

Notice of Meeting and Agenda

Education and Children's Services Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 20 January 2022	13:00	Microsoft Teams Meeting,

KENNETH GRAHAM
Head of Corporate Governance

Membership

Ms Mary Jane Bird: Mr Jack Nellaney: Mr Ravinder Singh: Councillor Karen Devine-Kennedy: Councillor Audrey Doig: Councillor Edward Grady: Councillor Neill Graham: Councillor Jim Harte: Councillor John Hood: Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes: Councillor Scott Kerr: Councillor John McNaughtan: Councillor Will Mylet: Councillor Iain Nicolson: Councillor Emma Rodden: Councillor John Shaw: Councillor Jane Strang:

Councillor Jim Paterson (Convener): Provost Lorraine Cameron (Depute Convener):

Recording of Meeting

This meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site – at the start of the meeting the Convener will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. If you have any queries regarding this please contact Committee Services on 07934714023.

Apologies

Apologies from members.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare an interest in any item(s) on the agenda and to provide a brief explanation of the nature of the interest.

Finance

- | | | |
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| 1 | Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring as at 12 November 2021 | 5 - 12 |
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Joint report by Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Children's Services.

Education

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| 2 | National Qualifications Results 2021 | 13 - 28 |
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Report by Director of Children's Services.

- | | | |
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| 3 | Education Standards & Quality Report September 2021
Education Improvement Plan 2021/22 | 29 - 128 |
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Report by Director of Children's Services.

- | | | |
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| 4 | Consultation on Education Reform | 129 - 148 |
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Report by Director of Children's Services.

- | | | |
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| 5 | Early Learning and Childcare Consultation - 2021 | 149 - 166 |
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| 6 | Standard Circular 3a - Early Learning and Childcare
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Report by Director of Children's Services.

- | | | |
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| 7 | Church Representatives on Committees Appointed by
Education Authorities | 201 - 204 |
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Report by Director of Finance and Resources.

Children and Families

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| 8 | Redress for Survivors (Historical Abuse in Care)
(Scotland) Act 2021 | 205 - 210 |
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Report by Director of Children's Services.

- 9 Annual report of the Fostering and Adoption Service 211 - 244**
2020/21 Update on developments for Looked After
Children and Fostering Service

Report by Director of Children's Services.

- 10 Renfrewshire's Promise: An update on the work within 245 - 252**
Renfrewshire to deliver "The Promise" to Scotland's
children

Report by Director of Children's Services.



To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 20 January 2022

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Children's Services

Heading: Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring as at 12 November 2021

1. Summary of Financial Position

- 1.1. The projected Revenue outturn at 31 March 2022 for Children's Services is an overspend of £0.439m (0.2%) against the revised budget for the year.
- 1.2. The projected Capital outturn at 31 March 2022 for Children's Services is an underspend of £0.1m (<1%), against the revised budget for the year.
- 1.3. This is summarised over the relevant service in the table below and further analysis is provided in the Appendices.
- 1.4. For the financial year 2021/22, the projected outturn position is split into Core (or business as usual) and COVID-19 related variances to help readers understand the impact of the pandemic on service finances.

Table 1: Revenue

Division	Revised Annual Budget £000	Projected Outturn Core £000	Projected Outturn COVID-19 £000	Total Projected Outturn £000	Budget Variance £000	Budget Variance %
Children's Services	£219,338	£218,289	£1,488	£219,777	(£439)	(0.2%)

Table 2: Capital

Division	Revised Annual Budget £000	Projected Outturn Core £000	Projected Outturn COVID-19 £000	Total Projected Outturn £000	Budget Variance £000	Budget Variance %
Children's Services	£8,572	£8,472	£0	£8,472	£100	<1%

2. Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- 2.1. Note the projected Revenue outturn position for Children's Services detailed in Table 1 above, and further note that the forecast position is based on best estimates and confirmed government support at this point in time; forecasts are likely to be subject to fluctuation as the year progresses.
- 2.2. Note projected Capital outturn position for Children's Services detailed in Table 2 above; and
- 2.3. Note the budget adjustments detailed in sections 4 and 6.

3. Children's Services Revenue

- 3.1. The Revenue Budget Monitoring report at Appendix 1 identifies a projected annual overspend of £0.439m (0.2% of total budget). Detailed division service reports can be found in Appendix 2, along with an explanation of each significant projected variance.
- 3.2. The projected outturn is based on available information and assumptions made by service budget holders as at mid November 2021. These assumptions will be refined during the year as more information becomes available. The projected outturn and projected Covid related spend are net of education-specific Covid resource either carried forward from 2020/21 or additional allocations in year of £3.3m; and net of general Covid resource of £1.3m which is underpinning care-related spend.
- 3.3. The main reasons for the projected outturn position are indicated below the tables showing the objective analysis (which division is spending the budget).

4. Revenue Budget Adjustments

- 4.1. Members are requested to note from Appendix 1 that budget adjustments totalling £0.008m have been processed since the last report. These related to transfers to other services for miscellaneous property works.

5. Children's Services Capital

- 5.1. The Capital Investment Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26 was approved by the Council on 4th March 2021.
- 5.2. The Capital Monitoring report at Appendix 3 indicates changes totalling £0.667m in the approved capital programme for Education and Children's Services. This largely relates to budget carried forward to 2022-23 from 2021-22 for Other School Investment programmes
- 5.3. Further detail, including reasons for significant variances, can be found at Appendix 3.

6. Capital Budget Adjustments

6.1. There have been budget changes totalling £0.667m since the last report:

Budget carried forward from 2021-22 to 2022-23 (£0.679m):

- Other Schools Investment Programmes (£0.679m):
 - To reflect timing of toilet upgrade projects at Arkleston and Bridge of Weir primary schools (£0.320m);
 - For timing of outstanding work at Riverbrae (£0.359m).

Budget increases in 2021-22 (£0.012m):

- Early Years 1,140 Hours Expansion Programme (£0.012m):
 - For a Contribution from Current Revenue for addition kitchen works in relation to the Glendee Pre Five Extension.

Implications of this report

1. **Financial** – The projected budget outturn position for Children's Services' Revenue budget is an overspend of £0.439m. Income and expenditure will continue to be monitored closely for the rest of the financial year and, where necessary, steps will be taken to mitigate any overspend including applying flexibility within specific grant funding as permitted by the Scottish Government.

The projected outturn position for Children's Services' Capital budget is an underspend of £0.1m. The Capital programme will continue to be monitored closely for the rest of the financial year.

Any changes to current projections in either Revenue or Capital budgets will be reported to the board as early as possible, along with an explanation for the movement.

2. **HR and Organisational Development**

None directly arising from this report.

3. **Community/Council Planning**

None directly arising from this report.

4. **Legal**

None directly arising from this report.

5. **Property/Assets**

None directly arising from this report.

6. **Information Technology**

None directly arising from this report.

7. **Equality and Human Rights**

The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts

on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety

None directly arising from this report.

9. Procurement

None directly arising from this report.

10. Risk

The potential risk that the Council will overspend its approved budgets for the year will be managed at a Council-wide level by the Chief Executive and Directors.

11. Privacy Impact

None directly arising from this report.

12. Cosla Policy Position

N/a.

13. Climate Risk

None directly arising from this report.

List of Background Papers: None

Authors: George McLachlan, Extension 6133
Kevin Festorazzi, Extension 4885

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT 2021/22
1 April 2021 to 12 November 2021

POLICY BOARD : EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Subjective Summary	Revised Annual Budget at P6	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Projected Outturn Core Business	Projected Outturn COVID- 19	Total Projected Outturn	Budget Variance (Adverse) or Favourable		Previous Projected Outturn Variance	Movement
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000
Employees	156,403	66	156,469	154,819	407	155,226	1,243	0.8%	705	538
Premises Related	9,107	(32)	9,075	9,937	94	10,031	(956)	(10.5%)	(577)	(379)
Transport Related	4,623	2	4,625	5,231	0	5,231	(606)	(13.1%)	(613)	7
Supplies and Services	28,303	270	28,573	27,686	206	27,892	681	2.4%	387	294
Third Party Payments	13,924	0	13,924	14,364	773	15,137	(1,213)	(8.7%)	(1,127)	(86)
Transfer Payments	14,869	(88)	14,781	14,971	8	14,979	(198)	(1.3%)	(204)	6
Support Services	200	1	201	238	0	238	(37)	(18.2%)	(1)	(35)
Depreciation and Impairment Losses	0	0	0			0	0	0.0%	0	0
GROSS EXPENDITURE	227,429	219	227,648	227,246	1,488	228,734	(1,086)	(0.5%)	(1,430)	344
Income	(8,083)	(227)	(8,310)	(8,958)	0	(8,958)	648	7.8%	547	101
NET EXPENDITURE	219,346	(8)	219,338	218,289	1,488	219,777	(439)	(0.2%)	(884)	445

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT 2021/22
1 April 2021 to 12 November 2021

POLICY BOARD : EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Objective Summary	Revised Annual Budget at P6	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Projected Outturn Core Business	Projected Outturn COVID-19	Total Projected Outturn	Budget Variance (Adverse) or Favourable		Previous Projected Outturn Variance	Movement
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000
Directorate	629	(13)	616	616	0	616	0	0.0%	0	0
Early learning and childcare	34,906	(2)	34,904	33,863	16	33,879	1,025	2.9%	1,001	24
Primary	54,799	51	54,850	54,350	457	54,807	43	0.1%	(54)	97
Secondary	75,316	29	75,345	75,044	164	75,208	137	0.2%	54	83
ASN (Special) Schools	6,344	(17)	6,327	6,308	55	6,363	(36)	(0.6%)	(28)	(8)
Additional support for learning (ASL)	14,801	0	14,801	15,156	0	15,156	(355)	(2.4%)	(800)	445
Psychological services	730	0	730	773	0	773	(43)	(5.9%)	(25)	(18)
Education development	1,723	(1)	1,722	1,722	0	1,722	0	0.0%	0	0
Attainment Challenge	(1,029)	(42)	(1,071)	(1,071)	0	(1,071)	0	0.0%	0	0
Facilities management	591	(12)	579	687	23	710	(131)	(22.6%)	(131)	0
Child care	30,536	(1)	30,535	30,841	773	31,614	(1,079)	(3.5%)	(901)	(178)
NET EXPENDITURE	219,346	(8)	219,338	218,289	1,488	219,777	(439)	(0.2%)	(884)	445

Objective Heading	Key Reasons for Projected Variance
Directorate	No variances to report.
Early Learning and Childcare	Underspend arises within employee costs and supplies & services, offset by overspends in premises costs and transfer payments.
Primary Schools	Underspend arises within employee costs, offset by overspends in premises costs, transport costs and supplies & services.
Secondary Schools	Underspend arises within employee costs and supplies & services, offset by overspends in premises costs and transport costs.
ASN Schools	Overspend relates to employee costs and premises costs.
Additional Support for Learning	Overspend relates mainly to transport costs.
Psychological Services	Overspend mainly relates to employee costs.
Education Development	No variances to report.
Facilities Management	Overspend relates to employee costs and premises costs.
Children & Families	Overspend mainly relates to employee costs, premises costs and third party payments, offset by increased income.

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL
CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY - NON-HOUSING SERVICES
 1st April to 12th November 2021
POLICY BOARD: EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Project Title	Prior Years Expenditure to 31/03/2021* £000	Current Year 2021-22						Full Programme - All years			
		Approved Budget 2021-22 £000	Budget Adjustments in 2021-22 £000	Revised Budget 2021-22 £000	Projected Outturn 2021-22 £000	Budget Variance (Adverse) or Favourable		Total Approved Budget to 31-Mar-26 £000	Projected Outturn to 31-Mar-26 £000	Budget Variance (Adverse) or Favourable	
EDUCATION & CHILDREN SERVICES											
Early Years 1,140 Hours Expansion	10,938	3,163	710	3,873	3,873	0	0%	14,812	14,812	0	0%
Primary Schools Estate Programme(SEMP)	42,269	362	367	729	629	100	14%	42,998	42,898	100	0%
Schools Estate Programme (SEMP 2020)	144	5,531	(4,781)	750	750	0	0%	51,250	51,250	0	0%
Other Schools Investment Programmes	20,372	3,606	(786)	2,820	2,820	0	0%	25,555	25,255	300	1%
Technology Replacement Strategy ICT	0	400	0	400	400	0	0%	2,000	2,000	0	0%
TOTAL EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES BOARD	73,723	13,062	(4,490)	8,572	8,472	100	1%	136,615	136,215	400	0%

*Rolling programmes have a prior year year expenditure of £0 as the expenditure is not directly linked from one year to the next as a singular project.

Objective Heading	Key Reasons for Projected Variance
Early Years 1,140 Hours Expansion	
Primary Schools Estate Programme(SEMP)	Minor underspends relate to St Paul and St Fergus primary investment projects.
Schools Estate Programme (SEMP 2020)	
Other Schools Investment Programmes	Aftger remedial works at Riverbrae School are completed, a £300k underspend is expected
Technology Replacement Strategy ICT	



To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 20 January 2022

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: National Qualifications Results 2021

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises attainment in the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) National Qualifications in 2021, based on the key measures contained within the Insight benchmarking tool.
- 1.2 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2021 exam diet could not take place for the second year running. An alternative certification model was put in place, but unlike the 2020 awards, teachers made evidence-based estimates of final attainment based on demonstrated attainment.
- 1.3 Skills Development Scotland are currently tracking school leavers' destinations. Insight is normally updated in spring and a further report providing data on our school leavers' attainment will be submitted to the Education and Children Service's Policy Board when this data becomes available. This report will provide data on the attainment of all pupils in the senior phase by stage (S4, S5 and S6).
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Education and Children's Services Policy Board are asked to:
- note the content of this report
 - note the efforts of pupils and the school communities in bringing about these results; and

- agree that a further report will be brought to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board when leavers data becomes available.

3. Background

- 3.1 Insight is a performance evaluation tool provided by the Scottish Government to schools and education authorities as a way of benchmarking performance in four key measures:
- Attainment in literacy and numeracy;
 - Improving attainment for all;
 - Attainment versus deprivation; and
 - Leavers' destinations.
- 3.2 This report provides data and commentary on the performance of each of our senior phase cohorts (S4, S5 and S6) over the last three years and against our virtual comparator for three of the measures detailed above. Leavers' destinations will become available in February/March 2022 and will form part of the report to this board in spring 2022 or as soon thereafter if the data release is delayed.
- 3.3 In addition to these local benchmarking measures, this report will provide data in relation to the number and quality of passes at each qualifications level.
- 3.4 The methodology for the Insight 'virtual comparator' (VC) is unchanged in 2021. The virtual comparator allows authorities and schools to make statistically valid comparisons between how young people have performed against young people nationally, who share four similar characteristics. These characteristics are gender, year group, percentage of time spent in mainstream classes, and live within an area with the same Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile.

4. Attainment in literacy and numeracy (S4, S5 and S6)

- 4.1 Raising attainment in literacy and numeracy remains a key priority of Renfrewshire Council children's services and this is reflected in one of the key priorities of the National Improvement Framework.
- 4.2 Attainment in literacy and numeracy includes passes at National 4 and 5 in English and maths and passes in some other awards at Scottish Certificate and Qualification Framework (SCQF) levels 4 and 5 which contain certain core elements of literacy and numeracy. The tables which follow, provide data on our performance in literacy and numeracy, alongside our virtual comparator and national figures, for each of our senior phase cohorts.

S4

- 4.3 Table 1 below provides data on attainment in literacy and numeracy in S4 at SCQF Level 4 and SCQF Level 5.

Table 1 - % S4 Pupils Achieving Literacy & Numeracy					
	Year	% Achieved Level 4 Literacy	% Achieved Level 4 Numeracy	% Achieved Level 5 Literacy	% Achieved Level 5 Numeracy
Renfrewshire	2019	95%	89%	80%	64%
Virtual Comparator	2019	92%	88%	73%	58%
National	2019	91%	87%	72%	57%
Renfrewshire	2020	95%	92%	82%	66%
Virtual Comparator	2020	93%	90%	76%	63%
National	2020	92%	89%	74%	61%
Renfrewshire	2021	95%	82%	82%	55%
Virtual Comparator	2021	93%	88%	76%	59%
National	2021	92%	86%	73%	56%

- 4.4 The percentage of pupils achieving SCQF Level 4 and SCQF Level 5 in literacy was above both the virtual comparator and the national figure in 2021. Both figures were unchanged since 2020. In numeracy, Renfrewshire is below the virtual comparator and national figures in 2021.

S5 (based on S4 roll)

- 4.5 Table 2 below provides data on attainment in literacy and numeracy in S5 at SCQF Level 4 and Level 5.

Table 2 - % S5 Pupils Achieving Literacy and Numeracy					
	Year	% Achieved Level 4 Literacy	% Achieved Level 4 Numeracy	% Achieved Level 5 Literacy	% Achieved Level 5 Numeracy
Renfrewshire	2019	94%	91%	84%	72%
Virtual Comparator	2019	94%	91%	81%	66%
National	2019	93%	90%	80%	65%
Renfrewshire	2020	96%	94%	86%	76%
Virtual Comparator	2020	94%	92%	82%	70%
National	2020	93%	90%	80%	69%
Renfrewshire	2021	96%	94%	88%	76%
Virtual Comparator	2021	95%	93%	84%	72%
National	2021	94%	91%	82%	70%

- 4.6 Renfrewshire remains ahead of the virtual comparator and national figures across SCQF Level 4 and SCQF Level 5 in S5. Attainment in literacy at SCQF Level 5 is higher than in 2020. However, all other figures are unchanged. Attainment remains higher in literacy than in numeracy across both levels. This mirrors the trend within the virtual comparator and nationally.

S6 (based on the S4 roll)

- 4.7 Table 3 below provides data on attainment in literacy and numeracy in S6 at SCQF Level 4 and Level 5.

Table 3 -% S6 Pupils Achieving Literacy & Numeracy					
	Year	% Achieved Level 4 Literacy	% Achieved Level 4 Numeracy	% Achieved Level 5 Literacy	% Achieved Level 5 Numeracy
Renfrewshire	2019	97%	93%	87%	76%
Virtual Comparator	2019	95%	92%	82%	69%
National	2019	94%	90%	81%	68%
Renfrewshire	2020	95%	92%	85%	74%
Virtual Comparator	2020	94%	91%	82%	69%
National	2020	93%	90%	80%	68%
Renfrewshire	2021	96%	94%	87%	78%
Virtual Comparator	2021	94%	92%	83%	72%
National	2021	93%	91%	81%	71%

- 4.8 In S6, Renfrewshire remains above its virtual comparator across all measures. This is consistent with previous years. Attainment in both literacy and numeracy has increased since 2020 but remains broadly in line with the previous year.

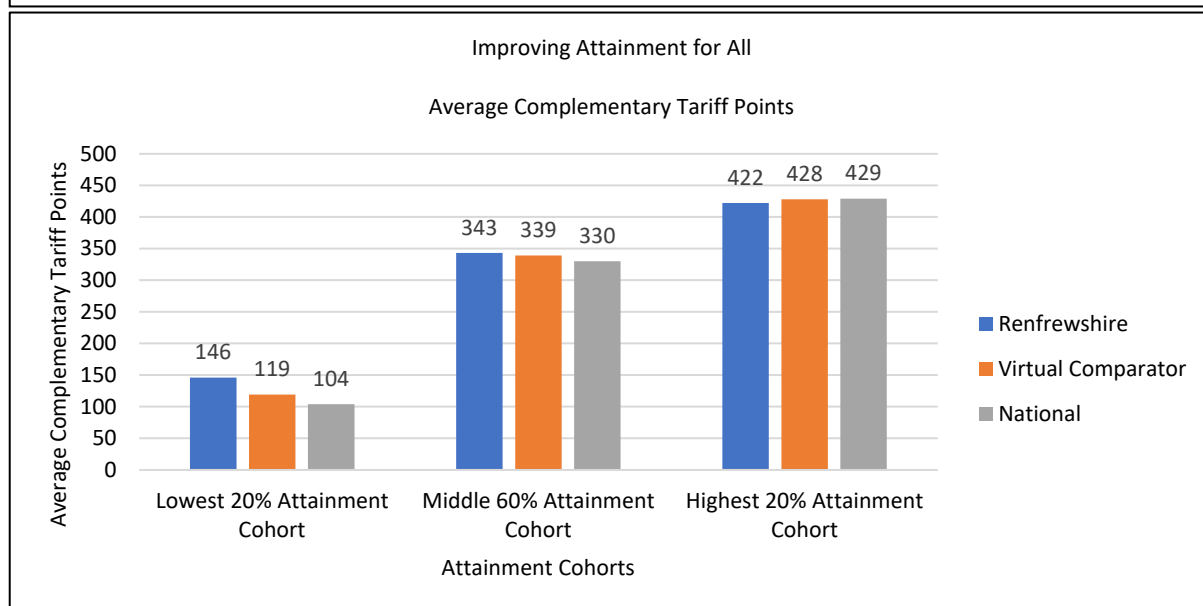
5. Improving attainment for all

- 5.1 Each qualification on the Scottish Certificate and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is attributed a number of tariff points. The higher level of qualification, the more tariff points are attributed. Each pupil gains a number of points that represents the number and level of qualifications they have gained. This report uses complementary tariff points, which measures a fixed volume of learning. Complementary tariff points allow for fair comparison across Scotland, regardless of differences in curricular models.
- 5.2 Within this measure, Insight breaks the data down into three groups: the average complementary tariff points for the lowest attaining 20%, the middle attaining 60% and the highest attaining 20% and compares these with the virtual comparator and the national figure.

S4

- 5.3 Graph 1 below shows the average complementary tariff points of S4 pupils by attainment cohort in the 2021 exam diet.

Graph 1- Renfrewshire S4 Complementary Tariff by Attainment Cohort 2021



- 5.4 In S4, the average complementary tariff is above both the virtual comparator and national figure for the lowest 20% and middle 60% attainment cohorts. The lowest 20% attainment cohort figure was 146 which is considerably above its comparators, which were 119 for the virtual comparator and 104 for the national figure. The average complementary tariff for the highest 20% attainment cohort remained marginally behind both comparators.
- 5.5 Table 4 shows the average complementary tariff of Renfrewshire S4 pupils over time.

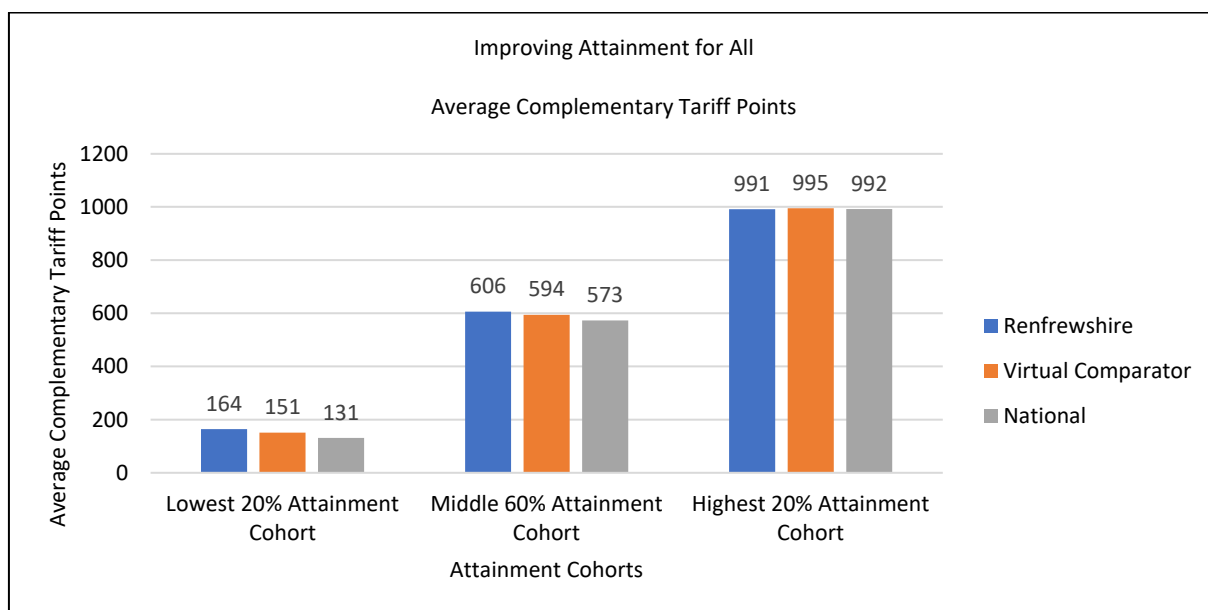
Table 4- Renfrewshire S4 Complementary Tariff by Attainment Cohort					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Highest 20% Attainment Cohort	423	420	419	424	422
Middle 60% Attainment Cohort	329	325	331	341	343
Lowest 20% Attainment Cohort	145	126	145	139	146

- 5.6 The 2021 average complementary tariff is higher than previous years in the lowest 20% and middle 60% attainment cohorts. The highest 20% attainment cohort remains broadly consistent with previous years despite a small decrease.

S5

- 5.7 The graph below shows the average complementary tariff points of S5 pupils by attainment cohort in the 2020 exam diet.

Graph 2- Renfrewshire S5 Complementary Tariff by Attainment Cohort 2021



5.8 Graph 2 demonstrates that Renfrewshire is above the virtual comparator and national figures in the lowest 20% and middle 60% attainment cohort. In both attainment cohorts, Renfrewshire is further ahead of the national figure than the virtual comparator. The highest 20% attainment cohort figure is below both comparators however the differences are very marginal.

5.9 Table 5 shows the average complementary tariff of Renfrewshire S5 pupils since 2017.

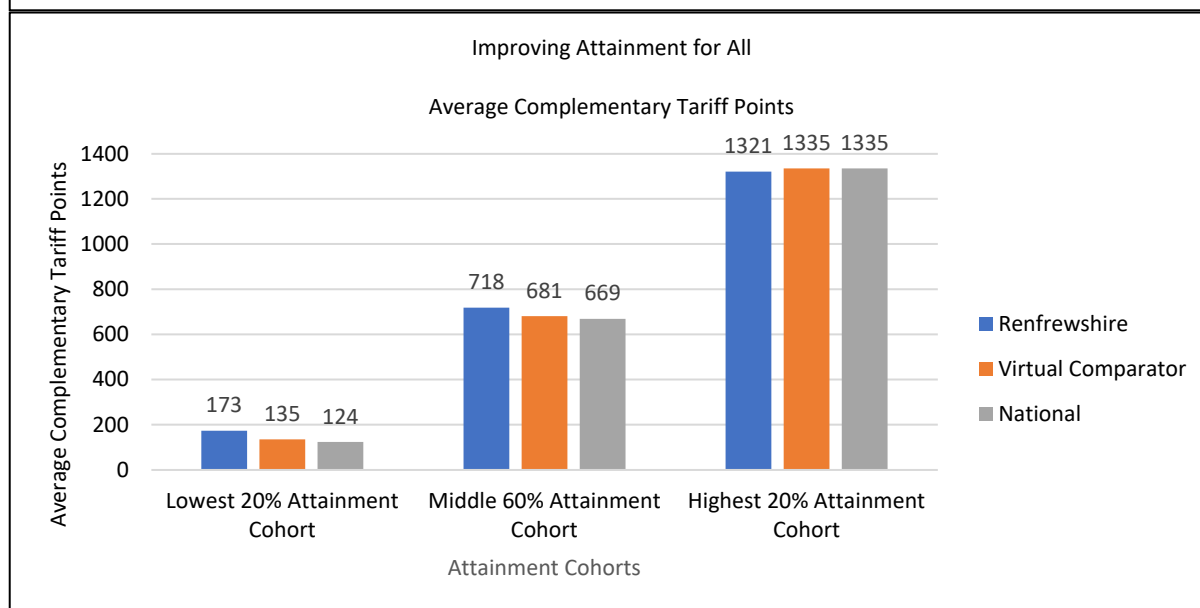
Table 5- Renfrewshire S5 Complementary Tariff by Attainment Cohort					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Highest 20% Attainment Cohort	956	961	954	981	991
Middle 60% Attainment Cohort	554	562	546	597	606
Lowest 20% Attainment Cohort	147	170	146	167	164

5.10 Attainment is higher than previous years in the middle 60% and highest 20% attainment cohorts. The 2021 figures are more closely aligned with 2020 than any of the previous years. The lowest 20% attainment cohort is in line with previous years despite a minor decrease since 2020.

S6

5.11 Graph 3 shows the average complementary tariff points of S6 pupils by attainment cohort in the 2021 exam diet.

Graph 3- Renfrewshire S6 Complementary Tariff by Attainment Cohort 2021



5.12 In graph 3, we can see that the average complementary tariff for the lowest 20% attainment cohort is considerably above both the virtual comparator and national, which were 135 and 124 respectively. Pupils in the middle 60% attainment cohort are also ahead of both comparators. The highest 20% attainment cohort is below both the virtual comparator and national figures.

5.13 Table 6 shows the average complementary tariff of Renfrewshire S6 pupils over 5 years.

Table 6- Renfrewshire S6 Complementary Tariff by Attainment Cohort					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Highest 20% Attainment Cohort	1237	1249	1258	1261	1321
Middle 60% Attainment Cohort	655	657	653	660	718
Lowest 20% Attainment Cohort	150	152	175	152	173

5.14 The average complementary tariff is higher than in 2020 across all attainment cohorts. The highest 20% and middle 60% attainment cohorts have a higher average complementary tariff than any of the previous 4 years. The lowest 20% attainment cohort is above the 2020 figure but remains in line with 2019.

6. Attainment versus deprivation

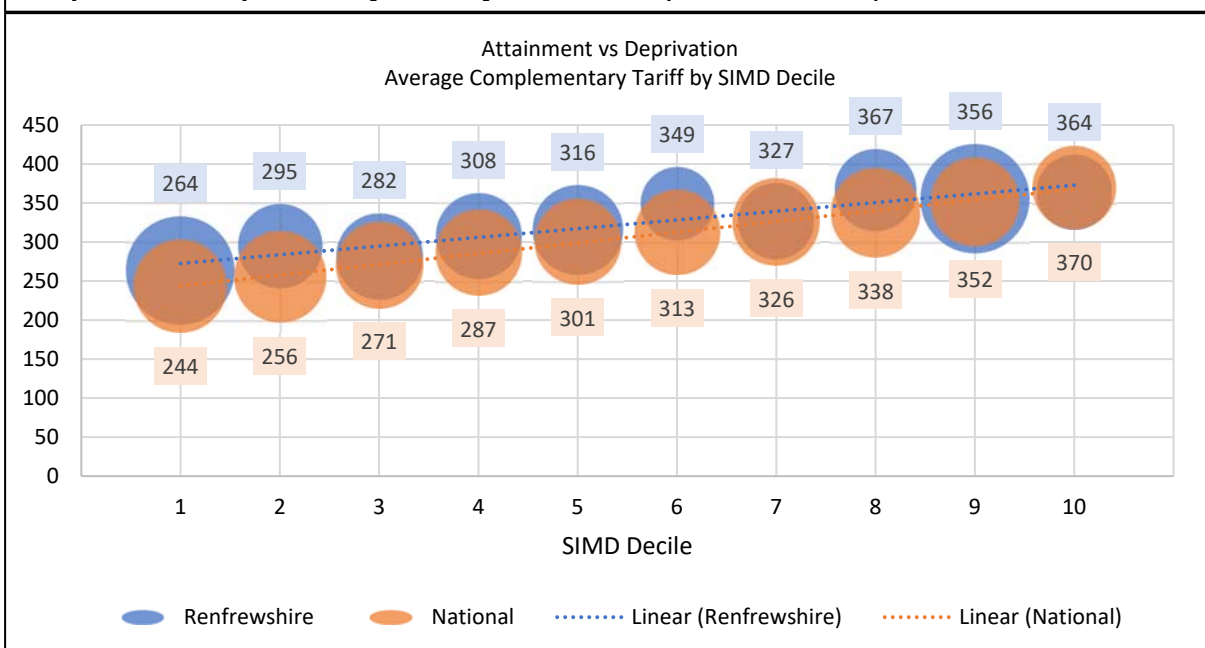
6.1 The attainment versus deprivation measure provides the average complementary tariff of pupils by SIMD decile. This allows us to identify the attainment gap in Renfrewshire and compare it to both our virtual comparator and national data.

6.2 The following charts show SIMD deciles 1 -10 (most deprived to least deprived) plotted along the horizontal axis with the average complementary tariff points plotted on the vertical axis. The size of the circles represents the percentage of pupils who live in each decile. The trend line which runs through the circles represents the difference in attainment between pupils living in the most deprived and the least deprived areas. The steeper the

angle, the more pronounced the disparity between the most and least deprived deciles.

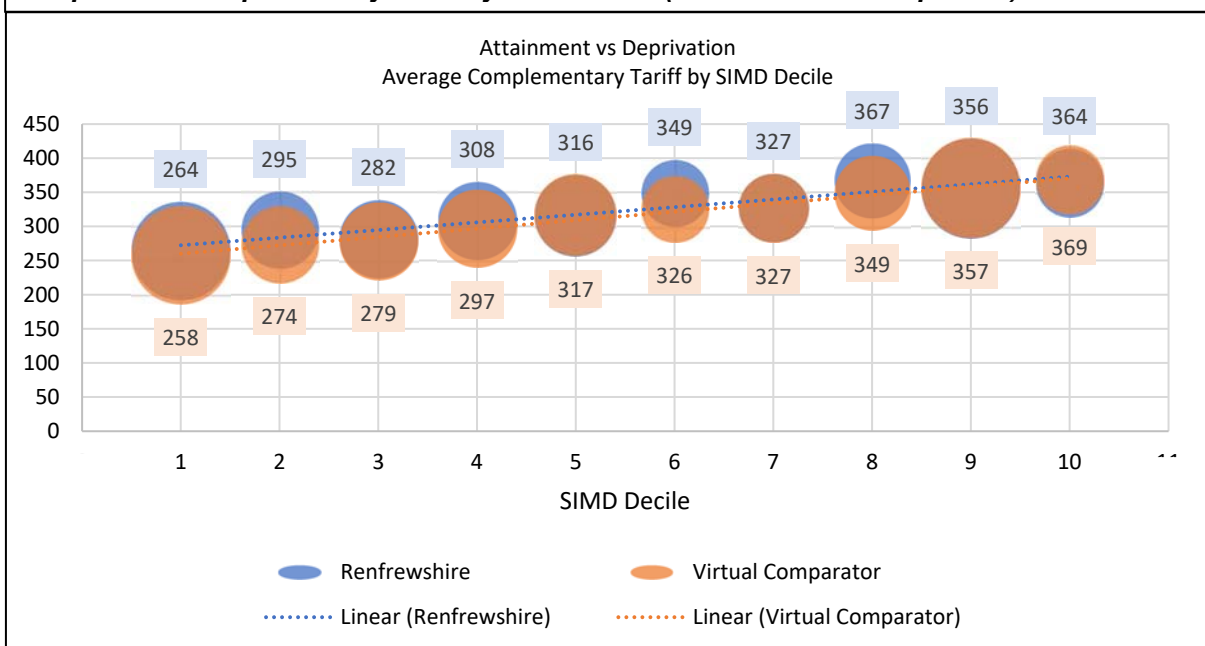
S4

Graph 4- S4 Complementary Tariff by SIMD Decile (Ren vs National) 2021



- 6.3 Renfrewshire's S4 average complementary tariff is in line with or above national figures in all deciles except for decile 10. The trendlines indicate that the size of the gap between most and least deprived pupils is larger nationally than in Renfrewshire due to lower attainment of pupils living in decile 1 and 2.

Graph 5- S4 Complementary Tariff by SIMD Decile (Ren vs Virtual Comparator) 2021



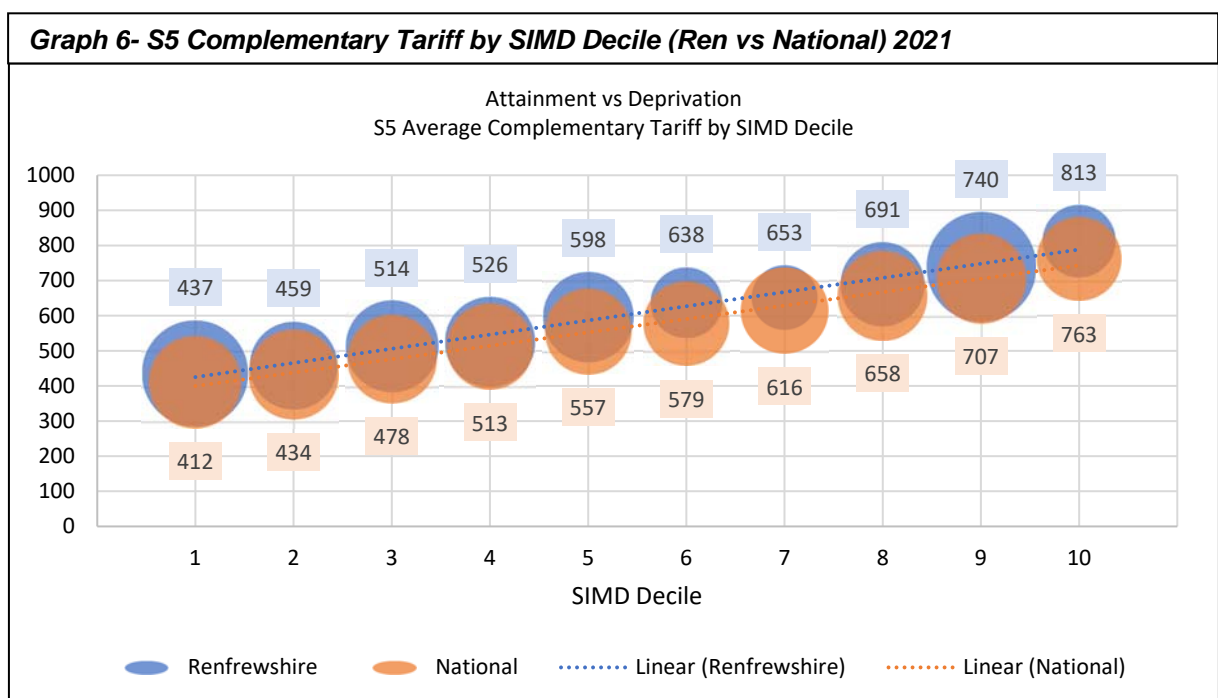
6.4 Renfrewshire's S4 average complementary tariff is very closely aligned with the virtual comparator in 2021. Renfrewshire is behind the virtual comparator in SIMD deciles 5, 9 and 10 but the differences are minimal. The trendlines in graph 5 indicate that Renfrewshire has higher attainment in the lower deciles, but the gap narrows as the deciles increase.

6.5 Table 7 shows the S4 average complementary tariff of pupils living in SIMD 1-3 (30% most deprived areas) and of pupils living in SIMD 4-10 (70% least deprived areas) over 5 years. It also shows the percentage gap between these two figures.

