme has triggered a review of school policies and procedures as referred to previously.



"In our school we have pupil groups that help make decisions about certain aspects of the school day. You always get a chance to represent your class as a member though someone else may be chosen."



The last two years has seen many schools start to engage with the Global Goals agreed by world leaders in 2015. Engagement with this approach enables children and young people to recognise how they can influence change and affect environmental change. This initiative has seen children present their work to Committee and collaborate with schools in the independent sector and other Local Authorities to share their ideas and expertise.

In order to develop the participation of our pupils further, over the last year Aberdeen City Council has promoted engagement with the Young Leaders of Learning Programme. 34 schools are now actively involved. The programme supports children and young people to move from knowing their rights to exerting these rights by being actively engaged in leading school improvement. The programme has been tailored to support children and young people with a range of additional support needs at Orchard Brae and Bucksburn Wing.

As a result of progress made, children and young people of school age tell us that they are able to influence decision making at school level but that it can be harder to influence change at a city level. In order to respond positively to this the Council is working with the Leadership Group in Bridge of Don Academy to establish a pupil group representative of all city schools. Following a Committee instruction in March 2020 the group will meet with the Chief Education Officer regularly and have the means of influencing recommendations being taken to Elected Members.



Empowering Care Experienced Children and Young People

Adoption within children's social work of 'Mind of My Own' <https://mindofmyown.org.uk/> has been positively showcased locally and nationally. 'Mind of My Own' is an App which directly supports UNCRC Article 12, allowing care experienced children and young people to express their views and be heard in all aspects of their day to day lives. In 2019, Aberdeen City received a range of awards from the device creators, including Greatest Use, Greatest Media Activity and Swiftest Implementation. A design workshop was hosted in Aberdeen with Mind of My Own and care experienced young people in addition to one of our Children's Rights Development Assistants presenting at the National Mind of My Own conference. Adoption of the App is being supported by a comprehensive implementation programme, including training for the workforce in its ethos and usage, delivered by Mind of My Own Champions, some of whom are care experienced.

We continue to invest in a Children's Rights Service. Fundamentally, its vision is to support our children, young people and young adults to enjoy and have their rights listened to and fulfilled. The Service actively promotes a rights-informed stance in the delivery of children's social work, to ensure inclusion of the UNCRC into daily practice. Currently the Children's Rights Service provides independent advocacy, advice and support to our care experienced children, young people and young adults aged 0-26 years, who need or request it, regardless of where they live. The Service employs children's rights development assistants who themselves are care experienced and this role reinforces a rights approach in promoting the needs and 'voice' of our care experienced children, young people and young adults in service delivery and development. The role provides a tangible employment opportunity, aimed at enhancing capacity and life chances. The most recent Children's Rights Report gives a flavour of the work undertaken over the last year. Following on from a Service functional review, recommendations to extend its remit and rename the Service are currently being progressed.



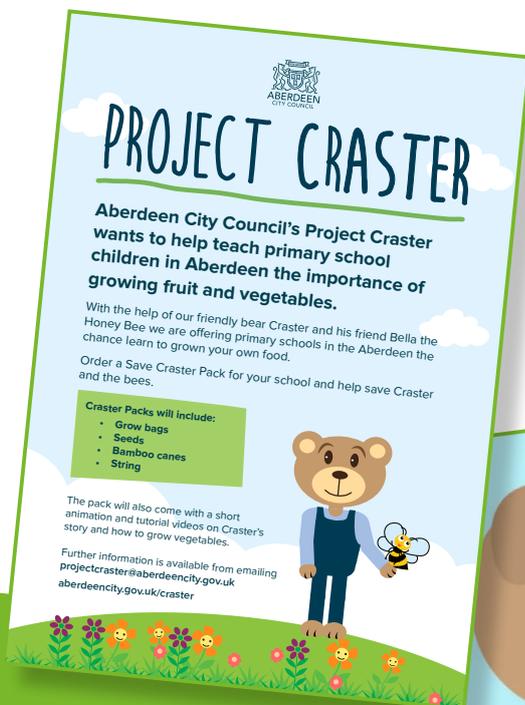
Environmental Services supporting Environmental Awareness

Children of school age have well established links with Environmental Services through school recycling and environmental schemes. School Eco and Environmental Committees regularly contact the service (and at times Danny the Council Gardener) for help to establish school growing gardens and support to lead community clean up campaigns. The Service consistently enable our school pupils to achieve their environmental ambitions and Green Flags.

In 2019 environmental services launched Project Craster to encourage our youngest children in primary schools to learn about environmental responsibility and food poverty. Schools were given the resources needed to grow vegetables and provided with links to videos developed by an in-house team using green screen technology. The videos feature Craster, an animated bear and his friend Bella the bumble bee, who show the children how to start their vegetable growing journey. The initial goal of the project was to engage around 11 schools but in the first year 34 schools got growing with Craster. Over 3500 children have now engaged

in project which has been extended to include experiences for older children. The approach has been highly effective in raising awareness of environmental issues.

Countryside Rangers have supported over 6500 children and young people over the last 3 years through environmentally themed workshops and collaborations with the Emergency Services designed to keep children safe. The service also collaborate with the Early Years' Service to deliver the Wee Greenspaces Project which empowers staff in early years settings to take their children outdoors to local greenspaces to build children's confidence, motor, communication and social skills and develop the ability to risk assess risk whilst supporting positive wellbeing.



Children and young people are fully engaged in a number of environmental campaigns including Clean Up Aberdeen, Aberdeen Communities Together (ACT) and Keep Scotland Beautiful Its Your Neighbourhood. Hundreds of children participate in the extremely popular 24-hour Glitter Pick on a yearly basis.

Duthie Park Ranger Service provides a range of workshops for primary age pupils to help raise awareness of the local environment and international climate issues. In 2019, the Service provided workshops to 1,980 pupils and it is anticipated that the workshops and numbers will be repeated in 2020. Themes for 2020 will include Tropical Forests, Pond & Tree Workshops and during British Science Week will look more at the science of plants. The team intend to provide a range of workshops during the school holidays.

Peep Little Rangers promote interaction between parents/guardians and children, also early preparation for nursery/school. Little Peep offers 2-3-year olds a chance to come along with their parent/

guardian, where they will learn about the environment through storytelling, crafts, songs and fun activities. The Rangers look forward to the opening of an Outdoor Nursery provision at Duthie Park in 2020 as this will further extend opportunities for collaboration with our youngest learners.

The Junior Ranger Project delivers workshops to primary pupils and some participants are keen to engage in learning about the environment whilst starting to learn basic Ranger Skills over weekends. In addition, many children attend Groovy Growits, a junior gardening group, where primary age pupils learn horticulture skills.

Environmental Services continue to be heavily invested in our children and young people and recognise that this investment is most likely to realise environmental change.



Enabling Aberdeen City Youth Council

Community Learning and Development's Youth Work service supports Aberdeen's Scottish Youth Parliament members and other citywide and community-based youth forums.

The Aberdeen City Youth Council (ACYC) are the voice of young people aged 12-25 who live, work and study in Aberdeen City. The group, made up of around 20 young people from all council wards, meet once a month to discuss the issues facing young people and determine what they want to do to tackle these issues. They have a role is enabling other young people to shape the Place of Aberdeen and have delivered democracy sessions to young people in all secondary schools and one primary school in order to share how young people can affect change.

