From mountain to sea

Aberdeenshire COUNCIL

Education and Children's Services Directorate Plan

"Working together for fairer and better lives"

2020 2022

Contents

Executive Summary

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

Education and Children's Service is the largest Service in Aberdeenshire Council with 5646 Full Time Equivalent staff providing Education for children and young people 3 – 18 years, children and families social Work service, resource and performance support, culture and sport services and area manager support. The 2021-2022 revenue budget for Education and Children's Services is more than £351m. The plan encompasses the variety of teams who work together through their own business plans to deliver Services to the children and young people of Aberdeenshire. The plan lays out the priorities and high-level direction of travel for the Service over the next two years, whilst reflecting on what has been achieved in the last two years.

Education and Children's Services have aligned their priorities for 2020-2022 to the new Council Priorities agreed in October 2020 – Our People, Our Environment and Our Economy.

Looking back over the last three years there have been positive upward trends in attainment in schools along with some success in closing the attainment gap. The number of positive destinations for leavers including care experienced children continues to increase and the developing the young workforce initiative continues to have a positive impact with Foundation Apprenticeships. Whilst continuing to support children and families in Aberdeenshire social work have reviewed and improved processes for their service delivery. Work has progressed on the revision of Devolved School Management with the development of professional support offer for Head Teachers to manage all elements of devolved budgets at local level.

Although delayed due to COVID-19 good progress has been made in increasing Early Learning and Childcare across Aberdeenshire with an increase of funded providers from 76 to 180.

During the COVID-19 pandemic our services have provided targeted support and services for children of keyworkers and vulnerable children alongside providing continued education to children during periods of national lockdown. Our community focused services have been invaluable in the pandemic response through mobilisation of staff into pandemic supporting roles.

Our priorities for the next two years are:

- To secure continuous improvement in outcomes for children and young people
- To have better, integrated working arrangements within ECS in pursuit of improved outcomes for children and young people

- To have improved business support and resource management arrangements in place across ECS
- By developing and delivering a revised LLA Business Plan focussed on the three pillars of Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Life @ home.
- Implement COVID-19 recovery action plan

Looking forward we aim to consolidate multi agency working and strengthen local and strategic Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Arrangements. Deliver the actions in the National Improvement Framework, focusing on literacy, numeracy and Health and Wellbeing as key priorities. Transform the business support function in line with long term business requirements. Enhance the pace of Estate review with particular reference to the place-based model including utilisation of outdoor space. Transform the Live Life Aberdeenshire service for long term success in delivery against business plan outcomes.

Forward

I am absolutely delighted to present the directorate service plan for Education and Children's Services (ECS). This plan provides an overview of all services which sit within the directorate and outlines our organisational arrangements, an overview of our financial and staffing arrangements and provides information of current service performance levels. In addition, the plan outlines our high-level service improvement objectives between now and 2022 as well as providing useful links to the wide range of plans and strategies, local, regional and national which inform our services across ECS. Across ECS we offer a huge variety of services to children, young people, their families and communities across Aberdeenshire across a wide geographical area including urban and rural settlements, covering a diverse population in terms of demographic and need. We are committed as a directorate to working not only strategically at Aberdeenshire wide policy committee levels, but also at area and local level, recognising the unique nature of our local authority area. This is the only way we can truly carry out our functions and meet the needs of the communities we serve.

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

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

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

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

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

Regards

Laurence

Laurence Findlay
Director of Education and Children's Services

Introduction

The Aberdeenshire Council Plan provides the strategic policy framework for the delivery of services by the Council. The Council Plan is the Council's corporate plan and covers two years from 2020-2022.

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

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

Our plan draws on the community impact assessment, with a firm focus on working with our partners and communities to deliver those priorities identified by our residents as important to them during the COVID-19 pandemic.
This plan is informed by the Strategic Assessment 2019/20, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2020 (MTFS) and the Community Impact Assessment. The MTFS is designed to ensure that council services remain financially sustainable in the current economic climate. This plan aligns with the Council Plan and Community Planning Partnership priorities and demonstrates how we will support delivery of corporate improvement action plans including the Child Poverty Action Plan, How Good is Our Governance and the Best Value Assurance Report 2020.

Council Plan Diagram
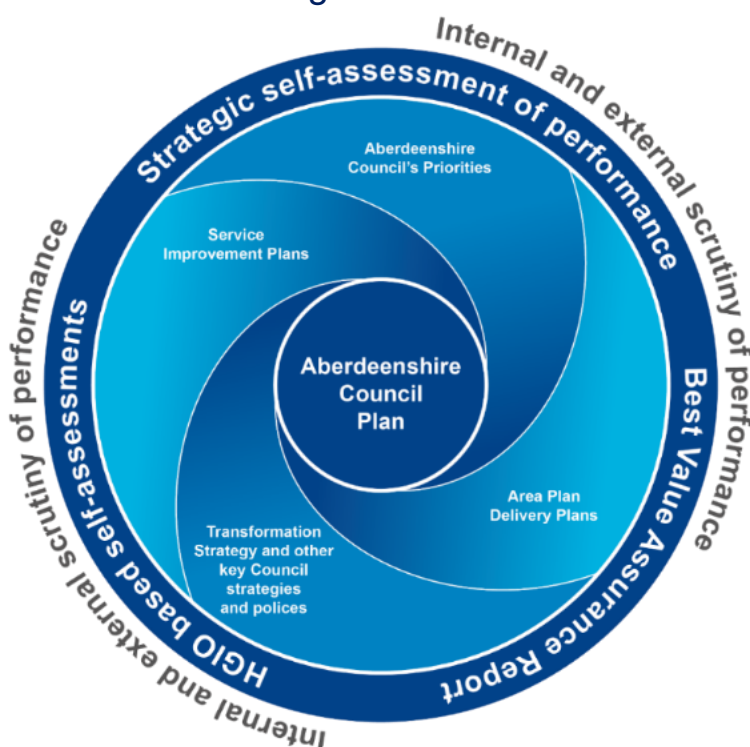
Strategic Context

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

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

Education & Children's Services Planning structure

- Aberdeenshire Vision Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland
- Council Plan (Strategic Priorities)
- Infrastructure Services Service Plan (Service Priorities)
- Health & Social Care Service Plan (Service Priorities)
- Business Services Service Plan (Service Priorities)
- Education & Children's Service Plan (Service Priorities)
- Area Plans (Area Objectives)
- Local Outcomes Improvement Plan
- Locality Plans
- Local Community Plans
- Education Business Plan (Section Objectives)
- Children's Business Plan (Section Objectives)
- Resources & Performance Business Plan (Section Objectives)
- Live Life Aberdeenshire (Section Objectives)
- Team and Individual Plans

Committee Structure

Aberdeenshire Council

Policy Committees
- Business Services
- Communities
- Education & Children's Services
- Infrastructure Services

Regulatory
- Licensing Board
- Local Review Body

Audit Committee
Can refer to ECS and Communities Committee on scrutiny matters

Area Committees
- Banff & Buchan
- Buchan
- Formartine
- Garioch
- Kincardine & Mearns
- Marr

Others
- Committees
- Boards
- Partnerships
- Panels

Education & Children's Services Committee remit is-
- Education
- Children and Young People
- Children's Services
- HR related to Education
- Community Learning & Development

Communities Committee remit for this Directorate is-
- Live Life Aberdeenshire

Remit -
Area specific matters and decision making related to the ECS Directorate and recommendations to the two policy committees

School Placings and Exclusions Appeal Committee

Council and Service Priorities

Review of the Council Priorities

Back in 2017, a set of 11 priorities was agreed by Full Council and they have steered the work of officers. From March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had a huge impact on Aberdeenshire communities, the economy and on public services. It was decided to develop new priorities which better reflect the current challenges being faced by the council and the region. The Council Plan 2020-22 and associated priorities were agreed in October 2020. The Council Priorities fall under three pillars, essential to support wider recovery.

Council Strategic Priorities for 2020/2022

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

Council Priorities

Our People
- Education
- Health & Wellbeing

Our Environment
- Infrastructure
- Resilient Communities

Our Economy
- Economy & Enterprise
- Estate Modernisation

Education and Children's Services Priorities

Council Priorities that align to Service Priority	Council Priorities that align to Service Priority	Council Priorities that align to Service Priority	Council Priorities that align to Service Priority
• Education • Health and Wellbeing • Economy & Enterprise	• Education • Health and Wellbeing • Resilient Communities	• Education • Health and Wellbeing • Economy & Enterprise	• Health and Wellbeing • Resilient Communities
To secure continuous improvement in outcomes for children and young people	To have better, integrated working arrangements within ECS in pursuit of improved outcomes for children and young people	To have improved business support and resource management arrangements in place across ECS	By developing and delivering a revised LLA Business Plan focussed on the three pillars of Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Life @ home,

Area Plans

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

Area Plans will:

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

Local and National Policy Issues

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

Children and Young Peoples (Scotland) Act 2014

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

Aberdeenshire Council's Accessibility Strategy and Brief Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 - guidance	
Aberdeenshire School Catering Service Schools Health Promotion & Nutrition Scotland Act Parent Menu Information Portal	Cultural Strategy 2018 - 2028
Area and Partnerships	**Council**
Local Community Plans	Council Plan
Local Outcomes Improvement Plan	Best Value Assurance Report 2020
Area Locality Plans	
Aberdeenshire Community Learning & Development Plan	
GIRFEC Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy	

Public Sector Equality Duty

Education and Children's Service discharges equalities duty through adhering to Aberdeenshire Council's Equalities Policy.