Table 7- Renfrewshire S4 Average Complementary Tariff by SIMD Groupings					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Pupils Living in 30% Most Deprived Areas	266	259	266	280	277
Pupils Living in 70% Least Deprived Areas	338	332	338	339	341
Percentage Gap	21%	22%	21%	17%	19%

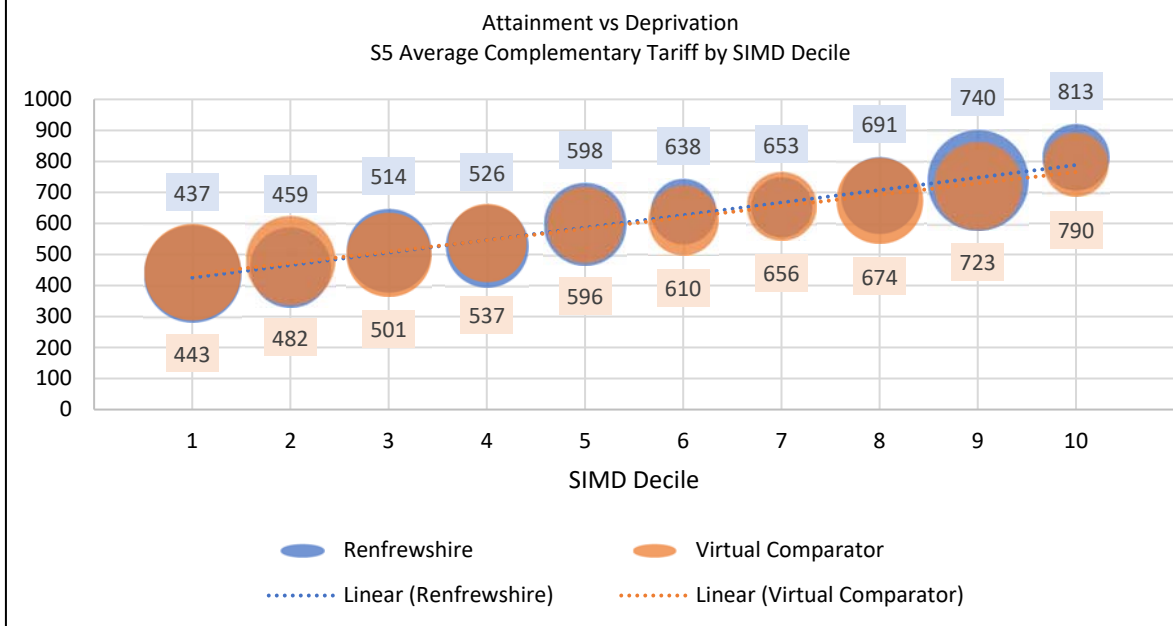
6.6 The average complementary tariff of pupils living in 30% most and 70% least deprived areas are closely aligned with the figures in 2020. There has been a minor decrease for pupils living in 30% most deprived areas which means the gap is increased slightly. However, the size of the gap remains smaller than it was between 2017 and 2019 when an exam diet took place.

S5



6.7 The S5 average complementary tariff for Renfrewshire is above national in all SIMD deciles. The trend lines follow a similar pattern, but Renfrewshire's overall attainment is higher.

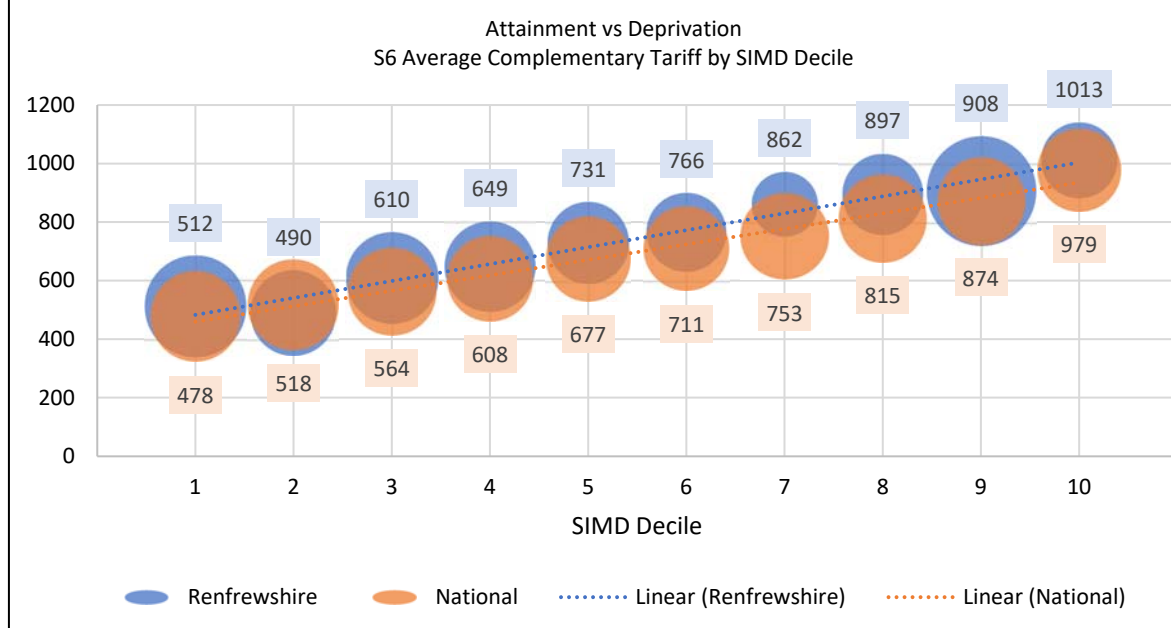
Graph 7- S5 Complementary Tariff by SIMD Decile (Ren vs Virtual Comparator) 2021



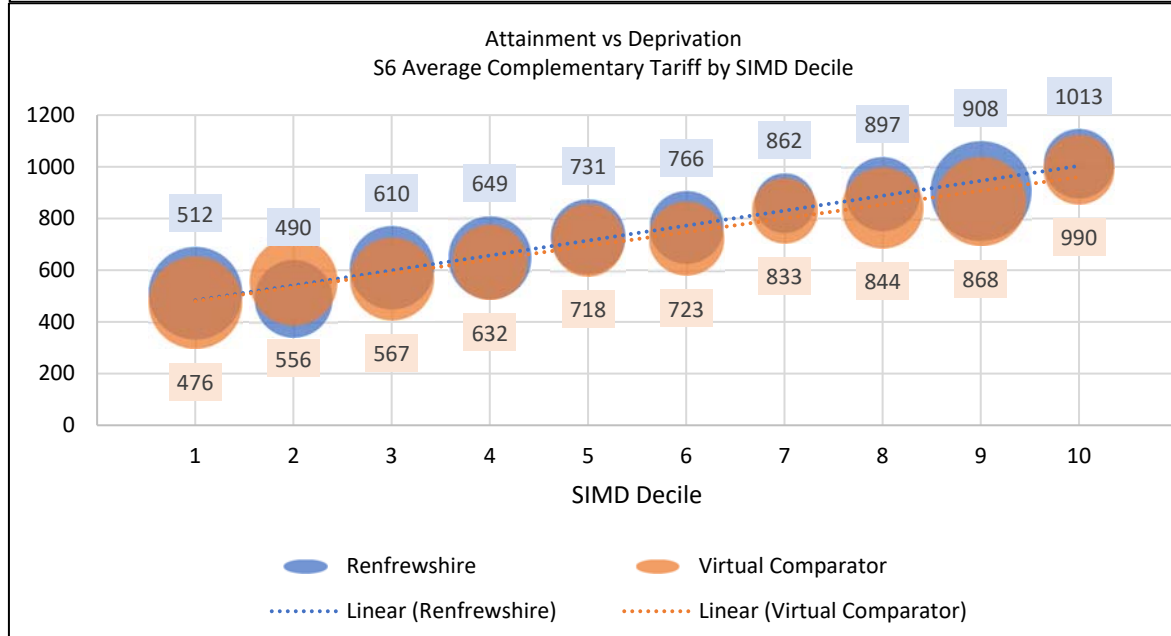
- 6.8 Graph 7 indicates that Renfrewshire and its virtual comparator are very closely aligned across all deciles. The trendlines on this graph overlap and therefore the size of the attainment gap is very similar. Renfrewshire is behind the virtual comparator in deciles 1,2,4 and 7 however these differences are marginal.
- 6.9 Table 8 shows the S5 average complementary tariff of pupils living in SIMD 1-3 (30% most deprived areas) and of pupils living in SIMD 4-10 (70% least deprived areas) over 5 years. It also shows the percentage gap between these two figures.

Table 8- Renfrewshire S5 Average Complementary Tariff by SIMD Groupings					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Pupils Living in 30% Most Deprived Areas	401	434	417	445	467
Pupils Living in 70% Least Deprived Areas	642	638	626	668	665
Percentage Gap	38%	32%	33%	33%	30%

- 6.10 The average complementary tariff has increased for the 30% most deprived and marginally decreased for the 70% least deprived groups in 2021. As a result, the size of the attainment gap is smaller than in previous years.

Graph 8- S6 Complementary Tariff by SIMD Decile (Ren vs National) 2021

- 6.11 The S6 average complementary tariff is higher than national in all SIMD deciles except for decile 2. The Renfrewshire trend is above the national trend however the difference between them is marginal.

Graph 9- S6 Complementary Tariff by SIMD Decile (Ren vs Virtual Comparator) 2021

- 6.12 The S6 virtual comparator is very closely aligned with Renfrewshire's figures as seen in the trend lines in graph 9. Renfrewshire is above the virtual comparator in all deciles except for decile 2.

Table 9 – Renfrewshire S6 Average Complementary Tariff by SIMD Groupings					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Pupils Living in 30% Most Deprived Areas	499	489	512	507	537
Pupils Living in 70% Least Deprived Areas	768	786	774	780	830
Percentage Gap	39%	35%	38%	34%	35%

- 6.13 The average complementary tariff for pupils living in the 30% most deprived and 70% least deprived areas have increased since 2020 and are higher than all previous years. As both groups have increased attainment, the size of the gap remains similar to previous years.

7. Breadth and depth

- 7.1 In addition to the key measures available in Insight, the service also looks at the percentage of the cohort who achieved any number of awards at various SCQF levels. These are known as ‘breadth and depth’ measures. We look at this data in conjunction with the Insight measures to allow us to gain a broader understanding of attainment across Renfrewshire and between schools.
- 7.2 The tables on the following pages show performance over time of some of the key breadth and depth measures and how we compare to the virtual comparator. SCQF 5 is National 4 or its equivalent, SCQF Level 5 is National 5 or its equivalent, SCQF Level 6 is Higher or its equivalent; and SCQF Level 7 is Advanced Higher or its equivalent.

S4

- 7.3 Table 10 includes data on the number of awards achieved for S4 pupils at SCQF Level 4 and Level 5 for Renfrewshire and the virtual comparator.

Table 10- S4 Breadth & Depth								
S4 A-C	3 or more awards at SCQF level 4 or better		5 or more awards at SCQF level 4 or better		3 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better		5 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better	
	Ren	VC	Ren	VC	Ren	VC	Ren	VC
2019	92%	89%	83%	77%	64%	60%	47%	41%
2020	93%	91%	86%	83%	69%	68%	53%	50%
2021	93%	91%	84%	81%	69%	67%	50%	48%

- 7.4 In S4, Renfrewshire remains above the virtual comparator at SCQF Level 4. The proportion of pupils achieving 3 or more and 5 or more are in line with previous years. At SCQF Level 5, Renfrewshire is ahead of the virtual comparator at 3 or more and 5 or more awards. These patterns are similar to previous years although there has been some variability in the figures due to different assessment methods.

S5

- 7.5 Table 11 includes data on the number of awards achieved for S5 pupils at SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6 for Renfrewshire and the virtual comparator.

Table 11- S5 Breadth & Depth (% of S4 Roll)												
S5 A-C	1 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better		3 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better		5 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better		1 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better		3 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better		5 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better	
	Ren	VC	Ren	VC	Ren	VC	Ren	VC	Ren	VC	Ren	VC
2019	86%	84%	70%	68%	53%	50%	59%	56%	36%	34%	18%	17%
2020	89%	86%	75%	72%	59%	56%	65%	62%	44%	42%	22%	20%
2021	89%	88%	77%	76%	61%	61%	65%	64%	45%	44%	23%	21%

- 7.6 At SCQF Level 5, Renfrewshire is above or in line with the virtual comparator at 1 or more, 3 or more and 5 or more awards. This pattern is replicated at SCQF Level 6 as Renfrewshire's results are consistently above the virtual comparator over 3 years. Several of these measures are higher than previous years for both Renfrewshire and the virtual comparator.

S6

- 7.7 Table 12 includes data on the number of awards achieved for S6 pupils at SCQF levels 5, 6 and 7 for Renfrewshire and the virtual comparator.

Table 12- S6 Breadth & Depth (% of S4 Roll)												
S6 A-C	3 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better		5 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or better		1 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better		3 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better		5 or more awards at SCQF level 6 or better		1 or more awards at SCQF level 7 or better	
	Ren	VC	Ren	VC	Ren	VC	Ren	VC	Ren	VC	Ren	VC
2019	74%	72%	59%	57%	63%	61%	44%	43%	30%	28%	20%	18%
2020	74%	71%	60%	57%	65%	62%	47%	45%	33%	32%	21%	22%
2021	77%	74%	63%	61%	69%	65%	54%	50%	39%	35%	24%	24%

- 7.8 In S6, Renfrewshire has performed above the virtual comparator in all measures at SCQF Level 5 and Level 6. This is consistent with previous year's trends. Attainment at SCQF Level 7 is in line with the virtual comparator, where in previous years Renfrewshire has been marginally behind.

8. Conclusion and next steps

- 8.1 The 2021 results need to be considered in the context of the uniquely challenging circumstances and the never-before-used alternative certification model. Considered in this context, it would not be helpful to directly compare attainment to previous years. What is clear is that young people across Renfrewshire have performed exceptionally well, and they should be congratulated for all that they have achieved.

- 8.2 A further report on finalised leavers' data and the attainment of our looked after children will be presented to this board in spring 2022 or as soon thereafter as the data becomes available.
-

Implications of this report

1. Financial Implications

None.

2. HR and Organisational Development Implications

None.

3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications

Children and Young People	- High levels of attainment and achievement provide our children and young people with the best start in life
---------------------------	---

4. Legal Implications

None.

5. Property/Assets Implications

None.

6. Information Technology Implications

None.

7. Equality and Human Rights Implications

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety Implications

None.

9. Procurement Implications

None.

10. Risk Implications

None.

11. Privacy Impact

None.

12. COSLA Policy Position

None.

13. Climate Risk

None.

List of Background Papers

(a) none

Children's Services
07/01/2021

Author: Fiona Wright, Management Information Officer

To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 20 January 2022

Report by: Director of Children's Services

**Heading: Education Standards & Quality Report September 2021
Education Improvement Plan 2021/22**

1. Summary

- 1.1 In line with the Statutory Guidance: Standards in Scotland etc Act 2000, which covers a series of local authority planning and reporting duties, Renfrewshire's Education Standards & Quality Report (September 2021) and Education Improvement Plan (2021/22) have been developed through consultation with a variety of stakeholders.
- 1.2 Both the report and plan align to the National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish education. Self-evaluation information, and a wide range of data was used to report on the progress and impact of our improvement priorities during session 2020/21 and to identify our priorities for recovery and improvement for the period 2021/22.
- 1.3 Due to the Covid pandemic, schools faced significant disruption again during session 2020/21. Most pupils learned remotely from the start of term in January 2021 until 15th March 2021. Only the most vulnerable children and those of key workers attended school. There was an additional challenge for teachers and Senior Phase pupils associated with the cancellation of exams which were replaced by the Alternative Certification model. Maintaining staffing levels across all establishments has also been difficult due to Covid-related absences. These factors have resulted in progress being hindered in some priority areas.
- 1.4 Despite the challenges, significant progress was made as outlined in the Standards and Quality Report. This report also reflects our response to supporting young people and families throughout the Covid crisis through, for example, improvements in digital learning.
- 1.5 Some areas for improvement from the previous Education Improvement Plan have been carried over to our new plan reflecting the recovery and improvement process. We focus on what can be done to remedy the impact of any widening of inequalities of outcome experienced by children and young people as well as being ambitious in our improvement journey. The Education Improvement Plan contains 4 improvement priorities:

- Develop high quality learning and teaching that leads to improved levels of attainment and achievement in all of our establishments;
- Reduce inequalities and deliver improved health and wellbeing outcomes for children;
- Develop high quality leadership to promote empowerment at all levels; and
- Improve employability skills and support all of our young people to enter positive and sustained destinations.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Education and Children's Services Policy Board are asked to note the content of the Education Standards & Quality Report (September 2021) Appendix 1 and Education Improvement Plan (2021/22) Appendix 2.
-

3. Background

- 3.1. The Statutory Guidance: Standards in Scotland etc Act 2000 covers a series of local authority planning and reporting duties which commenced from 1 August 2017.
- 3.2. This places a duty on education authorities to prepare and publish annual plans outlining the steps they intend to take during the planning period. In addition, education authorities are required to prepare and publish an annual report evaluating the progress and impact of the steps taken.
- 3.3. The guidance states that both the plan and the report must seek to reduce inequalities of outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in pursuance of the NIF for Scottish education. Additional advice this year, stressed the importance of remaining focussed on issues such as: supporting pupil and staff health and wellbeing; transitions at all levels; identifying gaps in learning; and a renewed focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- 3.4. Copies of the plan and report are required to be submitted to Scottish Government.
-

Implications of this report

- 1. Financial Implications**
None.
- 2. HR and Organisational Development Implications**
None.
- 3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications**
The priorities within the Education Improvement Plan support delivery of the priorities contained within Renfrewshire's Community Plan, Council Plan and the Children's Services Improvement Plan.
- 4. Legal Implications**
None.
- 5. Property/Assets Implications**

None.

6. Information Technology Implications

None.

7. Equality and Human Rights Implications

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety Implications

None.

9. Procurement Implications

None.

10. Risk Implications

None.

11. Privacy Impact

None.

12. Cosla Policy Position

None.

13. Climate Risk

None.

List of Background Papers

None

*Children's Services
SQ/MT/KO
11 November 2021*

Author: Mairi Thomas, Education Manager, 0141 618 3994, mairi.thomas@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Education Standards and Quality Report September 2021



Achieving Equity and
Excellence in Renfrewshire





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Our Values

We are fair, we treat each other and everyone we deal with respectfully and work hard to build trust in Renfrewshire Council.

We are helpful, we care about getting things right and are always approachable.

We are great collaborators; we work as one team and with people who care about this place.

We value learning to help us innovate, improve and deliver better services.

Introduction

We are delighted to present to you our annual Standards and Quality report which summarises the progress, successes and achievements of all our staff, children and young people. Yet again, this school year has been extremely challenging and difficult, however all who work to support the education of our children and young people should be incredibly proud of what has been achieved.

The commitment, efforts and endurance coupled with the resilience, innovation and care shown across the workforce has been incredible. It has been a massive team effort with great support from colleagues across the wider council teams, voluntary organisations, public health and of course our wider school communities, including parents and carers. Without this support, we would not have been able to achieve the same outcomes for our children and young people.

Our staff working in schools and centres across Renfrewshire found new and innovative ways of working with children and young people during and after periods of lockdown; using digital technology effectively to provide high quality remote learning; maintaining a focus on health and wellbeing;

communicating with parents and continuing to support test and protect activity throughout the year. A very effective partnership between the central team and schools ensured that all families had access to equipment and had the opportunity to connect to wifi to access remote learning. More importantly, early years practitioners, teachers and support staff continued to show incredible innovation, delivering great lessons and engaging and supporting our children and young people throughout the year.

Delivering National Qualifications has been an incredible challenge both for teachers and our young people. For all those who have been involved in either supporting or delivering the Alternative Certification Model, thank you. It has been an outstanding effort.

We would also like to pay tribute to the incredible resilience shown by our children and young people this year. We are extremely proud of how they adapted to change and what they have achieved as well as their contributions to support the health and wellbeing of the entire population.



Councillor Jim Paterson

Convener Education
and Children's Services



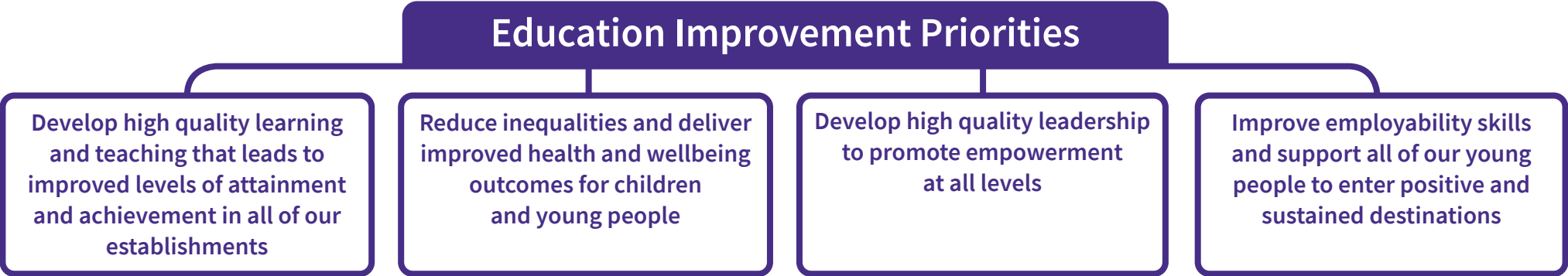
Steven Quinn

Director Children's Services

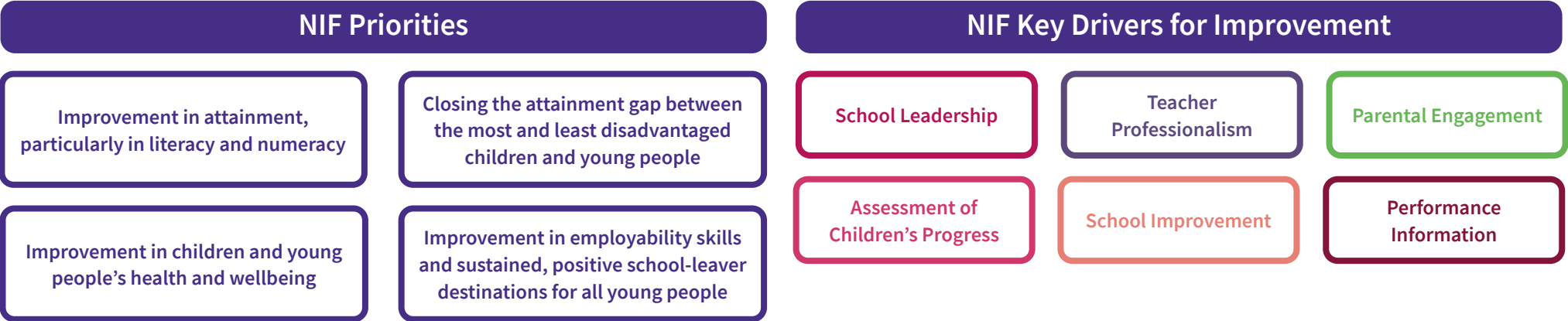
Working together to get it right for children, families and communities—protecting, learning, achieving and nurturing.

Our priorities

This report describes the progress made in taking forward our 4 strategic priorities below and the positive impact of this work on our children and young people.



Our priorities align to those outlined in the National Improvement Framework (NIF). The evaluative statements, contained within this report, are organised under the NIF Key Drivers for Improvement.



Local Context

27,145

children and young people in early years, primary, secondary and additional support needs schools and centres

11 secondary schools

2 schools for children and young people with additional support needs

12 early learning and childcare centres

49 primary schools 22 of which have an early learning and childcare class

4 children's houses and supported accommodation for young people leaving care.

37 early learning and childcare partnership providers

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

Of Renfrewshire's 225 datazones, more than a quarter are in the 20% most deprived areas.

66 datazones are within the **20%** most deprived areas in the health domain;

54 datazones are within the **20%** most deprived areas in the income domain

58 datazones are within the **20%** most deprived areas in the employment domain.



Successes and Achievements

Our Education Scotland Inspection of Local Authorities report highlighted the following key strengths. We have continued to build on our strengths to bring about further improvement.

Strengths

- Very strong self-evaluation, informed by high-quality data, is resulting in very successful, evidenced-based universal and targeted interventions, which are securing improvement.
- Highly effective leadership, shared vision and an ethos of empowerment of staff at all levels to improve outcomes for children and young people, their families and communities.
- The outstanding impact, of very high-quality professional learning approaches, developed and delivered in collaboration with partners.
- Renfrewshire Council’s excellent approach to Scottish Attainment Challenge governance, which is set within a well-defined accountability framework.
- Significant year-on-year improvements in closing the poverty-related attainment gap across all key indicators in the broad general education across curricular areas (as of June 2019).

Winning Scotland

St Catherine’s and St Anthony’s featured as case studies by Winning Scotland highlighting strong practice in implementing and embedding professional learning in Growth Mindset in Maths.

Renfrewshire’s Nurturing Relationships Approach (RNRA)

Schools’ Accreditation Awards

- | | |
|----------------------|----|
| • Jade (level 1) | 13 |
| • Ruby (level 2) | 8 |
| • Amethyst (level 3) | 2 |
| • Gold (level 4) | 2 |

Digital Schools Award

13 primary schools and 1 secondary school

Cyber Resilience and Internet Safety Award

- Heriot Primary
- St. Paul’s Primary
- Gryffe High School

Literacy—Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL)

Renfrewshire Council has become the first local authority in Scotland to provide DPIL to all children aged 2–5. Since the programme was introduced in March, over 2000 children in Renfrewshire have been registered to receive books on a monthly basis.





SEL Worldwide Model School Status (PATHS awards)

Three establishments were presented with their plaques for achieving this status in recognition of their outstanding commitment to social and emotional learning in their school.

- Bishopton Primary School
- Todholm Primary School
- St. Margaret's Primary School

A further four establishments achieved this award in July 2021

- Glencoats Primary School
- Kirklandneuk Primary School
- Barsail Primary School
- Hugh Smiley Early Learning and Childcare Class

Scottish Languages Employability Bronze Award—Renfrew High School

One of only two schools in the country to have achieved the award at this level for developing young people's learning about the world of work and their understanding of language skills to their future employability.

Successes and Achievements

Examples of good practice

National Improvement Hub

Linwood High—partnership working to ensure the safety of vulnerable families

Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Approach (RNRA)—establishing and embedding whole school nurturing approaches across the authority with a particular focus on the implementation of the approach.

National Health and Wellbeing Wakelet

Renfrewshire's 'Skills for Recovery' programme developed to support children, young people, staff and parents.

The International Journey of Nurture in Education—Volume 7

Article featured RNRA and our Skills for Recovery programme.

West Partnership

Storyboard featured Williamsburgh Primary school recognised for responsive remote learning during the pandemic. Their innovative digital approach using QR codes was successful in maximising parental engagement.

LGBT Charter Mark Award

- Bridge of Weir Primary School (Silver)
- Glencoats Primary School (Bronze)
- Johnstone High School (Silver)
- Gryffe High School (Silver)
- Castlehead Secondary School (Bronze)
- Renfrew High School (Bronze)

Care experienced children and young people digital conference

Children's Services hosted our first ever digital conference focused on care experienced children and young people. This very successful event was attended by over 360 Renfrewshire colleagues and was highly evaluated.



Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)

The Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap, helping to achieve equity. National PEF guidance was amended in June 2020 to ensure that the funding could be used flexibly as a response to the pandemic and this guidance was shared with Head Teachers. Following this, all schools reviewed their plans to ensure there was a continued focus on achieving equity and addressing the impact of Covid-19.

Clear advice has been provided by the central team through quality improvement visits, HR and the Procurement team regarding finances, procurement and staff deployment. These arrangements are further enhanced by a dedicated Pupil Equity Fund Coordinator, who has oversight of all PEF activity and supports the authority and Head Teachers with the central coordination of these funds. Head Teachers are required to report on the impact of PEF in a dedicated section of their annual school Standards and Quality report. These are reviewed by link Education Managers and feedback is provided.

In September 2020, the central team conducted a local equity audit to understand the impact of the pandemic on our children and young people. Gaps were identified which were broadly in line with the national equity audit conducted by Education Scotland. A sketchnote was also designed which summarised the main themes. This, as well as the centralised data, was shared with Head Teachers to help further inform their planning.

PEF has been used to support learners during the pandemic, help engage groups of children and young people in online learning, intensify short-term support and ensure children and young people have access to high quality resources and provision. Funding has also been used to support families in crisis through provision of basic necessities like food, utilities, toiletries, stationery, school uniforms and warm clothing in the winter. This support has been vital during the pandemic.

A working group meets regularly to review the impact of PEF. A plan is in place to evaluate the impact over the lifecycle of PEF which will include in-depth consultation with a range of stakeholders.

Covid-19

Following the national announcement of school closures from 23rd March 2020, a Covid-19 Business Continuity Plan was developed to identify how the Council would undertake its critical educational functions during the Covid-19 crisis. Through this planning process the Council ensured systems were developed to:

- provide support for vulnerable children and families;
- provide a safe learning and childcare environment for the children of key workers and those who are vulnerable (hubs);
- provide a platform for the delivery of remote learning (learning packs and digital) for children and young people;
- assess, moderate and quality assure the grades for all senior phase children and young people through the Alternative Certification Model; and
- restore the operation of the education function within Children's Services after the Covid-19 crisis.

By addressing these critical functions Children's Services has provided educational continuity for all children and young people and it has supported the health and wellbeing of its most vulnerable families.

A suite of recovery support documents, aligned to Scottish Government guidance, was issued to all schools and centres to support their return. This included:

- a Covid-19 workplace assessment;
- a strategic hazard identification template (HAZID);
- a Covid-19 establishment risk assessment;
- a Business Continuity Plan (BCP);
- Operational Guidance; and
- Guidance Papers – Additional Support Needs (ASN), Curriculum, Remote Learning, Alternative Certification Model, Transition, PE Risk Assessment and Learning and Teaching.

Prior to the return of staff, children and young people, all schools and centres undertook a health and safety review of their building through a Covid-19 workplace assessment. This process was designed to provide reassurance that the building is safe for occupation and the assessment is ordinarily conducted by the Head and trade union representatives where possible.

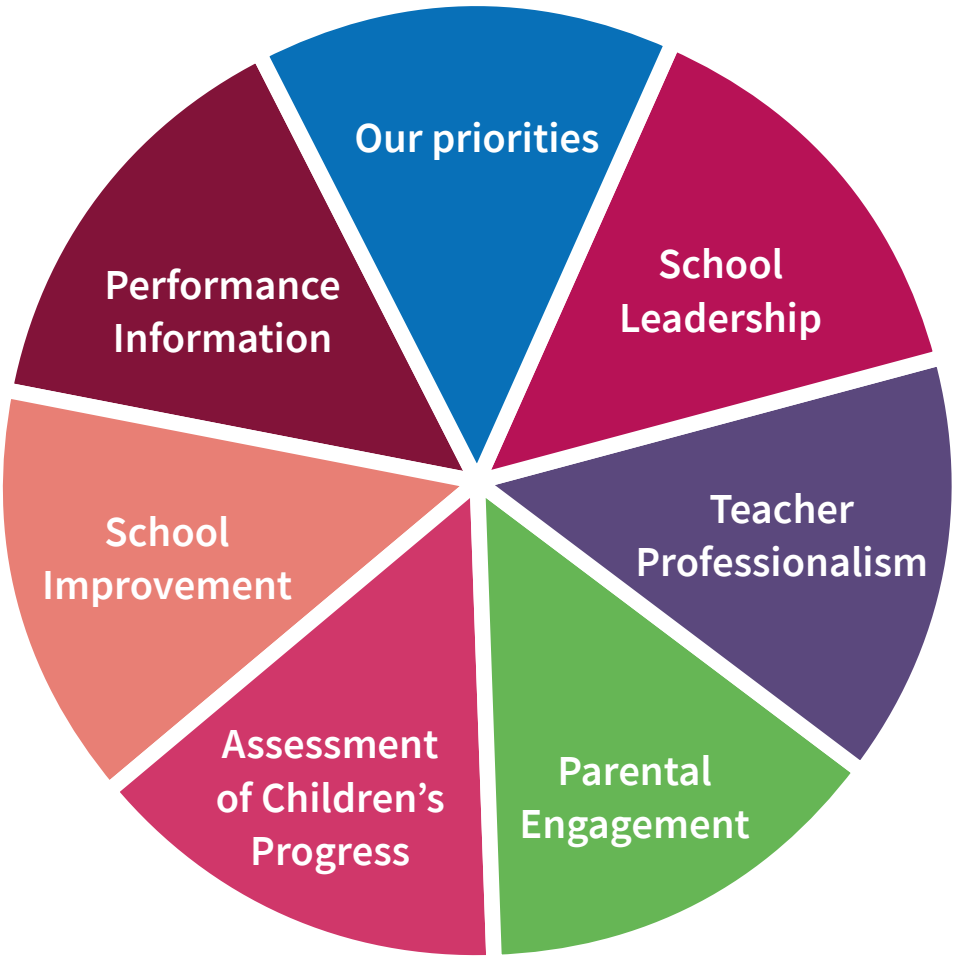
How well did we do?

How well did we do?

The national key drivers of improvement continue to provide a focus and structure for gathering evidence to identify where further improvements can be made. They all remain equally important and the links and connections across these key areas are essential to enable continuous improvement.

The following sections summarise how well we are doing under each of these drivers as well as outlining our next steps moving forward. This has been informed by the evidence we have gathered through our quality assurance activities and a variety of audit material, including data and external feedback from partners, such as Education Scotland. Due to the impact of the pandemic, some improvement priorities will be carried over to next session.

NIF Key Drivers for Improvement





School Leadership

Strong strategic leadership in Renfrewshire Council ensures that all decision-making and improvement planning is underpinned by the principles of empowerment and the very good use of research and data.

Our highly effective leadership programme continues to build resilience and supports succession planning. Adaptations were made to our programme to enable remote delivery where possible. Our Aspiring Deputes training, via Microsoft Teams, involved 26 staff from across all sectors. All participants gained knowledge and understanding across a range of topics including leadership styles, education and the law, empowering teams and discipline and grievance procedures. All who took part reported that, following participation in the course, they felt more confident that the role of Depute was a professional goal they would pursue in the near future.

‘I welcomed the opportunity to speak and connect with others from the Local Authority, learning about their journeys and experiences along the way.’

Aspiring Depute

In partnership with Drummond International, a bespoke programme was delivered to support the mental health and wellbeing of our most senior leaders. Informal online drop-in sessions allowed leaders across all establishments to discuss pandemic-related issues, concerns or difficulties they were experiencing and, where appropriate, these were followed up with one to one coaching sessions.

Step Back podcasts were made available to senior leaders from August to November 2020. These podcasts included interviews with a variety of education staff who provided their reflections, thoughts and support on the pandemic and its ongoing impact in our education settings. A series of virtual Step Back

workshops were delivered between December 2020 and March 2021, to ensure that personal health and wellbeing remained a priority but also to begin to prepare our senior leaders for the challenges and opportunities which lay ahead both in the short and the longer term for leading their school communities, curriculum and wider Education system.

“When we have sessions like this, I feel valued and reassured that my professional development, but also work life balance, are being considered and recognised by the authority.”

Head Teacher

External consultants facilitated 7 online Learning Sets to groups of primary and secondary deutes from across sectors, as well as one set of Head Teachers, to further empower them to work in more collegiate and collaborative ways. 44 participants in total benefitted from working together to develop strategies and solutions to school-based issues using a coaching approach.

“The Learning Set allowed us to speak frankly and honestly but also learn from each other. I liked holding the mirror up to myself and having staff who are there to support and challenge but not judge.”

Depute Head Teacher

A group of primary Head Teachers benefitted from a 1:1 bespoke coaching programme delivered online. Participants reflected against the GTCS Standard and support thereafter focussed on the individual development needs of each Head Teacher.

“Each session was very well structured and supportive. It was easy to build a good working relationship with the facilitator and I always felt at ease. The facilitator’s knowledge of relevant literature to support my aims was extremely helpful and several texts were recommended and discussed during our sessions. Coaching methods were used to enable me to come to my own conclusions and next steps rather than telling me what to do.”

Head Teacher

A Renfrewshire Head Teacher Induction programme has been developed to inform and support those new to post regarding council policy and procedure and familiarise new Head Teachers with development work being undertaken by Children’s Services and partners.

Early Learning and Childcare

The Early Years ‘Grow Your Own’ workforce development plan continued to be progressed with a broad range of online professional learning opportunities provided for leaders and practitioners. Funded support was provided for staff to access certificated training to meet Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration requirements. The professional learning programme is continuing to build a solid knowledge base for practitioners and leaders to study and practically apply their learning to improve outcomes for children. It is also supporting improvement in the quality of both indoor and outdoor learning environments and developing staff confidence in the management of this particularly at a time when staff are coping with Covid restrictions.

School Leadership

Our ‘Grow Your Own’ staff, in relation to the employment and training for Modern Apprentices and Support Workers, has been very successful. To date, all Modern Apprentices from the first 2 training cohorts have secured early learning and childcare officer positions with Renfrewshire Council, with cohort 3 and 4 training still underway. All early learning and support workers involved in the initial training programmes have achieved their qualification at either SVQ level 2 or 3, with 7 out of 11 support workers who achieved the level 3 qualification securing an early learning and childcare officer position.

Leadership development continues to be a priority with a range of specific learning opportunities provided for newly appointed deputies, seniors and early years graduates. Our Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) leaders are empowered and have increased skills and knowledge to lead and develop their services through our high quality professional learning programme. The programme, focused on health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy, is supporting staff to improve outcomes for children particularly given the impact of lockdown. The Froebel training, which is delivered in partnership

with Edinburgh University, has continued, with a new cohort of 60 practitioners underway. The confidence of practitioners in linking theory to practice continues to benefit the quality of learning and teaching for children in almost all settings.

Newly Qualified Teachers

A package of high-quality online professional learning and support was provided for our newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Input included a variety of mandatory sessions such as Child Protection, Inclusion and Managing Challenging Behaviour and optional sessions such as Improving Gender Balance and Equalities and Learning for Sustainability. Every NQT completed a professional enquiry, which was shared in small groups and celebrated through a Blog which was available to all NQTs, mentors and Head Teachers. A Development Officer provided high quality professional learning for NQT mentors and provided intensive support for individuals. NQTs rated the programme highly, giving it 4.6 out of 5 in relation to relevance and usefulness. As in previous years almost all NQTs had a satisfactory outcome to their induction year.

“The Local Authority, NQT team and school have kept me on track and pushed us all to continue to develop as motivated, flexible, caring and resourceful practitioners.”

Newly Qualified Teacher

West Partnership Collaboration

Effective collaboration with local authorities across the West Partnership resulted in a range of high quality online support for our senior leaders. This included:

- Head Teacher Action Learning Set pilot to expand their networks and facilitate sharing of effective practice on a variety of issues.
- Head Teacher Executive Coaching Programme with the Mudd Partnership; HTs worked on a 1:1 basis with an external coach allowing a confidential space to enable pause, reflection, sharing of thoughts, worries, concerns and challenges as well as the chance to explore opportunities.

- Thinking About Headship pilot training programme; this gave our aspiring Head Teachers the opportunity to reflect on the role of headship based on the General Teaching Council Standard for Headship 2021. The course allowed for professional dialogue and active engagement with key aspects of leadership.
- Virtual Leadership Networks open to all Head Teachers and Deputies were created to allow for effective collaboration across the West Partnership, particularly in planning for and navigating Covid recovery and renewal. Our staff found these sessions informative, inspiring and supportive during the most difficult of years.

Youth Voice

The voice of children and young people is shaping improvement across Renfrewshire through, for example, the Youth Symposium, Champions Board, and the Youth Commission. Young people are empowered and are given opportunities to influence decision-making on issues affecting their lives.

Renfrewshire Youth Voice (RYV), Renfrewshire Attainment Team and Youth Services designed and carried out a consultation exercise with young people in schools across Renfrewshire. Using the Community Learning and Development competencies, and linking the PSE review to the National Youth Work outcomes and indicators, ensured that this remained youth-led. The sessions were co-designed and delivered by young people from RYV and Peer Leaders. These results are informing the ongoing development and design of Renfrewshire's PSE Framework. Members of the Youth Services team were asked to share this approach with the West Partnership and Education Scotland as an example of best practice. The report was shared across partners and other local authorities and was a useful and practical guide for others not yet started the process of review. Our youth-led practice was recognised as a valuable approach in engaging and ensuring young people were meaningfully involved in the process.