A key role of ACYC is to represent young people as Community Planning Partners work to deliver the LOIP and the Group co-chair an Improvement Group aligned with the Integrated Children's Services Board. This approach enables young people to actively contribute and shape work across the partnership. ACYF promote their work by regularly featuring on SHMU FM, using this as a two-way platform to further engage with young people across Aberdeen.

ACYC hosted the Year of Young People showcase event which was attended by over sixty young people to celebrate volunteering achievements. As part of the Year of Young People the group consulted with over 800 young people across Aberdeen for the 'Make Your Mark' UK Youth Parliament consultation.

The group are becoming increasingly ambitious and have had success in gaining the backing of Co-Leaders, local Councillors, MSPs, Aberdeen Inspired (a business development service in Aberdeen), Aberdeen Market and local people through consultation for their latest campaign 'Bog Standards' which aims to ensure accessible toilet facilities are available to all within Aberdeen city. The group were instrumental in the commissioning and establishment of the new Young Carers service with one member being shortlisted for a Health and Social Care award in March due to the significance of their contribution. In addition, the group have made a significant contribution to International Women's Day celebrations, Grampian Pride and Celebrate Aberdeen.



Over the last three years the youth council have had several achievements to celebrate including:

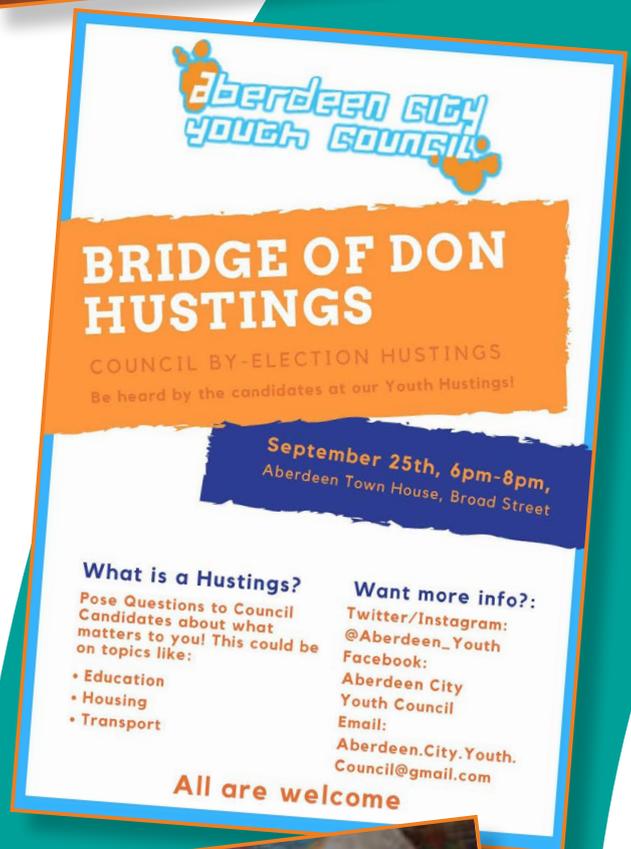
- Partnering with the NHS to deliver a Fitness for All campaign, which resulted in widened access to sport facilities for 'teen gym' in Aberdeen.
- Hosting Model United Nations debates to provide a safe space for young people to listen to other opinions and form views on topical issues
- Facilitating multiple hustings for local elections to inform young people in a youth-friendly setting
- Working with Childline to facilitate a session during a visit by Dame Esther Rantzen. The group took part in an internet safety session with one participant taking up a volunteering opportunity and training with the charity.
- Lending support to other action groups including The Tobacco Free Alliance Group and the Tenant Participation Group



Scottish Youth Parliament

Aberdeen has five Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament who are democratically elected by Aberdeen's young people to represent their views to decision-makers at a national level. The Aberdeen MSYP's have had motions passed in the Scottish Youth Parliament on several topics, all raised initially within Aberdeen. This has allowed local and city-wide issues to be discussed at a national level.

One of the MSYP's was also selected to sit on the National Youth Work Strategy VOICE Group and has influenced the development of the national youth work strategy.



Involving Children and Young People in Planning the Place of Aberdeen

In 2018, the Master Planning, Design & Conservation (MDC) Team ran a project with children and young people from six schools, teaching them about Aberdeen's Union Street (and in particular its architecture, design, local history and planning) and encouraged them to form and voice opinions about how they would like to see Union Street develop in the future.

This MDC team collaboration, which included Aberdeen Urban Studies Trust, local architects and the library service gave the children and young people a broad an experience and provided some helpful feedback that was used to shape the Master Plan and was celebrated through an event at the Tivoli Theatre. We are proud that this project was a Finalist at the Royal Town Planning Institute's annual awards, won a Scottish Award for Quality in Planning and is being rolled out to another 6 city schools.

It is important that we build on this work to ensure that children and young people are included in discussions relating to the future of the city in order to increase awareness of the Local Development Plan, increase participation and confidence when engaging with spatial planning and ensure we create a city for all. Aberdeen City Council intend to produce an accessible and child friendly version of the next Local Development Plan after it is adopted, thereby paving the way for future discussions on planning and city development with children and young people.

"I do like going to the park but there can be teenagers who like to vandalism the park with inappropriate pictures and bad words. When I see those pictures it makes me feel upset because a park is supposed to be a happy place but when it is being vandalised, all the happiness is washed away."

Children and Young People benefiting from Community Benefits

Aberdeen City Council continues to encourage third parties with whom we form contracts to participate in delivering community benefits. Resultant opportunities afford young people a chance to learn about different forms of construction, the difficulties involved and gain an insight into future careers such as construction, engineering, architecture, environmental specialisms, planning and project management.

In order to develop this practice further children and young people are being more directly involved in city transformation projects, an example being that all city schools will be asked to plant a tree as Union Terrace Gardens are redeveloped.

The City Growth team plays a significant role in the realisation of Community Benefits through the letting of major council contracts. Benefits including work experience, school engagement activities, apprenticeships, employment opportunities for priority groups, the delivery of sector career information and guidance events, and vocational training opportunities are routinely realised.



Promoting the rights of the Care Experienced through ACE and the Champions Board

Aberdeen Care Experienced (ACE) is one way that care experienced young people are empowered to participate, influence and make change in the city. ACE represents belonging and participation and is for care experienced children, young people and young adults to engage and discuss issues and ideas important to them, which are then brought to the Champions Board. Published 'Get em Telt' newsletters and ACE 6 monthly report illustrate the range of work being progressed.

The Champions Board provides a unique opportunity for care experienced young people to have a voice, be empowered and influence policy and practice across the partnership. It meets quarterly and is co-chaired by a young adult with care experience and a corporate parent. A scorecard tool co-produced by care experienced young people helps assess and show progress on the actions and activities within the workplan.

The Board is a mechanism for young people to hold corporate parents to account, ensuring that services are tailored and responsive to their needs and rights. A series of taking stock events in the summer of 2018 involving care experienced children, young people and young adults refreshed the Champions Board ethos, vision and priorities. Feedback emphasised the importance of having continued access to a range of capacity building experiences alongside opportunities to play, have fun and feel connected.

The commitment of a group of young people who have devoted much of their time to ACE activity and to the local community was recognised at the Champions Board in December 2019. These young people received a Saltire Award as well as a newly created ACE Award as a means of celebrating their volunteering efforts.



Care Experienced Children and Young People Corporate Parenting Champions Board Aberdeen City

VISION:

Our care experienced children and young people have a right to participate in decision-making about their own lives and have their voices heard.

Participation = consulting together, acting together, deciding together, learning better together.