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

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

Sustainability and climate change commitment

Carbon Budget

The carbon budget for the Council was set at the meeting of Aberdeenshire Council on 18 March 2020. For Education and Children's Services the target for carbon reduction for 2020/21 was set at 380 tCO2e, this being 11% of the Council's overall target. Each Service will now update their policy committee on progress on a 6-monthly basis. Various specific projects were identified towards achieving this goal, for example, replacing current ovens in schools with more energy efficient ovens instead of on a 'like for like' basis and sustainable grounds maintenance for schools taking into account the need for the protection of the biodiversity of sites. Live Life Aberdeenshire also have a number of projects planned, for example the change of vehicles to electric vans and the fitting of heat recovery systems to swimming pool buildings. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the delivery of these projects; however, It is hoped to progress them as soon as is possible.

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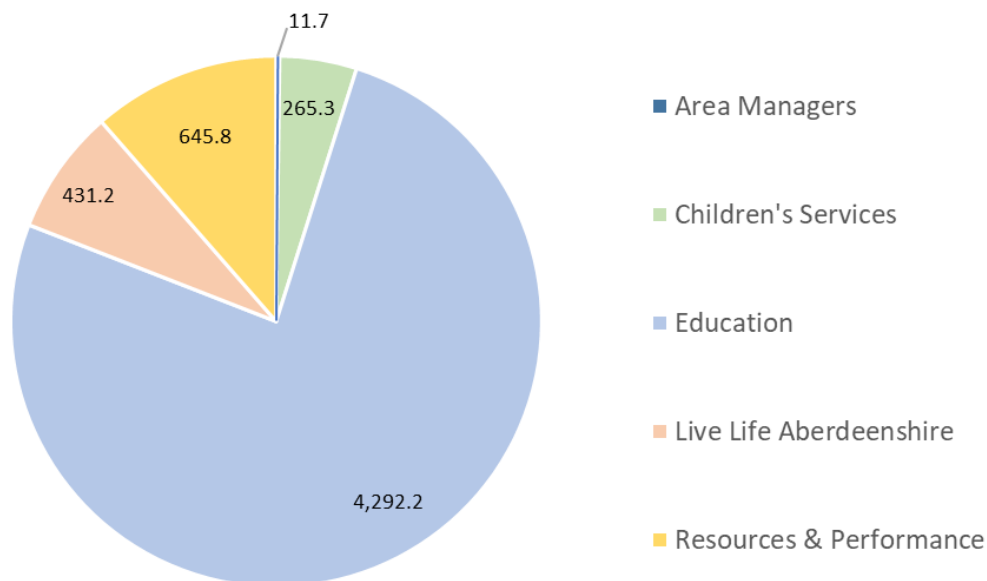
Sustainability Policy

Work is underway in Education and Children's Services on a Sustainability Strategy. The Service recognises that we have an impact on the environment and is working to reduce that impact through responsible waste, energy, and water management. As part of our commitment to safeguarding the local environment we will develop an approach to protect our natural surroundings and work collaboratively with local communities to increase and protect the biodiversity on the sites where we are custodians.

A key element of the strategy is the development and implementation, over the coming period, of a 'Sustainability Policy for Schools' in collaboration with appropriate stakeholders including pupils, staff, Elected Members and others as appropriate. This will be a comprehensive policy and include developing strategies for energy budget management in school, food recycling in all school areas, general waste recycling, reduction in the volume of paper used (schools consume approximately 75% of all paper utilised within the council), litter management, use of sustainable resources and pupil projects in this area. There is already a considerable amount of excellent work being undertaken by individual schools and existing good practice will be included in the development of the policy. This will require a mixture of process change but equally and possibly more importantly cultural change.

Staffing and Workforce Planning

Staff proportions in Education and Children's Services by Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

11.7	■ Area Managers
265.3	■ Children's Services
645.8	■ Education
431.2	■ Live Life Aberdeenshire
4,292.2	■ Resources & Performance

The Education and Children's Services workforce has been stable in recent years with a steady growth in headcount. Recruitment and turnover activity have been high; however recruitment is slowing down. There is a relatively high turnover rate in the teaching workforce at 18%.

In 2020 ECS advertised 935 vacancies, of which 377 were Teaching vacancies. Of these 171 were re-advertisements. There were 1000 new starts over the course of the year as follows: 535 Teaching (of which 206 were Supply), 465 in all other posts (of which 145 were Relief).

Teacher recruitment has been an ongoing issue for several years. Education and Children's Services have implemented a wide variety of strategies to address this. The impact of these strategies can be seen with teaching staff numbers having stabilised, indeed with surpluses in some areas. However, there continues to be shortages experienced in primary schools in north Aberdeenshire and in secondary schools across Aberdeenshire for certain subjects such as science, technical, maths and home economics.

Modern Apprenticeships are offered in a number of positions and Education and Children's Services currently have 14 Modern Apprenticeship in Early Years, Leisure and Administration. There are also 8 Graduate Apprentices in Early Years and Business Management.

A breakdown of Education and Children's Services employees can be found in the following table:
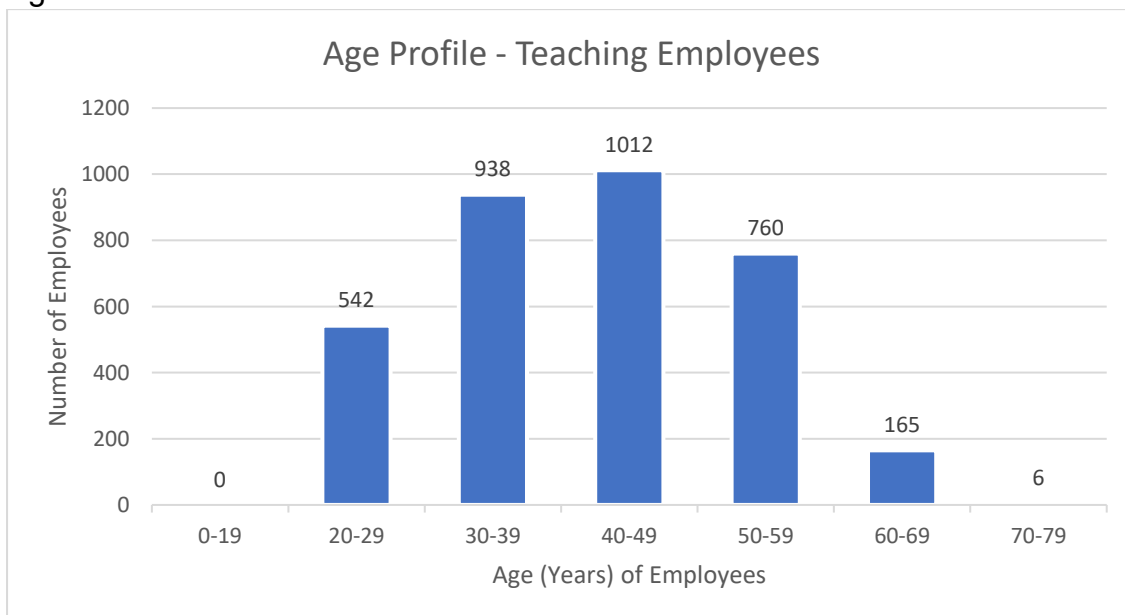
Employment Status – Teaching posts

Contract Status	Male		Female	
	Headcount	Full Time Equivalent	Headcount	Full Time Equivalent
Permanent	507	483.4	2,379	1,894.6
Fixed-Term	101	85.8	435	327.7
Supply	79	-	1,061	-
Total	**687**	**569.2**	**3,875**	**2,222.3**

Employment Status – All other posts

Contract Status	Male		Female	
	Headcount	Full Time Equivalent	Headcount	Full Time Equivalent
Permanent	459	354.9	3,853	2,362.0
Fixed-Term	54	37.3	620	303.7
Relief	1,046	-	2,994	-
Total	**1,559**	**392.2**	**7,467**	**2,665.7**

Total Headcount	**13,588**
Total Full Time Equivalent	**5,849.4**

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

Age Profiles

Age Profile - Teaching Employees

Age Profile - All Other Employees

A bar chart titled "Age Profile - All Other Employees" showing Number of Employees (y-axis) by Age (Years) of Employees (x-axis):