School Leadership

Next Steps

- Continue to support those aspiring to formal leadership roles through the delivery of high-quality Aspiring Leadership programmes.
- Continue to work in partnership with Drummond International, delivering a leadership programme which supports senior leaders to return to being more strategic in their thinking.
- Introduce Learning Sets for newly appointed Early Years Deputes and further roll out the opportunity to primary and secondary Deputes to continue to empower them to work in more collegiate and collaborative ways.
- Provide the opportunity to participate in 1:1 bespoke coaching programme to a further group of newly appointed leaders.
- Support secondary schools to develop leadership skills in young people through the provision of residential programmes which focus on physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing.
- Continue to provide a package of high-quality professional learning and increase the support available to NQTs and Mentors by increasing the development officer team.
- Roll out successful West Partnership programmes including Thinking About Headship, Head Teacher Learning Sets, Executive Coaching and Virtual Learning Networks and Masterclasses.
- Develop opportunities for nominated staff to undertake facilitation training with a view to expanding the scope of the Leadership Learning Sets and to empower these staff to undertake facilitation roles across the West Partnership as well as within their own local authority and establishments.
- Pilot Renfrewshire's Head Teacher Induction programme.
- Continue to develop and implement the 'Grow Your Own' professional learning and training programme for early years practitioners and leaders
- Progress the work of reviewing and updating arrangements for devolved school management in line with national expectations.
- Facilitate further discussion with young people on the structure and future content of the PSE Framework through taking the recommendations to the Renfrewshire Youth Assembly.



Teacher Professionalism

We have created a collaborative culture where all staff are empowered to fully participate in career long professional learning (CLPL). Approaches to improving literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are effective in providing universal, targeted and individual interventions. Our Development Officer team continue to provide very effective professional learning and bespoke support to establishments in their areas of expertise.

Literacy

Evidence-based approaches to the teaching of reading and writing continue to be successfully embedded and extended. Our partnership with the University of Strathclyde and use of their 3 Domain Model has led to extensive professional learning for staff and the delivery of a consistent and high-quality literacy curriculum for all children. The 3 Domain Model, a tool for thinking about literacy and learning, supports staff to navigate a broader range of evidence under the 3 domains of cognitive skills and abilities; cultural and social capital; and identity and agency.

Very good bespoke Literacy support has been provided to 29 schools tailored to their own contexts. This has spanned a wide range of areas including: in-service and collegiate training; guidance on the purchase of new reading schemes, novels and literacy resources; advice on school improvement planning; and individual school evaluation of implementation of the Renfrewshire Literacy Approach.

215 teachers and school leaders from 38 schools and peripatetic services across Renfrewshire participated in professional learning opportunities related to Raising Attainment in Reading, Raising Attainment in Writing and the Primary Literacy Coaching Programme. All participants indicated that post-training they had an increased knowledge and understanding of evidence-based pedagogy to raise attainment in reading and writing.

To support ongoing learning in Literacy during periods of remote learning and for children self-isolating, all schools were provided with access to a comprehensive online literacy-based resource; our own website containing a range of reading activities and a range of home learning booklets.

28 Classroom Assistants have completed half of our comprehensive programme of professional learning delivered in partnership with the University of Strathclyde. This programme will be completed when training is able to resume in light of Covid-19.

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library programme has grown significantly. There are currently 1922 children receiving a book each month from our programme and since 2019 we have had 192 children graduate from the programme when they turned 5 years old.

‘Thank you for your time and this excellent opportunity. Some of our children are not at their chronological/developmental age, developmentally they are younger. A picture book, a flap lifting book, a touch and feel or interactive books are always a safe resource. The books look great. We are very grateful for this lovely opportunity’

Head Teacher

Our Approach

FOSTERING A
+GROWTH+
MINDSET



THE RENFREWSHIRE LITERACY APPROACH

1 THE THREE DOMAIN MODEL (UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE)

The Renfrewshire Literacy Checklist



2 HIGH QUALITY CLPL (FOR TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF & SCHOOL LEADERS) evidence-based approaches to raise attainment

Primary Literacy Coaching Programme

book banding
turning records
misuse analysis
coaching strategies

Dive into Reading

3 sharings
reading journals
high quality texts

Dive into Writing

free writing
writing journals
low stakes high impact activities

3 ESTABLISH A NETWORK OF LITERACY CHAMPIONS

Ongoing Professional Learning

Sharing Practice



Supporting Implementation across Schools

Evaluation & Impact

POSITIVE IMPACT IS
EVIDENT FROM HMIE
AUTHORITY INSPECTIONS

The innovative approach to improving attainment in literacy is supported by extensive professional learning. Schools are empowered to prioritise elements which suit their own context and has had a positive impact across the authority.

"YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERFORMANCE HAS IMPROVED IN ALMOST ALL MEASURES IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS"



SCHOOLS & THE WIDER AUTHORITY
HAVE ACHIEVED A RANGE OF
NATIONAL AWARDS INCLUDING



UKLA Literacy School of the Year
(St Anthony's Primary)

COSLA Excellence Silver Award

KEY LESSONS

1 Effective Leadership of the Renfrewshire Literacy Approach at all levels

2 Whole School Approach & Implementation

3 Inclusion within School Improvement Planning

4 Sharing effective Practice within & across establishments

Teacher Professionalism

Our school library service continue to provide very good universal and targeted support to schools. They delivered a programme of online activities to engage children with reading and information literacy. These included virtual book clubs and storytelling sessions. An online home learning hub was launched—a one-stop shop for children, teachers and parents to online library resources providing access to knowledge, and reading resources. Over 10,700 e-books for children and young people were borrowed between July 2020 and June 2021—an increase of 3,441 on the previous year.

The Primary School Outreach Service provided online support to primary schools including guides on how to join the library online, specialist guides to support teachers e.g. using the school library safely during Covid, themed resources for study and special promotions including the Paisley Book Festival schools programme and the Summer Reading Challenge. RIOT (Read It Out Time) in Renfrewshire promoted the benefits of reading aloud, based on Lindsay Littleson's book

“A Pattern of Secrets”, set in Victorian Paisley, and engaged with 12 primary schools and 634 children.

During periods when schools were open the team of school librarians in secondary schools adapted the service to comply with Covid restrictions, offering access to physical books via a request service and classroom delivery. They also provided presentations on accessing online resources in classrooms.

Numeracy

In Numeracy, a similar approach is in place based on the 3 Domain model. Evidence based approaches are being implemented to promote attainment and achievement in all 3 domains.

Our ‘Limitless Learning’ professional learning was co-authored with partners Winning Scotland and co-delivered to 62 practitioners spanning 11 schools as well as the Transition team. The course aimed to tie together Mindset theory, local and national priorities, and practical guidance for implementing effective pedagogy in numeracy and mathematics. Most participants agreed the course was relevant to their professional needs as well as the needs of their learners and schools.

All participants agreed that the training improved their pedagogical knowledge and skills and almost all participants reported that it supported them to be a better teacher of numeracy and mathematics.

“It’s revolutionising the way maths is taught and perceived all the way from early years right up to adulthood.”

Transition Teacher

“The content of this course is very much about getting them to a place where they enjoy learning, feel able to contribute and have ownership over their learning... It’s bridging the gaps by bringing the joy back to learning and teaching.”

Head Teacher

THE RENFREWSHIRE NUMERACY AND MATHEMATICS APPROACH



NUMERACY & MATHEMATICS CHECKLIST



1 TEACHING FOR A GROWTH MINDSET
~ SUPPORTED BY **WINNING SCOTLAND** MINDSET CHAMPIONS COURSE

2 ATTENDING TO THE THREE DOMAIN MODEL
~ DEVELOPED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE

3 TEACHING FOR UNDERSTANDING
~ USING MULTIPLE REPRESENTATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN TO DISCUSS MATHEMATICAL IDEAS (S.E.A.L., C-P-A, Numbertalks etc.)

KEY LESSON ONE

GROWTH MINDSET INTERVENTIONS HAVE GREATEST IMPACT WHEN TASKS RE-ENFORCE MINDSET MESSAGES

- * Consider how your resources ALIGN with mindset principles
- * Do you provide opportunities to EXPLORE, BE CREATIVE & MAKE MISTAKES?
- * Is the focus on mathematical THINKING or procedures & answers?
- * Can the task be OPEN-ENDED with a low floor & high ceiling to include and CHALLENGE all learners?

KEY LESSON TWO

NO SINGLE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH IS THE KEY TO UNLOCKING ATTAINMENT

- * S.E.A.L., C-P-A & Numbertalks etc all feature effective practice...



Strength comes when they come together

LEARNING & TEACHING TOOLKIT

114 participated on the Winning Scotland Mindset course

91% agreed that the course made them a better teacher

91% said that their pupils have an improved understanding of how mistakes can be used as a learning opportunity



88% reported that their pupils felt less anxious

NUMERACY & MATHEMATICS CLPL ATTENDEES...

94% reported increased knowledge & understanding

96% agreed they had improved skills & abilities

98% believed that CLPL would have a positive impact on learning in classrooms

KEY LESSON THREE

TEACHERS SHOULD WORK WITH COLLEAGUES AT DIFFERENT CURRICULAR LEVELS OR SECTORS

- * leading to consistency of approach
- * facilitates connections between key concepts

Teacher Professionalism

In partnership with Education Scotland, we are currently co-authoring and co-delivering a Numeracy Recovery Improvement Pilot. The programme is halfway complete and will resume in the next session. So far 65 practitioners from across 9 establishments have benefitted from participating in the pilot, which centres around the Maths Recovery series of literature.

In addition to the two large-scale pieces of professional learning above we have delivered sessions on Numbertalks, Numeracy Across the Curriculum, NQT Training, S.E.A.L strategies for Early/First Level, Bar Modelling and Using Low Floor High Ceiling Tasks. These have been attended by staff from almost all establishments in primary and some in secondary. Almost all participants agreed the professional learning had increased their knowledge and understanding of the content and improved their professional skills and abilities.

A collaborative network of 86 Literacy champions and 60 Numeracy champions continue to receive ongoing training, development and opportunities to share practice, enabling them to support the senior leadership team in schools in leading and sustaining the ongoing implementation of the Renfrewshire Literacy and Numeracy approaches across all areas of the curriculum.

Health and Wellbeing (HWB)

Following a lengthy period of schools closures it was vital that we strengthened our emphasis on health and wellbeing. Led by Renfrewshire's Educational Psychology Service (REPS), Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Approach (RNRA) continues to make excellent progress impacting positively on staff's practice and having a positive effect on the social, emotional and behavioural development of children and young people across all sectors. We have continued to embed RNRA and build sustainability across all engaged establishments through development of leadership training, training for trainers and ilearn modules. Individual establishments are able to provide evidence of impact through their RNRA Action Plans and accreditation submissions. To date, 25 establishments have successfully achieved accreditation. RNRA

has been used to support children and young people, staff and parent/carers' wellbeing and recovery from Covid-19 using the suite of RNRA 'Build Back Better Resources'. These include the highly successful 'Skills for Recovery' programme developed in partnership with the Health and Wellbeing Development Officer.

Our life skills programme 'Living Life to the Full' (LLTTF) has been rolled out across all secondary schools and one special school. Leadership training was delivered online and new schools are being mentored by colleagues from our cohort trained last year. Almost all teachers who deliver the programme in Personal and Social Education lessons have emerging skills and confidence in using a cognitive behavioural therapy approach to develop emotional literacy and resilience in young people.

In partnership with Barnardo's, the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS®) programme continues to be successfully implemented across the authority in 30 settings. Despite the challenges faced this year, evaluation data, including case studies, provides evidence that the programme is impacting positively on children's self-regulation, emotional awareness and interpersonal problem-solving skills. Highly

skilled coaches provide professional learning for teachers, support staff and parents. This whole-school approach is helping to ensure that the programme is sustainable. Last session, the coaches were flexible in their delivery, moving to online training sessions and assemblies. To support schools during lockdown, online lessons and resources were shared via social media channels and with teachers directly so that they could be incorporated into home learning packs. Three schools celebrated their excellent achievement of Worldwide Model School status in 2020 and were awarded with their plaques in June. Another 3 schools and one early learning and childcare centre were also successful in achieving this high profile award in July 2021.

In order to meet the recommendation of the Scottish Government's Personal and Social Education (PSE) Review, schools were supported through targeted training and information sharing to improve staff knowledge in the areas of Internet Safety, Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP), Mental, Emotional, Social and Physical Wellbeing and Planning for Choices and Change. Staff were also encouraged to attend similar sessions run by the West Partnership PSE Lead Officers group, chaired by

our Health and Wellbeing Development Officer. The latter focused on RSHP for recovery planning, accreditation in PSE and implementing the SQA Mental Health Award. Through this work we have stepped closer to a consistent approach across schools.

Establishments were provided with a mental health resource and supplementary toolkit to raise awareness of staff, at all levels, of the mental health difficulties children and young people may face and improve staff confidence in providing support. Evaluations received indicated that staff found the presentation effective in raising their awareness and reported that the information in the toolkit was useful. This resource is revisited, at least annually, as part of the suite of annual updates for staff.

Skills for Recovery (SFR), a collaborative project between REPS and the HWB Development Officer, was developed to support the transition back to schools following the summer holidays and the periods of school closures. It provides practical help for children, young people, staff and parents around dealing with change, understanding and naming our feelings, relationships, bouncing back and signposts to supports within the authority. Resources can be used flexibly and accessed from

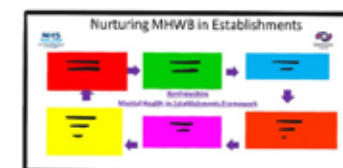
home to: support the proposed blended learning approach at that time; allow quick adaptation of teaching methods if there was another lockdown; and enable children and young people who were self-isolating due to Covid to complete the programme. Additional SfR self-isolation resources were provided on Microsoft Sway, a platform that allows us to monitor engagement; they were accessed over 5,500 times.

We continue to make good progress in rolling out our Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) peer-mentoring programme in secondary schools. Four out of six trained schools managed to deliver mentor training despite the challenges of Covid. With an increased focus on gender-based violence in society, our schools recognise the importance of having a programme which tackles difficult conversations around relationships. Schools have delivered mentor training to a large number of young people. Young people reported that they had increased knowledge of issues which affect relationships and felt more confident talking about them. They reported that they learned new skills and improved on existing skills. Young people were able to share with the Education Scotland MVP Development Team ways in which the programme could be updated and improved.



DEVELOPMENTS

- MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY and development of 6 box model



- ASSESSING WELLBEING USING THE GLASGOW MOTIVATION & WELLBEING PROFILING TOOL

- HEALTH & WELLBEING BLOG



Information about resources, training, professional learning & local and national supports

- PSE REVIEW (YOUTH SERVICES) RENFREWSHIRE
 - Pupil voice
 - Teacher voice

- SUBSTANCE MISUSE MODEL & TRAINING AT ALL STAGES

OUR COUNSELLING SERVICES



The-Exchange



Improving children's mental health

@swanton.sketches

The focus of professional learning for staff changed and developed due to the restrictions placed on face to face events and also the hold by Public Health Scotland on delivering training around self-harm and suicide. Through collaboration with the Choose Life Coordinator, staff needs were discussed and bespoke training developed around mental health.

‘I took lots of helpful tools away with me to help me support children with anxiety.’

Teacher

‘Some confidence built about a response to suicidal thoughts. Awareness of what works and practical resources.’

Teacher

To support establishments on their return post lockdown, professional learning in the use of the national Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) was provided in partnership with colleagues from the NHS Health Improvement Team. Staff reported that these sessions supported their planning in the final term and also the new session. Early Protective Messages training for early years staff moved online at Easter and will continue next session.

CEOP (Child Exploitation Online Prevention) Delegate training was offered to all sectors. To support this further, we expanded our training team to include staff from all sectors so that we could develop a sustainable and consistent training offer and resources framework across all age groups. Training also introduced staff to the parent zone and resources available on the Thinkuknow website. Training has now taken place across 9 of our secondary schools, 5 of our primaries and one ELCC. Staff shared that the training provided valuable up-to-date information around internet safety and sexual exploitation online and that they valued having a whole establishment input.

In line with Scottish Government’s commitment to LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex) Inclusive Education, schools have been supported to build on existing practice through provision of professional learning from LGBT Scotland on tackling homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying. Currently 8 schools are working towards the LGBT Scotland Charter award. To date, 3 of our schools have achieved the Silver Award and 3 schools have achieved Bronze. Evaluations indicate an improvement overall with staff reporting an increased understanding and awareness of what LGBT young people experience, particularly with regards to their identity, societal attitudes and the language used. In addition, staff stated an increase in their confidence in how best to support a LGBT young person. Our schools have developed LGBT inclusive curricular work, inclusive picture story books, updated their libraries and are collaborating with local community groups. Young people in one of our secondary schools linked with children from P5-7 in one of their feeder primaries to run a joint ‘Rainbowfest’ event.

“It’s genuinely inspiring how hard all the teachers are working. I can see the commitment from the staff and pupils driving this work forward is seen as valuable, which in these times is such a testament to each school community and their values.”

**Education Capacity Building Officer—
LGBT Youth Scotland**

Establishment staff have been kept abreast of a wide range of local and national HWB resources and services through the HWB blog, high quality monthly newsletters and our Twitter page (@RenEdHWB). Signposting to resources to support the mental and emotional wellbeing of staff and children and young people has been particularly important during lockdown and remote learning.

Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach

Due to the pandemic, most activities, local and national, were unable to take place and will be carried over into the new academic session. Funding was downloaded to schools and used to support in-house school programmes during the pandemic. An authority-wide subscription to Linguascope was obtained and put in place to ensure that schools had access to the resource particularly during lockdown periods. We hosted 3 German Educational Trainees through an online model. The impact was variable and lessons learned will be used to inform future practice.

Exploring Pedagogy

‘Enquiry Based Learning in Primary 3’ was delivered online to 30 teachers from 21 schools by Deirdre Grogan, Principal Knowledge Exchange Fellow from Strathclyde University. Due to the pandemic, support visits to participating establishments could not go ahead and full implementation of the guidance could not

be adopted by practitioners due to Covid mitigations. However, the online training allowed for the effective sharing of pedagogy in primary three which led to some increase in children’s involvement in planning their own learning. We plan to build on these results in the coming session and ensure participating staff are able to make the most of this training depending on mitigations in place.

Next Steps

- Continue to provide high quality professional learning to staff at all levels based on evidence-based approaches to raising attainment in literacy and closing identified gaps in pupil attainment.
- Introduce programmes of CLPL in relation to: high quality teaching of phonics linked to the Renfrewshire Literacy Approach and development of early reading skills; and the Talk for Writing approach.
- Work with practitioners across primary and secondary establishments to further develop the Dive into Reading and Writing approaches ensuring consistency, clear progression and avoiding overlap.

- In partnership with the University of Strathclyde deliver the remainder of our programme of professional learning for classroom assistants and devise an ongoing, comprehensive programme of CLPL for support staff based on local and national priorities and areas identified via staff consultation.
- In partnership with the Scottish Book Trust, introduce a programme of professional learning, to support the implementation of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and pilot the Reading Schools Award in targeted early years settings.
- Support targeted groups of children and young people to improve digital literacy and information literacy skills via the school libraries attainment team.
- Using poverty-related attainment data, identify schools for targeted support from Modelling and Coaching Officers (MCO) in numeracy & mathematics.
- Deliver extended training programme on using the Maths Recovery framework, to upskill practitioners in identifying and addressing gaps in numeracy and mathematics.
- Deliver an in-house programme of professional learning in effective pedagogy including: Numbertalks, using Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract strategies, Bar Modelling, S.E.A.L and Teaching for Understanding in N5 and Higher.
- Support the continued implementation of RNRA in establishments through the continued development of imodule training, support through locality Network meetings, promotion of pupil voice and parental engagement, and support to achieve accreditation.
- Promote the use of the Compassionate and Connected Classroom and Renfrewshire's 'Skills for Recovery' programme to support the mental and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and staff.
- Provide high quality professional learning and resources, to support establishments to improve health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on mental and emotional wellbeing. This includes areas that can impact on mental health e.g. LGBTI, substance misuse, relationships, sexual health, understanding self-harm and suicide.
- Develop new Alcohol and Drug Education curricular resources for Early Years – Secondary which will meet the recommendations of the Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drug Commission Report 2020.
- Lead the West Partnership Strategic PSE group for primary and secondary and collaborate with colleagues around self-evaluation within PSE/HWB inputs and accreditation from P7 to S6.
- Provide high quality professional learning to support teacher confidence in teaching additional languages and in language development through a cluster delivery model.
- In partnership with University of Strathclyde, and building on previous work, deliver 'Enquiry Based Learning in Primary 3' training to a further cohort of teachers and provide establishment follow up visits to support the implementation.

Parental Engagement

All of our establishments have been creative and innovative in successfully engaging with parents to support learning and teaching, provide vital information, and consult on what is working well and/or needs to improve. Indeed, use of a variety of digital platforms have been so successful and efficient in engaging a greater number of parents, that many establishments intend to retain and build on these as we move out of the pandemic. A local authority Parental Survey on 'remote learning' was conducted in January 2021, providing authority and school-level data. Most parents agreed that their child's experience of online learning was positive.

'Live lessons where teachers are using ingenious methods to keep kids engaged and also actively participating in live calls'

Parent

'A weekly call from the school and words of positivity and encouragement to continue their great work from teachers to students has been great and makes a big difference'

Parent

'Daily check in, being able to comment on how they're feeling and a light hearted, fun question included on the daily hello video from the teacher where they can reply on the blog has also been great and much appreciated'

Parent

Some parents expressed concerns over the effect remote learning was having on their child's mental health. In response to these concerns, our Skills for Recovery programme and Covid helpline provided very good support for parents in relation to their own self-care and in supporting their child. Signposting to

supports available, for example, our school counselling service, was also important in raising awareness of where help could be accessed quickly and easily.

Throughout the past year we have continued to develop 'Non-Violent Resistance' (NVR) approaches to support children, young people and families. Engagement in the programme has been high with approximately 80 families (including kinship & foster carers) accessing NVR Parent Groups. NVR Level One Training has been delivered to 14 establishments (including specialist establishments), Home Link, and Families First staff and we have developed an implementation plan to support 'whole school NVR' across the authority. Impact data for the first cohort of parent participants indicates that most parents reported a decrease in their child's behavioural problems and the majority of parents reported a decrease in emotional problems related to their child. Parents also highlighted: the positive impact of de-escalation strategies; their increased understanding of the importance of self-care in helping them to build positive relationships with their child; and the very good support from the group during lockdown.

Implementation of our revised Parental Engagement Professional Learning framework was delayed as a result of Covid demands on schools. A Sharing Practice Wakelet has been circulated to schools highlighting examples of effective parental engagement/family learning successfully implemented during school closure periods. A 'Walking Together with Parents in Renfrewshire' practitioner website has been developed to share good practice and information.

Our Pizza Learning programme successfully moved online and continued to offer very good family learning opportunities in targeted schools. New materials and a digital delivery model have been developed to enable this change of approach. 153 families successfully participated in Pizza Reading and/or Pizza Maths since January 2021.

Pizza reading has resulted in

“increased confidence in children and motivation to pick up another book. More family learning activities came out of pizza reading such as starting up cooking classes for families. A couple of parents actually went onto college afterwards to develop their own learning.”

Head Teacher

The impact of Covid has resulted in a reduced number of secondary schools being able to deliver the Parents In Partnership (PIP) programme as planned during session 20/21. However, the schools who did implement aspects of the programme had it positively evaluated by participants. There are some good practice examples of how home/school relationships have improved during school closure periods.

Inclusion Support Assistants and Home Link staff have worked collaboratively with pastoral care teams and external partners to provide very good

support to the most vulnerable learners in school and at home. Positive home/school relationships have continued to be developed, nurtured and improved to ensure digital inclusion and equity of opportunity. They made home visits, carried out regular online/telephone check-ins, supported young people to access online learning and provided practical support e.g. distribution of food parcels, IT hardware and stationery packs. Many also worked in our hub schools supporting the children of key workers and those who are vulnerable.

Since August 2020, the Language Bank has been used to support families through 75 face to face/telephone interpreting tasks and 32 written translation tasks. As a result of the support provided by the interpreters, families and schools have been able to: ensure letters from school were sent to families in their own language; ensure families welfare and education needs were supported through the periods of lockdown and remote learning; communicate on the progress of their children and receive support where required; apply for vital benefits with support; and progress their own English language and communication skills.

Parental Engagement

Parent Council Chairs from across Renfrewshire are regularly briefed and consulted on progress in taking forward improvement priorities by Children's Services' Directorate. During school closures, the Director of Children's Services continued to meet virtually with Parent Council Chairs in addition to using social media channels to provide regular communication to parents/carers through video messages, letters and responses to parental questions. A series of helpful documents were developed to provide information and advice for parents/carers on a range of different topics, including health and safety, Alternative Certification Model and arrangements during remote learning periods.

Next Steps

- Collaborate with an academic partner from Swansea University and the Attainment Advisor to collect and evaluate good practice across establishments and provide targeted training to support the embedding of parental engagement in learning.
- Explore how we use digital learning to widen access and increase parental participation capitalising on the success of engagement during remote learning.
- Provide bespoke support to schools around co-evaluation, co-creation and improvement planning in the area of parental engagement, making use of the West Partnership Self-Evaluation Toolkit.
- Provide ongoing central operational support around planning and implementation of PIP programme in secondary schools.
- Implement the national Parental Involvement and Engagement census and use the results to inform improvement priorities.
- Continue to support children and families through provision of Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) parent groups and support implementation of 'whole school' NVR through existing RNRA frameworks.
- Extend the scope and reach of the Pizza Family Learning Programme in targeted primary schools.
- Use Parent Survey responses to inform our parental engagement strategy and digital learning strategy.



Assessment of Children's Progress

Assessment and Moderation

All teachers continue to develop confidence in making effective judgements about children's progress; this has been particularly challenging given the extended periods of remote learning last session. However, a range of effective formative and summative assessment approaches have been used across early years establishments and schools to assess children's progress in literacy and numeracy.

Assessing the wellbeing needs of children and young people has also been a priority in all establishments. A number of primary and secondary schools have piloted use of the 'Glasgow Motivation and Profiling Wellbeing' tool to measure a young person's motivation and sense of wellbeing in the learning context linked to the wellbeing indicators. Results have helped to ensure interventions are in place to support targeted children and young people.

On publication of the updated SQA Alternative Certification Model (ACM), Renfrewshire Council developed clear and robust guidance which outlined specific actions at each stage of the process. Our aim was to maintain school autonomy to design their approach

to assessment based on courses and programmes experienced by their young people while ensuring there was a robust framework that supported a rigorous approach to quality assurance at all levels. Our focus was on ensuring that young people got the results that they deserved through inter-authority quality assurance processes which ensured grades were subject to rigorous checks.

The Central Education Team worked closely with all schools to ensure that the necessary support and challenge was provided. This included:

- Frequent secondary HT meetings with the Director and Heads of Service providing HTs with the opportunity to share ideas, ask questions and develop their thinking around the ACM.
- Internal verification guidance, closely aligned with SQA policy, developed with senior school staff. It set out best practice for the creation and validation of assessment and how schools would undertake moderation to ensure a shared understanding of standards and expectations. The policy was peer reviewed by another Local Authority.

- Grade analysis tool developed and shared with all schools enabling middle and senior leaders to look at the progress of young people in the context of trend data.
- Ongoing data analysis support provided by our data management team.
- Moderation teams for every subject created to provide external moderation if required. These teams were accessed at the request of schools or in response to local authority analysis and/or SQA feedback.
- Monthly meetings with subject leaders facilitated by Education Managers with agendas agreed in advance.
- Regular meetings of SQA coordinators including weekly drop-in sessions with SQA liaison manager.

Since the onset of Covid-19, Renfrewshire Council has placed protecting the interests of children and young people at the heart of our response. Schools remaining safe, open and welcoming – with a focus on health, wellbeing and intensified support for reducing inequity and enabling the highest quality of learning and teaching – has been critical. As part of our local Education Recovery Plan, Build Back Better, we sought to fully understand what impact the pandemic has had on the attainment and achievement of our children and young people. Whilst understanding the poverty related attainment gap has always been a service priority and focus, the pandemic has raised the profile of the gap even further. The aims of our Equity Audit were to: define what the attainment gap looks like now by comparing across all quartile schools; determine who the pandemic has had the biggest impact on; identify the potential reasons why the gap may have widened; and determine future steps. A sketchnote on page 40 summarising the findings is provided.

School Leavers

For 2020, attainment must be considered within the context that results were based on estimated grades. Leaver Destinations figures will also have been impacted by the pandemic. The availability of particular opportunities (employment opportunities, for example) may have been directly affected by the Covid pandemic.

The percentage of 2019/20 Renfrewshire school leavers in a positive destination is 94%. This represents a decrease (-1pp) since 2018/19 but an increase over 5 years. Renfrewshire is in line with the virtual comparator and marginally ahead of the national figure. Both comparators have decreased since last year. The percentage of leavers going into employment has decreased by 7 percentage points and is lower than any of the previous 4 years. This is a pattern that is replicated within virtual and national figures and is likely due to the Covid pandemic.

Renfrewshire continues to increase the proportion of leavers that enter higher education. The percentage of Renfrewshire leavers entering higher education and employment is above both the virtual and national comparators. Within further education, Renfrewshire is slightly above the virtual comparator and behind national.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy continues to be strong. The percentage of young people achieving SCQF Level 4 and SCQF Level 5 is ahead of both virtual comparator and national figures. Average total tariff points have increased across all attainment cohorts since 2018/19 but Renfrewshire remains behind the virtual comparator in the middle attainment cohort. The gap between SIMD 30% most and 70% least deprived pupils has narrowed slightly in 2019/20 but there is a flat trend over the previous 4 years.

BUILD BACK BETTER: RENFREWSHIRE'S EQUITY AUDIT

KEY FINDINGS

- ATTAINMENT GAPS BETWEEN ALL QUARTILES
- greatest gap in literacy (especially writing) in P4 & P7
 - gaps have emerged in social & emotional development and listening & talking attainment in P1s

BIGGEST ↓ IN ATTAINMENT SEEN IN CHILDREN WITH

- additional support needs
- behavioural issues
- entitlement to free school meals & clothing grants

IMPACTING ON HEALTH & WELLBEING

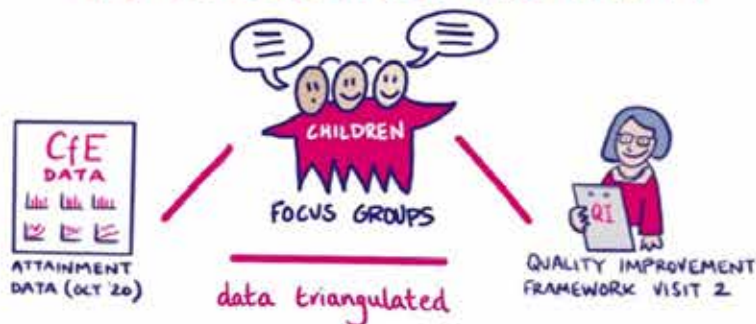
I miss my pals
When will it be normal?
I'm worried about Gran
especially mental health
↑ feeling anxious and stressed

WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON OUR ATTAINMENT GAP?

AIMS

- What does the attainment gap look like now?
- Who has the pandemic had the biggest impact on?
- Why might the gap have widened?
- What should the next steps be?

HOW WE CONDUCTED THE AUDIT?



STEPS TAKEN

Schools working with children to narrow the gap through supports & interventions
AUG 2020

Significant investment in digital infrastructure

A wide range of high quality services & resources available to support the health and wellbeing of all children, young people and families

Planning Day

DEC 2020

Short-term
medium
long-term
OUTCOMES

LOCKDOWN RETURNS

CLOSED

JAN 2021

PRIORITY REMAINS TO CLOSE POVERTY-RELATED ATTAINMENT GAP, WHILE RAISING ATTAINMENT FOR ALL

Achievement of a Level Data— P1,4,7

Prior to the pandemic, very good progress had been made in improving levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy and in closing the poverty related attainment gap. Data from the Achievement of a CfE Level returns indicated that increases in attainment in literacy and numeracy had been maintained or surpassed. The attainment gap between children living in the most deprived areas and those living in the least deprived areas had continued to decrease across most measures since 2016/17. However, lockdown and school closures have significantly impacted on the attainment and achievement of our children living in the most deprived areas; this has caused the attainment gaps to widen. The largest decreases in attainment are seen in P4 and 7 in writing.

We have been very proactive from the outset in establishing our authority position post lockdown. Carrying out our local equity audit, visiting every establishment, gathering data snapshots and surveying parents and staff, have allowed us to actively plan, through the Scottish Attainment Challenge, to begin to mitigate against the

negative impacts of the pandemic on attainment and achievement. We were very successful in narrowing the poverty-related attainment gap prior to the pandemic and are confident that our plans in place to provide targeted support will enable us to do so once again.

Transition Support

We continue to support establishments to narrow the gap for disadvantaged groups and give support to targeted children, young people and families at key transitions. Transition teachers continued to work successfully across primary and secondary schools to support curricular transitions for targeted children and young people. They have worked collaboratively with schools, partners and parents to support learning during lockdown and periods of remote learning. Both P7 and S1 young people have been supported with learning universally through team teaching and in a targeted way, continuing to offer support in literacy and numeracy using digital means. They also continued to connect with parents during lockdown.

To support learning transition, the transition team produced learning at home flipbooks for families, a sharing practice Wakelet and termly

Sways for practitioners. They also added value to the transfer of information system, by advising secondary practitioners about the learning needs of young people transitioning from P7 following lockdown, which enabled responsive planning. A family survey shows that 100% of parents of target children and young people agree that the transition teachers helped their children to settle into learning following lockdown and 99% of parents agree that transition teachers supported parent confidence in how to support their children's learning at home.

Differentiation

To promote effective differentiation approaches in Early Years and Primary schools, a support resource was developed by the Learning and Teaching team in collaboration with our Attainment Advisor. The resources are flexible to enable schools to tailor them to suit the needs of their own context. Bespoke professional learning will be offered next session to targeted establishments to support its implementation.