Trust and positive relationships between children/young people and adults are key to effective participation.

APPROACH:

- Build a culture which demands and values participation, using co-production.
- Strengthen practice by improving ways of engaging children and young people to support their participation individually and as a group.
- Develop structures to make sure that planning and service delivery takes account of children and young people's views
- Review these structures to evaluate the impact of children and young people's participation on decision-making and outcomes.

STANDARDS:

- Our children and young people are listened to and free to express their views on all matters that affect them.
- These views directly influence decision-making at all levels.
- **Our children and young people are diverse and are given equal opportunities to be involved in participation activities.**
- We make sure adults are trained to effectively listen to and support them using a range of different participation methods.
- Our children and young people are safeguarded within all participation activities and experience participation as positive and empowering.

Participation approaches will reflect a range of capacity building opportunities alongside opportunities to play, have fun and feel connected.

OUTCOMES

Participation = improved individual outcomes for children and young people alongside improved services, now and into the future.

Children and Young People Influencing their Communities

Community learning and development have well established mechanisms to engage with children and young people through priority-based budgeting, this approach is also a political priority. This process enables children and young people to directly inform how Local Authority resource is used in their communities.

Following a U Decide participatory budgeting event for Tillydrone, Woodside and Seaton, international artist Patricio Forrester was commissioned to work alongside pupils, local tenants and volunteers to transform an electrical substation at Fersands. This intergenerational project helped children, young people and residents see that change is possible and realise the benefits of coming together across the generations. Over a weekend, pupils from Kittybrewster School worked alongside older members of the local community to transform the electricity substation at Woodside Medical Centre into a giant, colourful, boom box. Children and young people confidently spoke to the local media and to peers about their experience.

A similar consultation event in Torry led to the establishment of a Cruyff Court project. This new multi sports court is the first of its kind in the UK and plans are underway for a second court in Tillydrone.



DECIDE TORRY



Adults...

**LISTEN
HELP
SHARE**

**Listen to our voices
Help by acting on them
Share what you hear, it's up to you to change
people's thoughts on children and make sure
they pay attention to our rights.**

Imagining Aberdeen
Imagining Aberdeen is a partnership
between Aberdeen's Parliament and
Aberdeen City Council

The Imagineers are a group of 40 children, aged
8-12, from across the city. The children attend
these schools: Aynhall Primary School, Bramble
Bee Primary School, Sandstone Primary School,
Fernlea Primary School, Forehill Primary School,
Greenhall Primary School, Maria Park Primary
School, Riverbank Primary School, Tallis Primary
School, Lockside Academy, Northfield Academy
and St Machar Academy. Our travels go to all
the parents, carers, teachers and PSAs who have
supported the Imagineers' association.

Adult

*The Imagineer guide
sharing a worry is
and respectful way*

Every child having an adult they trust
to, who they feel they can share
and who will help them stay strong
is time to really listen and make the

**Take the child aside. Say
you have to tell someone
really worried about their**

**Calmly explain to the child
share their worry. If the
going to tell someone else
prepared for something t**

Let the child have a say

**Just tell what the other p
Don't go into details.**

**Sometimes a child wants
you tell, to have their say
repercussions. If the child
to their problem getting l**

Do it discreetly, don't sho

Do not do it in front of o

**Walk the child home or b
them feel safe.**

**The adult should keep a c
or enough food.**

Adults have to find the
space in their day to
stop and listen to us.

Adults should understand how we
might feel and make us feel loved.

We need adults to look
at the child when they
are talking, and stay
quiet, calm and be
ready to listen.

Children should understand how we
might feel and make us feel loved.

Children should understand how we
might feel and make us feel loved.

Children should understand how we
might feel and make us feel loved.

Sharing the successes of Children and Young People

Aberdeen City Council has a number of mechanisms to recognise children and young people's contributions at both community and city level. The successful city-wide Children and Young People's Awards continue to showcase achievement across the city and were hosted by children and young people for the first time in 2019.

One award category recognises children and young people who have helped represent the views and voices of their peers to positively influence change.

Children and young people are now involved in the selection of winners as well as planning, compering and entertaining the audience on the day.

Sharing the Achievements of our Care Experienced Young People

The introduction of Care Experienced Awards in 2018 provided an opportunity for young people to be celebrated in a smaller environment where they felt more comfortable. This was also an opportunity for families and corporate parents to come together to celebrate the achievements of our young people and encourage young people to be aspirational about their future.



Accessibility

Accessible information has been developed to ensure that children and young people are aware of how our multi-agency systems can support their wellbeing, although we recognise that there is more to do in this area. The city Accessibility Plan is currently being refreshed to help plan next steps. This will include the further development of accessible and 'child friendly' versions of key documentation and in particular consider how to make information for parents of children with additional support needs more easily accessible.

Software, including Texthelp, has been introduced to make the curriculum accessible to all. This investment has significantly impacted on levels of engagement for some children and young people.



Promoting the Rights of New Syrian Scots

A council wide approach was taken to Syrian Scots with work co-ordinated by an Integration Officer who works with 18 young people age 12-22 years on integration and educational work including Dynamic Youth Awards, Saltire awards and ESOL. The approach to supporting this group of young people has provided an opportunity to promote engagement in the culture of the city, meet individual needs and provide a range of bespoke support. There is evidence that the young people are becoming fully integrated into the community and exercising their rights, with 4 young people having successfully gained employment and many now taking advantage of mainstream opportunities across the city.

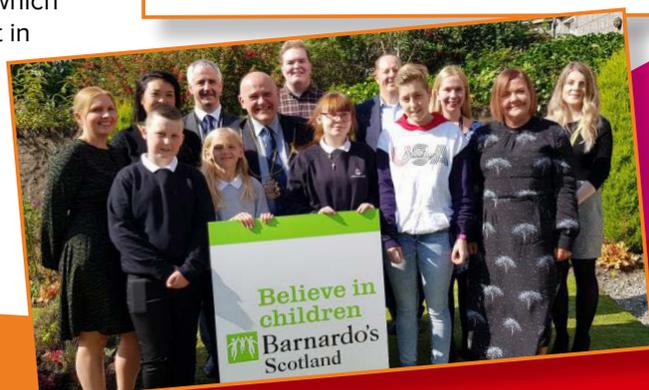
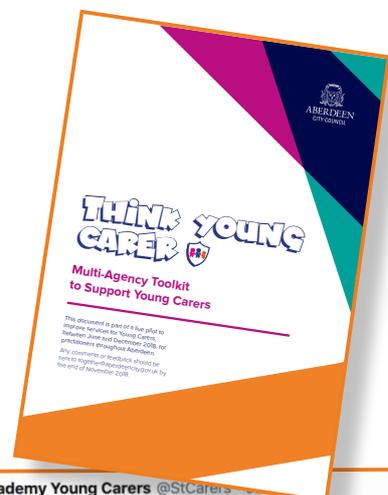
Supporting Young Carers

[Aberdeen Health & Social Care Partnership](#), [Aberdeen City Council](#) and Young Carers at St Machar Academy developed a [Carers Strategy](#) to help drive the implementation of the legislation. This gives Young Carers entitlement for the first time to an assessment known as a Young Carers Statement and is part of a larger suite of tools developed in the City called the Young Carers Toolkit.

Considerable work has been undertaken to develop a Young Carers Toolkit to ensure that all young carers are able to exercise their rights. This work was driven by Young Carers themselves.