- 0-19: 380
- 20-29: 1446
- 30-39: 1209
- 40-49: 2358
- 50-59: 2302
- 60-69: 1085
- 70-79: 246
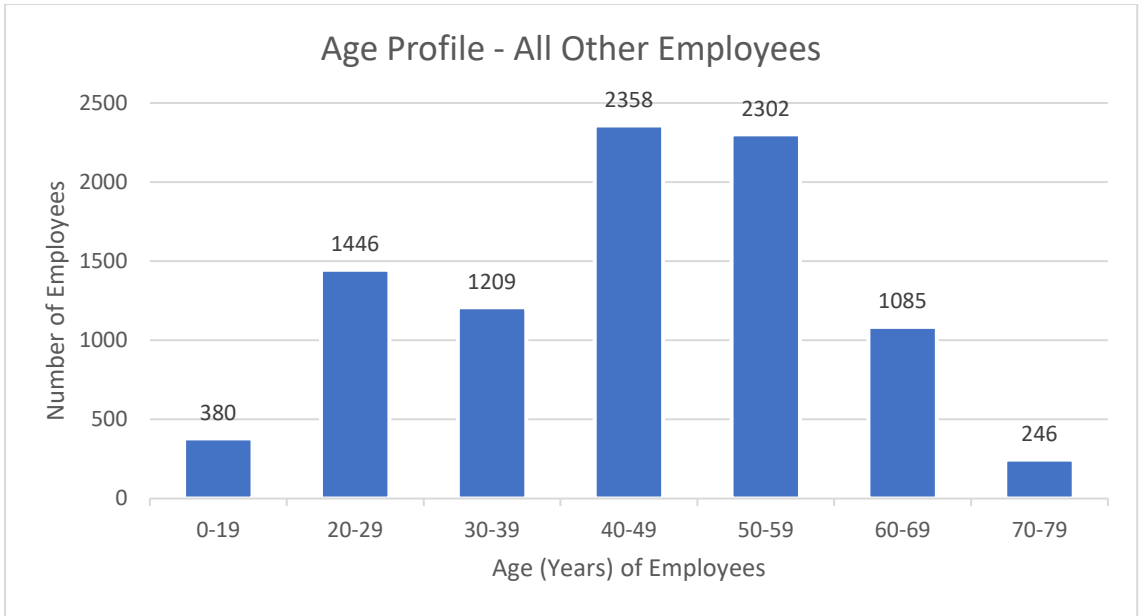
The average age of the teaching workforce is 42 years of age and the average age of all other employees is 44.4 years of age.

Within this:

- 5% of the teaching workforce and 14.7% of all other employees are aged 60 or over
- 15.8% of the teaching workforce and 20.2% of all other employees are aged under 30

Length of Service

Length of Service Profile - Teaching Employees

A bar chart titled "Length of Service Profile - Teaching Employees" showing Number of Employees (y-axis) by Length of Service (Years) (x-axis):

- 0-9: 1939
- 10-19: 1031
- 20-29: 339
- 30-39: 106
- 40-49: 8

Length of Service Profile - All Other Employees
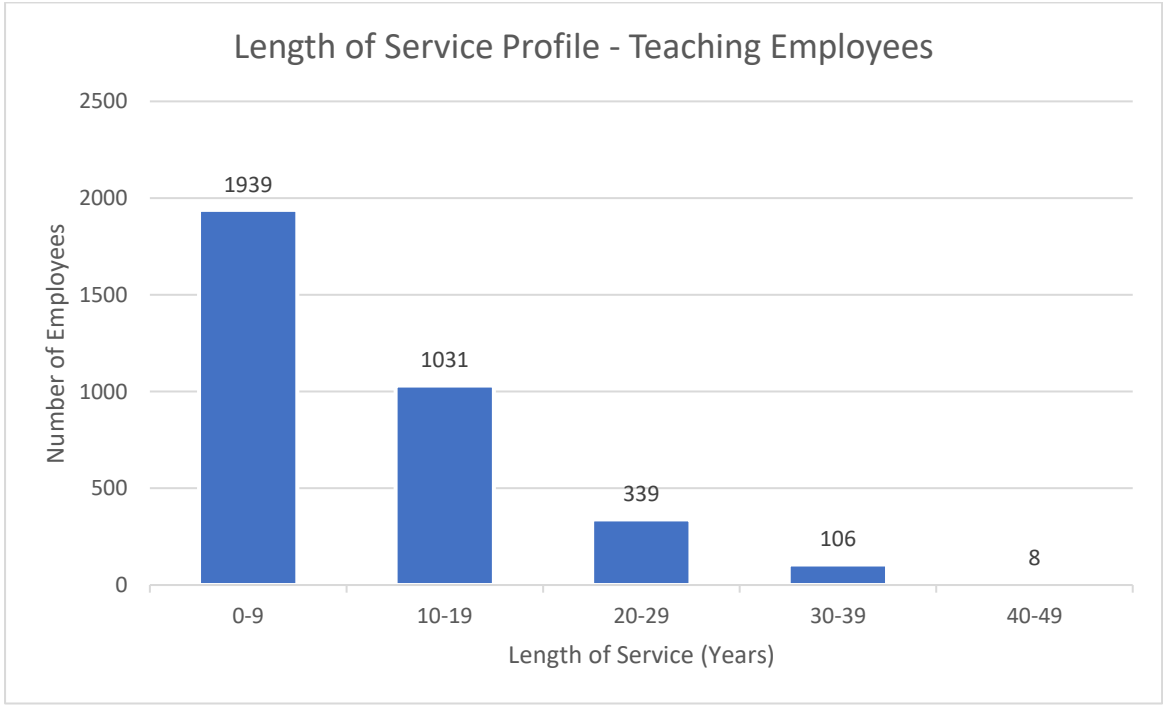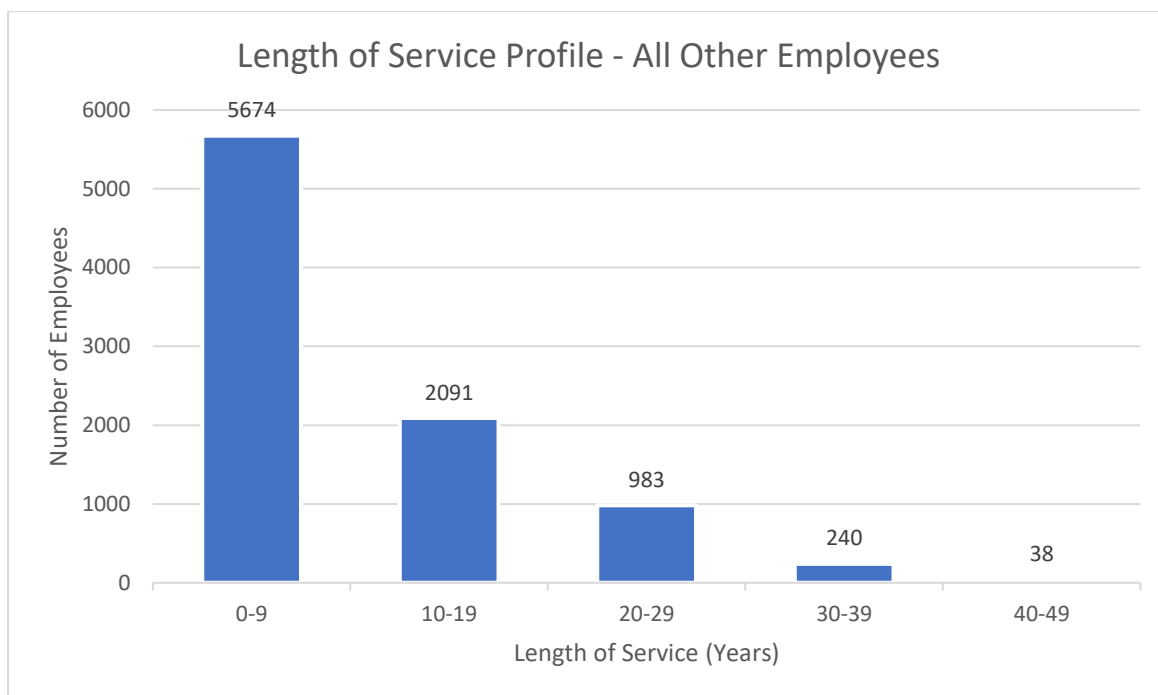
The average length of service for the teaching workforce is 10.2 years and 9.6 years for all other employees.

The turnover rate during 2020 for the teaching workforce was 18.1% and 14.8% for all other employees.

Disability
Across Education and Children's Services, 48 teaching employees and 210 other employees have self-declared a disability, representing 1.4% of teachers and 2.3% of all other employees.

Sickness Absence
Sickness rates in 2019/20 for teachers were 5.94 days per employee and 6.75 days for all other employees.

Impact of COVID-19
COVID-19 has impacted on staff deployment during 2020/21. Staff across Education and Children's Services continued to work throughout the lockdown phases. Staff worked from home where possible delivering services, including home learning for 35,000 school pupils, and in innovative ways making use of digital technologies. Frontline service delivery continued in Children's Social Work and in staffing of the Childcare Hubs for the children of keyworkers and for vulnerable children, as well as working with childcare partner providers for additional childcare provision. Live Life Aberdeenshire, Community Learning & Development and other staff were redeployed from their existing roles to support the Grampian Assistance Hub, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership and Childcare Hubs. Staff re-mobilisation work was undertaken as services started to resume, including the return of staff and pupils to school buildings in August 2020. The health and wellbeing of all staff within Education and Children's Services during the pandemic and in the future will be closely monitored.

Workforce Planning

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

Given the depth and breadth of services that are delivered within Education and Children's Services workforce planning needs to be undertaken at team level. Elements of Education and Children's Services have Workforce Plans in place. Each service area within Education and Children's Services are currently progressing the Workforce Planning Toolkit within their team planning.   In association with HR, each service area will build a better understanding of team workforce profiles and build more detailed workforce actions into all team plans by March 2022.

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

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

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

1. Digital Skills
    A skill which has become evident during the COVID-19 pandemic is digital skills and Education and Children's Services are committed to ensuring our workforce are highly skilled and agile to new demands. Staff have adapted to using Microsoft Office365 packages such as Teams for online meetings, Forms for collecting information and Sharepoint for sharing of documents.   Within schools digital now has an embedded place in education provision. It will be important to ensure that digital skills continue to keep pace with the environment with ongoing continuing professional development in this area.