Assessment of Children's Progress

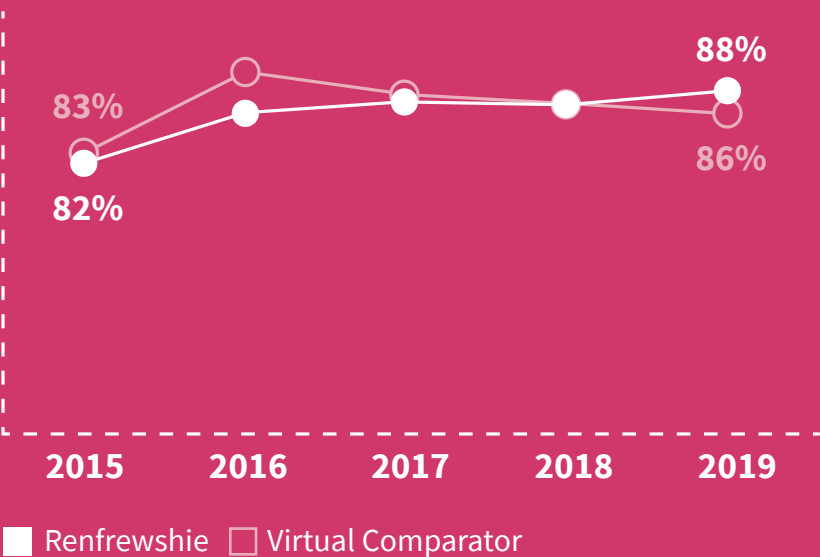
Renfrewshire attainment

School Leavers

S4-S6

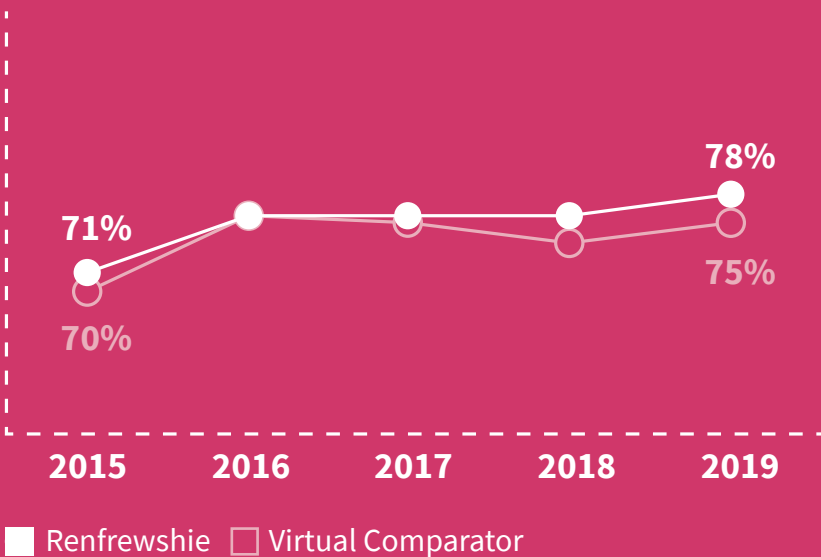
% Leavers Achieved Level 5 Literacy

Up 6 percentage points over 5 years
in line with Virtual Comparator



% Leavers Achieved Level 5 Numeracy

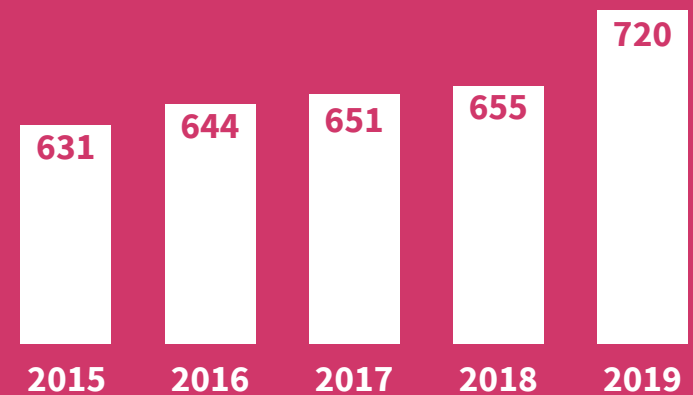
Up 7 percentage points over 5 years
in line with Virtual Comparator



**Average Total Tariff—
All Leavers 2019/2020**



**Average Total Tariff—
SIMD 20% Most
Deprived Leavers**



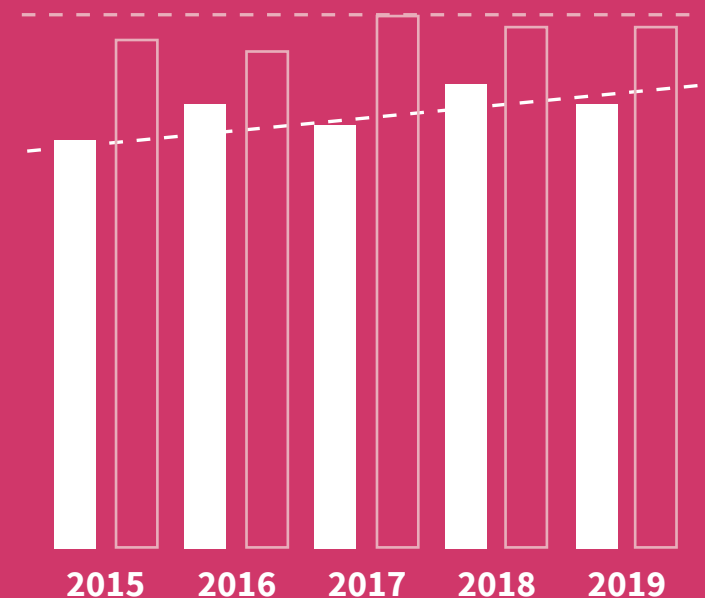
**94% of 2018/19 school leavers
went on to positive destinations**



**% Leavers in a
Positive Destination**

SIMD Quintile 1 (20%
Most Deprived) & SIMD
Quintile 5 (20% Least
Deprived)

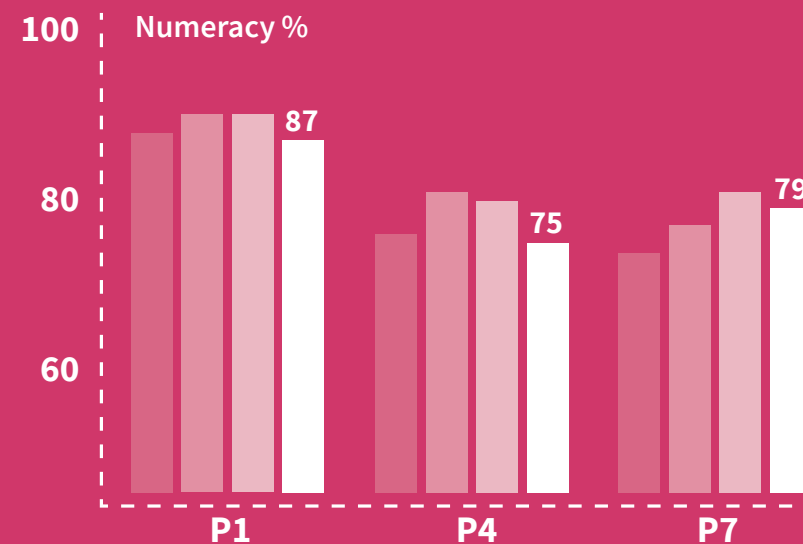
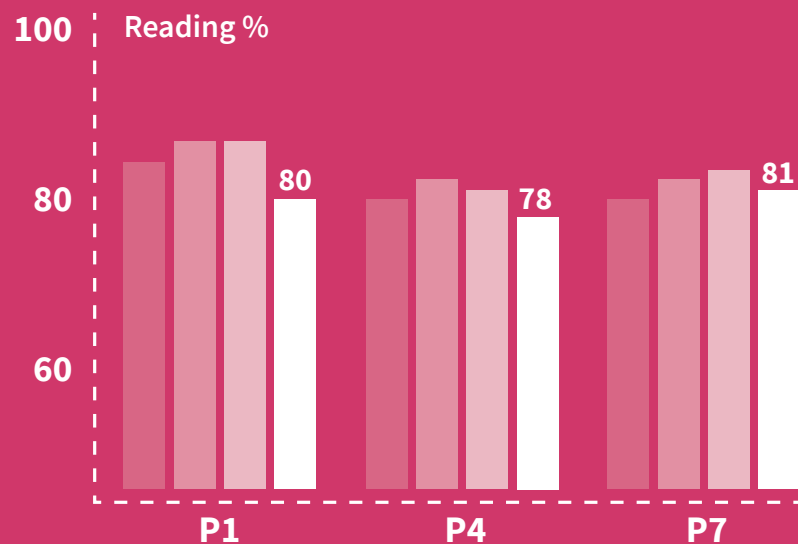
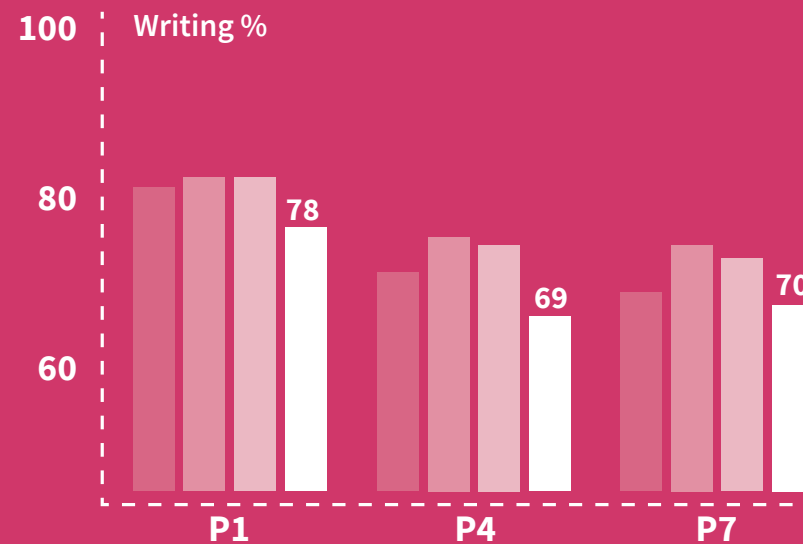
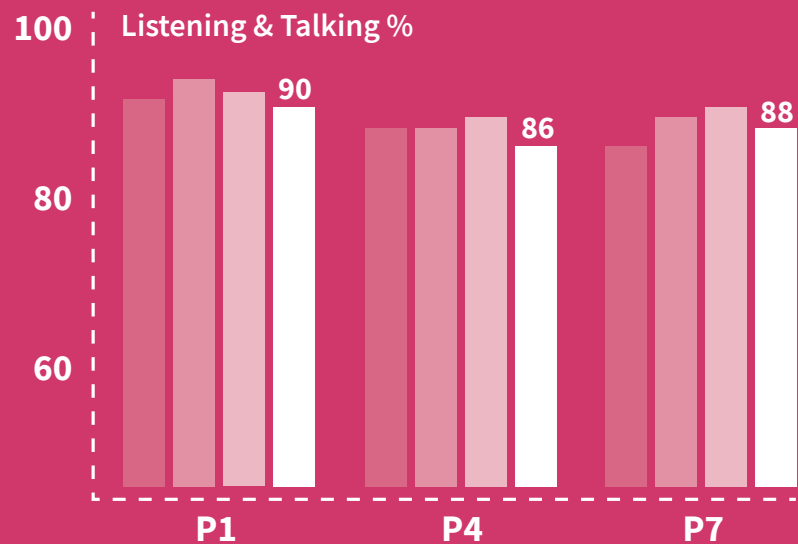
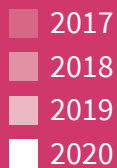
■ Quintile 1
□ Quintile 5



Assessment of Children's Progress

BGE Attainment

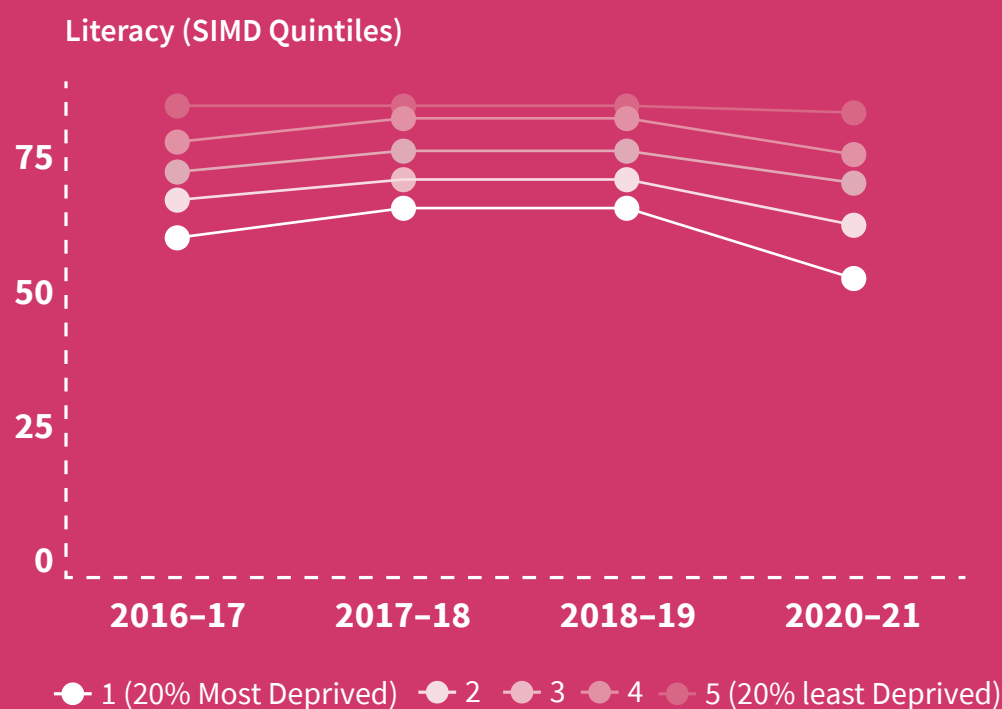
P1/P4/P7
Percentage Achieving
Expected CfE level
2017 to 2021



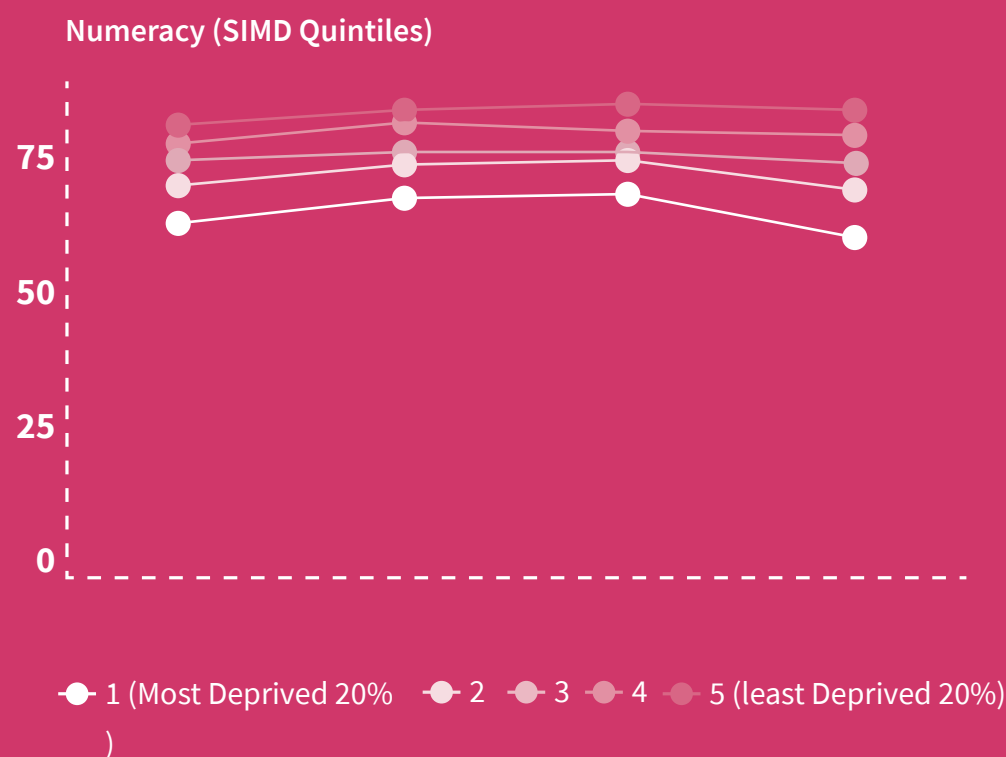
Attainment has decreased
following school closures
in 2020-21

Attainment Gaps

% Achieving Expected CfE Level by SIMD Quintile (P1/P4/P7 combined)



Attainment has decreased across all groups but highest impact on pupils living in most deprived areas



Due to the pandemic there was no national collection of Achievement of a CfE level (ACEL) data in 2020.

In 2021, ACEL data was collected nationally for P1,4 and 7 only.



Counselling services

Both The Exchange and Place2Be provide very good school-based counselling services to support children and young people across our primary, secondary and ASN schools. These services are supporting improvements in the emotional wellbeing of children, young people, staff and families. In addition, the services have been flexible and responsive in providing emotional support to groups of children, young people and staff to cope with critical incidents in school communities.

Since August 2020, Place2Be have supported over 700 children and young people in targeted schools through 993 drop-in sessions, 532 one-to-one therapeutic counselling sessions, 270 parent partnership sessions and 422 staff Place2Think sessions. The work of Place2Be in secondary schools was showcased at an online webinar in December 2020 at which both the Place2Be CEO and the Regional Director for Scotland joined school staff and young people to highlight the positive impact of the service in Paisley Grammar school. Since August 2020, The Exchange have supported over 1150 children and young people through 1-1 counselling in addition to group work and support to families.

**‘I get everything off my mind,
to make my mind clear.’**

Primary child

**‘I really like my counsellor, she’s
helped me understand how
to ask for help’**

Primary child

**‘We are really grateful for The-
Exchange’s quick responsiveness
to the critical incident that took
place and how quickly you worked
to support the young people,
knowing that this type of response
is available is great’**

Head Teacher

**‘Thank you for your help today, this
has been really affirming and I have
a much better understanding of
how I can help my son now.’**

Parent

Supporting Inclusion of vulnerable Children and Young People

In light of the education recovery plan, a revised system to access support through our Education Support and Resource Group (ESRG) was put in place when schools returned in August 2020. This recognised the impact of lockdown and ensured that schools received a quick response to requests for support.

Work has been ongoing this session with the home link service to reframe intervention in line with our local Community CYP Mental Health and Wellbeing framework. An increased number of Home Link staff have been trained in a range of evidence-based approaches. This will ensure that recovery support from the service focuses on key mental health and wellbeing priorities. Focused engagement took place with staff on the October in-service day on the direction of the service. As a result, all staff are positively engaged in the change process.

Work on the Additional Support Needs (ASN) review resumed in late 2020. Workstreams were refreshed to take account of the recommendations of the national Additional Support for Learning (ASL) review. A paper describing the locality model through which our ASN services will be organised in the future was approved by the ASN review steering board and shared with Head Teachers, managers and key staff involved in the review. As a result, there is now a clear vision and operational plan for the improvement of our ASL services.

All leaders participate in Locality Inclusion Support Networks (LISN); a peer support framework where leaders from different schools take a solution oriented approach to addressing the social, emotional and behavioural needs of identified children and young people. Early years LISN groups have been established around admission panel clusters and now operate in all areas. This also involves partnership nurseries. Sectoral LISN chairs continued to meet and a survey was carried out which has informed the position of LISN within ASN governance arrangements.

The Home Link service delivered a wide range of supports and interventions across education establishments, including: extensive home visiting; parenting support programmes; group work for children and young people on trauma informed approaches; social skills and friendship groups; and delivery of the new Seasons for Growth resources to support the recovery process.

During periods of remote learning, our most vulnerable children and young people as well as children of key workers continued to attend their school to receive face to face learning and teaching. Robust guidance was developed to ensure that vulnerable children and young people were safe and supported. To assist schools and early learning and childcare centres with recovery planning, needs assessment guidance and advice was developed.

Assessment of Children's Progress

Care Experienced Children and Young People

A wide range of effective supports have been established and implemented for care experienced children and young people across Renfrewshire.

Our Aberlour Attain mentoring service is providing bespoke mentoring support to help raise attainment and improve the life chances of 56 young people. There are currently 72 volunteer mentors in place. This year very good progress has been made to support children and young people throughout the pandemic and approaches were adapted in line with national guidance. As part of delivering 'The Promise' and to help our children and young people fully understand their rights, innovative activities such as 'The Promise Young Detective Project' have been successfully delivered. In addition, all young people were provided with a USB containing 'The Promise' along with a keyring with 'The Pinky Promise'.

The 'Support to Promote Attendance/Attainment for the Care Experienced' (SPACE) Team adapted their approaches during lockdown and continued to provide support in hubs and in the community. The team conducted telephone calls and engaged digitally with children and young people. SPACE practitioners have worked with individual young people to address emotions and anxieties experienced as a result of isolation, lack of peer associations and reduced social activities. Practitioners provided continued support and guidance to parents ensuring that they were able to begin to re-establish and apply more appropriate routines and boundaries as they emerged from lockdown. The team is currently working at full capacity supporting over 60 cases through daily engagement with young people which has been very positive. Over the last year, 20 cases have closed with positive outcomes and 4 progressing on to further education.

'Since meeting my SPACE worker, I have been calmer and happier. She has taught me new coping skills she makes me feel safe and less anxious about high school, she helps me when I feel down I trust her and confide in her.'

Young Person

As part of the ASN review, work is ongoing to improve data management and capture. The objective is to develop a topical and comprehensive view of the child using Eclipse, SEEMiS and other ASN data, stored in one place, to support improvement in the management and delivery of the ASN service. The pilot will commence using data related to care-experienced young people. The development of the data repository is complete, with the build and the process for Eclipse and SEEMiS downloads in place.

Ten care experienced young people took part in the online art class and 19 applications were granted for small grant awards this year. The grants have allowed care experienced children and young people to access driving lessons, bass guitar lessons, horse riding lessons, membership to clubs and access to equipment such as cameras and laptops.

‘The flexibility of approach, even with the pupils themselves has led to success for pupils in our school e.g. supporting complex hub needs in school setting, taking time to speak to the child in their home setting and getting to know them better, taking the child out into the community to help build their cultural capital with experiences they may have missed out on due to circumstances.’

Depute Head Teacher

“She really enjoyed going out to the escape rooms and engaging in problem solving activities. It has had a positive impact on her ability to engage with social worker in a more confident way when discussing other areas of her life. For example, she has been able to talk to me more openly about her questions about birth family”

Carer

“I treasure my new camera. I don't bring it out when with friends as it may get damaged. I am due to attend college in August and having a new camera means that I will be able to fully participate in the class which I wouldn't be able to if I had not received the camera.”

Care experienced young person



Assessment of Children's Progress



This year, Children's Services hosted our first digital conference focused on care experienced children and young people. A series of keynote speakers were invited to present to a range of practitioners from across the authority including Head Teachers, teachers, social workers, educational psychologists and central teams. Keynotes included:

- Judy Furnival on corporate parenting
- Ryan McCuaig on the power of positive relationships
- Thomas Carlton on The Promise
- Dr. Peter Tomney on aspirations for care experienced children and young people

Over 360 Renfrewshire colleagues attended the conference and feedback was very positive, being described by Head Teachers as “powerful” and “inspiring”.

The Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists were given access to the material as part of a seminar about The Promise and the need to respond as a profession. A short seminar was led by Renfrewshire's Depute Principal Educational Psychologist (EP) with 30 EPs from across Scotland in attendance.

‘I thought yesterday's event was excellent and inspirational! I loved the tone of the session; you emphasised the pace of change required but gave very clear and manageable ways in which Services can start to do this.’

LA Principal Educational Psychologist

Next Steps

- Using Achievement of a Level data collected in June 2021, identify schools impacted most negatively by the pandemic and provide a package of targeted bespoke support in literacy, numeracy, differentiation, parental engagement and digital learning. (See 'Next Steps' under previous sections for more detail on specific interventions).
- Improve employability skills and support all of our young people to enter positive and sustained post-school destinations. (See pages 57–58)
- Continue to work with secondary schools and the SQA to ensure the successful implementation of NQs for session 2021/22, taking account of any updated advice and guidance.
- In partnership with Educational Psychology colleagues, revise our current procedures for the identification of young people with specific literacy difficulties and provide a range of CLPL and resources to support practitioners.
- Implement the national Health and Wellbeing census and use the results to inform improvement priorities.
- Support establishments to utilise the West Partnership Portal to self-evaluate schools' and ELCC approaches to moderation. Provide opportunities for establishments to participate in relevant professional learning in assessment and moderation.
- Extend and embed our collaborative targeted support offer to children, young people and families at key transitions to close the attainment and achievement gap. Continue to work and plan collaboratively with schools, parents and partners to support seamless literacy and numeracy learning transition from P7-S1.
- Extend counselling services to under 10s and to include parents where appropriate, across primary, secondary and ASN schools.
- Develop the work of the Home Link Service and Families First to deliver on the priorities of the Community CYP Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework by increasing the number of staff trained and delivering on the agreed range of evidence based approaches.
- Implement a number of small tests of change which will operationalise aspects of the ASN locality inclusion model prior to full implementation in August 2023.
- Explore and develop the role of LISN at a systemic level as the implementation stage of the ASN review is progressed during 2021-22.
- Launch revised promoting positive relationships policy and implement across all establishments supported by appropriate training.
- Deliver on 'The Promise', supporting care experienced children and young people, through a range of programmes and approaches.
- Ensure the rights laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), that all children have to be treated fairly, be heard, and be as healthy as possible, will be embedded in policy in line with legislation. Raise awareness and undertake an audit, of where we are currently with compliance, to agree priority areas.

School Improvement

Scottish Attainment Challenge Summary of Progress 2015-20

In December 2020, the Education Scotland Attainment Advisor worked alongside local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence the impact of our Scottish Attainment Challenge work over the last 5 years.

The following key strengths were identified:

- Well-structured programme management ensuring clearly defined approaches.
- Partnership working to enhance impact including coordinated approaches in the sharing of data.
- A sector-leading approach to professional learning including a highly effective leadership programme and a programme for classroom assistants.
- Evidence-based approaches to the teaching of literacy have led to delivery of a high-quality literacy curriculum.
- Very good moderation activities provided across the authority.
- Staff are skilled at recognising and addressing the impact of poverty on families.
- Attainment in literacy and numeracy in the broad general education has improved over time and the authority continues to perform above national averages with decreasing poverty-related attainment gaps across stages.
- Schools have been supported to deliver a Senior Phase which ensures appropriate pathways for young people and provides them with the opportunity to achieve a range of qualifications.
- There has been an increase in positive destinations for leavers from areas of highest deprivation.
- The views and voices of children and young people are shaping improvements across the authority.
- The roles of inclusion support assistants and transition teachers have supported improved attendance, reduction in exclusions and transitions among targeted groups.
- Almost all establishments in all sectors are fully engaged in Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Approach and there is a wide range of high-quality services and resources available to support the health and wellbeing of all children, young people and families.
- The work of the Support to Promote Attendance/Attainment for the Care Experienced (SPACE) team is effectively improving attendance and health and wellbeing for care experienced children and young people.
- The development of a parental engagement strategy has been a key focus to support establishments with their planning around parental engagement.
- The authority's approach to the use of data to inform all aspects of its work has led to the development of a positive data culture.
- Increased opportunities to work in partnership within, across and outwith the workstreams including with a range of academic partners have been impactful.

During the last academic session, our planned Quality Improvement programme adapted and evolved to meet the needs of school and early years communities and to assist the recovery process in our aim to achieve equity and excellence across all establishments. We required to respond quickly to the ever-changing national picture in relation to the pandemic and support establishments to understand the national and local Covid guidance.

To ensure leaders felt supported, Education Managers/EY Officers chaired regular online small group meetings with their link Heads of establishment to provide information updates, share practice on what was working particularly well, and provide time for open discussion on issues arising. Standing items on the agenda for the meetings had a strong focus on equity. For example, arrangements for monitoring vulnerable children and young people, tracking of remote learning and online engagement, IT hardware inequities and use of PEF/Cost of the School day

funds to support families. Feedback from Heads indicated that they very much valued these opportunities to collaborate in small groups with colleagues who were experiencing similar challenges. These small group meetings will continue next session.

Guidance and advice to establishments on improvement planning and reporting on standards and quality has evolved in response to unfolding events. In line with Scottish Government advice, establishments have been issued with clear guidance and advice on reporting and planning.

Digital Learning

Very good progress has been made in implementing Year 1 of our 5-year Digital Plan – Assess, Build, Innovate. Our strategy is underpinned by the aim to develop high quality learning and teaching that leads to improved levels of attainment and achievement in all of our establishments.

Infrastructure

To improve our infrastructure and ensure that all children, young people and schools have access to hardware, wifi and well-researched digital platforms/software to ensure equity and improve outcomes, approximately £1.5 million has been invested:

- 1600 Chromebooks were allocated to Senior Phase young people and 150 are being managed centrally to support identified children access remote learning due to self-isolating or shielding.
- 500 dongles were distributed to ensure that all children and young people had internet access to support learning at home.
- Wifi upgrades were provided to improve connectivity in all secondary and ASN schools.
- Over 2000 additional devices were provided; all schools benefited as well as targeted schools to ensure equity across the authority.
- Access to Windows 10 laptops provided for all teachers.

School Improvement

Resources—Capacity and Capability

To ensure all practitioners have improved skills and increased confidence in using digital tools to enhance learning, teaching and parental engagement:

- Numeracy software was provided for Primary and BGE which has been shared with all S1 families to support transitions.
- Literacy software trial supported in-school and at-home learning.
- Web-filtering software purchased to safeguard devices and process agreed for ensuring new software is GDPR, Cyber and DPIA compliant.
- Digital Needs survey carried out with all staff led to provision of extensive training opportunities and support for school Digital Learning Champions (DLC).

Engagement, Coordination and Communication

Creative use of various digital platforms has strengthened family learning in almost all establishments. We are developing a flexible, layered and empowered Renfrewshire approach to digital learning through our 5-year Digital Plan.

- Our Digital School online resources and Google Classroom 'Ask a Teacher' provided very good support to children and young people who had to self-isolate or were shielding.
- Over 200 secondary young people accessed a 'Teacher Surgery' where teachers across Renfrewshire supported with subject-specific questions.
- A Digital YouTube channel was created to provide a space for staff to access professional learning as and when it suited them including recordings of our CLPL sessions and a variety of 'how to' videos on a range of skills that have been requested.
- Our Digital Learning site was redesigned to provide a 'one-stop' shop for all things related to digital learning.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

- We provided professional learning on digital learning pedagogy to promote a shared understanding and provision of high quality learning online.
- 95% of schools have engaged directly in high quality professional learning sessions or bespoke training this session.
- Over 300 staff have participated in professional learning ranging from weekly drop-ins for Digital Learning Champions to sessions led by our partnerships with Apple, Education Scotland, Google and Microsoft. Almost all staff found the materials helpful for learning and teaching and rated every session as 4 or 5 stars.
- Our Numeracy and Digital Learning Development Officer piloted a successful series of Supported Study Sessions for Higher Maths with 147 young people from 8 secondary schools participating.

‘Thank you so much for running these sessions, I’m really getting a deeper understanding of the topics. The worked solutions for each question is super helpful to see where I’ve gone wrong. The pop quiz was also great for interaction and refreshing last week’s work.’

Young person

‘Thank you so much for coming online to help us, some people in my year have been self-isolating this week so being at home trying to learn maths can be so difficult but tonight has definitely helped me and now I have a bit of belief in myself that I can do this.’

Young person

- All schools have a Digital Learning Champion (DLC) to support and promote high quality digital learning and teaching. Our Renfrewshire DLC Teams site provides helpful guidance, advice and information to support them in their role.
- 14 schools have achieved the Digital Schools Award and/or the Cyber Resilience and Internet Safety award with a further 44 schools registered.

‘I now feel better about gathering the documentation for the Digital Award.’

Teacher

‘The YouTube videos look really good for sharing with staff.’

Teacher

‘Thinking about using the quality of answer options when using Forms as a learning resource.’

Teacher





Regional Improvement Collaborative—West Partnership (WP)

Renfrewshire Council education staff continue to be active leaders and participants in taking forward the actions for improvement within the 3 workstreams of the West Partnership Plan 2020-23. A range of mechanisms, making effective use of digital technologies, have been used to deliver virtual learning opportunities to colleagues across the West Partnership and have created a number of virtual networks which enable group meetings and discussions. Despite the challenges, the partnership is building a strong learning system in the West focused on equity, excellence and empowerment. The opportunities for practitioners and central officers to share learning and practice outwith their own establishments/ authority, and to collaborate on pieces of work to support the Covid response, have been invaluable this year.

Implement Renfrewshire's expansion of early learning and childcare from 600 hours to 1140

Renfrewshire Council has very successfully implemented the expansion of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare to eligible children, with 94% of children aged 3 to 5 years and 99% of eligible 2 year olds receiving this during session 2020-21. This is despite a delay, due to the Covid pandemic, in some of the Council's planned infrastructure work required to support the expansion. Almost all of the required staff are in post to support the 1140 expansion. Our 'Grow Your Own' staff strategy related to the employment and training for Modern Apprentices and Support Workers has been very successful. The increased provision of early learning and childcare continues to enable children to experience deeper and extended learning opportunities. Parents are also benefiting financially due to reduced childcare costs and are able to secure employment and training.

Improve employability skills and support all of our young people to enter positive and sustained post-school destinations

All young people in the senior phase were supported to make appropriate curricular choices and pathways. Consortium arrangements continued to support the delivery of Advanced Highers for all young people who wished to undertake them.

The 'Skills for Success' partners group was replaced by the 'Renfrewshire Economic Recovery Group', which has representation from Children's Services and key partner organisations, and is focused on ensuring all young people are provided with opportunities to prepare them for the world of work, including skills for work and work placements.

The Renfrewshire Community Benefits Forum has continued to provide opportunities to engage with a growing number of local employers, approximately 150, who offer work experience and potential employment to our young people.

The Career Education Standard is now featuring in almost all schools with skills for life and work a key component of curriculum delivery. Schools are becoming increasingly creative in the opportunities they are offering for accreditation of wider and personal achievement both within the senior phase and the broad general education.

Foundation Apprenticeships continued to run last year, despite the challenges of the work experience element, which had to move to online delivery, with 44 young people undertaking these. At present there are 72 applications across Renfrewshire schools, for Foundation Apprenticeships for session 2021/22.

Our schools, working in partnership with the Development Officer for Engaging Learners, provide very good support to school leavers across Renfrewshire schools. The Officer met with over 300 young people who had been identified as being most at risk of not achieving a positive destination. Follow up phone calls and sessions have since been offered over summer months to help support transition into post school destinations. This not only allows us to signpost to appropriate supports but also to ascertain if young people are eligible for funding/bespoke opportunities.

Fortnightly tracking and monitoring meetings taking place with key partners (Skills Development Scotland, Invest, West College Scotland) to ensure that opportunities for young people are maximised on an ongoing basis. Schools Career Information Advice and Guidance commenced in July. Flexible onsite work placements resumed in June 2021; a number of young people were out on extended placements over the summer. Working in partnership with Career Ready Scotland, a pilot in two schools provided the opportunity for 3 young people to participate in blended mentoring and work experience placements within Renfrewshire Council.

The 'My Future Pathway (MFP)' Construction programme successfully ran for a third year. Due to the pandemic, young people experienced a full virtual delivery model. 92% of young people enrolled on the programme completed the course and are awaiting dates to complete their CSCS (Construction Skills Certificate Scheme) card test. Over the course of 20 weeks, young people



attended virtual site visits, work experience, employer visits and employability sessions. All young people were put forward for a work experience badge, City and Guilds Employability Badge and, on completion of relevant application, a guaranteed interview for two college NPA courses. 91% of the 2019/20 MFP cohort have sustained their destinations over the pandemic and will now move forward to the next stage of their MA journey.

The MFP online employability website and careers fair, an online resource developed to support employability and careers awareness, hosted a number of 'Day In the Life of' videos, a full careers fair and employability segment supporting transitions from school into employment, training and education. Since its launch in January 2021, the website has had over 1700 views. Our 'Hire Me!' Employability workshop, a 6-part series developed and delivered by Akari Solutions, provides very good support for young people in a range of areas including making your CV stand out, interview hints and tips and how to sell yourself.

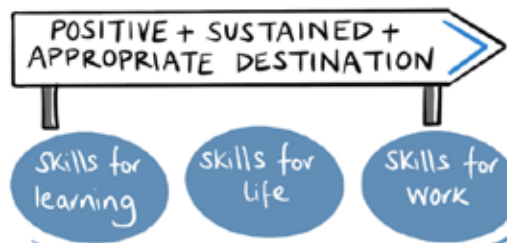
Partnership with Glasgow School of Art

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, almost all work planned in relation to the partnership between Glasgow School of Art and one secondary school did not go ahead. Portfolio classes took place online for students across Paisley to support young people in their preparation for application to further and higher education institutions. Plans to resume this partnership working are in place for next session.

Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths (STEM)

Our highly evaluated partnership programme with Glasgow Science Centre (GSC) delivered a unique education programme that supports high quality STEM learning in the classroom and at home. Engagement levels across Renfrewshire schools were high with 31 primary schools and 6 secondary schools successfully participating in the programme.

DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE



SENIOR PHASE

Building on the curriculum for Excellence

Increased awareness & uptake of the **APPRENTICESHIP** family (Foundation • Modern • Graduate)

1st in Scotland to pilot the FA in Digital Manufacturing

Mentoring & 1:1 support offered by local businesses



New Partnerships

College & University visits breakdown the barriers of the "unknown"



NEED TO BE ABLE TO TAILOR PROGRAMMES & OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT SPECIFIC PUPILS

CPD to support more Vocational Courses

My Future Pathway Programme



for example - The construction programme runs over 24-30 weeks

- ~ taster days
- ~ 2 week placements
- ~ digital qualifications
- ~ CSCS Card training
- ~ H&S SQA L2
- ~ Networking with employers & colleges

developed to EMPOWER pupils & help them make INFORMED decisions - providing experience, skills & qualifications through:

- work
- apprenticeships
- college
- University

(Construction, Hospitality, Design, Manufacturing & Employability)

EXPANSION of volunteering & work-based learning opportunities



STEM Fortnight

- work experience
- site visits
- mentoring
- skills transfer events

Impact

% young people → +ve destination

2014-15 - 92%

2018-19 - 95% (↑ 3%)

Covid Impact
2019-20 - 94%

Proportion of leavers that enter higher & further Education continues to increase

School Improvement

Renfrewshire Council has committed to participation in the RAiSE programme with the Wood Foundation and Education Scotland, to increase primary practitioner confidence in the teaching of STEM. A new Primary Science Development Officer will support implementation of the programme next session.

Next Steps

- Fully implement the expansion of 1140 hours of high quality early learning and childcare to all eligible children from session 2021/22 onwards.
- Implement Year 1 of the refreshed QIF, to promote empowerment and greater collaboration between establishments.
- Implement Year 2 of our 5-year Digital Plan – Assess, Build, Innovate to promote a flexible, layered and empowered approach to digital learning that supports the best outcomes for all children and young people.
- Introduce Cohort 1 of Improving our Classrooms – a programme of high-quality professional learning, which places classroom practitioners at the heart of leading school improvement.
- Review and refresh the senior phase offer in line with the recommendations of the OECD Report on CfE, to ensure a range of opportunities are available to young people which maximise their chances of success.
- Develop a flexible, bespoke work placement model across all schools.
- In line with the Young Person's Guarantee, strengthen links with local employers and community benefit groups to ensure that young people are provided with opportunities and are equipped for the world of work.
- Working in partnership with SDS, continue to support the delivery of the Career Education Standard 3-18 across schools.
- Ensure that all schools and partner agencies (SDS and Invest) have systems in place to implement the revised expectations for tracking and supporting young people into positive and sustained destinations post school.
- Continue the rollout of partnership work with Career Ready Scotland, offering mentoring and work experience placements for identified young people in secondary schools.
- Continue to promote and support Developing the Young Workforce and Career Education Standard within Primary sector – include further Insight into Industry Pilots.
- Further develop My Future Pathway Programmes and extend the offer to more young people in Renfrewshire.
- Re-affirm the aims and objectives of the Glasgow School of Art (GSA) and Castlehead High partnership and develop a programme of staff training in creative approaches to curriculum delivery.
- In partnership with the Wood Foundation and Education Scotland, participate in the RAiSE programme to increase primary practitioner confidence in the teaching of STEM.
- Extend partnership working with Glasgow Science Centre to include primary children and teachers working at First Level and increase the opportunities within the programme to further develop family learning

Performance Information

Across the service, a wide range of accurate data is used very well, centrally and within establishments, to monitor and track the impact on learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap.

For 2021, the absence of external examinations led to teachers using robust assessment and moderation processes, as well as rigorous quality assurance at school and authority level, to enable young people to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding of courses studied. Analysis was provided by the central Data team to support school quality assurance processes. This included a Grade analysis tool developed and shared with all schools which enabled middle and senior leaders to look at the progress of young people in context of trend data. Monthly meetings with subject leaders were facilitated by Education Managers to support the moderation process.

The Data team have continued to deliver on key actions, providing analysis and very good support to schools while responding to changing needs as a result of the Covid pandemic. The availability of analysis has been improved following the launch of interactive

data dashboards, created using PowerBI data visualisation software. These dashboards have replaced PDF reports which were previously shared via email. The initial phase of dashboards includes analysis of attainment, attendance, exclusions and demographics. The benefits of these dashboards are that staff are now able to produce their own analysis using report filters, can visualise key trends, and have easy access to all information provided by the team. It also improves the turnaround speed from the team receiving data and being able to share it with schools.

Very good progress has been made in supporting teachers' data literacy skills. Online training sessions were provided throughout the second half of the 2020-21 academic year, with a focus on improving skills in data gathering, data analysis and evaluation. Positive feedback has been received on the move to online training sessions. These sessions used existing materials but were re-designed to suit online delivery. Attendees reported that they found the sessions to be a good length, well-paced, and liked the way that the sessions built upon one another. They also highlighted the benefit of the accompanying support materials that

allowed them to practice in their own time. 12 sessions were provided with 74 staff attending from 36 schools. 95% of respondents reported that the session increased their confidence and they were able to apply the learning in their role. In addition, a range of training materials were made available online via Glow and SharePoint. These materials can act as a refresher to courses or as a starting point for discussions within schools. These videos all have associated guidance and datasets to allow for them to be followed as a package. In addition, the Management Information Officer and Data team provide bespoke support as required to establishments to ensure that tracking and monitoring attainment in the BGE suits individual school contexts. In all establishments the analysis of data informs improvement planning.

To improve early level monitoring and tracking an Early Level Progression Tool has been developed to provide a summative view of children's progression towards the Early Level of Curriculum for Excellence. This will be implemented within all early years establishments from next session.

Performance Information

Heads of Service and link Education Managers/EY Officers continue to make focussed quality improvement visits to establishments with a specific focus on Quality Indicator 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement. This involves in-depth professional dialogue on key data sets and performance information used by the establishment to support improvement. Information from visits is used to: identify authority priorities for improvement; share effective practice; and provide individual support to establishments where required.

The use and application of local, national, and international educational research and evidence continues to be a strength in Renfrewshire and underpins authority strategies for improving learning and teaching. We work very effectively with academic partners, including the University of Strathclyde, Stanford University and University of Glasgow. Together we deliver and evaluate evidence-based targeted programmes and interventions to close the poverty-related attainment gap. This work has been summarised in a series of themed sketchnotes showcasing our approaches in Literacy, Numeracy, Health and Wellbeing and Developing the Young Workforce.

All approaches have a strong evidence base and demonstrable impact across our schools and are available via our Scottish Attainment Challenge offer next session. Our work with University of Glasgow (Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change) has promoted greater collaboration across Attainment Challenge workstreams to ensure there is greater collective impact.

The ongoing collaboration with Early Action System Change Co-Design Commission is supporting our work on priority areas identified as part of the Dartington Wellbeing Survey: to prevent coercive control within adolescent relationships; and improve emotional wellbeing. Our strategic partnership with Barnardo's is ongoing and aims to bring about a systems-level shift from a medical to a social model of mental health and wellbeing and ensure that children get the right support at the right time by the right people. The 'Core Priority Programme in Mental Health and Wellbeing' baseline evaluation report, May 2021, aimed to identify the added value of our strategic partnership approach facilitated by Barnardo's to improving children and young people's mental health. Findings from the report provide useful learning to support the

understanding of both the nature of, and barriers and enablers to, strategic partnership working, as well as providing insight into the current system.