[The Young Carers Toolkit](#) includes approaches to help Practitioners identify and support Young Carers. Following the best practice described in the Toolkit will result in a better-informed workforce across partnership services and improved outcomes for all Young Carers in Aberdeen. The Toolkit and Young Carers Statement were developed in consultation with Young Carers across the city and across all agencies involved in supporting Young Carers. A soft launch was held in June 2018 where feedback was sought from partners and young carers alike. This feedback was then used to finalise the toolkit which was then launched in January 2019 at an event in Aberdeen's Beach Ballroom.

A Young Carers service was commissioned and started on 1 April 2019 with support from Aberdeen City Youth Council. This service is designed to deliver training to increase awareness of who might be a 'hidden young carer'. 30 Young Carers are now supported by the service. Children and young people benefit from access to two weekly social groups and access to a variety of other activities, including support groups at three schools across the city: Heathryburn Primary, Woodside Primary and St Machar Academy 'St Carers' group. It is thought that the number of young carers being supported will increase as awareness of the service and of who might be a young carer continues to increase.



Promoting Rights at Clinterty Traveller Site

Community Learning and Development's Adult Learning service continues to implement its whole-family project at Clinterty Traveller site. The project aims to improve the literacy and numeracy of traveller families and has been well received by the traveller community. Parents are engaging in their children's learning and being supported to enrol their children in school. A homework group supports both parents and children to complete assignments and the local primary school has noted improvements in attainment. Young people not in formal education are being supported by Community Learning and Development staff to achieve SQA qualifications in literacy, numeracy, core skills and ICT.

Children and young people from the community were involved in a project in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen University, Aberdeen's Community Learning and Development service and non-traveller children on the theme of what it means to be a young traveller today. The project aimed to challenge stereotypes and culminated in a performance at Aberdeen University during Mayfest.

Addressing Poverty

The Local Outcome Improvement Plan continues to guide our work across the partnership to ensure that 'Aberdeen City is a place where all can prosper'.

Following detailed planning and coordination, fully flexible delivery of 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare will start to be rolled out from August 2020. The level of flexibility being offered will help address the impact of poverty in the city by providing greater opportunities for parents and carers to access employment or training.

The expansion of Early Learning and Childcare will see the universal roll out of PEEP to all families and this will enable us to share information about children's rights with families from the earliest opportunity. Five Excellence and Equity Practitioners have been employed to support closing the poverty related attainment gap and improve outcomes for children and families in priority areas. The Education Service are keenly aware of how positive wellbeing can help mitigate some of the risks around poverty and continue to invest in the promotion of outdoor learning to ensure that the benefits to pupil and family wellbeing are maximised.



Good financial inclusion services are available to families impacted by poverty. Sadly, many families continue to live in poverty and in-work poverty is an increasing challenge for families. Schools have agreed a set of pledges to remove financial barriers to engagement with the wider life and ethos of the school.

Children and young people adversely affected by poverty tell us that they at times feel unsafe in local green spaces, particularly when children can see drug use takes place there. Work to progress the partnership response to drug misuse features heavily in the LOIP in order to address an emerging trend of young people being exploited to sell drugs. A member of staff has been recruited to work closely with the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership on this work to ensure that the curriculum offering is ideally matched to the current state. All schools continue to reduce the cost of the school day with innovative practices emerging.

Poverty continues to remain the root cause of poor outcomes for many families and the LOIP ambition to ensure Aberdeen is a place where all people can prosper ensures that all Community Planning Partners retain a clear focus on this.



Promoting Children's Rights in Priority Areas

Big Noise Torry is an upstream early intervention programme which uses the experience of learning to play an instrument and being in a community orchestra to transform the lives of children and young people living in one of Aberdeen City Council's priority locality areas. Big Noise Torry currently engages with over 550 children.

The Big Noise staff team works intensively with the children and young people, and inclusively with families and the broader community, to achieve permanent social change. Key to this are the long-term, trusting relationships based on consistent daily and weekly contact over many years, with the musicians acting as educators, mentors and role models, supporting positive behaviours and life choices.

A partnership with Aberdeen University for student musicians offers the opportunity for placements within the programme with pathways to progression and employment and one student now successfully employed as a musician after graduation.

Independent research and evaluation of the project has been undertaken by The Glasgow Centre for Population Health with their most recent report *People Change Lives* published in 2019.

Key findings:

- increased confidence, discipline, pride, and aspiration
- improved team-working, communication, and leadership
- enhanced academic skills including listening, concentration, and creativity
- increased resilience, happiness, sense of belonging and fulfilment
- strong musical skills development
- uptake of physical activity and healthy eating, avoidance of damaging behaviours
- development of positive social groups, peer relationships and cultural engagement



Civil Rights and Freedoms - Do we promote the freedom of association and expression, protect privacy, ensure appropriate access to information and protect from inhumane treatment? (Articles 7,8,13,14, 15, 16 and 17)

Over the last three years, the Council has worked hard to establish expectations of how children and young people should be involved in helping to take decisions that will affect their personal and family life and wellbeing. Clear guidance is in place, however case file reading evidences that, although this best practice is followed in almost all cases, there is room for improvement for a few of the most vulnerable children and young people. This is now being considered in the context of the findings of the Independent Care Review as it is important that we address this area to ensure that all children can directly influence decisions that affect them.

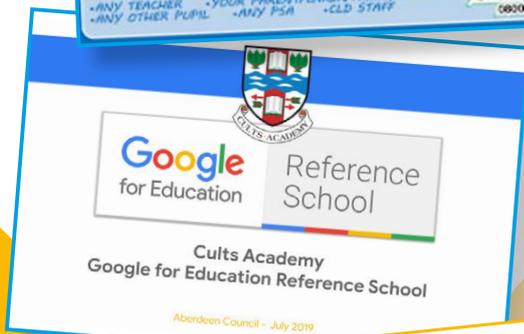
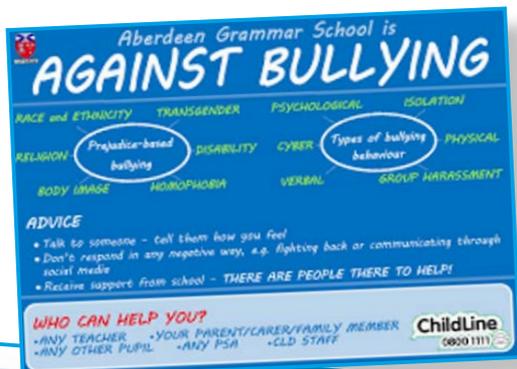
Using Technology to support and promote children's rights

The Education Service are collaborating with Microsoft, our digital partner, to help develop an efficient and effective means of planning for children whilst taking full account of their views. The approach complies with data protection legislation and enables more effective recording of the views of children, young people and their families.

The Local Authority has enabled free access to internet services for those in priority areas and the city benefits from an excellent free Wi-Fi service and good connectivity. This helps children and young people feel connected to their local and wider community.

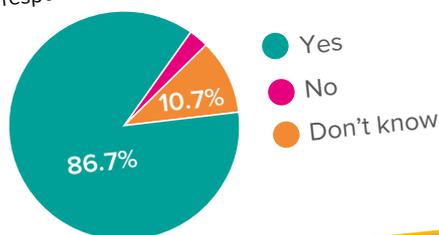
Children and young people tell us that social media continues to present challenges. Accessible information has been made available to parents, carers, children and young people to help address this issue, but some concerns remain. Two separate tests of change are currently underway to inform our response and potential refresh of the anti-bullying policy by September 2020. Initial indications are that we need to guide more careful use of settings on personal devices to reduce the risk to children and young people.