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

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

Directorate Profile Education and Children's Services

Our Vision and Values

Working together for fairer and better lives

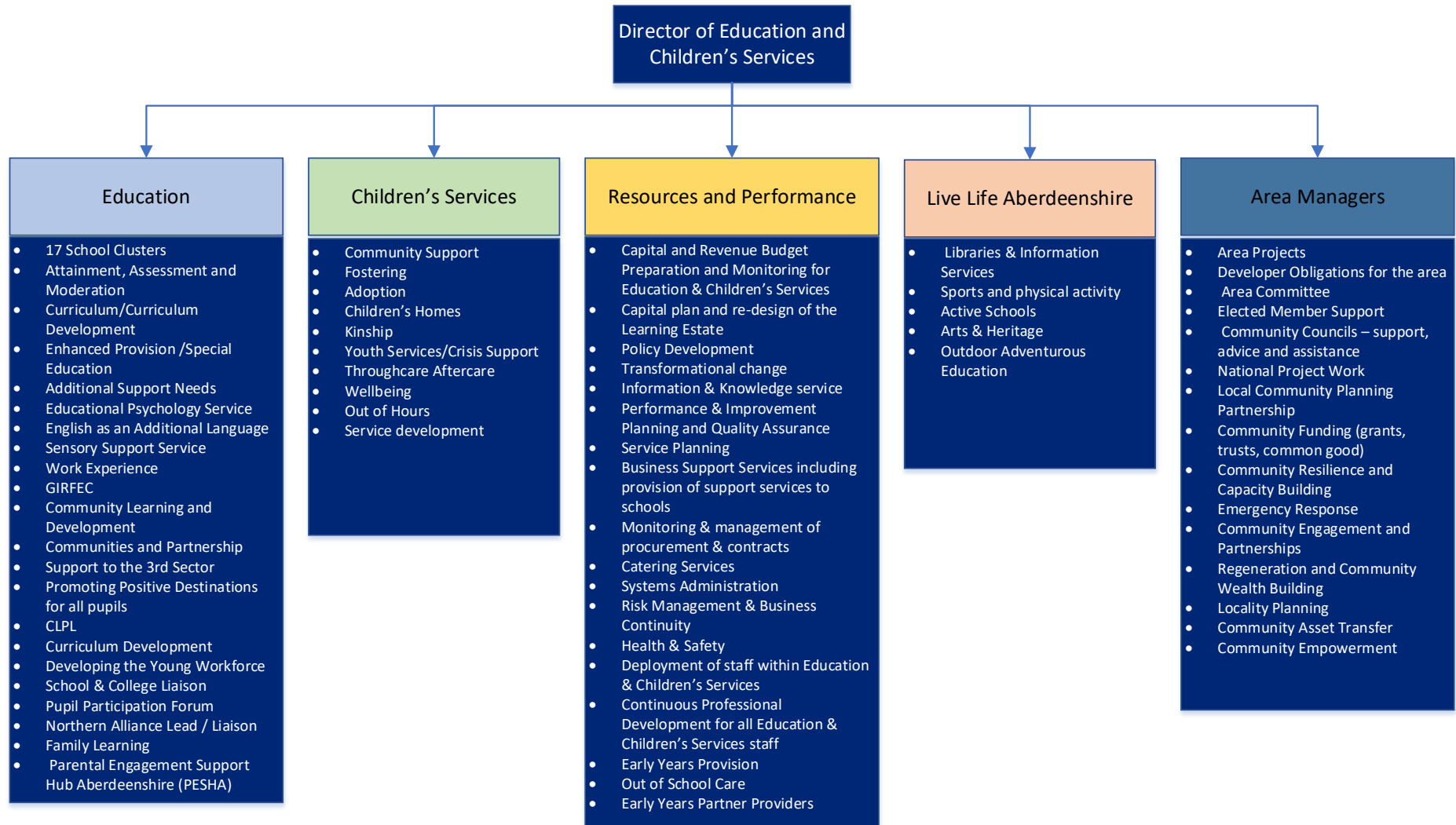| Integrity	• We are open, honest in everything we do. • We are responsible and accountable. • We respect and value the dignity of the individual.
Equity	• We treat everyone fairly and without prejudice. • We will be caring and inclusive.
Empowerment	• We will empower people to achieve their ambition and reach their potential. • We will listen and support individuals, families and communities to realise their ambitions according to their rights. • We will seek collaboration and be courageous in our actions within the scope of our obligations. • We will facilitate growth and development.

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

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

Organisational Chart

Director of Education and Children's Services

Education
- 17 School Clusters
- Attainment, Assessment and Moderation
- Curriculum/Curriculum Development
- Enhanced Provision /Special Education
- Additional Support Needs
- Educational Psychology Service
- English as an Additional Language
- Sensory Support Service
- Work Experience
- GIRFEC
- Community Learning and Development
- Communities and Partnership
- Support to the 3rd Sector
- Promoting Positive Destinations for all pupils
- CLPL
- Curriculum Development
- Developing the Young Workforce
- School & College Liaison
- Pupil Participation Forum
- Northern Alliance Lead / Liaison
- Family Learning
- Parental Engagement Support Hub Aberdeenshire (PESHA)

Children's Services
- Community Support
- Fostering
- Adoption
- Children's Homes
- Kinship
- Youth Services/Crisis Support
- Throughcare Aftercare
- Wellbeing
- Out of Hours
- Service development

Resources and Performance
- Capital and Revenue Budget Preparation and Monitoring for Education & Children's Services
- Capital plan and re-design of the Learning Estate
- Policy Development
- Transformational change
- Information & Knowledge service
- Performance & Improvement Planning and Quality Assurance
- Service Planning
- Business Support Services including provision of support services to schools
- Monitoring & management of procurement & contracts
- Catering Services
- Systems Administration
- Risk Management & Business Continuity
- Health & Safety
- Deployment of staff within Education & Children's Services
- Continuous Professional Development for all Education & Children's Services staff
- Early Years Provision
- Out of School Care
- Early Years Partner Providers

Live Life Aberdeenshire
- Libraries & Information Services
- Sports and physical activity
- Active Schools
- Arts & Heritage
- Outdoor Adventurous Education

Area Managers
- Area Projects
- Developer Obligations for the area
- Area Committee
- Elected Member Support
- Community Councils – support, advice and assistance
- National Project Work
- Local Community Planning Partnership
- Community Funding (grants, trusts, common good)
- Community Resilience and Capacity Building
- Emergency Response
- Community Engagement and Partnerships
- Regeneration and Community Wealth Building
- Locality Planning
- Community Asset Transfer
- Community Empowerment

Our Teams and what we do

Education	
Schools	- The Schools team offer support and challenge to all schools across the authority ensuring all settings have developed effective systems to secure continuous improvement with a focus on achieving excellence an equity for all children and young people. - Improve standards in education in line with national priorities. - All functions are performed In line with the Local government in Scotland Act 2003 where it is stated that council officers have a duty to continuously improve the performance of their services, and effectively manage performance and improvement.
Inclusion Equity and Wellbeing	The Inclusion, Equity & Wellbeing Team is responsible for: - The statutory Additional Support Needs (ASN) requirements of the local authority, - Policy development and implementation, practice framework development, resourcing, and capacity building in relation to ASN, Inclusion, Equity & Wellbeing, - Provision of specialist education support services, including Educational Psychology, English as an Additional Language, Sensory Support, and School Counselling Services.
Performance Empowerment Governance	The Performance, empowerment and governance group work with all schools and central based teams to: - Offer support and challenge and develop consistency in practice. - Support for schools is developed at a universal, targeted, or intensive level with the overarching aim of all schools becoming high performing establishments. Work with schools includes: - Ensuring all school improvement is focussed and interventions are informed through robust analysis of data and rigorous self-evaluation. - Ensuring that data and other relevant evidence is being used effectively and leading to improvement. - Improving approaches to moderation, monitoring, tracking and assessment and ensuring this includes a particular focus on equity. - Offering relevant professional learning opportunities to support school improvement, meeting both local and national priorities. - Developing a shared understanding of an empowered system within and across schools using a School Improvement Partnership approach (School Trios) - Building capacity for school improvement through professional learning and peer collaboration with an ethos of support and challenge. (School Trios)

	▪ Working with schools and the corporate support networks to co-produce a model for Devolved School Management

Communities and Partnerships	Community Learning and Development (CLD)
	• CLD staff work to reduce inequalities in Aberdeenshire by improving life chances for individuals and families and by supporting community groups and organisations in building strong and resilient communities. We do this through three different work strands of:
	    ○ Work with Young People
	    ○ Work with Adults
	    ○ Work with Communities
	• CLD work is targeted support to where it is needed most.
	• Working with adults and families - supporting adults through improving skills and confidence
	• Working to support and strengthen communities - supporting volunteers, developing new groups; working with community groups to strengthen organisational and operational development, delivering learning
	• Working with young people - supporting young people to overcome challenges by developing life skills

Developing the Young Workforce	• Improvement in employability skills and sustained positive school-leaver destinations for all young people. • Support pupils through the development of Foundation Apprenticeships. • The DYW agenda is in close partnership with SDS (Skills development Scotland). They also have close links with Aberdeen University in assisting employability for vulnerable young people through Project Search and other developments including link with DYW North East which supports effective employer to school links. • Support every pupil to access at least one work placement during the senior phase of Academy. • Support the promotion of diverse learner pathways across all 17 academies.
Children's Services	
Children's Services Social Work	• Targeted service to over 2,000 families in need as part of the Getting it Right for Every Child approach. • The Children's Services Plan identifies 5 priority areas that informs the delivery of Children's Services. • Statutory duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of children, young people, and their families • We have 12 Community Teams throughout Aberdeenshire working with children: looked after; have a disability; young carers • Out of Hours service and teams providing crisis and wellbeing support.