A core component of Renfrewshire Children's Services Partnership (RCSP) work has been engaging with service users and stakeholders in co-design. Most recently in 2019/20, with Barnardo's, an analysis identified important gaps in the system-wide provision of mental health and wellbeing (MHW) supports at the level of early intervention (tiers 2 and 3). In response, a proposal was developed for forthcoming work in Renfrewshire based on a 'partnership hub' model and is being led by the Depute Principal Psychologist. This is an approach and model of working based on the values of inclusion, community mental health and wellbeing, and relationships. Proposed work focuses on bringing together a selection of psychologically led and peer-led approaches, implementation support and monitoring to support capacity-building. Details are outlined in our Children and Young People Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Next Steps

- Rollout Power BI in secondary schools to improve accessibility of school tracking data.
- Continue to offer expanded range of data training to class teachers through online platforms.
- Refresh Dive into Data training with senior management teams to increase staff confidence and support the cascade of information to class teachers.
- Implement Early Level Progression Tool in all early years establishments and provide support to staff on the implementation of this to help achieve consistency in practice.
- Support data gathering within early years sector to ensure consistency, improve range of evidence available and enhance transition to primary.
- Develop an approach to capture the impact of Pupil Equity Funding on improving outcomes for learners.
- Implement the Children and Young People Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Collaborate with the West Partnership to analyse and extract relevant data from the national HWB census to identify improvement priorities.
- Continue to collaborate with Barnardo's and the Early Action System Change Co-Design Commission to bring about systems change.



For further information, please contact

Steven Quinn

Director Children's Services
Children's Services
Renfrewshire Council

Tel: 0141 618 6839

Email: steven.quinn@renfrewshire.gov.uk



Education Improvement Plan

2021/22



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Introduction

Renfrewshire's Education Improvement Plan for session 2021/22 focusses on recovery, renewal and improvement. Our plan is underpinned by the Council's values; Fair, Helpful, Collaborative, Learning and reflects our own vision within Children's Services; Working together to get it right for children, families and communities—protecting, learning, achieving, nurturing.

We are mindful of the impact of the Covid pandemic on children, families and staff and in particular our most vulnerable. Our Education Improvement Plan sets out where we want to improve and how we want to do that, based on the evidence we have gathered on our current performance. This range of evidence includes our Standards and Quality report on the improvements we set out to achieve in our previous plan, self-evaluation activity across the service, feedback from stakeholders, our Quality Improvement visits and improvement processes. This process has ensured that our plan reflects where our schools and stakeholders wish to see improvement, is based on evaluation of current performance, and is focussed on building on our culture of empowerment and collaboration.

As part of the West Partnership regional improvement collaborative, we will continue to benefit from the many opportunities provided to work collaboratively and in a true spirit of cooperation towards the Partnership's vision of equity, excellence and empowerment.

Our plan continues to focus on four main priority areas; learning and teaching; health and wellbeing; leadership at all levels and employability skills leading to sustained positive destinations for all young people. These directly align to Scotland's national priorities for education. We recognise that continued emphasis on health and wellbeing is required to support staff, children and young people to recover and to mitigate against any negative effects of lockdown. We will continue to use universal approaches to raise attainment for all, alongside targeted interventions with a renewed focus on narrowing of the poverty-related attainment gap and addressing any widening of inequalities of outcome experienced by children and young people.



Councillor Jim Paterson

Convener Education
and Children's Services



Steven Quinn

Director Children's Services

Our Values

We are fair, we treat each other and everyone we deal with respectfully and work hard to build trust in Renfrewshire Council.

We are helpful, we care about getting things right and are always approachable.

We are great collaborators; we work as one team and with people who care about this place.

We value learning to help us innovate, improve and deliver better services.

Renfrewshire's Council Plan 2017–2027

Working together for a thriving and connected Renfrewshire, creating opportunities for all

Reshaping our place, our
economy, our future

Building strong, safe and
resilient communities

Tackling inequality,
ensuring opportunities
for all

Creating a sustainable
Renfrewshire for all
to enjoy

Working together to
improve outcomes

Children's Services Vision

Working together to get it right for children, families and communities—
protecting, learning, achieving and nurturing

Education Improvement Plan Priorities

Develop high quality learning
and teaching that leads to
improved levels of attainment
and achievement in all of our
establishments

Reduce inequalities and deliver
improved health and wellbeing
outcomes for children
and young people

Develop high quality leadership
to promote empowerment
at all levels

Improve employability skills and
support all of our young people
to enter positive and sustained
destinations

National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan

Vision

Excellence through raising attainment: ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, set out within Curriculum for Excellence levels, and the right range of skills, qualifications and achievements to allow them to succeed; and

Achieving equity: ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Four Priorities

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
- Improvement in children and young people’s health and wellbeing
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

Six Drivers of Improvement

- School Leadership
- Teacher Professionalism
- Parental Engagement
- Assessment of children’s progress
- School Improvement
- Performance Information

Renfrewshire’s Education Improvement Plan

This Education Improvement Plan supports delivery of the priorities contained within key plans such as Renfrewshire’s Community Plan, Council Plan, Children’s Services Partnership Plan and Children’s Services Improvement Plan. It also aligns perfectly with the National Improvement Priorities for education as well as other relevant policy drivers such as the recently published OECD report on ‘Scotland’s Curriculum for Excellence’. Our plan is organised under our 4 improvement priorities and details the expected outcome and impact, alongside how we will measure if we have been successful, and the actions we will take to bring about improvement.





PRIORITY

1

Develop high quality learning and teaching that leads to improved levels of attainment and achievement in all of our establishments

NIF Priorities

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children

NIF Drivers

- Teacher Professionalism
- Assessment of Children's Progress
- School Improvement
- Performance Information

What is the expected Outcome/Impact?

By June 2022:

- Improved monitoring and support for all care experienced children and young people (CYP) leads to improved attendance, engagement and attainment. All identified CYP feel supported.
- Almost all practitioners have increased skill and knowledge, and evidence in their practice, a range of universal and targeted, evidence-based pedagogies in literacy and numeracy.
- Almost all practitioners demonstrate increased, knowledge, skill and confidence in teaching reading and writing.
- All participating classroom assistants have increased expertise, knowledge and confidence in supporting children in literacy.
- All practitioners trained in Limitless Learning in Mathematics, align pedagogy with the principles of Growth Mindset as well as the three-domain model. Maths anxiety in participating classrooms reduces compared to data from last year.
- The majority of targeted schools participate in extended numeracy professional learning programmes leading to improved attainment in numeracy.
- Modelling and Coaching Officers (MCOs) provide bespoke support to target schools leading to staff having greater knowledge and skills in delivering numeracy using effective pedagogy.
- All practitioners use effective approaches to differentiation to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy.

What do we intend to do to bring about improvement?

- Provide enhanced support to care experienced CYP to deliver on 'The Promise' through a variety of projects including our Aberlour Attain mentoring programme, family support service (SPACE team), extra-curricular opportunities and a virtual school approach. Recruit a 'Promise Ambassador' to drive forward Renfrewshire's Promise plan.
- Using Achievement of a Level data collected in June 2021, identify schools impacted most negatively by the pandemic and provide a package of targeted bespoke support in literacy, numeracy, differentiation, parental engagement and digital learning. The Attainment Advisor, Development Officers, Education Managers, Modelling and Coaching Officers and Transition Teachers will support this work.
- Continue to provide high quality professional learning to staff at all levels, based on evidence-based approaches, to raise attainment in literacy and close identified gaps in attainment.
- Introduce programmes of professional learning in high quality teaching of phonics linked to the Renfrewshire Literacy Approach and development of early reading skills, and the Talk for Writing approach.
- Work with practitioners across primary and secondary establishments to further develop the Dive into Reading and Writing approaches ensuring consistency, clear progression and avoiding overlap.
- In partnership with the University of Strathclyde, deliver the remainder of our programme of professional learning for classroom assistants and devise an ongoing, comprehensive programme of professional learning for support staff based on local and national priorities and areas identified via staff consultation.

What is the expected Outcome/Impact?

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy improves for almost all CYP with evidence of narrowing the poverty-related attainment gaps which have widened due to lockdowns.
- Almost all staff in the authority undertake some form of professional learning in numeracy and mathematics.
- Almost all establishments engage with Digital Learning Team—universal and/or bespoke support. Most practitioners have improved skills and increased confidence in using digital tools to enhance learning and teaching.

What do we intend to do to bring about improvement?

- In partnership with the Scottish Book Trust, introduce a programme of professional learning, to support the implementation of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and pilot the Reading Schools Award in targeted early years settings.
- Continue to work with our colleagues in Educational Psychology to revise current procedures for the identification of young people with specific literacy difficulties and provide a range of professional learning and resources to support practitioners.
- Revisit and refresh the content of the Limitless Learning programme in partnership with Winning Scotland. Deliver through a hybrid of online modules, live online webinars and face-to-face sessions.
- Deliver extended training programme on using the Maths Recovery framework to upskill practitioners in identifying and addressing gaps in numeracy and mathematics.
- Deliver an in-house programme of professional learning in effective pedagogy including: Numbertalks, using C-P-A strategies, Bar Modelling, S.E.A.L and Teaching for Understanding in N5 and Higher
- Use the practitioner enquiry model to ensure that professional learning has a measurable and sustained impact on learners as well as practitioners.
- Provide high quality professional learning in differentiation to targeted schools.



What is the expected Outcome/Impact?

- Increased number of schools achieve Digital Schools Scotland Award (DSA) and Cyber Resilience-Internet Safety (CR-IS).
- Creative use of various digital platforms strengthens family learning and parental engagement in almost all targeted establishments.
- All Primaries/ELCCs surveyed and access and wi-fi gaps identified. Targeted establishments upgraded to Comms World line, giving 10x faster broadband.
- To ensure equity and enhance learning and teaching, all Secondary young people have access to devices as and when required. All Primary children have 1:4 ratio or better for access to devices and wifi.

What do we intend to do to bring about improvement?

- Implement Year 2 of our 5-year Digital Plan—Assess, Build, Innovate. Provide universal, targeted and bespoke professional learning on digital learning pedagogy to promote a shared understanding of, and provision of, high quality learning online.
- Support schools, via Digital Learning Champions, to achieve DSA and/or CR-IS.
- Carry out a sample of themed Digital Learning visits across establishments to: gather examples of effective practice to share more widely; evaluate effectiveness of our DL plan and identify areas for improvement/support.
- Carry out wi-fi surveys in all Primary and Early Learning and Childcare Centres. Work with partners to plan and implement the upgrade requirements.
- Work with Scottish Government to implement the roll-out of digital devices across establishments.
- Provide targeted family digital learning activities including basic skills and Cyber Resilience-Internet Safety (CR-IS) training.
- Digital Learning Team will provide universal and bespoke professional learning to schools and partners on using digital tools and platforms to strengthen parental engagement and accessibility. These will include using Glow blogs, using Sway to provide virtual updates and using forms for parental surveys.

What is the expected Outcome/Impact?

- Almost all children and young people supported by the Transition team, successfully transition to new establishments and demonstrate improved confidence in identified areas of literacy and numeracy.
- Most P7/S1 staff engaged with the Transitions team have improved knowledge and skills in inclusive/ targeted literacy and numeracy pedagogies which support seamless learning transition and this is demonstrated in their practice.
- All staff working with children with ASN, who have engaged in West Partnership professional learning, have enhanced knowledge of strategies to effectively support them to formatively assess. They use evidence of learning to adapt teaching and meet the needs of all CYP.
- All staff participating in 'Enquiry Based Learning in P3' provide enhanced learning environments and demonstrate increased involvement of children in planning their own learning.
- Almost all practitioners confidently use relevant data and evidence to support recovery planning.
- All Head Teachers engage with data analysis support and report increased confidence in data use. Increased number of class teachers engage with live and online resources.
- Accessibility of tracking data in secondary is improved following PowerBI rollout throughout the 2021-22 session.

What do we intend to do to bring about improvement?

- Extend and embed our collaborative targeted support offer to children, young people and families at key transitions to close the attainment and achievement gap.
- Work with West Partnership to provide high quality professional learning for ASN staff on moderation, planning for assessment through collaboration, and bundling experiences and outcomes.
- In partnership with Strathclyde University, deliver 'Enquiry Based Learning in Primary 3' training to a further cohort of teachers and provide establishment follow up visits to support implementation of guidance provided.
- Provide universal professional learning in Dive into Data, data analysis and excel training. Provide targeted support for school leaders with low confidence/engagement to enhance use of data within school.
- Rollout Power BI platform to secondaries to improve access to data. Create tracking reports that can be shared across schools and highlight pupil progress and attainment gaps.

What is the expected Outcome/Impact?

- Consistent and robust model of tracking is in place to meet the needs of children and families within all Early Years settings.
- All eligible children access 1140 hours of high quality early learning and childcare and children experience deeper and extended learning opportunities.
- Early Years staff are highly skilled, knowledgeable and effectively support children in their learning and development.
- Parents are able to access a range of flexible provision, allowing them to work or undertake training and benefit financially from reduced childcare costs.
- Establishments are supported, challenged and empowered to improve through our revised Quality Improvement Framework.

What do we intend to do to bring about improvement?

- Develop a tracking system for Early Years that provides information on key attainment trends and enhances the transition of data into primary.
- Implement Year 1 of new QIF, to promote empowerment and greater collaboration between establishments. This will include visits to all establishments, reviews, themed visits and facilitated HT trio discussions.



What information/data will we gather to measure progress and impact?

- Increased attendance and attainment of all care experienced children and young people (CYP).
- Almost all care experienced CYP report that supports meet their needs.
- Feedback from partners (Aberlour and SPACE) indicates improvement in behaviour and relationships of identified care experienced CYP.
- Information collated from Quality Improvement (QI) visits evidence supports provided for care experienced CYP.
- Pre and post professional learning surveys demonstrate that almost all staff have increased knowledge and confidence in applying concepts and skills in, for example, Literacy, Numeracy, moderation, assessment, pedagogy and digital learning.
- Attainment and tracking data shows that almost all targeted CYP are making progress in literacy and numeracy with a trend towards closing identified attainment gaps.
- Pre and post CYP's survey demonstrates confidence, involvement and understanding of the importance of building on prior learning in transitions.
- Leuven's scale scores show improved attainment and engagement for all children targeted for transition support.
- Improved literacy and numeracy attainment throughout the BGE.
- Improved attainment in the Senior Phase.
- Improved leaver destinations—96%.
- Almost all establishments evaluated as 'good' or better for learning, teaching and assessment—target 91% and raising attainment and achievement—target 95%
- Number of schools achieving Reading Schools accreditation highlights the commitment of schools to improve reading.
- Winning Scotland impact report will highlight school-specific case studies that show improved engagement, enjoyment and attainment in numeracy and mathematics.
- Maths engagement surveys pre and post intervention will show a 10% decrease in the number of pupils who feel anxious about their learning in maths.
- Practitioner enquiry reports highlight that professional learning has led to sustained change and positive impact in the classroom.
- Number of DSAS and CR-IS badges will increase across LA.

What information/data will we gather to measure progress and impact?

- Post CLPL surveys will demonstrate that almost all staff have increased understanding and confidence in using digital tools and platforms to promote parental engagement.
- Digital Learning Parent survey will demonstrate increased engagement.
- Pre and post upgrade surveys will measure speed, access and use of digital tools.
- Post device roll-out surveys will show increased access to digital tools.
- QI visits, establishment reviews and focus groups of CYP and staff demonstrate the positive impact of a wide range of professional learning on practice in almost all classes.
- Professional learning evaluations will demonstrate senior leaders' and teachers' increased confidence in analysing and using data to inform improvement.
- Almost all Early Learning and Childcare establishments' Care Inspectorate reports will be graded 'good' or better in all measures
- % attendance rates – Primary target 95% or better
- Secondary target 90.7% or better
- Exclusion rates (Rate per 1000 pupils)
- Primary target 6.5
- Secondary target 39.6



PRIORITY

2

Reduce inequalities and deliver improved health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people

NIF Priorities

- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

NIF Drivers

- Teacher Professionalism
- Assessment of Children's Progress
- School Improvement
- Parental Engagement

What is the expected Outcome/Impact?

By June 2022:

- All practitioners are confident in applying Renfrewshire's Nurturing Relationships Approach (RNRA) in their practice.
- The majority of RNRA establishments will report increased confidence in engaging parents in RNRA as a community approach.
- All RNRA Ruby level accreditation submissions include: clear evidence of parental consultation and involvement; and clear evidence of pupil consultation.
- Successful RNRA accreditation submissions will increase by 50%.
- At least half of establishments will be using the Compassionate and Connected Classroom(CCC) with upper primary children and most children report improved wellbeing.
- All targeted Pupil Support Coordinators experience supervision structures and have an increased awareness of staff wellbeing interventions. Most engage in at least one wellbeing intervention and most report increased wellbeing.
- Most parents participating in Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) groups report increase in self-efficacy and decrease in emotional and behavioural problems related to their child.
- CYP get the help they need at the right time from a skilled network with appropriate training and supervision. The voices of CYP are heard and they are supported to build strong safe relationships where their wellbeing is protected.

What do we intend to do to bring about improvement?

- Support the continued implementation of RNRA in establishments with a focus on parental engagement, pupil voice and continued development of imodule training and support through locality network meetings.
- Promote use of the Compassionate and Connected Classroom (CCC) to improve wellbeing in upper primary pupils.
- Explore the introduction of supervision structures as wellbeing interventions to support staff (Pupil Support Coordinators) in pilot establishments.
- Extend Non Violent Resistance (NVR) approaches to support additional CYP and families.
- Implement the Children and Young People Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy including development of the prevention and early intervention space using a community-based, social model of support which promotes good mental health for all children and young people.
- Extend Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme across additional secondary schools, implement a red-flag campaign in partnership with Youth Services, and extend training to other Council partners.

What is the expected Outcome/Impact?

- All PSE staff trained in Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP), deliver effective lessons as part of the PSE programme. All young people have increased awareness of issues which affect relationships and the red flags to be aware of.
- All establishments have an evidence-based emotional literacy programme in place. Almost all practitioners use evidence-based programmes and approaches in the learning and teaching of mental, emotional and social wellbeing. Increased levels of wellbeing are evident in all CYP.
- An interactive digital progressive resource to enhance learning and teaching in Alcohol and Drugs education is developed and used effectively by most practitioners.
- Progressive and relevant Personal and Social Education (PSE) programmes are in place across all establishments to meet the Scottish Government's PSE Review deadline of March 2022.
- All practitioners have an enhanced knowledge and understanding of programmes, resources and strategies available to support their own wellbeing and that of CYP.
- HWB census data is used effectively to identify priorities for improvement.
- All CYP have increased knowledge and understanding of the mental and emotional wellbeing supports available to them and access these as required.
- All CYP and targeted parents requiring specialist HWB services e.g. Counselling, receive timely support to cope with life issues and build resilience.

What do we intend to do to bring about improvement?

- Extend implementation of emotional literacy programmes in targeted early years centres, primaries and secondaries through high quality professional learning and evidence-based approaches (e.g. Living Life To The Full and PATHS).
- Collaborate with key partners to develop and implement a new Alcohol and Drug Education resource to meet the recommendations of Renfrewshire's Alcohol and Drug Commission Report 2020.
- Continue to collaborate with the West Partnership Strategic PSE group, our MHWB Action Group and young people, regarding ongoing development of PSE/HWB resources and self-evaluation materials.
- Provide high quality professional learning and resources to support establishments to improve health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on mental and emotional wellbeing e.g. LGBT Charter, substance misuse, CEOP online safety, relationships, sexual health, understanding self-harm and suicide.
- Implement the national Health and Wellbeing census for all CYP P5–S6 and use the results to inform improvement.
- Coordinate the delivery of counselling services (Therapeutic Counselling Services and Place2Be) across primary, secondary and ASN schools. Extend to children under 10 and targeted parents.
- Develop the work of the Home Link Service and Families First to deliver on the priorities of the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy by increasing the number of staff trained and delivering on the agreed range of evidence-based approaches.

What is the expected Outcome/Impact?

- All leaders participate in Locality Inclusion Support Networks (LISN) and are supported by peers to promote inclusion and address the social, emotional and behavioural needs of identified CYP.
- A number of small tests of change enable aspects of the Additional Support Needs (ASN) locality inclusion model to operate effectively.
- All practitioners understand and are clear about how to respond to the distressed behaviour of CYP.
- Targeted establishments meet the national priorities and goals of 'Learning Together' and Renfrewshire's 'Walking Together with Parents in Renfrewshire' strategic goals.
- All participating families feel supported in home-school relationships, engagement, family learning and learning at home.
- All secondary schools delivering Parent in Partnership (PIP) programmes are responsive to the needs of the families. Programmes successfully reduce the anxiety and concerns of targeted families around transition to secondary.
- All schools receiving bespoke parental engagement support, have embarked in a process of self-evaluative planning with parents which will be reflected in SIP planning for session 2022-23.
- All families participating in family learning projects have increased confidence in supporting their child in literacy and numeracy through quality play and learning activities.
- The rights laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are embedded in policy in line with legislation.

What do we intend to do to bring about improvement?

- Implement a number of small tests of change which will operationalise aspects of the ASN locality inclusion model prior to full implementation in August 2023.
- Explore and develop the role of LISN at a systemic level as the implementation stage of the ASN review is progressed during 2021-22.
- Launch revised promoting positive relationships policy and implement across all establishments supported by appropriate training.
- Working with an academic partner from Swansea University and the Attainment Advisor, collect and evaluate good practice across establishments and provide targeted training to support the embedding of parental engagement in learning.
- Provide bespoke support to schools around co-evaluation, co-creation and improvement planning in the area of parental engagement, making use of the West Partnership Self-Evaluation Toolkit.
- Encourage and support active collaboration and engagement with parents and families to support their child's learning e.g. extend and embed the scope of Pizza Learning in targeted schools and continue to provide operational support for Parents in Partnership programme in secondaries.
- Collaborate with Barnardo's and the Early Action System Change Co-Design Commission to bring about systems change in areas of mental health and coercive control.
- Raise awareness of UNCRC legislation and undertake an audit to establish current position in relation to compliance in order to agree priority areas.

What information/data will we gather to measure progress and impact?

- Almost all establishments evaluated as 'good' or better for ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion (QI 3.1).
- Over 90% of establishments achieve RNRA accreditation. Accreditation submissions audit, Action Plan sampling and feedback from focus groups demonstrate that all establishments are on track.
- Pre and post professional learning surveys demonstrate that almost all staff have increased knowledge and confidence in applying nurture principles in practice.
- Feedback re supervision structures from Pupil Support Coordinator focus groups, small tests of change and survey information, provides evidence of improved wellbeing.
- CCC evaluations and small test of change feedback in pilot schools evidence improved wellbeing.
- Evaluations of MVP programmes in targeted schools and feedback from young people shows that MVP content meets the recommendation of the PSE review.
- Alcohol and Drugs resources are developed in collaboration with stakeholders and meet the recommendations of the Renfrewshire Alcohol & Drug Commission Report 2020.
- Evaluation data shows that PSE/HWB resources and skills of staff meet the PSE Review recommendations, reflect the current needs of CYP in Renfrewshire and take account of HWB/MH data collated by partners including Health.
- Professional learning evaluations demonstrate that almost all staff have increased knowledge and confidence in supporting the emotional wellbeing of CYP.
- Monitoring of social media channels e.g. HWB Blog and Twitter page will evidence that central support is valued by practitioners.
- Qualitative and quantitative information received from partners will show that almost all participating CYP successfully engage in HWB programmes.
- National HWB census results will be analysed and used to establish a baseline to inform planning.
- % of Counselling service referrals and qualitative information will highlight the positive impact of the service on CYP's and parents' mental health and wellbeing.
- Test of change monitoring framework reviewed through the ASN review project operational group measures progress in implementing ASN locality inclusion model.
- Strategic discussions with LISN Chairs will demonstrate the positive impact of this approach.
- QI visits and focus groups of CYP and staff will highlight the positive impact of HWB professional learning and programmes on emotional literacy.

What information/data will we gather to measure progress and impact?

- Increase in number of schools achieving LGBT Charter Mark.
- Evaluative evidence will demonstrate the impact of projects, approaches and initiatives e.g. CYP Community Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy, ASN Review, LISN, MVP, Early Action System Change and Barnardo's projects.
- Swansea University case studies will highlight good practice in supporting parental engagement with learning and its correlation with attainment. Pre and post online surveys of parents and staff show improved understanding of, and practice around parental engagement in learning.
- Qualitative feedback and % families engaging with PIP, Pizza Family Learning, and online support hub, highlight the positive impact of the programmes on CYP and families.
- Education policies and programmes will comply with UNCRC legislation



PRIORITY

3

Develop high quality leadership to promote empowerment at all levels

NIF Priorities

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children

NIF Drivers

- School Leadership
- Teacher Professionalism
- Assessment of Children's Progress
- School Improvement

What is the expected Outcome/Impact?

By June 2022:

- Enhanced leadership capacity at middle and senior management levels across all sectors.
- Increased capacity of Heads to think strategically following the Covid pandemic leading to greater school improvement.
- Adoption of successful practice from the Covid pandemic across establishments.
- All Heads feel valued and supported to carry out their role with confidence and competence.
- Deputes support empowered school leadership and explore collegiate and collaborative ways of working to improve outcomes for our children and young people.
- 1:1 coaching participants critically reflect on their own practice against the new GTC Standards. They enhance their knowledge and understanding of leadership and management and develop an enhanced understanding of coaching skills and techniques to further support others in their own school.
- NQTs and mentors are well supported throughout session 2021–22 to carry out their roles.
- Almost all Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) are recommended for full registration in their final profile submission to General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) in June 2022.

What do we intend to do to bring about improvement?

- Continue to support those aspiring to formal leadership roles through the delivery of high-quality Aspiring Leadership programmes including revised primary and secondary Aspiring PT courses and revised Aspiring Heads course.
- Continue to work in partnership with Drummond International, delivering a leadership programme which supports senior leaders to return to more strategic thinking.
- Introduce Learning Sets for newly appointed Early Years Deputes and further roll out the opportunity to primary and secondary Deputes.
- Provide the opportunity to participate in 1:1 bespoke coaching programme to a group of newly appointed Head Teachers.
- Provide an enhanced package of high-quality professional learning and support for our NQTs who experienced significant disruption to their studies during the pandemic and provide support for their Mentors.
- Support secondary schools to develop leadership skills in young people through the provision of residential programmes which complement the broad general education and add significant value to learning in physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing.
- Youth Services will seek to recruit young people as PSE Leaders who can participate and support the development and delivery of PSE programmes. Delegates will be sought from schools to participate in the Renfrewshire Youth Assembly.

What is the expected Outcome/Impact?

- All targeted young people develop increased leadership capacity, self-confidence and a variety of other skills including resilience, team working and decision making.
- Central staff and establishment senior leaders enhance their leadership capacity, improve approaches to learning and teaching and promote empowerment, excellence and equity through shared professional learning opportunities with the West Partnership.
- All new Head Teachers are informed of pertinent Renfrewshire policy and processes.
- Improved learning and teaching, data informed targeted interventions, improved attainment and achievement with a relentless focus on equity and excellence for all children in Improving Our Classroom (IOC) programme classes.
- Early Years middle and senior leaders are highly skilled, knowledgeable and are effectively supporting staff and children in their learning and development.
- Effective practice is shared and used to improve quality across all Renfrewshire Early Years establishments.
- Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) practitioners have increased understanding of pedagogical approaches across theoretical thinking which informs individual establishment's curriculum design and practice.
- Early Years teachers and graduates effectively support establishments to implement central priorities to support children's development across core areas of the curriculum.

What do we intend to do to bring about improvement?

- Continue to roll out successful West Partnership pilot programmes from session 2020-21, including Thinking About Headship, Headteacher Learning Sets, Executive Coaching and Virtual Learning Networks and Masterclasses.
- Develop opportunities for nominated staff to undertake facilitation training with a view to expanding the scope of the Leadership Learning Sets across the West Partnership.
- Pilot Renfrewshire's Head Teacher Induction programme.
- Introduce Cohort 1 of Improving our Classrooms (IOC)—a programme of high-quality professional learning, which places classroom practitioners at the heart of leading school improvement.
- Revise and update the 'Grow Your Own' plan and continue to develop and implement the 'Grow Your Own' professional learning and training programme for early years practitioners and leaders.
- Continue to roll out the leadership programme for ELC Heads, Deputies and middle leaders, including professional learning and qualification opportunities, to meet the staffing requirements.
- In partnership with Strathclyde University, deliver high quality leadership and management training for ELC deputies, graduates and middle managers.
- Roll out the Froebel training programme in partnership with Edinburgh University.
- Progress the planned cluster working approach for early years teachers and graduates.

What information/data will we gather to measure progress and impact?

- Almost all establishments evaluated as ‘good’ or better for leadership of change—target 95%.
- Participant numbers and qualitative feedback on content of all courses reflects relevance, quality and ability to meet stated aims.
- Evaluative evidence, quality assurance processes and qualitative feedback demonstrates participants’ increased knowledge, understanding and application of skills in practice.
- Participants perform to a high standard in interview (feedback) for promoted posts.
- Education Manager reports and school records demonstrate progress towards School Improvement Plan priorities is on track.
- Standards and Quality Reports 2021-22 demonstrate significant SIP progress for all establishments.
- Qualitative data on successful recommendations for full registration June 2022.
- Staff observations (school and CANI) and CANI Pupil Leadership Programme pre and post pupil survey questionnaires evidence the positive impact on all participating young people.
- Youth Services self-evaluation using ‘How Good is Our Learning in the Community’ and against the national Youth Work Outcomes measures the progress of individuals and the impact of youth work delivered.
- WP Pre and post professional learning questionnaires indicate a positive impact on knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects, leadership capacity, and collaboration across local authorities.
- Qualitative evaluation of Head Teacher Induction from each participant and input provider.
- Number of IOC teachers attaining GTCS Accreditation and Masters Level Credits validated by Glasgow Caledonian University.
- Care Inspectorate reports will be graded ‘good’ or better in all measures.



PRIORITY

4

Improve employability skills and support all of our young people to enter positive and sustained destinations

NIF Priorities

- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

NIF Drivers

- Assessment of Children's Progress
- School Improvement

What is the expected Outcome/Impact?

By June 2022:

- A refreshed Senior Phase curriculum offers increased flexibility to ensure that all young people are supported to choose appropriate pathways and achieve a range of qualifications and personal achievement awards.
- A more bespoke work experience delivery model will provide opportunities for all young people to prepare for the world of work.
- All children and young people are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of employers.
- All staff are confident and knowledgeable in delivering the Career Education Standard 3-18.
- All school leavers are well-supported and move into positive and sustained destinations in line with the Young Person's Guarantee.
- All participating practitioners are more confident and skilled in the teaching of STEM. Children and young people benefit from motivating and engaging learning and teaching.
- Partnership between Castlehead High and Glasgow School of Art (GSA) leads to revised approaches to curriculum delivery across Expressive Arts subjects and Technology and Creative Industries Departments by end of session 2022-23.

What do we intend to do to bring about improvement?

- Review and refresh the senior phase offer in line with the recommendations of the OECD Report on 'Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence', to ensure a range of opportunities are available to young people which maximise their chances of success.
- Develop a flexible, bespoke work placement model across all schools.
- Second a Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) officer to lead on this work in partnership with schools.
- In line with the Young Person's Guarantee, strengthen links with local employers and community benefit groups to ensure that young people are provided with opportunities and are equipped for the world of work.
- Working in partnership with Skills Development Scotland (SDS), continue to support the delivery of the Career Education Standard 3-18 across schools.
- Ensure that all schools and partner agencies (SDS and Invest) have systems in place to implement the revised expectations for tracking and supporting young people into positive and sustained destinations post school.
- Continue the rollout of partnership work with Career Ready Scotland, offering mentoring and work experience placements for identified young people in secondary schools.
- Continue to promote and support Developing the Young Workforce and Career Education Standard within Primary sector—include further Insight into Industry Pilots.



What do we intend to do to bring about improvement?

- Further develop My Future Pathway Programmes and extend the offer to more young people in Renfrewshire.
- Development Officer for Engaging Learners will continue to work with partners to support and mentor school leavers onto positive and sustained destinations and will provide central support for the newly recruited DYW coordinators, funded by Scottish Government (SG), for all secondaries and our 2 ASN schools.
- In partnership with the Wood Foundation and Education Scotland, participate in the RAiSE programme to increase primary practitioner confidence in the teaching of STEM.
- Extend partnership working with Glasgow Science Centre to include primary children and teachers working at First Level and increase the opportunities within the programme to further develop family learning.
- Following the pandemic, re-affirm the aims and objectives of the GSA and Castlehead High partnership and develop a GSA programme of staff training in creative approaches to curriculum delivery alongside a programme of opportunities for pupils to engage with GSA.

What information/data will we gather to measure progress and impact?

- Improved leaver destinations—target 96%.
- Improved attainment in the BGE.
- Improved attainment in the Senior Phase.
- Improved uptake and retention rates.
- Increased engagement between schools and employers/businesses.
- QI visits and focus groups of CYP and staff will demonstrate the positive impact of training on learning and teaching and skills development in almost all classes.
- An increase in the range and number of qualifications which young people are achieving including personal achievement awards and those offered by awarding bodies other than SQA.
- Tracking and monitoring information related to school leavers demonstrates the high level of scrutiny and support provided.
- Monthly SDS data checks and use of the SDS 16+ Data Hub demonstrates the supports/interventions in place for senior YP and their intended post school pathway.
- Increased delivery of Career Education Standard in schools evidenced through school documentation and QI visits.
- Evaluative evidence from partners and employers is used to ascertain the effectiveness of school programmes and preparedness for world of work.
- Work placement data will evidence the range of relevant opportunities provided for young people.
- Quarterly reports to SG highlight the positive impact of the school DYW coordinators.
- Pre and post professional learning STEM evaluations will evidence the increased confidence of primary practitioners.
- Castlehead and GSA Improvement Plans and staff training feedback demonstrate a commitment to, and enhanced knowledge and understanding of, creative pedagogies.



For further information, please contact

Steven Quinn

Director Children's Services
Children's Services
Renfrewshire Council

Tel: 0141 618 6839

Email: steven.quinn@renfrewshire.gov.uk



To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 20 January 2022

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Consultation on Education Reform

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Scottish Government is undertaking a public consultation on Education Reform, following the recommendations from the OECD report. On behalf of the Council, Children's Services have responded to the consultation, with a response being submitted on 25th November. Our response is appended to this report at Appendix One.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Elected members are asked to:
- Homologate the content of the response to the Education Reform Consultation.
-

3. Background

- 3.1 The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Ms Somerville, announced on 22 June the intention to replace the SQA and consider a new specialist agency for both curriculum and assessment while also taking forward reform to Education Scotland, including removing the function of inspection from the agency.
- 3.2 Professor Ken Muir, University of the West of Scotland, was appointed to act as an independent advisor to the Scottish Government to consider and advise on the implementation of the reform that will consider all functions currently delivered by both the SQA and Education Scotland.

- 3.3 The consultation ran from 30 September to 26 November. The response from Renfrewshire Council will support Professor Muir in his considerations. The Scottish Government will provide an analysis of the responses in early 2022.
-

Implications of this report

1. **Financial**
None
2. **HR and Organisational Development**
None.
3. **Community/Council Planning**

Our Renfrewshire is fair	- <i>enter details/ delete if not appropriate</i>
Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all	- <i>enter details/ delete if not appropriate</i>
Working together to improve outcomes	- <i>enter details/ delete if not appropriate</i>
4. **Legal**
None.
5. **Property/Assets**
None.
6. **Information Technology**
None.
7. **Equality and Human Rights**
The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health and Safety**
None.
9. **Procurement**
None.
10. **Risk**
None.
11. **Privacy Impact**
None.

12. Cosla Policy Position
None.

13. Climate Risk
None.

List of Background Papers

None

Children's Services

JC 25/11/21

Author: Julie Calder, julie.calder@renfrewshire.gov.uk, 0141 618 7194

Renfrewshire Council

Education Reform Consultation

Response

Completion date: 25/11/21

SECTION 1 - VISION

As an introduction to the questions which follow in this consultation, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

1.1. The vision for Curriculum for Excellence reflects what matters for the education of children and young people in Scotland.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☒ **Agree**
- ☐ Neither Agree/Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Response:

We believe that it is right to revisit the vision to ensure that it fully incorporates how society has evolved (digital transformation, climate change etc), particularly as we emerge from the pandemic, and takes account of the importance of health and wellbeing as a critical feature of our curriculum.

1.2. What do you think should be retained and/or changed?

Response:

We fully support the ambition that underpins Curriculum for Excellence and we commend the work that has taken place to realise this ambition. The flexibility to design a curriculum that meets the needs of the learners has been an important feature as has the focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across all areas of the curriculum.

However, there are limiting factors that we believe need to be addressed to ensure that we maximise the opportunity that this review presents.

- *The volume of content in the BGE (3-15) does not support appropriate depth of learning*

We believe that a de-cluttering of the curriculum would provide the time and space to ensure meaningful and relevant learning experiences that develop essential knowledge, skills and capabilities whilst developing the necessary love of learning. Due to the significant work that has taken place, we do not believe it is necessary to start again but simply to refine the existing framework.

- *Articulation between the BGE and Senior Phase*

The potential of CfE has been undermined by the narrow focus on qualifications in a restricted timeframe (particularly S4). These restrictions have unintentionally stifled creativity in designing a curriculum that prepares pupils not only living in but being successful in the 21st century. Moreover, as schools are rightly designing curriculum pathways for all young people with the expansion of vocational courses this is not reflected in the BGE, indeed it can be argued that there is not the space for this in its current form. We are excited by the opportunity to address this through this review to ensure that structures and programmes reflect the pathways of all learners.

Any proposed changes should be carefully considered and resourced appropriately.

SECTION 2 - CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

The OECD reports *Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future*¹³ and *Upper-Secondary Education Student Assessment in Scotland: A Comparative Perspective*¹⁴ make it clear that aligning curriculum, qualifications and system evaluation is essential to delivering on the commitments made in Curriculum for Excellence relating to assessment.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- 2.1. Curriculum for Excellence provides a coherent progression in the journey of learners (3-18 and beyond) that gives them the best possible educational experience and enables them to realise their ambitions.**

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ **Neither**
☐ **Agree/Disagree**
☐ Disagree
Strongly Disagree

- 2.2. Please share what you believe currently contributes to a coherent progression.**

Response:

BGE

Schools and local authorities have worked hard to ensure that there are clear curriculum pathways in place that ensure progression and coherence. It is important to note that this has been a particularly challenging process which perhaps could be attributed to a lack of clarity surrounding Experiences and Outcomes, Significant Aspects of Learning and Benchmarks as advice and guidance from Education Scotland evolved. Furthermore, as recognised in the OECD report, there was little direct evaluation of the impact of advice and guidance across the system.

An unintended consequence of this has been a lack of what we believe, to be a robust National Standard – we must take the learning from this when considering any further revisions.

Senior Phase

Whilst the senior phase offer has broadened in terms of alternative programmes such as Foundation Apprenticeships and work-based and vocational alternatives to traditional academic programmes, they remain largely an 'add-on' activity in terms of priority (and timetables) and do not, yet, carry the same perceived value as SQA results when considering the success of an individual's achievements. It is also clear that there is an issue regarding the status of vocational and work-related courses and programmes which should be addressed systemically.

Work is required with all stakeholders to address the perception that alternative qualifications do not hold relevant value.

Overall, there is undoubtedly scope progression, however; it is difficult to agree or disagree as the issue remains with the articulation between the BGE and Senior Phase. Decluttering of the curriculum and a coherent approach to assessment across all stages has the potential to address this.

2.3. Please share ideas you may have to improve learner progression across stages and sectors.

Response:

We share the generally held view that clearer understanding of progression could be achieved through the development of an assessment framework for the BGE which describes progression clearly across each level, and which aligns with the requirements for assessment in the senior phase.