Safe digital tools support the accessibility of the curriculum in schools. Safe internet use is also promoted and safeguarded within our children's and foster homes. The use of Texthelp and Google Drive have been successfully implemented over the reporting period with the impact of these approaches positively evaluated through school inspections by Education Scotland.



Do you feel your right to privacy is respected?

450 responses



Promoting the Rights of those who require Alternative Communication Systems

Special schools have policies in place to uphold children's rights and consider their rights as approaches are tailored to the needs of children and young people in accordance with UNCRC 23 and CRPD 7.

Aberdeen City Libraries offer a wide range of resources to support a range additional support needs including Bag books, talking books, picture books for older readers, high interest/low vocabulary, large print and braille books as well as educational games, learning packs, DVDs and wallcharts.

All libraries continue to provide a set of calming resources to help children and young people feel comfortable and welcome in libraries. Families can pre-arrange visits to libraries to support children with additional support needs and a range of Familiarisation Storyboards and 3600 walkthroughs are available to support a positive trip to the library.

Library staff delivering Bookbug sessions have received training in British Sign Language (BSL) and Makaton to support engagement of non-verbal

children and young people and an increasing number of mainstream schools are now teaching pupils either British Sign Language or Makaton. Stoneywood School shared their BSL on the national stage at the Scottish Learning Festival.

A library volunteering programme supports young people with additional support needs to undertake work experience placements suited to their needs with the aim of building employability skills.



Violence Against Children - to what extent do we uphold (Article 37(a))

Aberdeen City Council benefits from highly effective partnerships with others and this helps us collaboratively protect our children and young people. Appropriate and effective arrangements for protecting children are in place and were evaluated as 'good' in a Joint Child Protection Inspection in 2019. A quality assurance framework has been developed to enable careful tracking of trends to inform decision making of The Child and Public Protection Committees.



Family Environment and Alternative Care - to what extent do we support families and maintain the family unit if this is in the child's best interests? (Articles 5,10,11,18, 19, 20, 25, 21,27 and 39)

Preventative Services

A range of preventative services, such as the Priority Families team and Youth Justice Management Unit wrap around vulnerable families to help protect children and ensure they are safe. The Priority Families Team have had a major impact on the families supported. Care Inspectorate feedback shows this is already a strong service:

Category	Grade	Comments
Staffing	4	Motivated, enthusiastic, flexible, proactive, different approach, variety of training, supportive supervision, team meetings
Management & Leadership	4	Supportive, strong, cohesive, robust systems and processes
Care and Support	5	Overwhelmingly positive, work alongside families, strengths based, families involved in own support planning, clear safeguarding processes

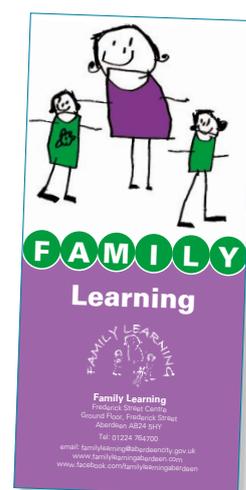
During 2018/19 the service received 36 referrals for families comprising 143 individuals, 57 adults and 86 children. Over 60% of families were female single parent households, with the average number of children in a family being 2. School aged children made up the significant majority (84%), with only 7% of children being pre-school. Most families were in receipt of benefits, and there were several blended families. The table below illustrates the range of issues that the team helped support families with over the 12-month period:

Anti-Social Behaviour	28 families
Offending and Crime	10 families
School Attendance	22 families
Child Wellbeing	22 families
Adult Wellbeing	13 families
Out of Work/Financial Exclusion	10 families

The work of the team in supporting these families has resulted in significantly improved outcomes including a 68% reduction in VPDs and 96% reduction in criminal charges, contributing to an overall reduction of 70% in crime and antisocial behaviour linked to the families.

Parents being supported reported a 62% increase in their own parenting skills and a 58% improvement in their home environment. There has also been positive impact on school attendance and achievement - one notable example of joint working with education resulting in a young person with over 150 unauthorised absences from school being able to access alternative education. This resulted in employment and achievement of National 4 in English.

The overall impact of this programme of work on children, young people and adults is testament to our commitment to improving the life chances of everyone in our city.



Over the last three years an increasing number of Family Learning opportunities have been made available through schools, and families report that they find these opportunities helpful. These opportunities are supported by the work of community learning. There is a need to develop greater consistency and alignment in this area and the Education Scotland thematic review of Family Learning will help support this work when published later this year.

Changes in approaches to Housing, most notably a 75% reduction since 2017 in eviction proceedings being commenced for rent arrears, has significantly aided the extent to which we protect children's rights. As a landlord we understand the impact that insecure housing tenure, and the threats of losing your home, can have on children and young people and have actively changed our approach. Our Housing policy already places a priority on families who are homeless being rehoused urgently, and we have moved purposefully to support households across the city to maintain their current tenancy. Our current redesign of services seeks to embed a more supportive approach to all tenants including children and young people.

Council recently agreed to approve the provision of accommodation to all care experienced young people who enter further or higher education.



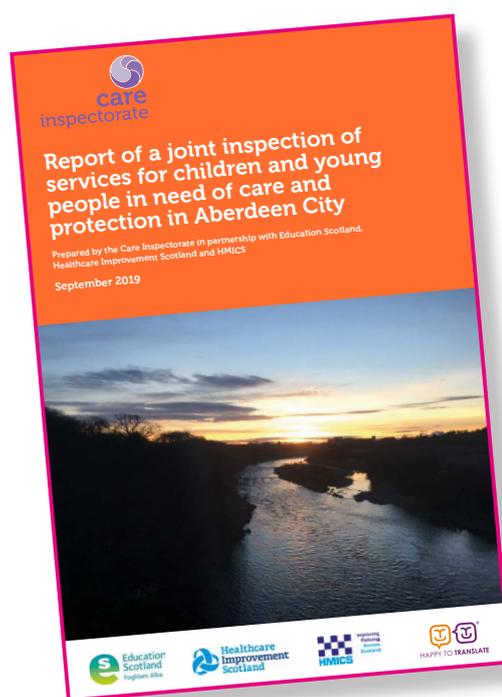
Effective Systems to Uphold and Promote Children's Rights when something goes wrong

A multi-agency policy on Missing Children has recently been agreed by the Chief Officer Group. Effective single agency procedures support local delivery of this policy. Performance in this area is highly effective. Almost all children identified as being missing from education are located within one day due to the strength of the partnership response.

Effective systems have been established to support refugees. Aberdeen City Council employees are working alongside third sector organisations to support families and data suggests that these supports are effective. Since 2017 over 100 families have been helped to settle in Aberdeen through the Syrian New Scots resettlement scheme. The majority of these families have been empowered to live independently in the city, accessing support initially and then becoming independent. This support has included education for adults and children, ESOL support and the provision of housing. We continue to support a small number of families and are open to new refugees coming to the city through Home Office procedures. We have also supported a small number of families with no recourse to public funds following immigration decisions, all of these families have had children and we have worked across the Council to ensure their rights are upheld irrespective of their parents' immigration status. A Youth Worker post specifically set up to support the integration of young Syrians was created in August 2019. Refugees have participated in a range of sporting and cultural activities and as a result of this have developed a better understanding of the city they now call home.