	• Registered services of Adoption, Kinship, Fostering and Residential Homes provide support to children, families and carers. • Throughcare Aftercare team support care experienced young people up to the age of 26. • We aspire to reduce offending through diversionary and early and effective intervention activities. This targets individual offending by advancing the Whole Systems Approach (WSA) and improving life chances. Through our community support, we do provide specific services through a Youth Services Team.

Resources and Performance

Learning Estates	• Ensure that the learning estate is fit for purpose and advise the council accordingly. Following the 10 guiding principles of the Scotland LE Strategy: Connecting People, Places and Learning. Supporting the council target for carbon reduction. • Create and maintain annual School Roll Forecasts and project utilisation of school buildings maximising occupancy where possible • Determine secondary school admission limits • Responding and processing of all placing requests in line with the policy and providing the case for the authority for appeals • Lead statutory consultations for changes to the Learning Estates • Respond to planning applications, inform the Local Development Plan and Developer Obligation process • Provide support and collaboration to the Northern Alliance collaborative. • Liaison between ECS teams and Property & Facilities Management teams to ensure smooth delivery of relevant projects and efficient utilisation of budget, wherever possible.
Catering	• Provide a high-quality service to all Aberdeenshire's schools and pupils whilst complying with Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drinks in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2008. • Provision of a hot school meals – on average 20,000 meals per day • Provide a service in 5 Community Cafes, day care and luncheon clubs • Providing meals that are prepared by well-trained catering staff to ensure the highest of quality whilst adhering to Environmental Health legislation and health and safety regulations.

Business Support and Performance	• Provide business support to teams across Education & Children's Services to allow these teams to concentrate on frontline service delivery.
	     ○ Administration
	     ○ financial administration

	- Budget monitoring - Staff deployment - Systems support - Health and safety support - Procurement support - support on improvement, performance management and service planning - Janitorial and technician services.
Early Years	- ELC settings are all those which offer education and childcare to children up to school age. These include settings known as family centres, nursery schools, nursery classes attached to primary schools, and childminders. ELC settings can be operated by local authorities, private businesses, voluntary sector organisations, and in the case of childminders, self-employed individuals. - Support the Scottish Government aims to increase the hours of free ELC for entitled children from 600 to 1,140 hours pa by ensuring that the capacity to deliver funded entitlement (eligible 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds) of 1140 hours (by August 2021) is sufficient through ongoing monitoring of the sector. - Working with providers of funded entitlement (schools, day-care, childminders, playgroup, 'pop up' provision) to ensure that they meet the national standards defined by (Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland) to continue to deliver this service and to raise developmental and educational outcomes. - Providing training and development opportunities to ensure that all settings meet service legal requirements and to improve, knowledge and understanding of the ELC workforce. - Providing opportunities for workforce development in partnership with other agencies and services/professionals. - Providing and supporting wrap around care for school age children across Aberdeenshire. - Supporting third sector in working with families to support educational outcomes for children aged 0 to 5 and to support early intervention.

Live Life Aberdeenshire

Live Life Aberdeenshire is a customer facing service which offers easily accessible, high-quality Culture and Sport experiences delivering improved mental and physical health and wellbeing, fun and learning from mountain to sea for everyone living in, working in or visiting Aberdeenshire.
Our purpose is -
To provide data-informed and local intelligence-led responsive opportunities for participation in arts, libraries, heritage, learning and physical activity.

To deliver improved health & wellbeing and develop a sense of belonging to place and community.

Live Life Aberdeenshire staff work across all networks in a range of facilities. We also deliver high quality outreach, virtual online programmes, and partnership delivery. We offer a quality membership scheme which is available to all residents which encourages participation in a wide range of culture and sports activity. The service offers experiences to visitors through a range of high profile partnership sports events and facilities, outdoor experiences, online Arts and Heritage offer and visitor attractions.

The Live Life Aberdeenshire work contributes to
- Improved mental health and physical health and wellbeing
- Support employability and skills
- Personal and family support and resilience
- Community capacity building and resilience
- Tackling poverty and equality

Area Managers Team

- The Area Manager provides leadership, vision and strategic direction to the Council and its Services in partnership with the Corporate Leadership Group and elected members. The Area Manager is a key interface between Elected Members and officers, they support the democratic processes and provide advice on policy and professional matters
- The Area Managers' Offices manage the Area Committee cycle, this enables and supports local decision making in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Governance. The Area Managers support the local Elected Members and ensure that they are involved in local decision making.
- Full Council requires that every elected Member is a member of an Area Committee and also serves on a policy committee or the Audit Committee. Area Managers are Chief Officers, and they are members of the Council's Corporate Leadership Group. Each Area Manager is also part of a Council Directorate team with two in Business Services, two in Education and Children's Services and two in Infrastructure Services. Area Committees are therefore able to influence policy making within the context of local grass roots requirements. This principle is embedded in the Scheme of Governance, specifically in the delegations in Part 2A and in Part 4B the Policy Development and Review Framework. the Policy Development and Review Framework.

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

Financial Profile

Revenue Budget 2021 – 2026 EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES	BASE BUDGET 2021/22 £000	BASE BUDGET 2022/23 £000	BASE BUDGET 2023/24 £000	BASE BUDGET 2024/25 £000	BASE BUDGET 2025/26 £000
Admin & Management	8,064	8,291	8,524	8,764	9,011
Area Managers - Banff & Buchan and Garioch	791	813	835	858	882
Early Years - Nurseries	19,083	19,231	19,593	19,963	19,963
Early Year - Central Costs	20,395	20,971	21,350	21,737	21,737
Out of School Care	(247)	(246)	(245)	(244)	(244)
Primary	111,605	114,383	117,237	120,172	123,180
Secondary	108,190	110,796	113,472	116,222	119,039
Special	31,076	31,882	32,710	33,562	34,436
Community Learning & Development	3,858	3,962	4,069	4,179	4,292
Active Schools	185	208	232	256	282
Catering - General	1,299	1,258	1,278	1,299	1,320
Catering - Primary & Early Years	3,669	3,789	3,859	3,930	3,930
Catering - Secondary & Vending	1,032	1,041	1,046	1,051	1,051
Catering - Special	98	101	102	104	104
Catering - Support Staff	468	481	488	496	496
Children - Community Care	13,067	13,414	13,739	14,072	14,413
Children - Self Directed Support	1,667	1,675	1,716	1,758	1,758
Children - Family Placement	8,330	8,457	8,586	8,718	8,852
Children - Residential Care	2,191	2,254	2,319	2,386	2,455
Children - Out of Authority Placements	11,952	12,079	12,207	12,337	12,468
	346,773	354,839	363,117	371,620	379,425
Live Life Aberdeenshire					
Arts Development	487	501	516	531	546
Macduff Aquarium	170	172	174	175	176
Grant Aid	102	104	106	108	110
Libraries	4,169	4,280	4,394	4,511	4,631
Museums	650	662	674	686	698
Outdoor and Adventurous Activities	181	187	192	198	204
Halls	363	368	374	379	384
Sport & Leisure	3,841	3,909	3,979	4,050	4,122
	9,963	10,183	10,409	10,638	10,871
Expenditure to be funded from borrowing	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)
EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES TOTAL	354,736	363,022	371,526	380,258	388,296

2021-2036 Capital Plan	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	
	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	
	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026-2031	2031-2036	Total
COMMUNITIES								
25 Live Life Aberdeenshire	1,752	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,752
Communities Total	**1,752**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1,752**
EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES								
30 Early Learning Childcare (1140 Hours Projects)	9,572	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,572
31 Early Learning Childcare (Children & Young Peoples Bill)	105	0	0	0	0	0	0	105
32 ECS Enhancements	3,591	3,870	4,419	2,850	2,850	14,250	14,250	46,080
33 Capitalisation of Other Projects	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	10,000	10,000	30,000
34 Improved Disabled Access (Education)	773	550	1,104	550	550	2,750	2,750	9,027
35 Inverurie Community Campus	354	0	0	0	0	0	0	354
36 Learning Estates Improvements	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	100
37 Peterhead Community Campus	0	0	0	0	98,600	0	0	98,600
38 PFI Lifecycle Replacement	1,283	2,206	1,717	1,953	1,451	3,942	2,311	14,863
39 Portlethen/Hillside PS Causeymounth Road Upgrading Wks	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
Education & Children's Services Total	**17,793**	**8,626**	**9,240**	**7,353**	**105,451**	**30,942**	**29,311**	**208,716**

Efficiency Savings

Through self-evaluation and identification of areas for improvement, reduction in expenditure can be identified. During the preparation of the Education & Children's Services revenue budget these areas are put forward to Councillors for agreement to reduce budgets in these areas.