3.1. In practice, learning communities are empowered and use the autonomy provided by Curriculum for Excellence to design a curriculum that meets the needs of their learners.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ **Neither**
- ☐ **Agree/Disagree**
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

3.2. Please share ideas you may have on what is needed to enhance this in future.

Response:

In theory schools have the flexibility to build a curriculum that meets the needs of their children and young people, particularly in the primary sector; however, it is important to note that there are limiting factors to this flexibility. The volume of content; the rigidity of learning across all curriculum areas until the end of S3; and the lack of articulation between BGE and Senior Phase; and the focus on qualifications from S4 has resulted in the Senior Phase, in particular, losing its power.

Arguably curriculum design is also driven by inspection process which has perhaps stifled innovation required to realise the ambition of CfE.

We need to:

- reimagine our approaches to delivering a curriculum with pedagogy and assessment as the drivers rather than the qualification structure which is still too narrowly focussed on academic success.
- take the learning from international studies where there is parity of esteem of academic and vocational pathways. This must be done in partnership with colleges, employers and universities to ensure that all qualifications are rightly recognised. In addition, there will be a need to inform and convince wider society in the value of change; and

- Revisit the complete landscape of a qualification structure to provide the time and space to deliver a curriculum that develops key 21st century skills; to build on what we have achieved, to recover what we lost in the early stages of implementation when developing the four capacities was the focus.

We need to be bold; however, there must be clarity on standards, roles and responsibilities.

We fully appreciate the challenge in striking the balance between designing a framework that is clearly understood but also allows for flexibility.

4.1. The creation of a Curriculum and Assessment Agency will help to address the misalignment of curriculum and assessment as outlined in the OECD report¹⁵.

4.2. Don't answer

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree –
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Agree/Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

4.3. Please share your views of the potential advantages of establishing such an Agency.

Response:

Wholly dependent on the focus and function of the new agency.

Such an agency would have the potential to ensure that assessment reflects the rationale and ambition for the curriculum and ensure the articulation between learning and teaching, assessment, and qualifications.

A further advantage would be a consistency in terms of the approaches to assessment in the BGE and those used in the Senior Phase. This would also help address the issue of a narrow set of academic qualifications (as described in previous responses) driving approaches in the earlier stages.

Any change in approach will require clear communication in terms of what is changing and why, or could result in uncertainty and confusion across the system.

4.4. Please share your views of the potential disadvantages of establishing such an Agency.

Response:

A concern would be that the organisations would change in name only therefore missing the opportunity of what is described above. There is huge potential to think and approach things differently that could improve the outcomes for all of our learners – it is important that we grasp this moment.

5.1 The full breadth of existing SQA qualifications¹⁶ play an important part of the curriculum offered by secondary schools.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree/Disagree
- ☐ **Disagree**
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

5.2 Please identify the main factors, if any, that support a broader range of SQA qualifications being included in the curriculum in secondary schools.

Response:

National Qualifications are a significant driver of the curriculum and the organisation of Secondary schools. Schools are set up in a way that prioritises the study of individual subjects for the purposes of SQA certification. As such all other learning must fit around the SQA courses in terms of the timetable and the staffing required to deliver them. This can lead to the needs of all young people not being served.

Rather than the qualifications driving the curriculum, the qualifications offered should reflect the breadth of the curriculum and allow young people to demonstrate knowledge, competences and skills in their chosen pathway.

Please share any ideas you may have on what is needed to enhance the role of a broader variety of qualifications in the curriculum in secondary schools.

Response:

To ensure parity of esteem across the SCQF framework or indeed a new qualifications framework, it is essential that courses and awards, where appropriate, are accepted as valid entry requirements to further and higher education courses. While there is evidence emerging that Foundation Apprenticeships and other accredited courses being accepted, this has not progressed at the pace required.

We believe that it is important that any redesign of the qualification structure is done in consultation with key stake holders with implementation timeframes agreed. Credibility and the ability for HE and FE to be able to differentiate candidates will be a critical feature of any qualification structure.

Is it time for us to reconsider the focus of a narrow subject specific approach? International research challenges this approach.

Is it time for us to review the purpose and value of S4 qualifications?

6.1. Technologies are fully and appropriately utilised as a support for curriculum and assessments.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree/Disagree
- ☐ **Disagree**
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

6.2. Please share any comments you may have on the use of technologies to support curriculum and assessments, and what could be done to deliver improvements.

Response:

There is huge potential to expand on the use of technology: however, there is not currently the infrastructure to support an equitable provision. This must be addressed at a national level before any wider roll out of digital assessment, because there must be a level playing field.

7.1. Please share any additional comments you have on curriculum and assessment.

This is an opportunity to learn from the first phase of CfE and what we have experienced throughout the pandemic. We believe this is the time to “grasp the nettle” to ensure that assessment fully supports learning and that our qualification system is fair and enables our learners to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and capabilities.

This is the time to identify what is important and what will genuinely and meaningfully enable us to realise the ambition of CfE and importantly how we measure success. We welcome the prospect of this and believe that there is capacity in the system to achieve this if led and managed appropriately.

SECTION 3 (Roles and Responsibilities)

The rationale for reform of Scottish education is to ensure that learning communities get the best possible support to provide the highest quality of learning and teaching for our children and young people. The aim is to continue to reduce the attainment gap and reduce variability in outcomes achieved by young people in different parts of the country.

*Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future*¹⁷ recognises the complexity in Scottish education and highlights duplication of functions between different groups. It is claimed that this reduces clarity and consistency for practitioners and points to the need for Scotland's system leaders and stakeholders to revise the current allocation of responsibility for Curriculum for Excellence, including responsibilities for its strategic direction, its reviews and updates, and the response to needs and/or requests for support with curriculum issues.

A key challenge in improving the transparency of responsibilities and accountability mechanisms surrounding Curriculum for Excellence is in ensuring that the functions of agencies are designed in a way that maximises support for achieving excellence and equity for all children and young people from the early level upwards.

Building on a commitment to shared ownership of Curriculum for Excellence, the report therefore points to the need for improved clarity on functions and simplification of guidance for all stakeholders in order that the system is more coherent and more easily understood by all, allowing a greater focus on learning and teaching.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- 8.1 There is clarity on where the responsibilities for the strategic direction, review and updates for Curriculum for Excellence lie.**

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree/Disagree
- ☐ **Disagree**
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

- 8.2 Please indicate where you think the responsibilities for the strategic direction, review and updates for Curriculum for Excellence should lie.**

Response:

A single national agency overseeing all aspects of CfE has the potential to address the current disconnect between assessment and qualification. This single agency will be able to do this by determining its course based on sound evidence, and building into its strategic plan a proactive, structured, regular review programme.

This national education body should work closely with local authorities in a spirit of collaboration and partnership, to ensure that the delivery of CfE can continually improve and deliver improving outcomes for all learners.

9.1 There is clarity on the roles played by national agencies and other providers for responding to needs for support with curriculum and assessment issues.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree/Disagree
- ☐ **Disagree**
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

9.2 Please share which aspects of the support currently provided by national agencies and other providers is working well.

Response:

National support can work well at times on specific initiatives, both in terms of the ongoing support offered through guidance documents, as well as the training offered. However, the most effective support for schools continues to come from individual local authorities and regional improvement collaboratives as these can tailor any support to be flexible and adaptable to a local context.

9.3 Please indicate where you think greater clarity is needed in relation to the roles played by national agencies and other providers for responding to needs / requests for support with curriculum and assessment issues.

Response:

Greater clarity is required at national level in terms of both the strategic direction of education in Scotland, and who exactly is responsible for delivering on the different aspects of the service.

The statutory responsibility for improvement rests with local authorities therefore it needs to be clear how local authorities, regional improvement collaboratives and any national agency or agencies work together to ensure continuous improvement in the outcomes for learners.

10.1 There is clarity on where high quality support for leadership and professional learning can be accessed to support practitioners.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ **Agree**
- ☐ Neither Agree/Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

10.2 Please share any comments you may have on support for leadership and professional learning.

Response:

The current support could be improved. While there is a wide range of content, there appears to be very little evaluation of the effectiveness of the current offer.

A deeper understanding of each local authority will better enable a new agency to tailor support and challenge that enables continuous improvement.

The removal of the Area Lead officer eroded that understanding.

The professional learning offer needs to meet the needs of individuals – there should not be a ‘one size fits all’ approach. Instead of a narrow focus on events and guidance, any national agency should provide a wide-ranging professional learning offer which can facilitate peer to peer support and challenge across different local authorities.

11.1 There is sufficient trust with all stakeholders, including children, young people, parents & carers, so they are genuinely involved in decision making.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Agree/Disagree
- ☐ **Disagree**
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

11.2 Please share any ideas you may have on how trust and decision making can be further improved.

Response:

Transparency, clarity and a genuinely collaborative approach are critical to strengthening trust in the education system. Currently there is a certain amount of opaqueness to how decisions are made – the evidence base for certain decisions is not always obvious.

There is a perception that too much of the decision making is political and not being driven by the wider system.

12.1 Independent inspection has an important role to play in scrutiny and evaluation, enhancing improvement and building capacity.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ **Agree**
- ☐ Neither Agree/Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

12.2 Please give examples of how you would like to see scrutiny and evaluation being carried out in future.

Response:

The current system of inspection would benefit from a complete refresh in order to provide for genuine continuous improvement.

The process of grading schools and then publishing these grades does not capture the true value of the work being undertaken in individual schools – this published grading system can be demoralising for schools and school communities.

Moreover, the grading system is not applied consistently and, in our view, is not compatible with an empowered and supportive system. The existing suite of Quality Indicators needs reviewed as it does not reflect the post-COVID landscape in which schools are working. Despite efforts over the last few years the current system is perceived as adversarial and lacking in partnership.

In addition, we believe that the role of Associate Assessors needs further development as these roles are essential for having a presence on inspection that keeps a direct link between scrutiny and current practice.

Any new system of inspection should be built by fully consulting with and engaging stakeholders, ensuring that measurement tools reflect the needs of the system and are fit for purpose and be based on the principles of integrity, independence and fairness. It should be responsive to need and be flexible.

13.1 Please share any additional comments on roles and responsibilities in Scotland's education system.

Response:

The critical outcome from the current review of education must be that there is absolute clarity on roles and responsibilities, both in terms of individual agencies, local authorities, schools etc., but also in terms of how these agencies all work together to improve outcomes for individual learners. There must be a clear overarching vision, and it must be clear how each stakeholder part contributes to the whole. At present, there is a lack of clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the different players, which leads to confusion and duplication of effort.

It is our hope that any revised model is carried out in partnership with Local Authorities. There is huge potential for the new agency to work in partnership with local authorities in their role of supporting continuous year on year improvement.

SECTION 4 - REFORMING EDUCATION SCOTLAND

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced in June 2021 the intention to replace the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and consider a new specialist agency for both curriculum and assessment while also taking forward reform of Education Scotland, including removing the function of inspection or scrutiny from the agency. This section seeks views on how best to take forward key aspects of the Cabinet Secretary's decision including:

- a. Removing Scrutiny (Inspection and review) from Education Scotland**
- b. Further reform of Education Scotland**
- c. Replacing SQA**
- d. Considering the establishment of a new Curriculum and Assessment Agency**

While it is expected to take some time to establish new or revised national agencies, it is anticipated that they will have a key role in taking forward delivery of wider OECD recommendations. This would include embedding a refreshed vision for Curriculum for Excellence, defining indicators to understand progress across the four capacities, building curricular capacity, implementing new pedagogical and assessment practices, implementing approaches for internal assessment in determining qualifications, ensuring appropriate breadth and depth of learning through the Broad General Education¹⁸ and in respect of the Senior Phase¹⁹, embedding a structured and long-term approach to implementation, effective stakeholder engagement and coherent communications.

To assist you in answering these questions, information on the current roles and functions carried out by SQA and Education Scotland are provided within the supporting documents section at <https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781802014327/documents/>.

Removing Scrutiny (Inspection and review) from Education Scotland

External scrutiny (inspection and review) plays a fundamental role in the overall drive to continue to improve education in Scotland for all of our children, young people and adult learners. HM Inspectors carry out independent, external evaluation of standards, quality and improvement with a clear focus on impact and outcomes for learners. The scrutiny programme covers all sectors from early learning and childcare to adult learning. The evidence gathered through observing practice at first hand identifies what is working well in our education system, including examples of highly effective practice, areas which are showing improvement and areas where further development is needed.

14.1 Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example what form should this agency take)
- b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example the development of a new national approach to inspection including alignment with other scrutiny functions)
- c) the risks associated with any reform (for example whether the independence of the inspectorate could be jeopardised by change)
- d) how any risks might be mitigated
- e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

Response:

There are opportunities to review not only what is subject to scrutiny but also how this scrutiny may be undertaken e.g. a greater involvement of stakeholders or inspecting themes across schools or Learning Communities.

Further Reform of Education Scotland

Beyond inspection Education Scotland is a broad organisation responsible for a range of important functions designed to support a number of parts of the Scottish Education system. These functions include directly supporting learning communities at local and regional levels, offering a wide range of professional learning and leadership development programmes and opportunities, Community Learning and Development (including the CLD Standards Council), supporting digital pedagogies and as the function of Registrar of Independent Schools.

15.1 Please share any comments or suggestions you have on how the functions currently housed in Education Scotland could be reformed.

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example which functions should continue to sit within a reformed Education Scotland, and are there any functions which could be carried out elsewhere)

Response:

Education Scotland should provide strategic direction and support to the delivery of the curriculum, with a focus on collaboration with local authorities.

- b) the opportunities reform could present (for example should more prominence be given to aspects of Education Scotland's role)

Response:

The opportunity is to strengthen collaboration and ensure absolute clarity on the roles and responsibilities of all of those involved in the delivery of education services. There is also the opportunity to champion an evidence-led approach to continuous improvement, and a proactive review and refresh framework. There

should also be a national assessment framework for assessment in addition to qualifications.

- c) the risks associated with any reform (for example disruption of service to education establishments and settings)

Response:

There is a genuine risk of confusion and unnecessary duplication.

- d) how any risks might be mitigated

Response:

Learning from the initial stages of CfE. Clarity is required on roles and responsibilities, and strategic direction, should avoid confusion as we transition to the new model.

- e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

Response:

It is not possible to answer this question without first knowing what the proposed reforms are.

It is important to note, however that we are of the strong view that Local Authority officers play a key role in driving continuous improvement.

We share the view that to effectively support schools in their improvement journey, a reformed Education Scotland need to work much more closely with their colleagues within Local Authorities.

Replacing SQA

SQA has two main roles: accreditation and awarding qualifications.

- **SQA Accreditation** accredits qualifications other than degrees and approves and quality assures awarding bodies that plan to enter people for these qualifications.
- **SQA Awarding Body** devises and develops national and vocational qualifications across schools, colleges, training providers and employers; sets standards and maintains such qualifications; validates qualifications (makes sure they are well written and meet the needs of learners and practitioners); reviews qualifications to ensure they are up to date; arranges for, assists in, and carries out, the assessment of people taking SQA qualifications; quality- assures education and training establishments which offer SQA qualifications; and issues certificates to candidates.

Within both of these roles, SQA offers a range of services for businesses and training providers, ranging from course and centre approval through customised awards, to endorsement, credit rating and licensing services.

16.1. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below. Q13 relates to the roles and responsibilities section

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example could a function be carried out elsewhere)
- b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example should more prominence be given to an aspect of SQA's role)
- c) the risks associated with any reform (for example loss of income, confusion as to system of awards in Scotland)
- d) how any risks might be mitigated
- e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

Response:

There is an opportunity to create a qualifications and assessment framework that is fit for purpose in 21st century Scotland, and which reflects the ambitions of Curriculum for Excellence.

Whatever replaces the current system should be credible, robust, transparent and fair.

The relationship with Further and Higher Education is also critically important. The role of SQA awards as currency for university entrance has significant impact on the shape of the curriculum and the priority given to these courses. FE & HE should therefore be included and involved in any system re-design.

The timescale for change should balance the need for discussion, debate and careful planning with the risk of the system reverting to pre-covid reliance on one-off high-stakes exams as the 'best' solution. On balance, an ill-considered or hastily implemented alternative could be more damaging both in the short term for candidates and in the longer term as a further barrier to reform.

Considering the Establishment of a new Curriculum and Assessment Agency

The establishment of a new agency has the potential to enhance the quality of teaching and learning across the education sector. It will be important that the remit, purpose, governance and culture of the new agency match the aspirations of the system it will be designed to serve.

17. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example are there alternative models for this reform?)
- b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example what should the role of the new agency be?)
- c) the risks associated with any reform

- d) how any risks might be mitigated
- e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

Response:

The value of such a body will lie in its ability to provide coherence between the curriculum itself, approaches to delivery and implementation and the means by which progress and success are measured and described – assessed.

The extent to which the inspectorate and this body share understanding of what excellence looks like in relation to the curriculum, learning & teaching, assessment and pupil outcomes will be important.

One risk, as with the replacement for the SQA, is that the system reverts to where it is currently. There is a perception that both the Inspectorate and the SQA can be inflexible in their approach. They are seen to be more focussed on their internal integrity and less mindful of their role in support of the system and as such internal resistance to change may be as much of an issue as any external challenges.

Risk mitigation lies in clarity of purpose and clarity of roles in meeting that purpose. In terms of timescales, this might be a good place to start

We believe that this is a fantastic opportunity to declutter the curricular particularly BGE (3-15.); address the misalignment between the BGE and Senior Phase; clarify roles and responsibilities; and ensure that a review process is established.

Narrow subject specific approach is limiting our ability to develop 21st century skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity and social contribution.



To: Education and Children Policy Board

On: 20 January 2022

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Early Learning and Childcare Consultation - 2021

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to consult representative populations of parents and carers on how the mandatory early learning and childcare, day care, out of school care and discretionary services should be made available. There is a requirement to consult every 2 years and to publish plans in response to these consultations.
 - 1.2 This report advises on the findings of the early learning and childcare consultation carried out by Renfrewshire Council during August and September 2021. The consultation report is attached as appendix one to this report.
-

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Service Policy Board is asked to note the findings of the early learning and childcare consultation - 2021, which is attached as an appendix to this report.
-

3. Background

- 3.1 Part 6 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to consult representative populations of parents and carers on how mandatory early learning and childcare should be made available and to publish plans for future delivery in response to the consultations. Parts 7 and 8 of the Act also requires an authority to consult representative populations of parents on how discretionary early learning and childcare (under the 1980 Act) and discretionary day care and out of school care for children not in need (under the 1995 Act) should be provided and supported. There is also a requirement to consult representative

populations of parents on how mandatory day care and out of school for children in need (under the 1995 Act) should be made available.

- 3.2 There is a requirement to consult every 2 years and to publish plans in response to these consultations.
- 3.3 Previous surveys were undertaken in June 2014, August 2016 and June 2018. A survey relating specifically to early learning and childcare was also carried out in 2017. The findings from the previous surveys have provided information on demand, barriers, perceptions and future use of early learning and childcare services for parents of children aged 0-14 years and assisted the council in the planning and delivery of services. This information played a key part in planning for the expansion of early learning and childcare.
- 3.4 The findings from the survey carried out by Renfrewshire Council in June 2018 were reported to Education and Children's Services Policy Board in November 2018. This consultation was conducted via an online survey to achieve maximum engagement from parents across Renfrewshire, with the findings used to further progress the expansion plans for early learning and childcare.
- 3.5 In line with the requirement to consult every 2 years a further survey should have been carried out around summer 2020. This did not progress due to the covid pandemic.
- 3.6 An online survey of Renfrewshire parents and carers relating to early learning and childcare was carried out in August and September 2021. A total of 940 respondents took part in the Nursery and Childcare survey. Questions were set to gather information on current and future usage of early learning and childcare 0 to 14 years, demand, barriers and parental perceptions. The survey was structured to provide information within two categories: needs and services for parents of children aged birth to five years and 5 -14 years. The survey included a number of closed questions.
- 3.7 Appendix one provides the overall findings from the 2021 survey, including information on headline results and responses to all the questions asked.
- 3.8 Due to the small sample size of respondents who participated in the consultation the responses provided can only be seen as an indicator of the desires, demand and perceptions which may not fully represent the views of the wider community.

4. Key Findings – Early Learning and Childcare Survey – 2021

- 4.1 A total of 940 respondents took part in the early learning and childcare survey. An analysis of the data revealed that 45% of the respondents live in the Paisley area, 55% had children aged under 5 years and 74% had children aged between 5 and 14 years of age.
- 4.2 The key findings of the survey are as follows:
 - (i) **early learning and childcare (0 to 5 years)**
 - 51% of parents local authority childcare with a further 45% using funded providers.
 - A higher percentage of respondents (52%) are using funded provider settings for children under 3, with 42% using local authority
 - Only 6% of respondents indicated that they use a registered childminder.
 - The key reasons for using early learning and childcare services are:

- 78% to support child development.
- 75% to enable parents to work.
- 60% because their child is entitled to a place.
- The key factors influencing parents in their choice of an early learning and childcare provider:
 - positive inspection grades (72%).
 - opportunity for children to socialise (72%).
 - highly qualified staff (69%).
- The preferred patterns for delivering 1140 hours of early learning and childcare are for:
 - 6 hours a day over the term time (39%).
 - 2 and a half days per week over the full year (31%).

(ii) Out of school care (school age)

- 45% use family and friends as the most common form of childcare.
- 24% had children attending before school care and 36% after school care provision.
- 96% are using a childcare services to enable parents to work.
- The key common views and perceptions on out of school care provision:
 - 70% strongly agree / agree that the support of their family and friends is required to meet childcare needs.
 - 60% of respondents strongly agree / agree that providers are in a suitable location.
 - 40% disagree / strongly disagree that out of school care is an affordable option, with 31% providing a neutral response to this question.

- 4.3 The survey responses from parents who had children from birth to not yet attending school equates to around 9% of the National Records of Scotland's population in Renfrewshire for this age group. 695 respondents had children of school age. The projected population for this age group in Renfrewshire is 19,383.
- 4.4 Due to the small sample size the responses provided can only be seen as an indicator of the desires, demand and perceptions which may not fully represent the views of the wider community.
- 4.5 Although a small sample size, the findings in relation to early learning and childcare will continue to assist the council in its delivery options of provision. The findings in relation to other aspects of childcare will be considered when undertaking any future planning of childcare services for Renfrewshire.

Implications of this report

1. Financial

None

2. HR and Organisational Development

None

3. Community /Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is thriving

Ensuring the best start in life for children and young people.

Our Renfrewshire is well

Earlier intervention will lead to healthier outcomes for young children.

Our Renfrewshire is safe

Local services will benefit children, young people and members of the community.

Building strong, safe and resilient communities

The quality of community life is enhanced by supporting parents, children and young people.

Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all

Effective governance arrangements ensure that the organisations receiving funding comply with legislative requirements.

Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy

Flexible childcare placements will enable parents to access and sustain employment, training or education.

4. Legal

None

5. Property/Assets

None

6. Information Technology

None

7. Equality and Human Rights

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because there is no decrease to the level of funding being proposed therefore no diminution of service. Services comply with the Equality Act 2010.

8. **Health and Safety**
None
9. **Procurement**
None
10. **Risk**
None
11. **Privacy Impact**
Personal information will only be held as required in order to deliver the service. This will be done in accordance with all data protection legislation.
12. **COSLA Policy Position**
None
13. **Climate Risk**
None

List of Background Papers

(i) Early Learning and Childcare Consultation – 2018, Education and Children Policy Board, 1 November 2018.

KMcD/JC/SQ/LG
22 November 2020

Author: Kathleen McDonagh, Education Manager – Early Years Tel No: 07799034553, kathleen.mcdonagh@renfrewshire.gov.uk ; Andrew Voysey, Information Systems Development, andrew.voysey@renfrewshire.gov.uk

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL
EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE
(0 TO 14 YEARS)
CONSULTATION
2021

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to consult with parents every two years on how early learning and childcare for children aged 0 to 14 years should be made available and to publish a plan for how it intends to make early learning and childcare available. This report provides the findings of the most recent survey carried out by Renfrewshire Council during August and September 2021.

The consultation was conducted using an online survey which was promoted on the council website and social media.

1.2 Key Findings

A total of 940 respondents took part in the early learning and childcare survey. An analysis of the data revealed that 45% of the respondents live in the Paisley area, 55% had children aged under 5 years and 74% had children aged between 5 and 14 years of age.

The key findings of the survey are as follows:

(i) Early learning and childcare (0 to 5 years)

- 51% of parents local authority childcare with a further 45% using funded providers.
- A higher percentage of respondents (52%) are using funded provider settings for children under 3, with 42% using local authority.
- Only 6% of respondents indicated that they use a registered childminder.
- The key reasons for using early learning and childcare services are:
 - 78% to support child development.
 - 75% to enable parents to work.
 - 60% because their child is entitled to a place.
- The key factors influencing parents in their choice of an early learning and childcare provider:
 - positive inspection grades (72%).
 - opportunity for children to socialise (72%).
 - highly qualified staff (69%).
- The preferred patterns for delivering 1140 hours of early learning and childcare are for:
 - 6 hours a day over the term time (39%).
 - 2 and a half days per week over the full year (31%).

(ii) Out of school care (school age)

- 45% use family and friends as the most common form of childcare.
- 24% had children attending before school care and 36% after school care provision.
- 96% are using a childcare services to enable parents to work.
- The key common views and perceptions on out of school care provision:
 - 70% strongly agree / agree that the support of their family and friends is required to meet childcare needs.
 - 60% of respondents strongly agree / agree that providers are in a suitable location.
 - 40% disagree / strongly disagree that out of school care is an affordable option, with 31% providing a neutral response to this question.

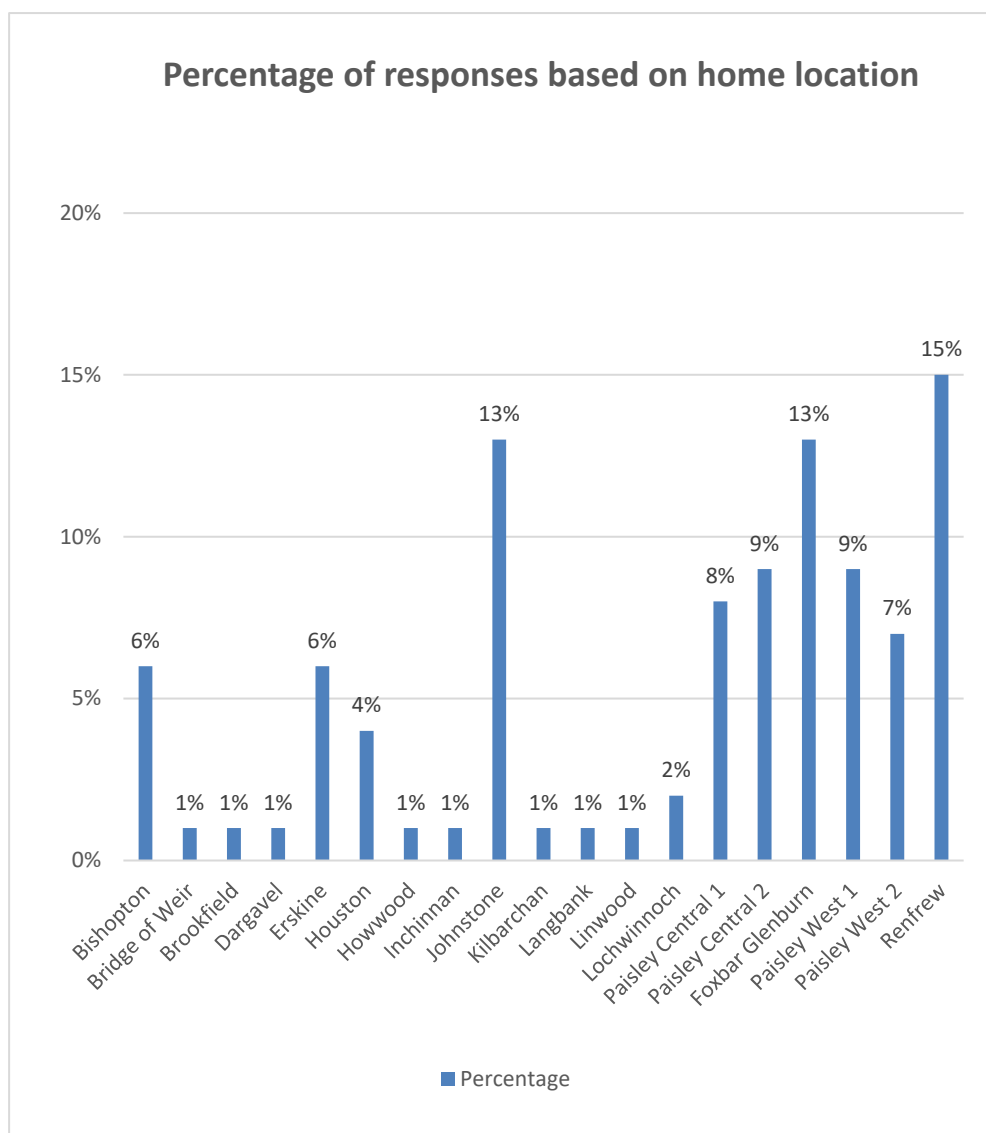
2. Overall Survey Results

This section of the report details the responses to each of the questions of the consultation survey. Due to the small sample size across the Renfrewshire Council areas the responses provided can only be seen as an indicator of the desires, demand and perceptions which may not fully represent the views of the wider community.

The survey responses from parents who have children from birth to not yet attending school equates to around 9% of the National Records of Scotland's population in Renfrewshire for this age group. 695 respondents have children of school age. The projected population for this age group in Renfrewshire is 19,383.

2.1 Respondent Profile

- 2.1.1 Of the 940 respondents who took part in the survey, they represented 823 children aged 0 to 5 years. Whilst the survey did not identify the total number of school age children the findings indicate that 695 respondents have children of school age.
- 2.1.2 Respondents were asked to identify which areas of Renfrewshire they lived in. Whilst the findings of the survey show representation from every area of Renfrewshire the distribution of respondents is not evenly spread, with around 46% living in the Paisley area and fewer than 10 living in areas such as Brookfield, Langbank and Howwood. The chart below details the area responses:



2.2 Survey Questions Relating to Early Learning and Childcare

2.2.1 This section of the survey related children aged 0 to not yet attending school.

2.2.2 Respondents were asked to indicate the number of children in their family within the following age categories. The highest populated age group was the 3 to 5 years with over 392 children falling within this category followed by 227 in the under 2 years age group. Table one below details the responses:

Table 1: Age Category	Number
0 – Under 2 years	227
2 – under 3 years	204
3 - 5 years	392

2.2.3 Parents were asked to identify the types of childcare they currently use, with the majority of respondents (51%) identifying a local authority early learning and childcare centre or class followed by 45% using funded providers. Only 20% of respondents are

using family or friends for childcare. Further analysis of the data showed that a higher percentage of respondents (52%) are using funded provider settings for children under 3, with local authority at 42%. The tables below detail the responses:

Table 2: Type of service currently used	Number	%
Early Learning and Childcare Centre/Class – Local Authority	264	51%
Funded Providers	232	45%
Family and/or friends	105	20%
Registered Childminder	32	6%
None of the above	16	3%

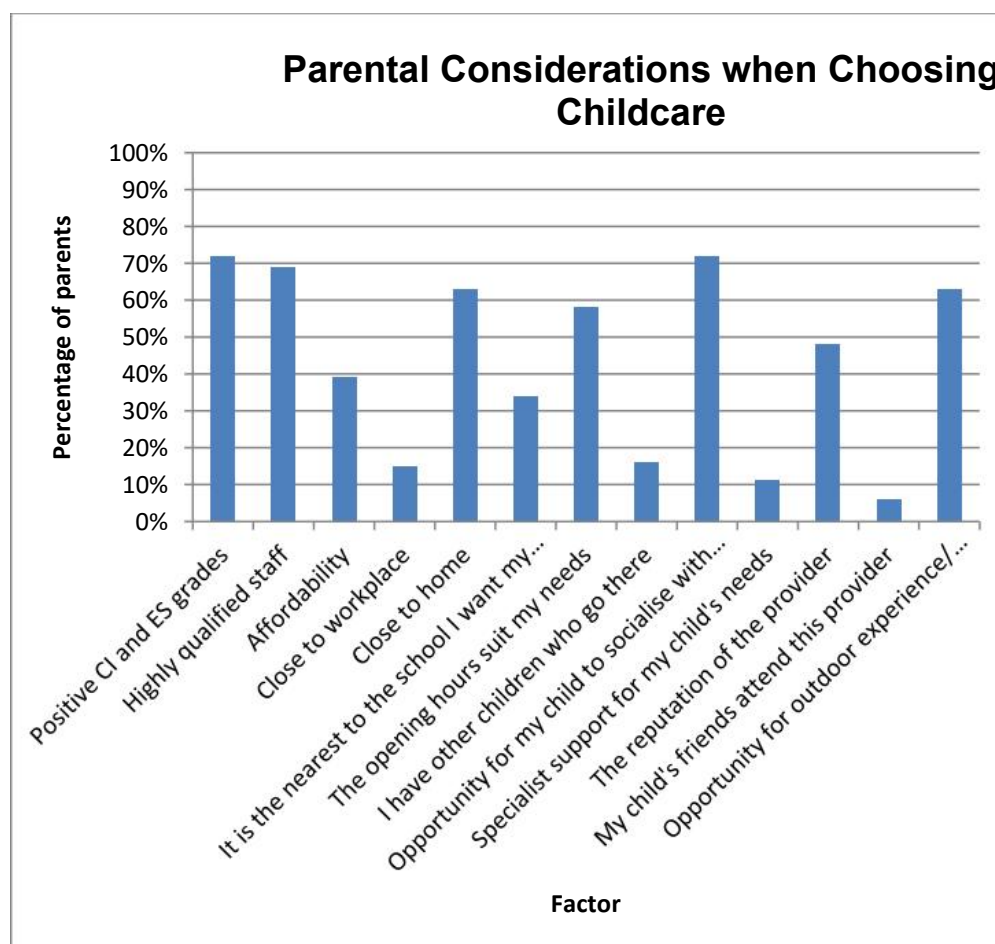
Table 3: Types of childcare by age group					
Age Group	Local Authority	Funded Provider	Family and Friends	Registered Childminders	None
0 - 2 years	41%	53%	26%	4%	4%
2 – 3 years	44%	51%	21%	7%	2%
3 - 5 years	62%	40%	20%	5%	2%

(NB: the number of responses totals to more than 100%, indicating that parents are using more than one service.)

- 2.2.4 Respondents were asked to indicate the factors they considered important when choosing a childcare provider. They were able to choose from a list of statements to select the factors that they considered important. Positive Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland grades and the opportunity for their child to socialise with other children were chosen by the largest number of respondents, 72% choosing these factors. A provider having highly qualified staff (69%) was the next most selected factor when considering a preferred provider. 63% of respondents choose the provider being close to home and the opportunity for outdoor experience/ learning as important factors.

While affordability was indicated as being important within all age groups, there was a slight difference across the stages, with 43% of respondents with children under 3 in comparison to 36% for the 3 to 5 age group. The table and chart below indicate the responses:

Table 4: Reasons for choosing Early Learning and Childcare		
Reason	Number	%
Positive Care Inspection and Education Scotland grades	373	72%
Highly qualified staff	353	69%
Affordability	203	39%
Close to workplace	77	15%
Close to home	325	63%
It is the nearest to the school I want my child to attend	177	34%
The opening hours suit my needs	301	58%
I have other children who go there	83	16%
Opportunity for my child to socialise with other children	373	72%
Specialist support for my child's needs	59	11%
The reputation of the provider	249	48%
My child's friends attend this provider	30	6%
Opportunity for outdoor experience/ learning	325	63%



2.2.5 Respondents were also asked the reason for using early learning and childcare for their child. 78% of parents use childcare as they believe it is good for their child's development. The second most selected reason was that it allowed the parents to work, 75%. 60% of respondents indicated that it was because their child was entitled to early learning and childcare. Further examination of the data showed no significant variance between age groups in the response to this question, except the reason that my child is entitled to early learning and childcare, with 75% of respondents' children in the 3 to 5 age group compared to 43% with children aged 0 to 3 years. The tables below provide the responses from parents:

Table 5: Reasons for use of early learning and childcare	%
My child is entitled to early learning and childcare	60%
To allow me to work	75%
To allow me to look for work	4%
To allow me to study/train	7%
To give me time for the other things	14%
It is good for my child's development	78%
To support my child's ASN	6%
My child likes spending time at the provider	35%

Table 6: Reasons for use of early learning and childcare by age	0 - 2 years	2 - 3 years	3 - 5 years
My child is entitled to early learning and childcare	43%	43%	75%
Allow me to work	73%	75%	72%
Allow me to look for work	0%	5%	5%
Allow me to study/train	6%	7%	7%
To give me time for the other things	14%	12%	15%
It is good for my child's development	71%	78%	80%
To support my child's ASN	2%	7%	6%
My child likes spending time at the provider	27%	25%	39%

NB: the percentage of the ages equals more than 100% due to parents having children in different age groups.)

2.3 Survey Questions Relating to the Expansion to 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare

This section of the consultation survey focused on parents' views, preferences and needs relating to the increased childcare provision following the 1140 expansion.

- 2.3.1 Respondents were asked to indicate the pattern of attendance of early learning and childcare that would best suit their needs. The favoured patterns of attendance selected by respondents was school day, 39%, and two full days and one-half day, 31%.

The data concerning preferred pattern of attendance was further examined on an area basis. Table 7 provides the breakdown of responses:

Table 7: ELCC pattern of attendance	Number	%
10 hours per day	39	8%
Half days – morning	44	9%
Half days – afternoon	17	3%
School days – 9:00 – 15:00	199	39%
Two full days and one-half day	159	31%
Other	53	10%

A comparison was made between the findings of this survey on preferred patterns of attendance against the 2018 consultation. There were some differences in the response relating to the preferences for 10 hours per day, decreasing from 40% to 8% whilst 2 and a half days per week increased from 14% to 31%. It is not possible to reach an absolute conclusion to the reason for this change, however the introduction of more flexible patterns of delivery in the roll out of the 1140 expansion is a likely factor.

- 2.3.2 Parents were asked if they required to purchase additional hours in a week over the 1140 hours of free early learning and childcare to meet their needs. 47% of respondents said that they would not need to purchase any additional hours, in comparison 53% either currently purchase or believe they will need to do this in the future. Further analysis of the data in relation to this question and the geographical areas where respondents live was undertaken. The findings showed that over 50% respondents from Johnstone, Erskine, Langbank, Lochwinnoch, Paisley Central 2, Paisley West 1, Foxbar and Glenburn indicated that they would not need to pay for more hours. Tables 8 and 9 below details the response:

Table 8: Additional hours in a week required on top of 1140	Number	%
Yes, currently purchase	119	23%
Yes, in the future	154	30%
No	241	47%

Table 9: Additional hours required on top of 1140 by area			
Area	Yes, currently purchase	Yes, in the future	No
Bishopton	30%	32%	38%
Bridge of Weir	0%	50%	50%
Brookfield	50%	0%	50%
Dargavel	64%	21%	14%
Erskine	23%	23%	55%
Houston	40%	25%	35%
Howwood	0%	60%	40%
Inchinnan	17%	67%	17%
Johnstone	11%	28%	61%
Kilbarchan	50%	0%	50%
Langbank	0%	0%	100%
Linwood	29%	43%	29%
Lochwinnoch	20%	0%	80%
Paisley Central 1	25%	25%	50%
Paisley Central 2	24%	24%	53%
Foxbar Glenburn	17%	32%	51%
Paisley West 1	19%	30%	51%
Paisley West 2	23%	40%	38%
Renfrew	24%	34%	42%
Grand Total	23%	30%	47%

2.3.3 A comparison of the findings to this question was made against the 2018 survey. There was a noticeable increase in the percentage of respondents saying they would need to purchase additional hours, 53% in this survey in comparison to 32% in the 2018 survey. An increase of more than 10% was found in all but one geographical area. Since the 2018 survey the entitlement to 1140 hours of free early learning and childcare is now available to all eligible children. This seems to have likely generated the increase.