Children aged 12 and over are now invited to take part in a case conference about them and their family and they can give their opinions around the concerns and plans going forward. The number of children attending these conferences is very low and their influence can be limited depending on the level of risk. Integrated Children and Family Services are currently working to identify a means of locating hearings in settings more familiar to children and young people in order to address this lack of engagement and subsequent influence.

Colleagues across Integrated Children and Family Services can now more readily share expertise and collaborate to support children and families due to closer alignment following the move to the new Council operating structure. The recent Joint Inspection evaluated approaches to supporting those in need of care and protection as good.



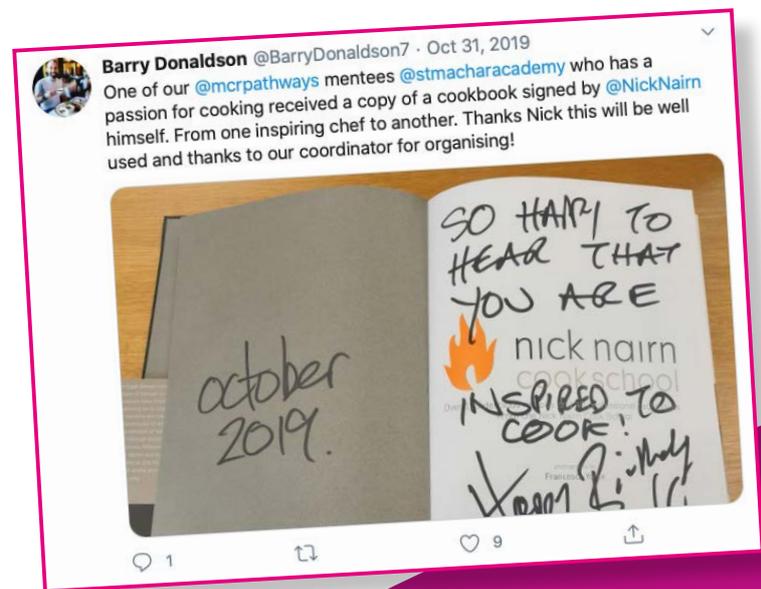
Being a Learning Organisation

Data is being used more effectively to support improvement, an example of being our approach to improving outcomes for our care experienced young people.

Despite some gains over the last three years, children who are care experienced experience poorer health and educational outcomes than their peers. A range of supports including the use of MCR pathways are being used to support improvement in this area. The Council continues to find the recruitment of local foster carers challenging and this can result in some children being accommodated outwith the city. A Virtual School Head Teacher was appointed to work with schools and Children's Social Work to support children. It can be harder to oversee how effectively rights are upheld when children live some distance away. The service is working hard to shift the balance of care to ensure our children and young people thrive locally.

The Children's Rights Service began a functional review in January 2019. It has been underpinned by a clear set of objectives, including ensuring alignment with the UNCRC. The Review has sought to articulate and be informed by what is most important for and to the children, young people and young adults it is there for. The methodology has included, for example, surveying, consultation and

focus groups themed around participation, protection and provision. A multi-agency stakeholder event in July 2019 provided an opportunity for partners, including those with care experience, to share views, experiences, expertise, ideas and good practice examples. A representative from the Office of the Children's Commissioner contributed to the event through presenting a national perspective of Children's Rights and workshop themes connected knowledge and understanding of children's rights, communication and provision.



The Review findings and associated recommendations are wide ranging. These include expanding the care experienced remit to include children and young people who are or have been involved in child protection processes which may or have led to Child Protection Registration. This aligns to findings within our 2019 Joint Inspection of services for children and young people in need of care and protection, that independent advocacy could be of benefit for those children and families.

Recommendations will also be taken forward in relation to single and multi-agency workforce training and development activity related to children's rights and participation.

Review work has identified specific 'rights related' transition points in the life of a child, which the Service will seek to support:

- early intervention;
- CPR registration/removal;
- becoming looked after;
- being looked after at distance;
- frequent changes in living arrangements;
- living arrangements which restrict or remove liberty;
- returning to live in Aberdeen;
- care/pathway plan supports being transferred from children to adult's services; and
- 'discharge' before or at the point of reaching the age of 26 years.

A proposed Service name change - based on feedback from survey, events and ACE - to better reflect the circumstances, needs and rights of those it should be accessible to is planned. The Service will also, through its implementation plan, continue to engage with children, young people, young adults and stakeholders to progress other recommendations in relation to communication, data collection, digitalisation/use of technology, participation, learning and development and safeguarding practice.

Highly effective systems have been put in place to oversee the effectiveness of our systems to support children and young people at risk from exploitation, violence and abuse. The strength in our system comes from our work as a multi-agency group to review data and challenge working practices.

A learning culture has become evident over the last three years. Where vulnerabilities are identified there are effective and established partnership processes to identify how our response failed in order to identify opportunities for improvement. This learning culture is only possible because of the close working relationships evident across the Community Planning Partnership.



Basic Health and Welfare - to what extent do we promote health and welfare and consider the need of children who are disabled?

(Articles 6,18,23,24,26 and 27, CRPD 24)

Promoting Health and Wellbeing in Schools

All children have continued to have access to a health and wellbeing curriculum over the last three years, although data suggests that Personal and Social Education (PSE) programmes should be reviewed to ensure they accurately reflect the challenges our children face today. Schools are increasingly using locality data and information gleaned via their partnership forum to support curriculum development and ensure it best meets the needs of children and young people in order to support and promote good physical health and mental wellbeing.

Increasingly innovative approaches are being used to support the promotion of resilience across a Locality area and it is important that this best practice is built upon. Programmes such as Bounce Back and Seasons for Growth are impacting positively on the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and this is enabling targeted services, such as school counselling, to be more effectively targeted. A Scottish Government grant and the change in remit for school Nurses will ensure that mental health support is available in all city schools.

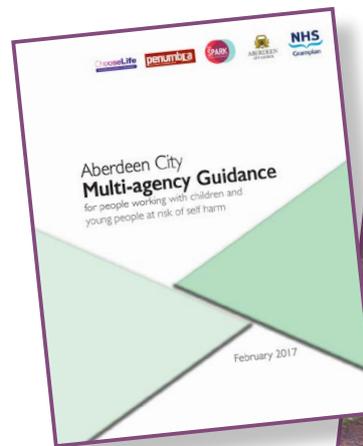
LIAM (Let's Introduce Anxiety Management) and ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) and emotion coaching is ongoing across the education service. These programmes will further strengthen our approaches to mental and emotional health education and support. Work detailed in the Education National Improvement Framework Plan and LOIP will help to develop a more consistent approach across the City and includes the further promotion of outdoor learning to support positive wellbeing.

"The playground is tricky because I have a disability and lots of the things I can't go on and the ground is bumpy and I often trip and fall over."

Promoting Health and Wellbeing across the City

A continued programme of play area refurbishment throughout the City is providing attractive and inclusive play areas for children.

From April 2017 to March 2020 the programme has seen refurbishment works carried out at 49 individual play areas. This includes the total renewal of all equipment in most areas and, in others, the introduction of replacement or additional equipment to improve inclusive access. This programme support the delivery of our agreed Play Policy.



Supporting and Upholding the rights of children with Additional Support Needs

A staged intervention process is in place to support best practice in meeting the needs of children and young people with additional support needs. The Local Authority has a number of specialist provisions for children and young people and work is ongoing to ensure integrated service delivery in response to requests from parents and carers. Colleagues across the integrated service are working collaboratively to ensure appropriate and necessary support can be accessed timeously by children/young people and their families. Outcome data is being closely tracked and monitored to inform how resource should be shaped to best meet needs across the city.