Directorate Performance Framework

Performance

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

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

Education and Children's Services Committee

Communities Committee

Best Value Assurance Report 2020

Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF)

In addition to outcome measures that help demonstrate how the Service is working towards the council priorities it leads on and scrutinises, Education & Children's Services (ECS) also contribute to the Aberdeenshire Council response to key national trends against the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) annual statutory performance indicators.

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

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

Aberdeenshire are listed in (LGBF) *Family Group 1*

East Renfrewshire	East Dunbartonshire	Aberdeenshire
Edinburgh, City of	Perth & Kinross	Aberdeen City
Shetland Islands	Orkney Islands	

Where are we now?

Activity review and key successes

Attainment	- As of August 2020, National Improvement Framework return 97% of schools have evaluated themselves as satisfactory or better in each of the four core quality indicators assessed. - In the Education Scotland inspections completed during session 2019-2020, all schools received a grading of satisfactory or better in the quality indicators evaluated which include, leadership of change, learning teaching and assessment and ensuring wellbeing, equality, and inclusion. Most schools received a grading of satisfactory or better in the final quality indicator graded, raising attainment and achievement. From the inspections carried out the majority of schools were evaluated as good or better in all four Quality indicators assessed. - Over the last three years there has been an improving trend in data for both literacy and numeracy for P1, P4 and P7. (Due to COVID-19 a decision was taken by Scottish government not to collect the annual achievement of a level return for P1, P4, P7 or S3.) - There has also been an improving trend in attainment in numeracy at S3 level. - Numeracy attainment tends to be broadly in line with the Comparator across all stages - The three key Breadth & Depth measures of general attainment in Insight show a general picture of improvement over the previous 3 years (2017-19) - Literacy & Numeracy attainment by S4 are consistently in line with or above the Insight Virtual Comparator - Level 4 and Level 5 Insight measures for Literacy & Numeracy attainment of Leavers are consistently above the Insight Virtual Comparator - There has been a significant increase in the number of alternative types of qualifications offered in schools to provide a wider range of curricular pathways through the senior phase. These include National Progression Awards, National Certificates, Customised Awards, Personal Development Awards, Workplace Learning Awards, Foundation Apprenticeships, and other Awards. See table next:

Literacy

| Year | Local Authority | P1 Early Level | P4 First Level | P7 Second Level | P1, P4, & P7 combined (expected Level) | Percentage | |
						S3 Third Level or better	S3 Fourth Level
2018/19	Aberdeenshire	75	68	69	71	82	44
2018/19	**Scotland**	**76**	**70**	**71**	**72**	**88**	**48**
2017/18	Aberdeenshire	74	66	69	70	83	45
2017/18	**Scotland**	**75**	**69**	**70**	**71**	**87**	**46**
2016/17	Aberdeenshire	72	67	62	67	85	47
2016/17	**Scotland**	**74**	**68**	**66**	**69**	**87**	**44**

Numeracy

| Year | Local Authority | P1 Early Level | P4 First Level | P7 Second Level | P1, P4, & P7 combined (expected Level) | Percentage | |
						S3 Third Level or better	S3 Fourth Level
2018/19	Aberdeenshire	86	78	76	80	92	65
2018/19	**Scotland**	**85**	**77**	**76**	**79**	**90**	**59**
2017/18	Aberdeenshire	86	74	76	79	91	64
2017/18	**Scotland**	**85**	**76**	**75**	**78**	**89**	**56**
2016/17	Aberdeenshire	84	76	68	76	91	64
2016/17	**Scotland**	**83**	**75**	**70**	**76**	**88**	**56**

	Closing the attainment gap
	• In Assessment of Curriculum for Excellence (ACEL) data, the difference between Quintile 5 and Quintile 1s achieving Level by Stage for Numeracy tend to be smaller for Numeracy than for Literacy and there is some evidence of closing the gap at P7 and S3
	• In ACEL data, the difference between Quintile 5 and Quintile 1s achieving Level by Stage for Literacy has reduced significantly at P7 over the past 3 years (2017-2019). Due to Covid-19 there was no ACEL collection during 2019/2020.
Positive Destinations	• Positive destinations for our Care Experienced Young People have increased from 80.9% to 94.9%
	• There has been an increase in Family Firm placements, with focused outcome delivery by Aberdeenshire Throughcare, Aftercare team and a range of partners contributing to Corporate Parenting including improved joint-working between Skills Development Scotland, Social Work, Education and Opportunities for All Officer.
	• Over half of Care Experienced Young People went into Further Education, an opportunity now financially viable as a result of the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.
Developing the Young Workforce	• Session 2020-21 Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) delivery commenced on 1st June 2020. There has been a considerable increase in numbers choosing to study an FA. Currently there are 315 pupils across 10 FA frameworks and 14 schools opting to study an FA through the Aberdeenshire Council model.
	• COVID-19 has had an impact on delivery and strategic planning. Successful delivery so far has involved the development of virtual and remote learning and the development of suitable teaching and learning resources.
	• Working with partners we have developed simulated experiences to assist with the delivery of the SVQ elements of the courses.
	• Successful bid made to Skills Development Scotland to deliver Level 4&5 Foundation Apprenticeships in Construction, Hospitality and Automotive.
	• The 'relaunch' of the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)/ Career Education delivery in our schools has been delayed due to COVID-19.
Inclusion, Equity & Wellbeing	• Strategic planning for over 2,000 vulnerable children and young people during school closures, and approximately 300 children and young people during the summer holidays.
	• Telephone and online support service for parents and carers during lockdown.
	• School Counselling Service established

Performance Empowerment and Governance	Universal level training has been offered to all schools linking to the following: • Learning teaching and assessment - developing more effective practice across schools. • Data informed practice – supporting more effective use of data to consider next steps for improvement. (focus on literacy and numeracy) • Effective assessment and moderation practices. From this the majority of schools and clusters of schools have engaged in professional discussion in this area leading to more collegiate practices within schools and also leading to schools reporting an increased level of confidence in the attainment level reported. • Interrogation of authority data and understanding of schools' local context when identifying types of poverty that exist in individual school communities. • Assessment in BGE –Training sessions offered to all HTs to support their understanding of assessment giving consideration to the six key themes. • Data packs have been developed for pilot schools in four clusters this session supporting more scrutiny and analysis of data to drive improvement. • SNSA training sessions have been offered to all HTs supporting the analysis of this data at both individual school level as well as at cluster level. • Attainment advisor offered support to all schools in understanding different types of poverty prompting schools to consider aspects of their own school community – generational poverty, rural poverty etc. • From March 2020 Attainment advisor has been working in a targeted way with a number of schools and clusters to support their understanding of the poverty related attainment gap as well as considering strategies and supports to ensure improvement in outcomes for pupils. • A dashboard of schools' information has been developed in order to support identification of schools that require universal, targeted, or intensive support. An agreed protocol has now been developed to support working consistently with schools considered in need of intensive support. A calendar of professional activities has also been designed to support universal schools for session 2020-2021 improving consistency in practice at local authority level. • School Improvement Partnerships pilot programme (school 'trios') has been developed from 2017 onwards. This has included a focus on school leadership teams collaborating and offering support and challenge to each other around aspects of school improvement. Workshops have taken place to empower school leadership teams with a focus on:

	- Advanced evaluative writing including understanding the six-point scale to support professional dialogue and critical reflection. Consideration has also been given to this work in the context of school improvement planning and validated self-evaluation reports. - Clear expectations and behaviours including consideration of the PRAISE framework which incorporates the principles of best practice: purpose; relationships; awareness; information gathering; sharing information; enabling - Coaching conversations - 57 of Aberdeenshire's 169 primary and secondary schools who participated in the orientation year have now moved into year one of the VSE cycle. - A further 43 schools have commenced school improvement partnerships (School Trios) this session - Work will continue with School Improvement Partnerships although cognisance will need to be taken in relation to the position schools find themselves in relation to the global pandemic.
Community Learning and Development	- The CLD Service has maintained good and very good levels of delivery in line with the most recent Education Scotland report on quality of provision. Over 12 months 8,668 people were engaged overall with 5492 registered learners benefitting from our direct delivery of programmes and activity and 205 active volunteers supporting this work. - Performance data for the period continues to show high levels of achievement with 93.4% of our targeted adult learners (1565/1462) and 96.6% of our targeted young people (6439/6218) achieving positive outcomes. 80.1% of the community groups (166/133) supported achieved their developmental outcomes - This covers our role with young people who are working with CLD in activities such as youth forums; youth activities; employability and skills development projects, individually designed pathways, transition work and health and wellbeing programmes. It also captures adult learning successes in relation to informal and accredited learning opportunities in community settings, targeted group work (e.g., an increase in family learning opportunities), English for Speakers of Other Languages classes, literacies work and personal development. - Community Development activities have enhanced the capacity of individual groups to improve their own organisations or community and to contribute to community projects which promote increased community involvement and participation
Children's Social Work Services	**Community Support** - A quality assurance framework was devised, and cycle of self-evaluation implemented over 2019-20. This has provided qualitative data on the support offered to children and their families from referral through to

allocation of a service. This has included recognition that 98% of plans reviewed had evidence of multi-agency working. In 85% of plans reviewed, there was evidence that the plan was making a difference.
- Improvements to call handling has also ensured initial enquiries are dealt with timeously and further quality assurance activities, including an audit of our duty system has also reflected that over 80% of referrals are concluded within 12 weeks.
- Increasing number of Young Carers receiving an assessment and support package to continue their caring role.
- Other improvement activities undertaken in 2019/20 include update to our child and young person assessment and observed contact assessment for planning.