2.3.4 Parents were asked if their childcare needs changed each week to accommodate work shift patterns. Less than a quarter of parents who responded to this question said that this described their needs. There does not appear to be an obvious geographical variance in shift needs within Renfrewshire. Table 10 below illustrates the results:

Table 10: Changing childcare needs due to work shift patterns	Number	%
Yes	105	21%
No	403	79%

2.3.5 Respondents were asked where they would like their 1140 hours of early learning and childcare to be provided. The consultation found that the majority (56%) of parents preferred to have all their early learning and childcare provided in the one local authority establishment. The data was analysed to understand parents' views within

each area across Renfrewshire. Bishopton and Dargavel (62% and 57% respectively) are the only areas where the majority wanted their child to attend a funded private or voluntary nursery. One observation in relation to this finding prior is that prior to this academic session was that there was no local authority establishment in this geographical area. Tables 11 and 12 details the responses:

Table 11: Preferred method for accessing 1140 hours of ELCC delivery option	Number	%
All in one funded private or voluntary nursery	169	33%
All in one local authority nursery	287	56%
All with a funded registered childminder	2	0%
Shared between a nursery and a Childminder	28	5%
Shared with more than one nursery	27	5%

Table 12: Preferred method for accessing 1140 hours of ELCC delivery option by area					
How would you like your hours provided?	All in one funded private or voluntary	All in one local authority nursery	All with a funded registered childminder	Shared between a nursery and a Childminder	Shared with more than one nursery
Bishopton	62%	32%	0%	4%	2%
Bridge of Weir	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Brookfield	25%	25%	0%	25%	25%
Dargavel	57%	29%	0%	7%	7%
Erskin	28%	58%	3%	8%	5%
Houston	40%	45%	0%	10%	5%
Howwood	20%	60%	0%	20%	0%
Inchinnan	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%
Johnstone	11%	78%	0%	6%	6%
Kilbarchan	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Langbank	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Linwood	29%	43%	0%	29%	0%
Lochwinnoch	0%	40%	0%	60%	0%
Paisley Central 1	22%	67%	0%	6%	6%
Paisley Central 2	35%	54%	0%	3%	8%
Foxbar Glenburn	22%	73%	0%	1%	4%
Paisley West 1	29%	61%	3%	3%	5%
Paisley West 2	38%	51%	0%	3%	8%
Renfrew	44%	45%	0%	5%	6%

2.3.6 Parents were asked about Gaelic as part of their early learning and childcare provision. 216 parents (42%) indicated an interest in this. This response represents 342 children which is 4% of the population of children not yet attending school in Renfrewshire.

2.3.7 In an attempt to understand parents' views and perceptions about current early learning and childcare provision respondents were asked, through a rating scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, to respond to a range of statements about common views/perceptions. A strong majority (89%) of respondents strongly agree/agree that early learning and childcare provision is in a suitable location for them. A similarly high number (87%) of parents strongly agree/agree that their childcare provider offers a quality service. 56% of respondents said the strongly agree or agree that childcare is

flexible and caters to their needs with 68% saying that they still require support from family and friends. 43% of respondents indicated that they strongly agree or agree that early learning and childcare is now more affordable.

- 2.3.8 An analysis of the responses against each of the age groups of children were consistent other than the question relating to affordability. 47% of parents with children aged 3 to 5 years agreed that childcare was more affordable, whereas 43% of respondents with children under 3 years of age disagreed / strongly disagreed with this. Whilst it is not possible to draw a firm conclusion to the reasons for this variance in view, one possible explanation could be the universal entitlement to 1140 hours of early learning and childcare for all 3- to 5-year-olds, whereas only 27% of 2 years olds are entitled, with no entitlement for children under 2 years. The response to this question is detained in table 13 below:

Table 13: Views/perceptions of current early learning and childcare	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Early Learning and Childcare is now a more affordable option.	20%	23%	22%	21%	14%
Early Learning and Childcare is flexible and caters for my needs.	17%	39%	21%	17%	6%
I require support from my family and friends for childcare.	41%	27%	13%	12%	7%
Early Learning and Childcare is in a suitable location for me.	52%	37%	7%	3%	1%
Early Learning and Childcare provision I receive provides a quality service for my child and my family.	49%	38%	9%	3%	1%

2.4 Survey Questions Relating to Before and After School Care

- 2.4.1 This section of the survey related to children school age children (5 to 14 years), focusing on parents' views and needs regarding before and after school care provision.
- 2.4.2 Respondents were asked about the type of childcare they used for their children. The most popular response to this question was the use of family or friends, with 45% of respondents using this form of childcare. 36% of respondents use after school care with 24% using childcare before school. The least utilised type of childcare was a registered childminder (6%). The responses are detailed in the table below:

Table 14: Types of Childcare Used	Number	%
Family and Friends	309	45%
After School	250	36%
Before School	165	24%
School Holidays	162	23%
Childminders	44	6%
None	177	26%

- 2.4.3 There was a comparison of the data of the responses from this survey against the 2018 consultation. The percentage responses remain reasonably stable between the 2 surveys other than the question about after school care, which increased from 27% to 36%.

2.4.4 Parents were asked for their reasons for using out of school care. The most popular response was that it allowed them to work, with 96% of parents using out of school care choosing these options. Table 15 details the responses to this question:

Table 15 - Reasons for using out of school care	Number	%
To allow me to work	370	96%
To allow me to look for work	3	1%
To allow me to study/train	27	4%
To give me time for other things (e.g. appointments, housework, socialising etc.)	15	7%
It is good for my child's development (e.g. social interaction)	65	17%
My child likes spending time with/at the provider	53	14%

(NB: respondents could select multiple option choices).

2.4.5 A question on the future use of out of school care was asked. 76% of respondents said they would use the service in future. 15% of respondents said they would not and a further 9% saying that it would not be applicable for them. There was a very low return rate in the 2 geographical areas (Howwood 8 responses and Kilbarchan 9 responses) which showed a variance from the results noted below:

Table 16: Use of OSC services in future	Number	%
Yes	527	76%
No	102	15%
Not applicable	60	9%

2.4.6 Those who responded that they would use out of school care services in future were then asked which services they would utilise. The below table details the responses:

Table 17: Future service use	%
After School	88%
Before School	60%
School Holidays	58%
Childminders	7%

2.4.7 Parents were also asked about their perceptions and views of out of school care provision for children aged 0 to 14. A rating scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, was used to gather respondent views against a range of statements.

2.4.8 More than 70% of respondent strongly agree / agree that they require support of their family and friends to meet their childcare needs. 40% of respondents indicated that they disagree / strongly disagree that out of school care is an affordable option, with 31% providing a neutral response to this question. Respondents were twice as likely to strongly agree/ agree that out of school care is flexible and meets their needs than disagree / strongly disagree, with 45% and 22% respectively. 60% of respondents strongly agree / agree that providers are in a suitable location. When it comes to rating

the quality of their childcare providers 54% of respondents strongly agreed/ agreed with this statement. Table 18 provides the detail of the response to this question:

Table 18: Views on Out of School Care	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Before / After / Holiday School Care is an affordable option.	7%	23%	31%	28%	12%
Before / After / Holiday School Care is flexible and caters for my needs.	10%	35%	33%	15%	7%
I require support from my family and friends for childcare.	43%	28%	16%	9%	4%
Before / After / Holiday School Care is in a suitable location for me.	26%	34%	26%	7%	6%
Before / After / Holiday School Care provision I receive provides a quality service for my child and my family.	23%	31%	35%	5%	5%



To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 20 January 2022

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Standard Circular 3a - Early Learning and Childcare Admission Policy

1. Summary

- 1.1. The existing Standard Circular 3a: Early Learning and Childcare Admission Policy and guidance for staff was approved by the Education and Children's Services Policy Board on 1 November 2018. Standard Circular 3a details the Early Year's Admissions Policy and Guidance on the implementation of the policy.
 - 1.2. On the 18 March 2021 the Education and Children's Services Policy Board approved a review of the current Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy. This followed a recommendation of the Petitions Board on 1 February 2021.
 - 1.3. This report advises of the outcome of the review and of revised changed to the Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to:
 - (i) approve the revised Standard Circular 3a: Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy which is attached as an appendix one to this report; and
 - (ii) note the outcome to the review of the geographical admissions panel areas as outlined in section 5 and appendix 2 attached to this report.
-

3. Background

- 3.1 The current policy and guidance for staff was updated and approved by the Education and Children's Services Policy Board in November 2018. This was to reflect the 1140 expansion of early learning and childcare and to address the needs of children and families requiring support. The admissions policy was amended as follows:
- (i) Priority 2A was extended to reflect children with complex or multiple needs, including those children who are born pre-term below 30 weeks.
 - (ii) Priority 2C was extended to include children and families experiencing acute stress and /or requiring high level of support due to being:
 - children of asylum seekers
 - refugees
 - children living in bed and breakfast, transient or who have pattern of homelessness
 - children of parents who have been looked after and accommodated
 - (iii) Priority 3 was amended to give priority allocation to children in their pre-school year over children in their ante-pre-school year and to include children transferring from an English reception classes.
- 3.2 The guidance for staff was also updated, some of the appendices and application forms attached to standard circular 3(a) were updated to reflect the policy change specified and increased entitlement to early learning and childcare.
- 3.3 The local area admissions panel groupings were also updated to reflect the 1140 expansion, ensuring a range of service types and delivery models in each admission panel geographical areas.
- 3.4 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 places a duty on local authorities to secure pre-school education for all eligible children (who are defined by Order under the Act). The term 'secure' enables authorities to discharge their duty by entering into arrangements with other suppliers of pre-school education in the private and voluntary sectors.
- 3.5 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) Order 2021, amended the entitlement of early learning and childcare for children aged 3 and 4 years and eligible 2-year-olds from 600 hours to 1140 hours, effective from 1 August 2021.
- 3.6 On the 1 February 2021, the Petitions Board considered a petition from a parent relating to his concerns that his son had been denied the opportunity to attend his local early learning and childcare class. The Petitions Board agreed that the petition would be referred to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board, with the recommendation that that Policy Board review the current admissions policy in relation to early learning and childcare across Renfrewshire.
- 3.7 On the 18 March 21 the Education and Children's Services Policy Board agreed to Children's Services reviewing the Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy and to report the findings and recommendations once the review was completed.

- 3.8 The Early Learning and Admissions Policy was reviewed to address updated advice and legislation and to respond to the outcome of the Education and Children's Services Policy Board as noted in paragraph 3.7.

4 Revised Standard Circular 3(a) - Early Learning and Childcare Admission Policy and Guidance for Staff

- 4.1 A review of the Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy and guidance for staff has now been undertaken. Heads of early year's establishments and colleagues from health and social work were consulted on the revisions to the policy and guidance.
- 4.2 The revision to the policy and guidance for staff continues to ensure it reflects the commitments outlined in the Scottish Government Blueprint for 2020 and the legislation relating to early learning and childcare. It also continues to take account of the Scottish Government guidance outlined in the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, Getting it Right for Every Child and Renfrewshire Council's Tackling inequality agenda.
- 4.3 The amendments to the policy are as follows:
- (i) Priority 1B has been updated to include children born to parents under 18 years of age who are in full-time education provided within a secondary school or to allow the parents to return to education. Previously the priority specified children born to parents under 16 years of age.
 - (ii) Priority 2A gives priority to children with complex or multiple needs and includes children who are born pre-term below 30 weeks. In line with medical advice this has been updated to include children born pre-term below 32 weeks.
 - (iii) Priority 2C prioritises children and families who are experiencing acute stress due to being: asylum seekers; a refugee; living in bed and breakfast, transient or homeless; a military family; or from being a child of parents who have been looked after and accommodated. There has been a slight amendment to this priority to include 'other family circumstances' and the terminology 'children of parents who have been looked after and accommodated' has been changed to 'children of care experienced parents'.
 - (iv) Priority 3A relates to eligible two-year olds who are entitled to early learning and childcare. The description of eligibility for two-year-olds has been updated to reflect the wording in the Scottish Government website.
 - (v) Priority 3B(a) relates to children born in January and February with an entitlement to an additional year of early learning and childcare or where a deferred year has been approved for children born between September and December. This has been amended from September to August and December in line with the Early Learning and Childcare Statutory Guidance.

- (vi) Priority 3 and 4 priorities parents in employment and in receipt of income support, income-based job seekers allowance, working tax credits or universal credit, or in employment, education or training. A prioritisation order has now been established which gives priority to families in receipt of qualifying benefits before being in employment or training, in line with the Council's commitment to tackling poverty.
 - (vii) Priority 5 relates to children aged from birth to starting school living out with Renfrewshire. This priority has been amended to include a prioritisation criterion, with priority given to children entitled to early learning and childcare in the first instance.
- 4.4 In terms of deferrals to primary the school age is defined in sections 31 and 32 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. Parents of children that are still 4 years old on the date they are eligible to start school can defer their child's start at primary school for a year.
- 4.5 In March 2021 the Provision of early learning and childcare (Specified Children) (Scotland) - Order 2014 was amended. The 2014 Order specified those children who were eligible pre-school children for the purposes of section 47(2)(c)(ii) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and who were entitled to the mandatory amount of early learning and childcare. The amendment removed the exception from eligibility for children whose birthday falls in the period beginning on 1 August and ending on 31 December and who turn 5 years old after the start of the school year.
- 4.6 From the 1 August 2023 children born after the beginning of the autumn term, in August, and before 1 January whose parent has chosen to defer the child's start at primary school for a year provide will automatically be provided with an additional year of funded early learning and childcare. Currently 8 local authorities are involved in a Scottish Government pilot to provide automatic entitlement to children born between August and 1 January. Renfrewshire is not part of this pilot. Until then the discretionary powers provided to education authorities (under the 1980 Act) continues to apply in Renfrewshire. Renfrewshire Council's admissions policy continues to comply with the legislation.
- 4.7 The guidance for staff has been amended to reflect the policy changes as specified above and to provide further clarification and guidance on the implementation of the policy.
- 4.8 There have also been some minor amendments to some of the appendices and forms attached to the Standard Circular. Appendices may be subject to change depending on administrative / future requirements to gather / process information.
- 4.9 A copy of the full Standard Circular 3a, with appendices can be accessed via the attached link <..\..\Standard Circulars\Current\Standard Circular 3a - Early Learn and Childcare Admissions Policy - Final 2022.pdf>

5 Review of admissions panel areas

- 5.8 The Scottish Government Blueprint for 2020 advises that the expansion of early learning and childcare to 1140 hours should reflect four key principles of quality, accessibility, flexibility and affordability.
- 5.9 In terms of accessibility, the Blueprint commitment is that early learning and childcare capacity is sufficient and as conveniently geographically located (with an emphasis on the importance of this in areas of deprivation and rural communities) as possible to support families and enable parents to work, train or study, while also supporting the needs of children. Flexibility relates to offering a range of patterns of provision to better align with working patterns whilst ensuring high quality experiences for children.
- 5.10 In line with the Blueprint commitment, Renfrewshire Council developed local area admissions panel groupings to ensure that early learning and childcare provision in each geographical area offers a broad range of services, thus providing accessible and flexible provision for families. The range of provision in each geographical area ensures options of early learning and childcare that includes term time/school day places and 52 weeks /extended day provision; Council and funded provider provision.
- 5.11 The panel areas for early learning and childcare are different from a primary school, with a placement at nursery having no bearing on the allocation process for primary school provision. Not all primary schools have an early learning and childcare class attached to it.
- 5.12 A review of local admissions panel groupings has now been undertaken. This included consultation with heads from each local panel area to better understand local needs and issues. In addition, parents were consulted on the accessibility of early learning and childcare provision through the Early Learning and Childcare Survey of parents of children aged 0 to 14 years which was carried out by Renfrewshire Council during August and September 2021.
- 5.13 This survey was carried out in line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Act places a duty on local authorities to consult representative populations of parents and carers on how the mandatory early learning and childcare, day care and out of school care and discretionary services should be made available. There is a requirement, under the Act, to consult every 2 years and to publish plans in response to these consultations.
- 5.14 To support the review of geographical panel areas, through the survey, parents were asked some key questions to understand their needs and perceptions. Parents were asked to identify where they lived, the age group of their child/children and their views on whether early learning and childcare was in a suitable location for them. To enable data to be collected and analysed the survey provided a direct link to the geographical admissions panels areas to the question which asked parents where they lived.

- 5.15 A strong majority (89%) of respondents strongly agree/agree that early learning and childcare provision is in a suitable location for them. In this question respondents were asked, through a rating scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, to respond to the statement about provision being in a suitable location.
- 5.16 The findings of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 consultation is being presented to today's Education and Children's Services board in a separate report.
- 5.17 The consultation exercise with heads of establishments provided some anecdotal information in relation to parent needs.
- 5.18 Renfrewshire Council has phased in the expansion of 1140 hours over the past 4 years, with 94% of children access the expanded hours in session 2020/21. As this is the first full year of implementation, the available data relating to the usage of models of delivery and types of service is at an early stage, with no real trend in terms of 1140 hours of early learning childcare being available.
- 5.19 The review of the geographical admissions panel areas failed to provide robust data to suggest that there is a requirement to revise defined geographical areas at this stage.
- 5.20 It is essential that through the geographical admissions panel groupings the Council continues to ensure each defined area has a broad range of service types and models available, thus ensuring flexibility and accessibility. The current geographical grouping achieves this. In addition, the prioritisation categories, as outlined in the Early Learning and Childcare Admissions policy (attached as an appendix) ensures that those children and families who are deemed to be most in need receive priority allocation.
- 5.21 The outcome of the review of the geographical panel areas is that the current designated area groupings continue, with minimum updates to include new housing estates that were not originally considered when the current panel areas were identified. The revised geographical panel list is attached as appendix 2.
- 5.15 Work is ongoing to understand the demand and need for specific delivery models, types of services and trends of usage of the 1140 hours of early learning and childcare. Officers will continue to gather data to assist in this, including using the Council's geographic information system (GIS) tools and Ordnance Survey large scale digital mapping to identify relationships between home and early learning and childcare service attended. Where appropriate, this information will be used to predict potential scenarios for future demand.

Implications of this report

- 1. **Financial**
None
- 2. **HR and Organisational Development**

None

3. Community/Council Planning

- | | |
|--|---|
| Our Renfrewshire is thriving | - Ensuring the best start in life for children and young people. |
| Our Renfrewshire is well | - Early intervention will lead to healthier outcomes for children and young people. |
| Our Renfrewshire is safe | - Local services will benefit children, young people and members of the community. |
| Building strong, safe and resilient communities | - The quality of community life is enhanced by supporting parents, children and young people. |
| Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all | - Effective governance arrangements ensure that the organisations receiving funding comply with legislative requirements. |
| Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy | - Flexible childcare placements will support parents to access and sustain employment, training or education. |

4. Legal None

5. Property/Assets None

6. Information Technology None

7. Equality and Human Rights The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations.

8. Health and Safety It is integral to the Council's aim of securing the health and wellbeing of employees and those affected by its undertakings and without this continued effective focus, there is a risk that will adversely impact on the Council both financially and in terms of service delivery.

9. Procurement None

10. Risk

None

11. Privacy Impact

Personal information will only be held as required to deliver the service.
This will be done in accordance with data protection legislation.

12. COSLA Policy Position

None

13. Climate Risk

None

List of Background Papers

The foregoing background papers will be retained within children's services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting.

The contact officer within the service is Kathleen McDonagh, Education Manager, 0141 618 7196, kathleen.mcdonagh@renfrewshire.gov.uk

KMcD/JC/SQ/LG
22/12/2021

Authors: Kathleen McDonagh, Education Manager, 07799034553
kathleen.mcdonagh@renfrewshire.gov.uk



Children's Services
Cotton Street
Paisley
PA1 1LE

To: Heads of All Early Learning and Childcare Settings

Dear Colleague

Standard Circular 3(a): Early Learning and Childcare Admission Policy and Guidance for Staff

The Early Learning and Childcare Admission Policy and policy guidelines provide guidance for staff on the procedures for prioritising and allocating early learning and childcare places in an equitable way, ensuring that those families in greatest need obtain a service appropriate to their needs. The revised policy was approved by the Education and Children's Services Policy Board on 20 January 2022.

The Early Learning and Childcare Admission Policy continues to reflect the duty on the local authority to provide early learning and childcare as required in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (including The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) Order 2021) and the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000. It continues to reflect the requirements of the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004, Getting it Right for Every Learner.

The revised policy also takes account of Renfrewshire Council's Tackling inequality agenda and continues to reflect the commitments outlined in the Scottish Government's Blueprint for 2020 and legislation in relation to the expansion of early learning and childcare to 1140 hours. The policy guidance also ensures that the rights of the child are recognised, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

As well as supporting Local Authority establishments, the policy considers the role of funded providers who are accepted onto the Council's framework to deliver early learning and childcare.

Yours sincerely

Steven Quinn
Director of Children's Services

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Section Two - Admission Panels	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Function and membership 	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures for dealing with deferred admission to primary school • Review of places • Children moving to another early learning and childcare setting • Wraparound provision Local Authority settings only 	
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Appendix 1	Annual admission calendar
Appendix 2	Renfrewshire Council local area admissions panel groupings
Appendix 3	Application form for a place in an early learning and childcare setting
Appendix 4	Request for assistance form for a place in an early learning and childcare settings
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Appendix 11	Request for assistance for early learning and childcare during a school holiday period
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Appendix 15 & 16	Emergency / temporary early learning and childcare placement
Appendix 17	Qualifying benefit/credit evidence list
Appendix 18	Confirmation of benefits form Department of Work and Pensions
Appendix 19	Processing of personal information notice
Appendix 20	Renfrewshire Council Privacy Policy
Appendix 21	Funded Providers – funding approval process.

Priority One – Child protection and children in need (allocate in priority order)

(A)	Any child considered in need of protection	Children on the child protection register or identified through child protection procedures.
(B)	Request for assistance from Social Work where a child is deemed to be in need	<p>Request for assistance from Social Work where either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The placement would help the child remain within the family environment rather than be looked after by the Local Authority. - The child is currently or has been subject to a statutory order, looked after, under a kinship care order or with a parent appointed guardian. - The placement would support the child's return to the family. - Children born to parents under 18 years of age who are in full-time education provided within a secondary school or to allow the parents to return to education.

Priority Two – Referral for Children and families identified as requiring support (allocate in priority order)

(A)	Request for assistance from Social Work or health professionals for children with complex or multiple needs.	Children who require substantial direct and continuing intervention from at least one other agency out with education and whose additional support needs are putting the child at an educational and social disadvantage, including children born pre-term below 32 weeks.
(B)	Request for assistance where it has been identified that substantial family support is required.	Children and families who have been identified as requiring substantial support through an integrated assessment .
(C)	Request for assistance for children and families experiencing acute stress requiring high levels of support.	<p>Children and families experiencing acute stress due to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asylum seekers; • Refugees; • Living in bed and breakfast, transient or who have a pattern of homelessness; • Military families; • Children of care experienced parents; and • Other acute family circumstances.
(D)	Request for assistance from other professionals for children with less significant additional support needs or where there are concerns about the circumstances of the child, parents, or family.	<p>Children who require support because of circumstances which are placing the child, parent, or family at an educational, social or health disadvantage.</p> <p>This includes children who are adversely affected by the disability of any other person in the family or where there is a high level of support required for English as an additional language.</p> <p>The professionals who would request assistance within this priority includes education settings; health agencies; Social Work services; voluntary sector agencies.</p>

Priority Three: children entitled to early learning and childcare (allocate in priority order)

(A)	Early learning and childcare entitlement for eligible two-year olds.	<p>Eligible two-year olds - includes children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who at any time since their 2nd birthday have been looked after by a local council, the subject of a kinship care order, the subject of a parent appointed guardian;
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who have a care experienced parent; or - whose parents are in receipt of qualifying benefits, as specified within the Scottish Government website - https://www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/funded-early-learning-and-childcare
(B)	Early learning and childcare entitlement for children aged 3 to starting school.	<p>(a) Children born in January or February with an entitlement to an additional year or where a deferred year has been approved for children born between August and December.</p> <p>(b) Children transferring from English reception class.</p> <p>(c) Children in their pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire within the admission panel designated area.</p> <p>(d) Children in their ante pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire within the admission panel designated area.</p> <p>(e) Children in their pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire from out with the admission panel designated area.</p> <p>(f) Children in their ante pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire from out with the admission panel designated area.</p>
Priority Three – Further priority is given to children whose parents are: (NB allocate in priority order) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in receipt of qualifying benefits in line with free school meals and or clothing grants- https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3338/Free-school-meals-and-clothing-grants • Both parents / lone parent is in employment, education, or training. • One of two parents are in employment, education, or training. 		
Priority Four – children from birth to 3 years (not entitled to funded early learning and childcare)		
	Children from birth to 3 years residing in Renfrewshire. <i>(wraparound care charges apply for places allocated within this priority)</i>	Priority is given to children whose parents are: (NB allocate in priority order) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in receipt of qualifying benefits in line with free school meals and or clothing grants- https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3338/Free-school-meals-and-clothing-grants • Both parents / lone parent in employment, education, or training. • One of two parents are in employment, education, or training.

Priority Five: children from birth to starting school residing out with Renfrewshire (allocate in priority order)

(A)	Early learning and childcare entitlement for eligible two-year olds.	<p>Eligible two-year olds - includes children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who at any time since their 2nd birthday have been looked after by a local council, the subject of a kinship care order, the subject of a parent appointed guardian; - who have a care experienced parent; or - whose parents are in receipt of qualifying benefits, as specified within the Scottish Government website - https://www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/funded-early-learning-and-childcare
(B)	Early learning and childcare entitlement for children aged 3 to starting school	<p>(NB allocate in priority order):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children born in January or February with an entitlement to an additional year or where a deferred year has been approved for children born between August and December • Children transferring from English reception class • Children in their pre-school year • Children in their ante pre-school year. <p><i>Further priority is given to children whose parents are:</i> (NB allocate in priority order):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in receipt of qualifying benefits in line with free school meals and or clothing grants- https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3338/Free-school-meals-and-clothing-grants • Both parents / lone parent in employment, education, or training. • One of two parents are in employment, education, or training.
(C)	<p>Children from birth to 3 years</p> <p><i>(wraparound care charges may apply for places allocated within this priority)</i></p>	<p>Priority is given to (NB allocate in priority order):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child protection and children in need (in line with priority 1 • Children and families identified as requiring support (in line with priority 2) • Children from birth to 3 years who are not entitled to funded early learning and childcare (wraparound charges apply). <p>Priority is given to children whose parents are: (NB allocate in priority order):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in receipt of qualifying benefits in line with free school meals and or clothing grants- https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3338/Free-school-meals-and-clothing-grants • Both parents / lone parent in employment, education, or training. • One of two parents are in employment, education, or training.

Section One

Policy Guidance

The purpose of this section is to assist heads and senior managers in promoting equality and ensuring consistency in the application of the admission policy criteria. Meeting the needs of children and families is paramount when considering applications for an early learning and childcare (ELC) placement.

No early learning and childcare settings are denominational in character and children should be admitted without reference to religious belief.

The admission panel is responsible for agreeing which priority is appropriate for each application.

Priorities 1 and 2: Request for assistance procedures

Priority One: Child protection and children in need

Priority Two: Referral for children and families identified as requiring support

- 1.1 A request for assistance referral form (appendix 4) for children and families identified as requiring support must be submitted from a referring agency, as follows:
- Priority 1: Social Work.
 - Priority 2: Social Work services, health, education, other professionals/agencies, or through the integrated assessment process.
- 1.2 Priorities 1 and 2 includes all children from birth to-starting school who have been identified by a professional agency as requiring support due to:

Priority 1A:

- The child being on the child protection register or identified through child protection procedures.

Priority 1B:

- The child is currently or **has been** looked after, subject to a statutory order, under a kinship care order or with a parent appointed guardian.
- The placement would support the child's return to the family.
- Children born to parents under 18 years of age who are in full-time education provided within a secondary school or to allow the parents to return to education.
- The placement would help the child remain within the family environment rather than be looked after by the Local Authority.

Priority 2A:

- Children who require direct and substantial intervention due to complex or multiple needs; and whose additional support needs are putting the child at an educational and social disadvantage.
- Children born pre-term below 32 weeks.

Priority 2B:

- Children and families who have been identified through the integrated assessment process as requiring substantial family support.

Priority 2C:

- Children and families identified as experiencing acute stress due to a range of circumstances as outlined in the policy criteria, it should be noted this is not an exhaustive list.

Priority 2D:

- Children and families who have been identified as having less significant additional support needs, or where there are concerns about the circumstances of the child, parents, or family which place the child, parent, or family at an educational, social or health disadvantage. This includes children who are adversely affected by the disability of any other person in the family or where there is a high level of support required for English as an additional language.

- 1.3 Requests for a placement must only be made for children and families who have been identified as requiring support in line with the policy criteria. It is the responsibility of each of these agencies to make a professional judgement regarding the level of need and concern for a family situation and detail this within the request for assistance form (appendix 4). Referring agencies should submit a request for assistance form (appendix 4) to the nearest Local Authority setting to the child's home.
- 1.4 The referrer must inform the parent of a request being made on their behalf and ensure that an ELC application form (appendix 3) is completed by the parent. (Supporting documents - birth certificate, proof of address and proof of benefits are also required to be submitted by the parent).
- 1.5 Requests for assistance should only be considered when the information provided clearly describes the circumstances of the child and the family and the reasons which make the application a priority one or two. Forms which have inadequate information should be returned immediately to the agency with a request for further information. A request for assistance application should be awarded a lower priority if the information provided is assessed as insufficient to warrant a high priority.
- 1.6 There should be an automatic admission to an ELC setting for children within priority 1. In emergency situations, heads in local authority settings can allocate an emergency/temporary placement in advance of an admission panel meeting, either within their own setting or other neighbouring local authority setting. An emergency temporary ELC contract (appendix 15) should be completed and agreed with the family.
- 1.7 If there are no ELC places available within a local authority setting for children whose applications are categorised as priority 1, the head of the setting should contact Children's Services Early Years Team via elc@renfrewshire.gov.uk to seek alternative options.
- 1.8 Places must always be allocated in priority order, for example, priority 1 applications first, then priority 2 applications. Priority 2 applications should also be allocated in priority order that is (a), then (b), then (c) then (d).

- 1.9 In the event of there being insufficient places available to meet demand within a priority ranking then the decision to allocate should be based on an assessment of the needs of individual circumstances.
- 1.10 Careful consideration should be given to the pattern of attendance allocated to support the identified needs of the children and families within these categories. For children entitled to 1140 hours of ELC, consideration should also be given to the allocation of an all-year round placement.
- 1.11 There are occasions when children categorised as a priority 1 or 2 are allocated a day care placement with a funded provider. This requires approval via Children's Services Early Years, contactable via elc@renfrewshire.gov.uk
- 1.12 Children categorised as priority 1 or 2 who attend term-time settings may be considered for a temporary school holiday placement within an extended year ELC setting. They may also be considered for the Local Authority essential provision taking place over the Christmas period. ELC classes and funded providers should submit a request for assistance form (appendix 4), and holiday list (appendix 11), to the area admissions panel for consideration. Heads **should only refer** children deemed in need of **essential** support, with referrals submitted in line with the timeline identified in the annual admission calendar (appendix 1).

Priority 3, 4, and 5

- 1.13 An application form (appendix 3) with supporting documents (birth certificate, proof of address, proof of benefits) is required for children in these categories and must be submitted by a parent or legal guardian.
- 1.14 **Priority 3 applies to children residing in Renfrewshire entitled to ELC.** Placements should be allocated in priority order in line with the policy criteria. The placement allocated should, at a minimum, reflect the agreed level of ELC entitlement.
- 1.15 Providers contracted to deliver ELC should ensure that parents applying, and who currently attend their setting, are aware that funded ELC places are subject to approval by the Local Authority.
- 1.16 **Priority 3A – Eligible two-year olds**
Applies to children, who at any time since their 2nd birthday are or have been:
 - Looked after by a local council, the subject of a kinship care or guardianship order;
 - A child of a care experienced parent; or
 - A child whose parents are in receipt of qualifying benefits as outlined in the Scottish Government website. The qualifying benefits and credits are as follows:
 - Income Support
 - Job Seekers Allowance (income based)
 - Any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance
 - Incapacity or Severe Disablement Allowance
 - State Pension Credit
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - In receipt of tax credits or universal credit, earning a certain amount of money and still be eligible, if on:

- Child Tax Credit, but not Working Tax Credit, with an income of or under the eligibility threshold
- Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit and an income of or under the eligibility threshold
- Universal Credit and your household take-home pay earned from working after tax, National Insurance and any pension contributions is below the income threshold per month, as outlined on the Scottish Government website*.

Proof of eligibility within priority 3A is required as outlined in the qualifying benefit/credit evidence list (Appendix 17).

As eligibility can vary annually it is the responsibility of heads and senior managers to monitor and update categorisation of applications as required and to remind parents to keep them informed of any changes to their circumstances. Information on the eligibility criteria is available on the Scottish Government website:

www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/funded-early-learning-and-childcare/

- 1.17 It may be deemed that an eligible two-year old is categorised as a priority 1 or 2 as a result of being looked after by a Local Authority, the subject of a kinship care or guardianship order (priority 1B); or a child of a care experienced parent (priority 2C).
- 1.18 Children allocated a place under priority 3A will retain their entitlement irrespective of any changes in circumstances.
- 1.19 Eligible two-year olds are entitled to an ELC place from the term after their second birthday, or the first term after the parent starts receiving the identified qualifying benefits as follows:
 - Term 1 – children born 1st March to 31st August will be eligible from August (autumn term) (following their birthday).
 - Term 2 – children born 1st September to 31st December will be eligible from January (Spring term).
 - Term 3 – children born January and February will be eligible from April (summer term).
- 1.20 Priority allocation should be given to Renfrewshire children living within the 15% most deprived SIMD data zones where all other contributing factors are equal. Information of SIMD status can be found by following the attached link: <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD/Look-Up>
- 1.21 Within category 3A wraparound care charges may apply for any additional hours allocated over a child's ELC entitlement.

- 1.22 **Priority 3B applies to children aged 3 years to starting school eligible for ELC. (NB Places should be allocated in the following order):**
- (a) - Children born in January or February with an entitlement to an additional year or where a deferred year has been approved by the Local Authority.
 - (b) - Children transferring from English reception class.
 - (c) - Children in their pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire within the designated panel area
 - (d) - Children in their ante pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire within the designated panel area
 - (e) - Children in their pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire from out with the designated panel area
 - (f) - Children in their ante pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire from out with the designated panel area.
- 1.23 **Priority 3B(a)** applies to children who are entitled to an additional year of ELC or where a deferred entry to primary school has been agreed by the Local Authority.
- 1.24 Children born in January and February are automatically entitled to an additional year of free ELC.
- 1.25 Parents have the right to apply to defer entry to primary school for children born between the start of the school year in August and December. Currently there is no automatic right to an additional year of free education for children who fall within these birth months, instead this would be at the council's discretion. Applications to defer should be considered with parent or legal guardian at a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting and discussed with the Children's Services Inclusion Support Officer. The decision to offer a deferred year of ELC will be made where:
- It is in the best interests of the child.
 - The needs of the child have been assessed and recorded in their wellbeing plan.
- 1.26 In exceptional circumstances it may be possible for children with March to July birthdays to be granted a deferred entry to primary school. In this instance additional year of ELC will only be granted. where:
- The child has been assessed to have additional support needs;
 - The needs are recorded in a wellbeing plan; and
 - There has been discussion with the Children's Services Inclusion Officer and a decision taken at the Education Support and Resource Group (ESRG).

- 1.27 **Priorities 3B(b) to (f)** applies to children in their pre-school and ante pre-school year who are entitled to ELC. For children in their ante pre-school year (born between 1st September and the end of February) they become eligible for their free ELC place from the month following their third birthday, with the placement commencing **on the first week of each month**. Children born between 1st March and the end of August will become eligible for a placement in August, following their third birthday.

The table below sets out the months of eligibility for children in their ante pre-school year:

Birthday	Eligible Month
March to August	August
September	October
October	November
November	December
December	January
January	February
February	March

For pre-school and ante-pre-school children, priority allocation is given to those living within the designated panel area before those living out with the designated area.

- 1.28 **Within each of the priority 3B categorises**, prioritisation should be given to children whose parents are (**NB allocate in priority order**):
- (i) in receipt of qualifying benefits in line with free school meals and or clothing grants - <https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3338/Free-school-meals-and-clothing-grants>
 - (ii) Both parents / lone parent in employment, education, or training.
 - (iii) One of two parents is in employment, education, or training.
- 1.29 Thereafter where all other contributing factors are equal, priority allocation should be given to Renfrewshire children living within the 15% most deprived SIMD data zone areas.
- 1.30 Wraparound care charges apply for any additional hours allocated over the ELC entitlement.

Priority 4

- 1.31 **Priority 4** applies to children from birth to 3 years living within Renfrewshire who do not meet the criteria for priorities 1, 2, or 3. Within this category prioritisation should be given to children whose parents are (**NB allocate in priority order**):
- (i) In receipt of qualifying benefits in line with free school meals and or clothing grants. <https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3338/Free-school-meals-and-clothing-grants>
 - (ii) Both parents / lone parent in employment, education, or training.
 - (iii) One of two parents is in employment, education, or training.
- 1.32 Wraparound care charges apply for places allocated within this priority; parents should be charged for all the hours allocated.

Priority 5

- 1.33 This priority applies to children from birth to starting school living out with Renfrewshire. Applications with this category are also referred to as cross boundary.
- 1.34 Children whose applications have been categorised as priority 5 should only be considered for a place if all Renfrewshire children have been allocated a placement and if the panel is assured that there are sufficient places available for all Renfrewshire applicants who will become eligible for a place during the academic year.
- 1.35 Applications for a place in a funded provider setting and eligible start dates should be considered in line with the West Partnership Cross Boundary Funding Protocol. Children whose cross-boundary funding has previously been approved are not required to make a request for funding on an annual basis.
- 1.36 Applications for a place in a local authority setting will be confirmed and allocated only if there is certainty that all Renfrewshire children can be accommodated throughout the academic year. For most panel areas this may not be until the start of the new academic session in August.
- 1.37 Within this category allocation should be made in priority order, in line with the policy as follows:

Priority 5A- ELC entitlement for eligible two-year olds.

Priority 5B - ELC entitlement for children aged 3 to starting school (**NB allocate in priority order**):

- (i) Children born in January or February with an entitlement to an additional year, or where a deferred year has been approved for children born between August and December.
- (ii) Children transferring from English reception class.
- (iii) Children in their pre-school year.
- (iv) Children in their ante pre-school year.

Within priority **5B** where all other factors are equal further priority is given to children whose parents are (**NB allocate in priority order**):

- (i) In receipt of qualifying benefits in line with free school meals and or clothing grants - <https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3338/Free-school-meals-and-clothing-grants>
- (ii) Both parents / lone parent in employment, education, or training.
- (iii) One of two parents are in employment, education, or training.

Priority 5C - Children from birth to 3 years who are not entitled to ELC (**NB allocate in priority order**):

- (i) Child protection and children in need (in line with priority 1).
- (ii) Children and families identified as requiring support (in line with priority 2).
- (iii) Children from birth to 3 years who are not entitled to funded early learning and childcare (wraparound charges apply).