Orchard Brae School houses education and specialist children's social work support for families of children with complex additional support needs and services have collaborated to extend the range of supports available to families outwith the school day and over holiday periods. These supports are also available for children and families with complex additional support needs who do not attend Orchard Brae School.

Parents and staff highlighted that they found current arrangements unclear and a Programme Manager has been seconded to help further improve processes. Consultation with parents, staff, children and young people will be ongoing so we can clearly identify existing strengths and good practice, share this and consider where to target improvement activity. In addition, data analysis is supporting the realignment of resources and our staff professional learning offer, particularly around trauma-skilled practice. Emerging themes include streamlining approaches and greater consistency in the use of plans (such as Child's Plans) to meet the needs of learners. Ongoing collaboration with Microsoft will support this. Work is underway to increase the accessibility of information to families and staff, particularly around processes and services to meet learners' needs.



"Provides excellent support in school (school for the deaf) and inclusion with mainstream, provides community groups to join and make new friends and learn new skills."

Promoting Rights by Positively Discriminating

Over the last three years almost all children have reported that they feel safe in their schools and communities. A few report having no one to approach and this includes children who are looked after. There is a need to increase awareness of Corporate Parenting responsibilities and ensure that all partners positively discriminate in favour of the care experienced child. This area of work is being driven through the LOIP. All newly qualified teachers now have an early input on their responsibilities as Corporate Parents.



Education, Leisure and culture - To what extent do we provide education services which are non-discriminatory? (Articles 28, 29 and 31)

Aberdeen City Council has continued to invest in school buildings and has opened 4 new modern facilities over the reporting period, including a new provision for children with complex needs at Orchard Brae School.

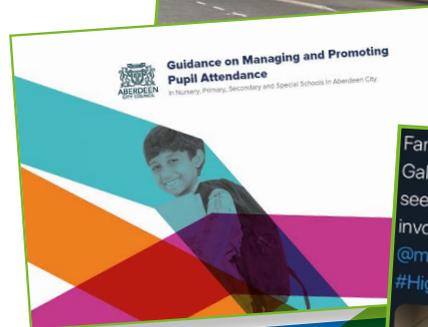
A Right to Education

All children across Aberdeen City have access to free education in a local school where the curriculum is informed and developed by the unique circumstances of the school's local community. Attendance levels are good across the city, although there is variation across schools and a revised attendance procedure has been developed to address this. The impact of this change will be monitored over the coming months.

Staffing shortages do negatively impact on the breadth of curricular offerings in some areas of the city and work is progressing to address this issue by exploring more integrated approaches which will help enable us to extend the range of learning pathways available to all of our young people.

Many schools are currently working to develop positive and respectful relational practices and policies. Some excellent practice is emerging which will be shared to support others to develop similarly effective practices. Local Authority policy guidance supports positive relationships with the UNCRC/ children's rights at the core. Exclusion rates are higher than we would like and officers are currently reviewing the data to determine next steps in this area.

We continue to work to improve attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap across our schools. This work is primarily coordinated through the National Improvement Framework Plan and LOIP. LOIP Outcomes 5 and 6 specifically outline the work being undertaken to strengthen the curricular offering and how to empower our Care Experienced children and young people. Work is ongoing to identify and tackle areas of weakness through revised education service structures, improved quality improvement approaches, the introduction of more robust tracking and monitoring arrangements and an agreed Aberdeen City Learning and Teaching standard.



"I think Aberdeen City Council helps me to enjoy my rights with good quality schools /education (right to an education) and groups with other children (right to meet with other children and join groups/organisations)."

The Employability Team in the Council's City Growth service works to ensure that employability support is provided to people of working age, as well as to school pupils approaching their leaving date.

The team works closely with the council's education service and with partner organisation Skills Development Scotland to ensure that appropriate support is in place to ensure a smooth transition from school through the provision of Pathway Planning meetings. Young people who are socially isolated receive the necessary support to build their confidence and help them to engage with other people at their own pace. This is done by providing a range of activities which are of interest to them and which are engaging and beneficial, with a view to supporting them to have the confidence to join group activities and learning environments.

Work experience placements are available for young people, prioritising these placements for those young people most in need of them, although the team endeavour to ensure that all young people requesting a placement get one and that the placement is of the type that they request.

For care experienced young people, they work closely with the virtual head teacher and with social work colleagues to ensure there is a breadth of support available to enable young people to reach and sustain positive destinations.

The Employability Team annually delivers a 'Moving On' youth recruitment event, which is aimed specifically at young people. This event brings together employers keen to recruit young job seekers, training providers, and educational establishments. The views of attendees are gathered at each event and used to inform the planning of future years' events. The event includes a quiet session specifically for those young people with additional support needs and this has been positively evaluated.

In the work carried out with adults who have caring responsibilities for children, the team provides signposts to available financial supports, where required, to ensure that they are getting the benefits and support which they and their children are entitled to.



One Council approach to supporting educational outcomes

We ensure that services commissioned by us promote and uphold children's rights. The contracts we put in place for social care services, including those for children and young people, have a human rights approach embedded in them with the principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment and legality.

The library service continues to support families to understand the UNCRC through a range of parenting support initiatives as well as by signposting and providing access to appropriate partners. The service has considerable reach through the Bookbug programme which is delivered in partnership with health and education. These sessions effectively support the development of language and literacy skills and of secure attachment, providing a network of peer support for families. The library service welcomed **24,318** children and young people over 18/19, issued **235,140** junior items and helped children and young people access **6,741** hours of PC time.

Consultation and research with audiences during the early phases of the planning for Aberdeen Art Gallery redevelopment highlighted a gap in Early Years provision. A regular programme of Early Years activity was launched in January 2020 including a monthly toddler group at the Art Gallery, music stop and play tours for 2-5 year olds, songs and stories sessions linked to Gallery displays for 0-5s, as well as a regular session of Early Years performances and dance activity in the Cowdray Hall. Combined, these programmes offer our youngest visitors increased opportunities to participate and engage with the city's collections.



"I like that we get to use the libraries for free and that they have a wide selection of books everyone can enjoy..."

In August and September 2019 Formal Learning Officers met with senior phase students in four of the city's secondary schools to hear what they would like Aberdeen Art Gallery to offer young people of their age group. These sessions have informed the public programme offer for learners in the 15-18 age group and will directly lead to the creation of a skills café to run at Aberdeen Art Gallery in the near future.

Art Chat is a series of short soundbites on selected artworks on display in Aberdeen Art Gallery. Primary aged learners from the Northfield area provide their unique perspective for the public to listen to while exploring the displays.

Aberdeen Art Gallery's first ever family ceilidh was held in January 2020. This involved children under eight years old attending, alongside their parents and grandparents, and was a fully sold out event. In response to the overwhelming support and positivity of the attendees, we are programming future family ceilidh events throughout the year.

The first exhibition in our new gallery showcased work by local schools, colleges, arts organisations and artists as well as presenting work by school pupils inspired by objects borrowed from the collection during the Art Gallery redevelopment. This innovative cross curricular project encouraged young minds to explore links between art and science through real artworks and artefacts which were displayed in schools and brought to life through sessions with artists, curators and University of Aberdeen scientists.



Promoting Children's Rights through our Culture Strategy

Children and young people helped support the development of the 10-year culture strategy and plan for the city. Consultation included workshops with individual schools and through Aberdeen Pupil Voice. The children directly influenced the 'Releasing Our Creativity' strand of the plan.