Looked After Children
- Our Registered services continue to receive positive inspection grades, recognising ongoing improvement activities to ensure the best outcome for families. Within our Children's Homes for example, there is clear engagement and participation with children and their families with measurement of improvement in their individual wellbeing undertaken.
- There is a continued increase in care experienced young people having a positive destination, including continuing care, living independently, and accessing support where required. Work also continues with Adult Services in the transition from Children's Services, particularly for those young people who experience a high level of risk due to their experiences.
- We continue to work with multi-agency partners in progressing the outcomes defined in the Corporate Parenting action plan in improving outcomes for all care experienced children and young people.

Child Protection
- There is now a dataset which enables analysis of local data. This includes highlighting areas of risk and outcomes in the child protection process. Emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect, and domestic abuse continue to be the main reasons child protection procedures are undertaken. Our data also reflect appropriate and timely interventions to promote and safeguard children. This includes over the last 3 years; an average 74% percent of Initial Referral Discussions will result in a Child Protection Investigation.
- Our service continues to participate in all Child Protection Committee quality assurance activities which has included an audit of Child Protection Case Conferences and development of multi-agency Core Group Guidance.

Whole Systems Approach (Youth Justice)
- There has been significant progress in mapping and developing responses to children who are supported by our Youth Services Team. This has included being part of a wider review of support and planning for

	early and effective interventions with families to reduce risk and address need. There have been 3 workstreams identified and now all progress to continue to develop the whole systems approach with multi-agency partners. • There continues to be a high conversation rate compared to national figures for referral to the Children's Reporter resulting in a Hearing.
Devolved School Management	• Work has progressed on the revision of the Aberdeenshire Devolved School Management Scheme • Development ongoing of a co-produced Professional learning and Professional Support offer for Head Teachers to manage all elements of devolved budgets developed • Devolvement of Primary School teaching and Additional Support Needs budgets being piloted
Early Learning and Childcare (Early Years)	• Increase in funded providers from 76 to 180 • £1 million Capital Grant Scheme offered and allocated to private/voluntary/independent childcare sector. Childcare providers have been able to leverage other funding in addition to Capital Grants. Over 160 1140 ELC places will be created as a result. • Total of 72 capital projects have been delivered, totalling a value of £9 million. • Universal, targeted and intensive QA support in place. Working collaboratively with the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Government.
Learning Estates	• Supported the delivery of Learning Estate Investment projects e.g., Inverurie Community Campus • Rezone of Inverurie primary school catchments • Undertook Community engagement e.g., Peterhead, Gartly, Strachan, Portlethen, Blairs development rezoning to Mackie Academy, Longhaven School • Kemnay Academy capacity review leading to Kinellar P7 option to attend Inverurie Community Campus • Supported the delivery of two new builds and 70 refurbishment projects across the Early Years Estate to support the delivery of 1140 hours, including Meiklemill School, Portlethen Primary School, Buchanhaven School, Westhill Primary School and Banchory Primary School. • Removal of temporary accommodation at Portlethen Primary School, Kintore, Premnay and Tullynessle School.
Catering	• Introduced catering for Early Years and Childcare establishments averaging 750 meals per day. • Carbon Budget / Sustainability - Food waste disposal is being introduced to all Aberdeenshire schools. To increase sustainability and cut costs we now share information such as menus online, seeing the reduction in 40,000 printed menus.

	- Parents Menu Information Portal - We are developing a new Wellbeing Portal for parents which will streamline work on allergens and nutritional specifications. - Throughout COVID-19 - Supplying breakfast, lunch and dinner within school hubs. Adapting catering service to meet the changing circumstances e.g., online free school meal payments, pack lunch provision - School Return in August 2020 - Worked with each school to establish the best model for the delivery of catering services in each locality. - Participated in The Eat Out to Help Out scheme as a service to provide the best possible support for our children and young people.
Live Life Aberdeenshire	- The service recorded approximately **4.38 million** visits to our facilities and programmes across Aberdeenshire, **an increase of 2.7%** on 2018/19**.** All of which give the residents of Aberdeenshire the opportunity to participate in health and wellbeing activities. - Our customers reported Overall satisfaction across Live Life Aberdeenshire of over 96% 4622 individuals were surveyed, and it is very encouraging that nearly 94% of responses indicated that the LLA service had a positive impact on them. - The service benefited from around 18,600 hours of volunteers input in 2019/20 with the vast majority being from Active schools. - The main targeted participation within SPA / Active Communities were the Macmillan Move More programme to support cancer patients to be more active which was established in 2018/19 and has since expanded across Aberdeenshire, and the Aberdeenshire Health walks which were established in 2019. - The library service is working with groups addressing deafness, visual impairment, mental health Alzheimer's and Women's health. - The Aquarium ran a weekend targeting intergenerational participation aimed at grandparents and grandchildren. - Our Across the grain festival successfully evolved from the first year and attracted positive praise. - BBC Scotland and the Stonehaven Folk Festival worked with Live Life Aberdeenshire to put on a very successful Hogmanay event in the Stonehaven Town hall which promoted the local community and the North East.

Opportunities

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

Digital technologies have been crucial to the continuity of Education and Children's Services, allowing the work of Education, Social Work and Resources and Performance teams to continue uninterrupted, and for some service provision to continue in Live Life Aberdeenshire. Some examples include:
- Free school meals – utilising payments directly into bank accounts for those with
- Collaborative problem solving and new system design across internal and external partners e.g., outbreak management of COVID-19 with Health partners
- Flexibility of employees to adapt to new roles in an emergency
- Challenging old ways of working and breaking down barriers
- Online learning
- Implementing an in-school pupil assessment system to replace the cancelled exam programme
- Reduction of cost and travel time through digital virtual solutions

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

Risk

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

Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers

Areas for Improvement

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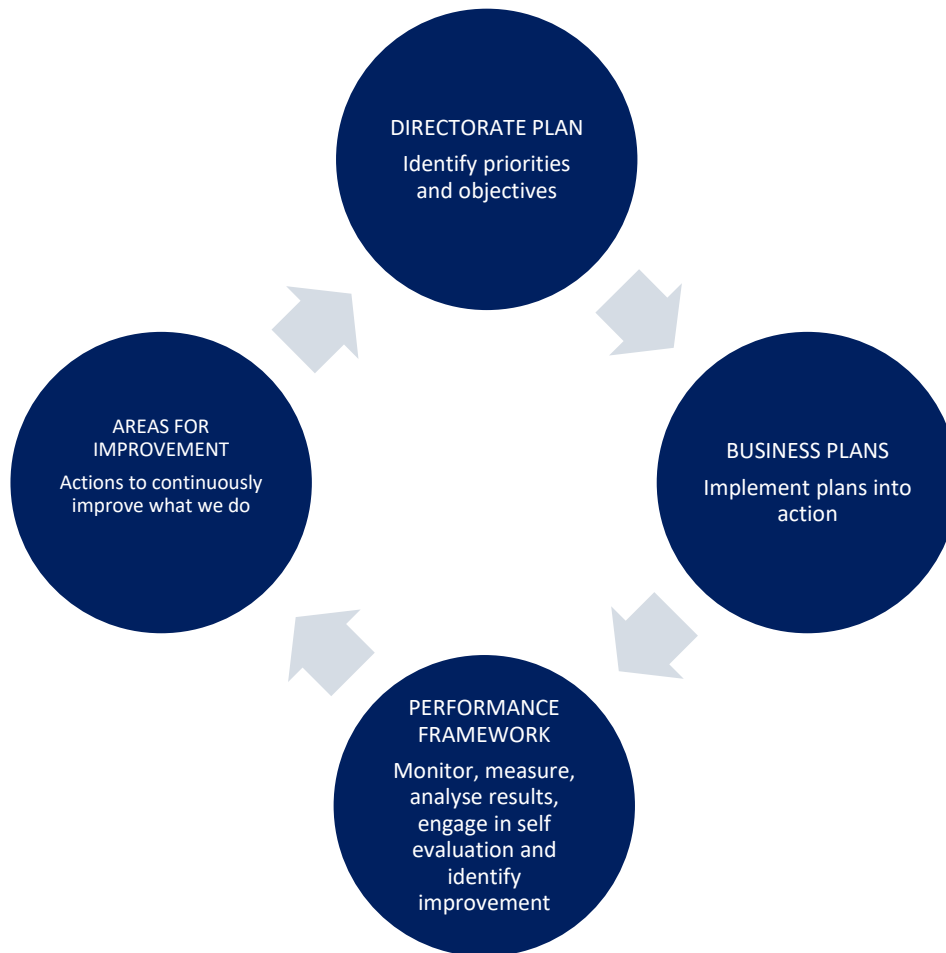
Service Transformation Board

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

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

Service Self Evaluation

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

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

Following the self-evaluation with the Service, an Improvement Action Plan was agreed in June 2020 by the ECS Service Transformation Board.

Progress has been interrupted by the impact of COVID-19 however the self-evaluation outcome actions are being progressed in the areas of:

- creating confidence in use of data to drive improvement
- clearer and more accessible opportunities for leadership training and development for the workforce across the service.

Where do we need to be?

What are our priorities moving forward?

Covid-19 recovery action Plan

Education and Children's Services responded quickly to the impact of Covid-19 through adapting how services were delivered and our workforce's flexibility to work in different ways. As we move from responding to the crisis to recovering from the crisis, the Covid-19 Management Team are now concentrating on the impact on the community and putting actions in place for recovery.

The action plan below indicates the direction of travel to identify and address the negative impact of the pandemic.

Council Priority/ Service Priority	Key Actions	Anticipated Outcome
ECS COVID-19 Recovery	Identify any health and wellbeing negative impact from Covid-19. Action affected areas with appropriate support	Health and wellbeing of our ECS community is strong
	Identify parents and families negatively impact by Covid-19. Action with appropriate support.	Parents and families impacted by Covid-19 are supported and regain resilience
	Ensure our teaching provision and quality of learning addresses any identified deficiency to learners	Our learners do not suffer any negative impact from the interruptions experienced as a result of Covid-19
	Identify impacts experienced by our workforce as a result of Covid-19 and implement support as appropriate. Embed improvements in ways of working through lessons learned.	Our workforce is resilient, and we capitalise on the positive learning from Covid-19

Directorate Improvement Action Plan 2021/22

Council Priority/ Service Priority	Key Action	Performance Measure	Anticipated Outcome	Responsible Person	Timescale
STRATEGIC					
To have better, integrated working arrangements within ECS in pursuit of improved outcomes for children and young people	Contribute to delivering a high- quality Multi agency Children's Services Plan focusing on supporting, safeguarding, and improving health and wellbeing in children and young people	**Actions and Performance Measures in** Children's Services Plan 1. Providing help for care experienced children & young people (Corporate Parenting) 2. Drive early intervention and prevention to support children and young people affected by their own, or someone else's drug or alcohol us. 3. Supporting children with a disability and their families 4. Making sure children get the best start in life by giving the best support to families in the early years (children aged 0 to 8 years old) 5. Helping children & young people enjoy great mental health and wellbeing.	All children are Supported, Safe and wellbeing improved	Head of Service CS	Continuous Improvement
	Strengthening GIRFEC approach	1. Baseline data collection underway and will determine target for improvement of quality of GIRFEC multi agency planning process 2. 100% engagement of multi-agency Local GIIRFEC Groups in local improvement activity.	Improved multi-agency working	Strategic Development Officer GIRFEC	31/03/23
	Deliver on the key recommendations as outlined by the Care Review and subsequent "Promise" to Care Experienced Young People.	• 87% of children looked after away from home experience 3 or fewer placements • 45% of Children/Young People engaged with Throughcare and Aftercare service are in Training, Education or Employment • 88% of Care Experience Young school leavers secure a positive school destination • SCQF average tariff score of Care Experienced Young People school leavers • Further performance measures in development	Children at risk of being accommodated are supported to remain safely with their families and communities and achieve improved outcomes	Head of Service CS	31/03/23
	Work collaboratively with partners and families to	• Successful delivery of project within timescales • Project Measures apply	Vulnerable families in the	Strategic Development	31/03/2023

Council Priority/ Service Priority	Key Action	Performance Measure	Anticipated Outcome	Responsible Person	Timescale
	meet local need through the delivery of holistic family support based on the principles of early intervention and prevention		Peterhead pilot will experience increased resilience, reduced vulnerability and parenting will improve	Officer Youth Services	
To secure continuous improvement in outcomes for children and young people	Deliver a high quality NIF Plan, focusing on literacy, numeracy and Health and Wellbeing as key priorities.	**Actions and Performance Measures in** National Improvement Framework Plan **NIF Theme 1 Improvement and Attainment** Attainment • % S4 5+ SCQF awards at level 5 • % S5 3+ SCQF awards at level 5 • BGE primary attainment levels for Reading, Writing, Listening/Talking and Numeracy • QI Grading ESQI learning, teaching and assessment in schools • QI Grading ESQI Raising attainment and achievement in schools **NIF Theme 2 Closing the Gap Between the Most and Least Disadvantaged Children** • SCQF Average tariff score of CEYP school leavers • % CEYP school leavers securing positive post school destination • The difference in average tariff score of all S4 in SIMD Quintile 5 and Quintile 1 **NIF Theme 3 Improvement in Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing** • % children looked after away from home who experience 3 or fewer placements • Number of volunteer hours LLA has provided/benefited from • LLA Customer satisfaction rates	School attainment data will reflect continuous and sustained improvement across all aspects of learning, at all levels	Head of Education	Continuous Improvement

Council Priority/ Service Priority	Key Action	Performance Measure	Anticipated Outcome	Responsible Person	Timescale
		• Impact of LLA Activities/experiences on people's physical and mental health **NIF Theme 4 Improvement in Employability Skills and Sustained, Positive School Leaver Destinations for All Young People** • % school leavers securing positive post school destination • Number of young people in Foundation Apprenticeship programmes • % young people successfully completing Foundation Apprenticeship programme **Initial Response to Supporting Children, Families and School Communities Throughout the Covid-19 Crisis** Provision of Child Care Hubs Provision of IT equipment **Early Years** • % registered children in LA pre-schools in 1140 settings • % 2-, 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds accessing funded place who receive >600 hours ELC			
	Redesign our Instrumental Music delivery model.	• Successful delivery of redesign project within timescales. • Project Measures apply	An efficient, modern service which maximises digital opportunity	Instrumental Music Manager	March 2022
	Strengthen HT EY induction processes to ensure that there is a clear understand of the HT's role to work in partnership with the Early Years Team to quality assure the work of the ELC setting in their school/impact of this on school results at P1 and in	• % LA ELC settings achieving good or better across all CI QI areas	Secure greater understanding of the importance of high-quality Early Years provision in settings with new HT/HT who have not led a school with an EY setting.	EY QIM	Summer 2021

Council Priority/ Service Priority	Key Action	Performance Measure	Anticipated Outcome	Responsible Person	Timescale
	closing the gap/impact on quality of practice and provision to meet CI and ES requirements				
	Review of Aberdeenshire ASN in line with national ASN support needs review.	• Successful delivery of review project within timescales • Review Measures apply	A complete review will identify the ASN needs across Aberdeenshire and provide a system that will meet them.	Head of Wellbeing, Equity and Inclusion	June 2022
	Delivery of our Children's Social Work Service Future Delivery Plan	**Key Performance Indicators based on the Wellbeing Indicators** • 90% of children are seen within 15 days of a new supervision requirement being made • 75% of reports are submitted to Children's Reporter within target timescale • 87% of children looked after away from home experience 3 or fewer placements • 45% of Children/Young People engaged with Throughcare and Aftercare service are in Training, Education or Employment • 88% of Care Experience Young school leavers secure a positive school destination • SCQF average tariff score of Care Experienced Young People school leavers	Safe, Healthy, Achieving and Active, Nurturing, Respected & Responsible, Included	Head of Children's Services	Continuous Improvement
	Closing the attainment gap – Pupil Equity Funding	• Successful use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to support the ability of all pupils to engage with the curriculum whether remotely or at face-to-face delivery • PEF has supported the H&WB of pupils throughout the pandemic by providing targeted and intensive support to those pupils in most need.	Every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap	Quality Improvement Manager PEF	June 2022

Council Priority/ Service Priority	Key Action	Performance Measure	Anticipated Outcome	Responsible Person	Timescale
		• PEF continues to support in a targeted and intensive manner those pupils as they reengage with face-to-face learning; specific resources; IT; Pupil Support Assistant support • PEF survey to be issued to Head Teachers to capture the impact of PEF spend this session on pupil engagement, themes, attainment, closing the gap. Survey to be issued as a Microsoft form at the end of May 2021			

To have improved business support and resource management arrangements in place across ECS	Transform the ECS Business Support function in line with long term business requirements, ensuring appropriate support arrangements are in place for all areas of the Directorate.	• Customer satisfaction improved from baseline
		• Continuous Improvement project outcomes measures
		     o Finance
		     o Information
		     o Performance Management Framework
		     o Improvement Framework
		     o Support arrangements
			A high performing team that enables the services we support to improve outcomes for children, young people and communities	Business Support & Performance Manager	

	Deliver the Peterhead Community Campus	• Successful delivery of project within timescales and budget	Improved integrated Service Delivery	Cross Service Leads	2025
	Implement a devolved school management scheme that is transparent and co-produced that supports greater empowerment of Head Teachers and local communities	• % all school budgets devolved • % of Additional Support Needs budgets devolved to clusters • % of Parent / Pupil Councils participation in capacity building activity			April 2022

Council Priority/ Service Priority	Key Action	Performance Measure	Anticipated Outcome	Responsible Person	Timescale
	Review Catering Services to ensure service meets needs of pupils and nutritional guidelines, while adopting a "commercial outlook".	• Successful delivery of review project within timescales • Review Measures apply	Our catering service meets needs of pupils and nutritional guidelines, while adopting a modern 'commercial outlook'.		August 2022
	Enhance the pace of Estate review with particular reference to the place-based model including utilisation of outdoor space.	• Reduced Carbon footprint • Reduced whole life costs • Estate matching demand • Improved suitability and condition grades		QIM (Learning Estates)	April 2023
To develop and deliver a revised LLA Business Plan focused on the three pillars of Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live @ Home	Deliver the LLA Business Plan	Actions and measures in LLA Business Plan			2024