A Youth Arts Group has been established as part of the Culture Aberdeen actions for Releasing Our Creativity. The group are mapping youth opportunities within culture as well as consulting to inform a Youth Arts Action plan, establishing a reference panel which will include a cross section of young people, including young people from protected characteristic backgrounds.

Year of Young People Creative Funding Programme 2018-19

A £100,000 grant was made available to support youth led, co-designed cultural activity, with a focus on events and projects which increased the voice of young people. Decisions about awards were decided by an independent panel which included Aberdeen City youth representatives (Youth Ambassadors & Youth Council). The same representatives were engaged in the design of both the funding criteria and application design process.

The Culture team facilitated a range of events to inform a new collective youth arts strategy for the North East in order to gain a better understanding of how young people wanted to engage in culture, to recognise any barriers to engagement and to find out how young people wanted to be involved.



Special Protection Measures - To what extent do we protect those in need of protection?

(Articles 22,38,39, 37 (a-d), 40, 32,33,34,35, 36 and 30)

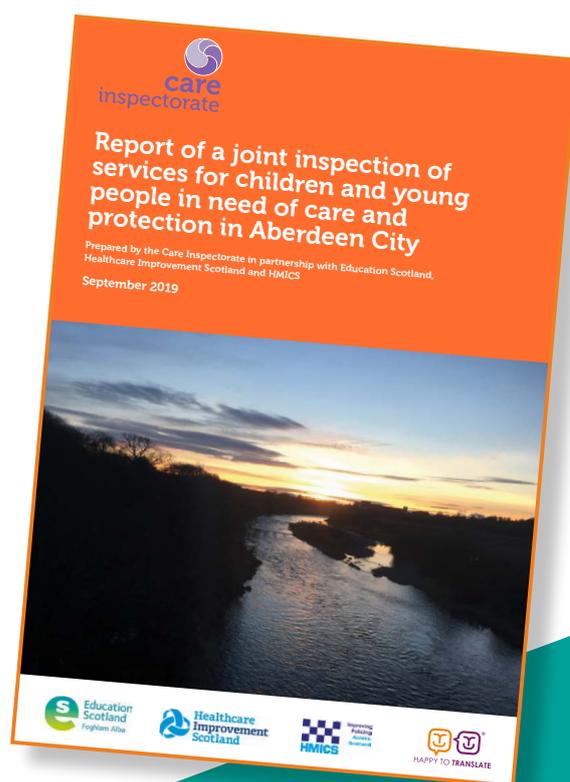
As part of the Care Inspectorate's joint inspection of services for children and young people in need of care and protection they met with or heard directly from over 100 children and young people. The findings of the inspection highlighted significant strengths across Aberdeen City's multi-agency partnership services and collaborative working, along with some areas where improvement was required.

Aberdeen City's Child Protection Committee oversees the strategic planning and improvement of child protection services. There is a comprehensive improvement programme which was refreshed in 2019 and focuses on key priorities. This includes protecting children from neglect, parental drug and alcohol use and emotional neglect. Significant workforce development has seen an increase in the reporting of neglect across the City. This is strongly suggestive of the responsiveness of staff to earlier identification and support of vulnerable children and young people who might be experiencing neglect.

Other key aspects of Child Protection Improvement programme are Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Trafficking. The CSE toolkit developed for professionals has been extremely positively received and has raised the awareness of CSE. Alert to the fact that significant grooming behaviours occur online, the CPC has strongly endorsed the development of a learning programme for P6/7 children and their parents to enhance their awareness of online child protection issues. The development of this was led and informed by children in one of our Primary Schools. We are now exploring how this can be scaled up across all schools. This aligns to the responsibility of the CPC to raise public awareness.

Aberdeen City like most parts of Scotland has experienced Child Trafficking. Although small in numbers, it is important that agencies and staff are alert to young people who are trafficked into the City and the importance of considering their needs within a care and protection context. In responding to their care, protection and cultural needs we are drawing on the knowledge and experience of other trafficked children into other cities across Scotland.

Aberdeen City welcomed the Scottish Government's decision to increase the age of criminal responsibility from 8 to 12. This recognises that most young people who come into conflict with the police will themselves have experienced early life trauma and are more likely to have been a victim of crime. While the level of youth crime in the city continues to fall, we continue to support a whole system approach to youth justice, in doing so recognising the early life experiences of the young person and ensuring wherever appropriate that their circumstances are considered via the Children's Hearing System not the Court.

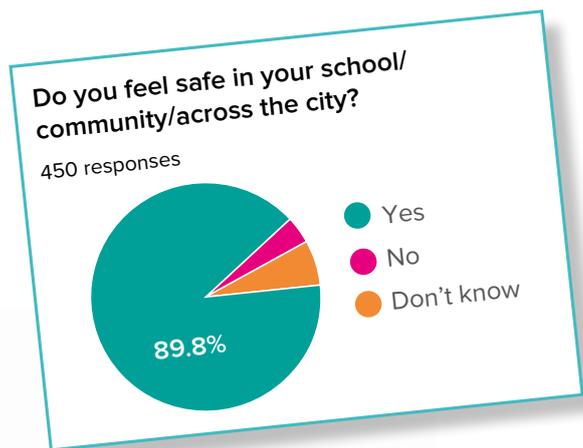


For all children going through a 'court' process it is important that they are appropriately supported and have the necessary legal representation. All children known to Aberdeen City services appearing in Court are supported to engage appropriate legal support.

Feedback from young people in our care homes reflects very well on the care and support provided to assist them make sense of their earlier life experiences. By adopting and embedding a relational approach, independent inspections of our Children's Homes have evaluated our children's homes as "very good".

Children are cared for with respect and dignity and staff do not use physical restraint as a means of managing challenging behaviours. We welcome the reinforcement of this approach as highlighted within the Independent Care Review report published in February 2020.

Aberdeen City has had a "no smacking" policy across all care settings and we welcome the change in legislation that removing the defense of "justifiable assault" to prohibit smacking as a means of disciplining children and young people.



Conclusion

We have made significant progress to “secure better or further effect the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)” over the reporting period but there are areas that require further focus and attention over the next three years. The areas of priority will largely be driven through close partnership working with our community planning partners and specific actions identified and led through our ongoing engagement with Unicef’s Child Friendly City programme and corresponding action plan. However, these themes will broaden and develop as we continue to listen to our city’s children and young people.

Areas of specific focus for us will primarily be aligned to the following areas:

Culture

Across the city

- people value and respect children and young people
- people know about and respect children’s rights

Co-operation and Leadership

Across the city

- people work together to make the city better for children and young people
- decisions are made involving children and young people

Communication

Across the city

- information about children’s rights is shared with children, young people and adults in different ways
- people know when important decisions affecting children, young people and families are being made



Participating

Children and young people

- can share their views and influence decisions that affect them
- can come together to discuss issues that matter to them
- can communicate their concerns and wishes to local leaders and other adults

Child-Friendly Services

Across the city

- Libraries, sports centres, parks, health clinics and other services respect, welcome and support children and young people
- Decisions about how to make services better at the design, commissioning and delivery stage are made with children and young people

Place

Children and young people

- can move freely in the city and their neighbourhood
- feel welcome in public spaces, such as parks, shops and on the high street
- feel connected to their neighbourhood and city.

The message from our young people is clear, we are making progress but there is still work to be done and, through close collaboration with our city's children and young people, we aim to continue to make progress to ensure that children's rights are respected, upheld and promoted to improve the outcomes and experiences for all of our children and young people.