Section Two

Admission Panels - Function and membership

- 2.1 Area admission panel membership includes heads and senior managers from Local Authority, funded provider settings and colleagues from health and social work. Where a head of a setting delegates the responsibility, this should be restricted to the senior management team. Where a head of a setting delegates the responsibility, this should be restricted to the senior management team. The delegated representative must ensure they have all relevant information relating to applications and vacancies to enable the panel to make decisions on applications being presented. All members of the panel participate in the decision-making process. All panel members should ensure all information remains sensitive and confidential. It is essential that all panel members prioritise attendance at meetings to ensure that the needs of children and families are met. Any changes to panel membership from a funded provider must be notified to the panel chair and recorded within the panel minutes.
- 2.2 Colleagues from other agencies representing their respective department or agency can provide knowledge and insight to panel members. Notice of cases to be discussed allows representatives to consult with their colleagues on individual cases as appropriate and to accurately represent the views of their department. The representative is responsible for feeding back the outcome of decisions made at meetings.
- 2.3 The chair of the area admission panel is responsible for notifying colleagues within health or social work of the date of forthcoming panels.
- 2.4 The sensitivity of families' circumstances must be respected, and all information presented to the panel should be treated as confidential. Sharing of information between Local Authority, funded providers and other agencies should comply with the data protection and confidentiality agreement.
- 2.5 The function of the local area admission panel is to:
 - Allocate places for children aged from birth to starting school, who are categorised as priority 1 and 2. Where there is no availability within Local Authority settings, approval for the child to be placed in a funded provider setting must be sought via Children's Services, with an e-mail request provided to the early years requests mailbox: elc@renfrewshire.gov.uk
 - Allocate places to children who are eligible to ELC, aged two to starting school, on an annual basis and throughout the academic session. Funding approval should be sought by funded providers from cssupport@renfrewshire.gov.uk following the timeline in appendix 1.
 - Allocate and monitor any requests for additional wraparound days / sessions in local authority settings. (Heads can approve requests for additional hours on top of their allocated placement)
 - Oversee the review of applications where a change of family circumstances indicates a revised priority.
 - Review placements that exceed the level of entitlement on a 6-monthly basis, or when circumstances change.
 - Allocate and review day care placements on a 6-monthly basis, or earlier if circumstances change.

- Alert Children's Services Early Years Team of issues regarding any shortfall of places across the panel area and under occupancy within Local Authority settings via elc@renfrewshire.gov.uk
- 2.6 Area admission panels meet approximately every 4-6 weeks in line with the annual admission calendar (appendix 1). New applications and Request for Assistance referral forms received throughout the year should be presented to the area admission panel using the applications list form (appendix 6).
 - 2.7 Admission panels are required to meet at an agreed date each year, around the school spring break, to allocate places for all children eligible for ELC during the forthcoming academic year. Local Authority settings should retain two full time equivalent (FTE) places until the first admission panel following the summer school break for priority 1 and 2 applications which may arise. Local Authority heads of settings should alert Children's Services Early Years via: elc@renfrewshire.gov.uk of any challenges in retaining the required number of places.
 - 2.8 Where ballots are necessary these should be carried out by the area admission panel and outcome recorded on the admissions ballot list form (appendix 8) and retained within the setting. All children balloted for a place should be assigned a number in order of the ballot draw. This will allow settings to refer to the next eligible child in the event of a family declining an offer of placement. A re-ballot is required as new applications are received.
 - 2.9 Individual settings are responsible for compiling and presenting their application list to the panel detailing the names, addresses (including the post code), dates of birth and proposed priority grade for all applications to be confirmed by the admission panel (appendix 6). This list should be retained by the setting following the panel meeting. The minutes of the area admission panel (appendix 12) should be sent to panelmins@renfrewshire.gov.uk by the specified date in the annual admission calendar (appendix 1).
 - 2.10 Children categorised as priority 1 and 2, may require ELC, in addition to their funded entitlement, during school holiday periods and the Christmas period. Area admission panels are responsible for collating a request for assistance list for ELC placements required during a school holiday and Christmas periods (appendix 11). Referrals for a holiday placement should be submitted by individual heads to the panel using the Request for Assistance form (appendix 4) (in line with the dates specified within the annual admission calendar (appendix 1).
 - 2.11 Referrals for the school holiday periods should be discussed and agreed (including a recommendation on pattern of attendance) by the area panel and submitted to the local extended day setting. The receiving setting should confirm the temporary placement and the child's current ELC setting is responsible for informing the family and the referrer.
 - 2.12 Where the child attends a funded provider setting authorisation for funding should be sought via Children's Services Early Years requests: elc@renfrewshire.gov.uk

- 2.13 Referrals for the essential Christmas provision should be submitted to the named head of establishment identified to operate the Christmas service. A nil return is required. It is the responsibility of the Christmas service heads to then allocate the placements and confirm this with the referring setting, in line with the timelines set in the essential Christmas guidance.

Section Three

Implementation of the Policy

- 3.1 All applications for places must be accompanied by the appropriate documentation. Heads and senior managers should provisionally categorise applications and business support staff should enter them on the identified early years administrative system (currently NAMS) as they are received, and the application status updated on the system when the child's placement is confirmed and started.
- 3.2 In addition to the automated response through the online application process ELC settings should acknowledge receipt of application to their establishment. This can be done by email or telephone, if the latter a record of communication is advised.
- 3.3 The setting should confirm parental preference for 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice setting. If an application is made to more than one setting parents should be advised that the most recent application will be considered as their first choice. Where possible the placement allocated should be the preferred choice as stated in the application form (appendix 3).
- 3.4 If a parent applies for a blended placement, the preferred 1st setting should contact the blended provider to discuss and agree availability, pattern of attendance and lunch arrangements prior to the application being presented to panel. The head of each setting should update the child's confirmed placement and application status on the identified early years administrative system as required and ensure that the eligible hours are not exceeded across both settings.
- 3.5 Confirmation of the child's date of birth, address and receipt of benefits/credits **must** be requested when a child registers with a setting. The child's birth certificate must be provided to confirm identity and date of birth. For higher priority applications the referring agency can confirm the date of birth as a temporary measure. There are exceptional circumstances when a child may start without a birth certificate, approval should be sought from cssupport@renfrewshire.gov.uk. This should not delay a child's start date.
- 3.6 A copy of a utility bill or most recent council tax notice is required for proof of address. Families who are not currently resident in the property of the identified home address are required to provide either a concluded missive or a signed and witnessed tenancy agreement/lease to confirm proof of address. Only the child's home address, which is the legal guardian's address, will apply; this may include a foster parent's address. Childminders and c/o addresses cannot be considered.
- 3.7 All settings must ensure that the status of all applications is updated and recorded accurately on the identified early years administrative system. Children's Services regularly use these systems to understand uptake and demand for ELC places, and to pay funded providers.
- 3.8 The mandatory amount of early learning and childcare does not need to be provided to a child who is looked after or has at any point been looked after since their second birthday if it is deemed that this is in the best interest of the child. An assessment of the child's needs may result in the child being allocated less than the mandatory hours of early learning and childcare or may include hours of working jointly with parents to better safeguard or promote the child's wellbeing. The decision to offer a placement which is less than the mandatory hours must be included in the child's plan.

- 3.9 Panels should be sensitive to the needs of families when allocating places. Attempts should be made to ensure that siblings are allocated placements within the same setting and with sessions which coincide wherever possible.
- 3.10 Where there is over demand for a setting and / or a particular pattern of attendance, and all other contributing factors are equal, a ballot should be carried out. Multiple ballots may be required to ensure equality and equity.
- 3.11 In the event of a ballot being carried out heads of settings should include multiple birth siblings, for example, twins/triplets as one entry in the ballot.
- 3.12 The length of time on the register of applications does not give applicants priority over a recent application when offering places.
- 3.13 It is intended that children take up their entitlement at times that best support their learning and supports the needs of parents in line with the model of delivery of ELC.
- 3.14 If the parent's first choice of setting is not available a placement may be offered elsewhere. The head of the setting offering the placement will contact the parent to notify them of the placement details.
- 3.15 Heads and senior managers must inform parents and referrers of the outcome of placement decisions reached by a panel, this should then be confirmed in writing via the placement allocation letter (appendix 10).
- 3.16 In the event of a blended placement allocation, the head of the 1st preferred setting should confirm with the blended provider the agreed arrangements following panel. The head of each setting shall communicate the agreed ELC allocation within their setting to the parents via the placement allocation letter (appendix 10). Any changes to the placement allocation must be communicated between settings.
- 3.17 Children should start their ELC place in line with their eligibility start date to ensure they receive their full entitlement to ELC. Any arrangements for settling children in must be agreed with the parent.
- 3.18 An ELC enrolment form (appendix 5) should be completed after the parent or legal guardian has accepted the place and at the very latest on the child's first day.

Procedures for dealing with deferred admission to primary school: an additional free year of early learning and childcare

- 3.19 Parents should enrol their child for primary school and notify the school of their wish to defer.
- 3.20 Parents should complete an application for an additional free year of ELC (appendix 7) in line with the timescales set in the annual admissions calendar (appendix 1). This is required for all children deferring, irrespective of the birth month (January and February; August to December, and March until July). The head or senior manager must also sign the deferral form. Applications should be sent to cssupport@renfrewshire.gov.uk

3.21 Decisions should be made prior to the spring break in time for managing the allocation process for the forthcoming school session and before the Primary 1 induction programme begins.

3.22 The head of the setting should notify the primary school of the decision to defer entry to primary school.

January and February Birthdays

3.23 Only children born in January and February are automatically entitled to an additional year of funded ELC.

August to December Birthdays

3.24 Placements for children with August to December birthdays should be based on an assessment of wellbeing and needs of the child and agreed in partnership with families and at a TAC meeting and discussed with the Children's Services Inclusion Support Officer.

3.25 When considering requests for an additional free year of ELC, Educational Psychology services 'early years to school transition guidance' should be considered. The TAC will consider the following aspects of the child's learning and development:

- their approach and attitude to learning.
- their ability to communicate own needs, feelings and ideas.
- their levels of independence and self-help.
- their emotional and personal development, including self-confidence and self-esteem.
- relationships and friendships with other children and adults; and
- their cognitive development.

March to July Birthdays

3.26 In **exceptional** circumstances it may be possible for children with March to July birthdays to be granted an additional free year of ELC. Heads should discuss requests for a deferred entry to school for children in this category with the Children's Services Inclusion Officer and present the application to the Education Support and Resource Group (ESRG) for approval. Approval will be granted if it is considered to be in the best interest of the child.

Review of places

3.27 Parents and referring agencies should be informed in advance of a review of placement. It is the head and senior managers' responsibility to gather up to date information on the family circumstances.

3.28 Any agreed arrangements which result in a reduction of the mandatory amount of ELC placement for an eligible 2-year-old who has been looked after by the Local Authority must be reviewed as part of the TAC process to ensure the arrangements continue to meet the needs of the child and family.

3.29 Day care placements should be reviewed on a six-monthly basis or earlier if there is any change to the family circumstances.

3.30 Placements that exceed the level of entitlement for children eligible to ELC should be reviewed on a six-monthly basis or earlier if there is any change to the family circumstances.

3.31 Only as a last resort, and with the approval Children's Services Early Years Team via elc@renfrewshire.gov.uk can a place be withdrawn. If a child is absent the

head of setting should follow procedures as detailed in Standard Circular 5 - Included, Engaged, and Involved: Attendance in Educational setting. If the absence is persistent then the head of the setting should contact Children's Services Early Years via elc@renfrewshire.gov.uk to establish if the child is attending another Setting.

Children moving to other early learning and childcare settings

- 3.32 Children who leave the designated panel area but remain in Renfrewshire should not be excluded from an ELC setting. Whilst there is no transfer arrangement, heads should assist parents by transferring relevant documentation to the new setting following confirmation of availability of placement. If required and where possible, consideration should be given to the previous pattern of attendance to continue the support to the family. If circumstances warrant it, the head of setting can also make a request for assistance at this stage.
- 3.33 Children moving between funded providers will have their funding transferred in line with their remaining entitlement of ELC.
- 3.34 For children moving to a new setting (funded provider or local authority), parents should give 4 weeks' notice to the current setting before taking up their new place. The head of the new setting should contact the current provider to establish the end dates of the notice period and to confirm the remaining free ELC entitlement to be transferred.
- 3.35 Funded providers must seek budget approval via cssupport@renfrewshire.gov.uk for eligible children transferring from a local authority setting only. Where funding has already been approved for eligible children, budget approval is not required when children are transferring between funded providers.
- 3.36 If a family no longer lives in Renfrewshire, and the family wishes the child to remain in a Renfrewshire setting, the head of each setting should notify Children's Services Early Years team via elc@renfrewshire.gov.uk to seek guidance on the future arrangement for the placement and funding from the resident authority.

Wraparound provision (purchased provision) – Local Authority settings only

- 3.37 Where places are available, parents can apply to purchase a wraparound place for children, this can be for additional hours / sessions or for children under 3, who are not eligible for place under priorities 1 to 3, this can be a whole place. Requests for wraparound provision should be prioritised in line with the admissions policy criteria. Additional sessions should only be offered if all children in priorities 1 and 2 and all entitled to ELC (priority 3) can be accommodated.
- 3.38 Parents must submit application form (appendix 13) to purchase wraparound care form to the head of setting. Prior to any child taking up wraparound care an agreement to purchase wraparound (appendix 14) must be completed and signed by the parent and head of setting.
- 3.39 Requests for additional days / sessions should be confirmed by the area admission panel. Heads can approve requests for additional hours on top of their allocated placement as this does not impact on the number of places available. Where there is a high demand for wraparound provision, all circumstances being equal, a ballot should be conducted.
- 3.40 The fee for wraparound provision will be based on the rate set by the council.

Wraparound fees for children categorised as a priority 1 and 2

- 3.41 Individual family circumstances are required to be carefully assessed to determine if wraparound fees are applicable to children and families in these categories.
- 3.42 In some circumstances the area admission panel may decide that the placement allocated to a child eligible for ELC may exceed the mandatory number of hours to meet the needs of the child or family at no charge to the parents or carers.
- 3.43 The individual circumstances of children looked after by family members requiring an ELC placement to enable them to continue in employment, training, or education will be considered to determine if wraparound fees apply. Discussions with Social Work may be required.
- 3.44 Parents (including foster parents) of children categorised as a priority 1 or 2, who make an application for additional hours for education, work, or training reasons should be made aware that they may incur a charge for the additional hours allocated beyond the agreed place to support the needs of the child and family.

Section Four

Conclusion

It is hoped that this guidance and the support of the admission panel will be of assistance to heads and senior managers of all settings in the implementation of this policy. However, should any setting still be unclear of circumstances you should contact Children's Services Early Years Team at elc@renfrewshire.gov.uk .

Section Five

Appendices

The purpose of this section is to provide staff with guidelines on the use of all admission forms and standard letters.

For all early learning and childcare settings:

	Title	Comments
Appendix 1	Annual admission calendar	This will be issued annually by Children's Services Early Years.
Appendix 2	Renfrewshire Council local area admissions panel groupings	The admissions panel grouping provides the list of providers within an area and defines the designated geographical area for each admissions panel.
Appendix 3	Application form for a place in an early learning and childcare setting.	An application form must be completed by the parent/carer for all children. Settings should ensure all required information is included in the application form. Proof of date of birth, address is required, refer to policy advice. It is considered good practice to have a member of staff to support parent with the application process if required.
Appendix 4	Request for assistance form for a place in an early learning and childcare setting.	A request for assistance form must be completed for priorities 1 and 2. Requests for assistance for placements of children under the age of three should be directed to the nearest local authority early learning and childcare establishment to the child's home. If necessary, request for assistance can be discussed in advance with the local authority establishment. A parent application is also required.
Appendix 5	Early learning and childcare enrolment form	The enrolment form should be completed after the parent has accepted the place. It is considered good practice to have staff available to support parents to complete the enrolment form as this provides the contract agreement of the placement and is part of the process of building relationships and to plan to support a child's needs. In exceptional circumstances an enrolment form can be completed at the very latest on the day the child starts the early learning and childcare setting.

	Title	Comments
Appendix 6	Applications to early learning and childcare admission panels – applications list	A copy of each setting's list of new applicants should be completed and shared with panel members at the admission panel meeting. Thereafter a copy should be retained in the individual setting.
Appendix 7	Deferred entry to primary school: Application for an additional year of early learning and childcare.	Parents are required to complete an application form for an additional year of early learning and childcare. Settings must ensure application forms and other required documentation is submitted to cssupport@renfrewshire.gov.uk in line with the date stated in the annual admission calendar (appendix 1).
Appendix 8	Admission ballot list	Where a ballot requires to be held for placement funding or preferred pattern of attendance. This should be completed for all those eligible for inclusion in the ballot.
Appendices 9 & 10	Standard Letters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for assistance • Placement offer 	Suggested letter formats are provided and can be personalised to reflect your early learning and childcare setting. NB. funded providers should use own company logo and not the Council one.
Appendix 11	Request for assistance for early learning and childcare during a school holiday and Christmas period panel list.	Area admission panels are responsible for collating a request for assistance list for ELC placements required during a school holiday and Christmas periods. An appendix 4 referral is required for each child identified; submissions should be in line with the dates specified in the annual admissions calendar (Appendix 1).
Appendix 12	Admission to early learning and childcare setting minute pro forma.	A minute of each admission panel meeting should be recorded and distributed in line with the Council's Information Sharing Protocol to panel members and panelmins@renfrewshire.gov.uk

For local authority early learning and childcare settings only:

Appendix 13	Application to purchase wraparound care.	Application should be completed by parents requesting wraparound care provision and submitted to the head of establishment.
Appendix 14	Agreement to purchase wraparound care.	Parents are required to sign an agreement for wraparound care prior to starting the service. This is a legal contract between the parent and the Council and details the wraparound placement agreed.
Appendices 15 & 16	Emergency / temporary early learning and childcare placement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contract (15)• Review of emergency placement (16)	The contract stating the duration of the placement should be agreed and signed by parent at the time of enrolment and the referrer should be informed. The standard letter regarding the review of an emergency placement should be sent to the parent and referrer prior to the agreed review date. NB. funded providers should use own company logo and not the Council one
Appendix 17	Qualifying benefit/credit evidence list	Provides a list of the qualifying benefits and the source for the evidence required.
Appendix 18	Confirmation of Benefits form Department of Work & Pensions	A completed and stamped confirmation of benefits form must be provided by the parent to evidence eligibility for placement.
Appendix 19	Processing of Personal Information Notice	The information regarding data protection described in this notice should be issued along with an application form for a place in an early learning and childcare setting (appendix 3). On enrolment a parent should be asked to sign a copy of the notice and this held within the file.
Appendix 20	Renfrewshire Council Privacy Policy	A copy of the policy should be issued with every application form for a place in an early learning and childcare setting (appendix 3). Parents should be given a copy of the policy on enrolment.
Appendix 21	Funded providers – funding approval process & template	This applies to funded providers and outlines the process for approval of ELC funded places.

NB: Appendices may be subject to change depending on administrative / future requirements to gather / process information.

Renfrewshire Council Local Area Admission Panel Groupings Appendix 2

Panel	Designated Area	Setting
Panel 1 Johnstone	Howwood Johnstone Lochwinnoch	Mid Gavin Nursery* Stepping Stones* Gleniffer Nursery* Auchenlodment Early Learning and Childcare Class Lochwinnoch Early Learning and Childcare Class Spateston Early Learning and Childcare Centre St Margaret's Early Learning and Childcare Class West Johnstone Early Learning and Childcare Centre
Panel 2 Erskine	Bishopton Erskine Inchinnan Langbank	Bright Starts Nursery* Cairellot Day Nursery* Carli's Kindergarten (Erskine)* Happitots Erskine* Erskine Community Nursery – Bargarran* Erskine Community Nursery – St Anne's Inchinnan Community Nursery* Little Pandas* Carole McLauchlan* Catherine Whyte* Fiona Murray* Karen Finnie* Kelly Rix* Dargavel Early Learning and Childcare Centre St Anne's Early Learning and Childcare Class St John Bosco Early Learning and Childcare Class
Panel 3 Renfrew	Renfrew	3 Bears Nursery* Little Flowers Nursery* Little Stars Hillington* Bright Horizons* In Safe Hands Nursery* Catherine Young* Claire Crawford* Helen Wardrop* Karen Chalmers* Kerry Goudie* Marie Norrie* Little Rabbit* Glendee Early Learning and Childcare Centre Kirklandneuk Early Learning and Childcare Centre Moorpark Early Learning and Childcare Centre
Panel 4 Houston	Bridge of Weir Brookfield Weirs Wynd ▲ Houston Kilbarchan	Abbey Nursery (Houston)* Kilbarchan Community Nursery* Rivendale Nursery* Gryffe Manor* Barbara Snodgrass* Helen Smith* Lynda McLeod* Bridge of Weir Early Learning and Childcare Class Houston Early Learning and Childcare Class

Panel	Designated Area	Setting
Panel 5 Linwood	Linwood Brooklands ▲	Linwood Community Childcare* Carli's Kindergarten (Linwood)* East Fulton Early Learning and Childcare Class Our Lady of Peace Early Learning and Childcare Class Riverbrae Early Learning and Childcare Centre ○
Panel 6 Foxbar/Glenburn	Brediland Foxbar Glenburn Meiklerigg	Carriagehill Nursery - Green Road* Bushes Early Learning and Childcare Class Foxlea Early Learning and Childcare Centre Glenburn Early Learning and Childcare Centre Glenfield Early Learning and Childcare Centre Heriot Early Learning and Childcare Class St Peter's Early Learning and Childcare Class
Panel 7 Paisley West 1	Elderslie Baronscroft Castlehead Westend	Abbey Nursery (Paisley)* Maxwellton Park Nursery* Hugh Smiley Early Learning and Childcare Centre St Mary's Early Learning and Childcare Class West Early Learning and Childcare Class Wallace Early Learning and Childcare Class
Panel 8 Paisley West 2	Ferguslie Shortroods Phoenix Park	Glencoats Lodge Nursery* Happitots Nursery (Glasgow Airport) * Rainbow Nursery* Hillview Nursery Douglas Street Early Learning and Childcare Centre Ferguslie Early Learning and Childcare Centre Mossvale Early Learning and Childcare Class
Panel 9 Paisley Central 1	Charleston Hawkhead Hunterhill Lochfield Paisley South Todholm	Carriagehill Drive Nursery* Jennyswell Nursery* Nursery Times* Orchard Grove Nursery* Lochfield Early Learning and Childcare Centre Paisley Early Learning and Childcare Centre St Charles' Early Learning and Childcare Class Todholm Early Learning and Childcare Class
Panel 10 Paisley Central 2	Gallowhill Paisley North Ralston Seedhill	Abbeymill Childcare* Leaps & Bounds Nursery* Little Learners* West College Scotland* Lilliput Lane Nursery* Gallowhill Early Learning and Childcare Class Ralston Early Learning and Childcare Class St Catherine's Early Learning and Childcare Class Williamsburgh Early Learning and Childcare Class

NB ▲ represents new housing estates within the panel area.

* represent funded providers in the private and voluntary sector accepted onto the Framework Agreement to provide early learning and childcare

○ represents designated places for children with Additional Support Needs.



To:	Education and Children's Services Policy Board
On:	20 January 2022
Report by:	Director of Finance and Resources
Heading:	Church Representatives on Committees Appointed by Education Authorities

1. Summary

- 1.1 Section 124 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 provides that where an education authority appoints a committee whose purposes include advising the authority on any matter relating to the discharge of their functions as education authority or discharging any of those functions of the authority on their behalf, three of the members to be appointed (who shall not be members of the education authority) shall be church representatives. One of the three places requires to be filled in accordance with the Act by a nomination from the Church of Scotland and one by the Roman Catholic Church.
- 1.2 The existing church members' appointments to the Education and Children Policy Board do not continue beyond the local government election to be held on 5 May, 2022. In anticipation that the new Council will appoint a committee or board with a remit relating to education functions, it is proposed therefore that the Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic Church be invited to nominate their respective representatives in order that these may be reported to the statutory meeting of the Council.
- 1.3 In the selection of the third person the Act specifies that the authority shall have regard (taking account of the representation of the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland) to the comparative strength within the area of all the churches and denominational bodies having duly constituted charges or other appointed places of worship therein.
- 1.4 In order to obtain nominations for the third representative, it is proposed (as has been the practice previously) to place an advertisement (as detailed in the appendix to this report) in the local and national press and on the Council's website seeking nominations: the closing date for nominations being 21 April 2022.

- 1.5 The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000 introduced an ethical framework which required the Scottish Ministers to issue a Code of Conduct for Councillors. The Code does not apply to non-elected members of committees. Standards Commission guidance recommends that co-opted members be guided by the Code and in the case of church representatives the Standards Commission has advised that authorities should seek confirmation from the appointing authorities that they will require their appointees to apply with the Code.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That it be noted that the existing church members' appointments to the Education and Children Policy Board do not continue beyond the local government election to be held on 5 May 2022.
- 2.2 That it be agreed that the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church be invited to nominate their respective representatives to the committee or board which may be established by the new Council to deal with education functions, and that these be reported to the statutory meeting of the new Council to be held on 19 May 2022.
- 2.3 That an advertisement be placed in the local and national press and on the Council's website seeking nominations for the third church representative and that a report on the responses to the advertisement be submitted to the statutory meeting of the new Council to be held on 19 May 2022.
-

Implications of this report

1. **Financial** - the cost of the advert will be met from existing resources.
2. **HR and Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community Plan/Council Plan** – none
4. **Legal** – as detailed in the report.
5. **Property/Assets** – none
6. **Information Technology** – none

7. Equality and Human Rights

- (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety – none

9. Procurement – none

10. Risk – none

11. Privacy – none

12. COSLA Policy Position - none

13. Climate Change – none

Author: Euan Gray, Senior Committee Services Officer, 07483410945,
euan.gray@renfrewshire.gov.uk.

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

Should Renfrewshire Council, following the local government elections to be held on 5 May, 2022, establish a committee to oversee the delivery of the education service within the area this will include one representative of the Church of Scotland, one representative of the Roman Catholic Church and a third person to be selected by the Council having regard to the comparative strength within the area of all the churches and denominational bodies having duly constituted charges or other appointed places of worship therein.

Nominations are invited by the Council of persons who would be suitable as the third representative. Nominations may be lodged by individuals on their own behalf or by churches and denominational bodies having duly constituted charges or other regularly appointed places of worship within Renfrewshire. Such nominations must be in writing and should contain the full name and address of any person seeking nomination together with a statement as to why he/she regards him/herself as worthy of selection. Any church or denominational body which wishes to nominate a person to be considered for selection must provide a statement to indicate why their nominee should be considered for selection and indicating the number of people who are members of their church or denominational body and such further information which supports the application as they may wish.

Everyone who has made a nomination will be informed of the outcome of the selection.

If you would like further information, please contact Euan Gray, Senior Committee Services Officer on 07483410945 or by emailing euan.gray@renfrewshire.gov.uk.

Nominations should be forwarded to the Head of Corporate Governance, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley PA1 1TT on or before 21 April, 2022.

Head of Corporate Governance
Renfrewshire Council



To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 20 January 2022

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Redress for Survivors (Historical Abuse in Care) (Scotland) Act 2021

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI) was established in 2015 to investigate the nature and extent of historical abuse of children while in care in Scotland. Findings published so far by the SCAI indicate widespread, serious systemic and societal failings over several decades in relation to children in the care of organisations investigated in its case studies to date.
- 1.2. The Scottish Government has established a redress scheme – Redress Scotland - to provide recognition of the harm caused to survivors of abuse in relevant care settings in Scotland before 2004.
- 1.3. The Scottish Parliament passed the [Redress for Survivors \(Historical Child Abuse in Care\) \(Scotland\) Act 2021](#) on 11th March 2021 and it received the Royal Assent on 23 April 2021.
- 1.4. The Act establishes a new non-governmental public, Redress Scotland. Redress Scotland will assess applications from survivors, make decisions and review appeals for the financial redress award(s) for the next five years. The scheme will provide financial and non-financial redress for survivors.
- 1.5. The redress scheme offers an alternative to court action which is a faster, more survivor-focussed route to redress for survivors of historical abuse. It also gives survivors access to acknowledgement, an apology and support.
- 1.6. Qualified One-way Cost Shifting (QOCS) was introduced into Scotland in June 2021. QOCS will impact on all civil litigation claims going forward. For historical abuse claimants who chose civil litigation over the redress scheme, it is possible that QOCS will make it more likely that some claims will be settled.
- 1.7. However, as QOCS removes one incentive for historical abuse claimants to choose the redress scheme over civil litigation, it might result in more claims

being pursued via the court as claimants will have protection around legal costs.

2 Recommendations

2.1 The Education and Children Services Policy Board is asked to note:

(a) the Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care) (Scotland) Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 23 April 2021;

(b) the establishment of a new non-governmental public body, Redress Scotland has been established to assess and make decision on applications from victims of historical abuse in care: and

(c) the right that victims can make applications to pursue claims via Court and this could result in higher litigation costs arising from Qualified One-way Cost Shifting in respect of historical abuse claim.

3 Background

3.1 The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI) was established in 2015, to investigate the nature and extent of historical abuse of children whilst in care in Scotland. Findings published so far by the SCAI indicate widespread, serious systemic and societal failings over several decades in relation to children in the care of organisations investigated in its case studies to date.

3.2 These investigations have found that children were subject to physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect. Care establishments were often places of fear, hostility, and confusion where feelings of isolation and vulnerability could be commonplace. Children who spoke up were often not believed. Many did not speak up because they were unable to, or they thought the abuse that they experienced was 'normal'. For some, the abuse was part of a 'regime of punishment and control that was at the core of the institution in which they lived'. For others, the conduct of individual perpetrators of abuse went undetected or unchecked. But for all who were abused, they were failed by the very systems in place to protect them.

3.3 At the time of writing, the inquiry has heard 238 days of evidence. It has produced seven case studies into a range of care settings and institutions including services run by charities and churches. Its current phase of work concerns a number of boarding schools.

3.4 Once concluded, the Inquiry will report to Scottish Ministers as soon as reasonably practicable, with recommendations to improve the law, policies and practices in Scotland.

3.5 The establishment of a redress scheme demonstrates the Scottish Government's recognition that many children in care in Scotland in the past were abused by those responsible for their care. Survivors of historical abuse

in care have campaigned for redress and the scheme is an important part of dealing with the wrongs of the past.

- 3.6 The Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care) (Scotland) Act 2021 received Royal Assent in April and the redress scheme will be open for applications before the end of 2021.
- 3.7 The Act established a new non-governmental public body, Redress Scotland to assess and make decisions in relation to claims of historical abuse in care. Redress Scotland can provide financial and non-financial redress. The chairperson, panel members and Chief Executive of Redress Scotland are in post. A temporary team of staff is also in place to support the set-up of Redress Scotland with recruitment now underway for more permanent staff.
- 3.8 Case workers from the Scottish Government will support and communicate with applicants. The Government will also provide other business and administrative support, but it is not involved in making decisions on applications.
- 3.9 Survivors of historical abuse can apply for a fixed rate redress payment of £10,000, or an individually assessed redress payment which will involve a more detailed examination of their experience. The individually assessed redress payment levels are set at £20,000, £40,000, £60,000, £80,000 or £100,000.
- 3.10 Survivors that receive financial redress will also be offered access to some non-financial elements of redress such as acknowledgement, apology and therapeutic support.
- 3.11 In some circumstances, next of kin of deceased survivors will be able to apply for a redress payment of £10,000.
- 3.12 Financial contributions are being sought by the Scottish Government from those involved in the care of the children at the time they were abused and COSLA has indicated that local authorities will contribute £100 million to the scheme.
- 3.13 Survivors who were abused before 1964, or for other reasons cannot, or do not want to, raise an action in civil court, will now have an opportunity to receive financial redress through the alternative route of Redress Scotland.
- 3.14 Survivors who currently have the right to raise a civil action in respect of their abuse, will continue to have that option. The Act provides a choice for them on whether or not they want to accept a payment through the redress scheme or pursue litigation. If they choose to accept the payment, they will be required to sign a waiver. Redress payments will be conditional upon the applicant signing a waiver relinquishing their right to continue or raise civil actions in respect of the abuse, against the Scottish Government or those organisations on the contributor list. The waiver only will apply to the organisations that have made fair and meaningful financial contributions to the redress scheme, the amounts of which will be published. Organisations who do not contribute will not be included in the waiver. In the absence of the waiver where an organisation does not participate in the scheme, survivors will be able to receive their redress payment and still retain the option to raise legal action against the organisation.

- 3.15 Independent legal advice, subject to appropriate limits, will be funded by the Scottish Government to ensure survivors can make fully informed decisions that are right for them.
- 3.16 It is likely that Qualified One-way Cost (QOCS) will lead to more settled claims, since, if the defender makes a formal offer to settle via the Court, and that offer is not accepted, and the pursuer then fails to achieve an award higher than the sum offered, the pursuer will lose the QOCS protection. In other words, they go from a position of having no liability, to one where they are liable for all for the expenses (pursuer's and defender's) from the date of the offer. That will weigh heavily on their advisers.
- 3.17 The principal incentive for claimants will be to raise claims that are otherwise weak, in the hope that an offer will be made, in order to reduce the defender's losses. It is likely that a higher percentage will end up with proceedings (as there is a much lower risk to them even where the decision goes in favour of the Council).

Implications of this report

1. Financial

Potential for increased litigation costs arising from QOCS should claimants choose not to pursue redress through the government scheme.

2. HR and Organisational Development

None.

3. Community/Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is thriving -

Our Renfrewshire is well - *Redress scheme supports mental wellbeing of Renfrewshire citizens who are survivors of the harm caused by abuse in care.*

Our Renfrewshire is fair - *Renfrewshire survivors have access to formal acknowledgement, apology and redress for the harm caused by historical abuse in care.*

4. Legal

The Act provides for a new non-governmental public body which will decide on historical claims. The Act establishes QOCS which could impact on the local authority.

5. Property/Assets

None.

6. Information Technology

None.

7. Equality and Human Rights

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety

None.

9. Procurement

None.

10. Risk

None.

11. Privacy Impact

None.

12. Cosla Policy Position

Cosla has supported the establishment of the Redress Scheme and local government has indicated it will contribute £100million to the scheme.

13. Climate Risk

None.

List of Background Papers

(a) none

Children's Services

KN/MMMc/LG

19 November 2022

Author: John Trainer, Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice

john.trainer@renfrewshire.gov.uk

0141 618 6860



To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 20 January 2022

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Annual report of the Fostering and Adoption Service 2020/21
Update on developments for Looked After Children and
Fostering Service

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the 14th annual report of Renfrewshire's Fostering and Adoption Service.
 - 1.2 The Annual report sets out the work undertaken by the Fostering and Adoption Panel and the Fostering and Adoption Service in the year 2020/21 and is set in the context of the broader issues pertaining to Looked After and Accommodated Children. The period covered by the report is August 2020 to July 2021. The reason for this reporting period is that it matches the reporting year used by the Scottish Government for children's social work statistics.
 - 1.3 The report refers to how the service managed and developed during the second year of the pandemic.
 - 1.4 The report considers the future work of the panel, the continued work of the fostering and adoption service.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to
 - a) note the contents of the Fostering and Adoption Annual Report 2020/21;
 - b) note the continuing effort to secure foster carers and adoptive parents for Renfrewshire's children who require to an alternative family placement; and
 - c) note how the service continued to develop during the second year of the pandemic.
-

3. Background

- 3.1 The Regulations supporting the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 require Social Work in its role as a Fostering and Adoption agency to operate a Fostering Panel and an Adoption Panel. These panels have the responsibility for putting forward recommendations to the agency decision maker regarding the suitability of people to adopt or foster children. In Renfrewshire there are two agency decision makers: the Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice and the Social Work Children's Services Manager. The Adoption Panel considers and approves plans for children to be adopted or for the Council to apply for Permanence Orders on a child. The Panel also considers and approves the matching of a particular child with a particular family where the plan is for the child to live there permanently.
- 3.2 Renfrewshire operates a Fostering Panel and an Adoption Panel; each with separate constitutions. The panels will often meet on the same day however each meeting separates out the Fostering panel business from the Adoption panel business to ensure that the appropriate regulations are met regarding a quorum, and for the attendance of the legal and medical adviser. In August 2016 we separated the remit of social work managers to ensure that the chair of the panel doesn't line manage the service. This separation of roles allows arm's length scrutiny and monitoring by the panel chair.
- 3.3 There are currently 19 members of the panel comprising elected members, social work and education staff, a legal adviser, a medical adviser, carers, independent panel members, and an independent member from the Adoption and Fostering Alliance Scotland (AFA). The panel is chaired by either a social work manager or the independent representative from Adoption and Fostering Alliance Scotland. It meets twice monthly. There are typically 3 panel members at each meeting along with appropriate advisors. The Fostering Panel and the Adoption Panel considered 60 agenda items over the course of the year.
- 3.4 The panel has a unique overview of the work being undertaken to assess and approve foster carers and adopters alongside the work being undertaken by social workers to progress plans for children who cannot be cared for within their own family. The annual report has been produced as a means of sharing this work with a wider audience and to assist in the process of service planning.
- 3.5 Between 1/08/20 and 31/07/2021 we held 2 set of preparation groups and 5 households subsequently applied to be assessed as foster carers. Renfrewshire had 80 active households of foster carers at 31st July 2021. In the period 1/08/20 and 31/7/2021 an additional 3 households were registered as foster carers, and 5 foster care households left the service.
- 3.6 The report notes the ongoing need to recruit Renfrewshire foster carers and adopters because of children being accommodated and in need of permanent care, and our commitment to reducing the number of children being placed externally. In the past we have had high-profile recruitment activity which only produced 1 or 2 more applications to foster. Most of our fostering application come from people who already have foster carers as friends or family.
- 3.7 In the period 1/08/20 and 31/07/2021 a total of 3 Renfrewshire households were approved as adopters at the Renfrewshire panel.
- 3.8 The Fostering and Adoption services are subject to regulation and were last inspected by the Care Inspectorate in May 2017. The Care Inspectorate reports were positive with gradings of 5 (very good) being applied to all domains inspected. The next Inspection

was due to take place in 2020 however has been postponed due to the pandemic. We meet regularly with our inspector about our current practice and developments.

- 3.9 The Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014 increases the responsibility/ duty of Local Authorities to provide continuing care placements for young adults up to the age of 21. This means that more young people are remaining in the same placement after they are 18. The service continues to assess foster carers to become supported carers wherever this is appropriate.
- 3.10 We currently have 22 young adults living with supported carers. Many of these carers were previously the young adults' foster carers.
- 3.11 The Children (Scotland) Act 2020 became law in 2021 and places new duties on local authorities to place brothers and sisters together in placements and place a new duty on local authorities to promote contact between brothers and sisters who are looked after. This is in keeping with the Independent care review report, The Promise.
- 3.12 Renfrewshire agreed the "Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together Policy" in May 2020. The policy contains the following pledge "When children come into care Renfrewshire will place brothers and sisters together". The policy recognises that there will be time that brothers and sisters can't be placed but requires us to report on this.
- 3.13 As of 31.07.2021 Renfrewshire Foster Carers had 19 sets of brothers and/or sisters placed together in their care which was a total of 36 children and 33% percent of children with our foster carers.
-

Implications of this report

1. Financial

None.

2. HR and Organisational Development

None.

3. Community/Council Planning

Our Renfrewshire is thriving	- <i>enter details/ delete if not appropriate</i>
Our Renfrewshire is well	- <i>enter details/ delete if not appropriate</i>
Our Renfrewshire is fair	- <i>enter details/ delete if not appropriate</i>
Our Renfrewshire is safe	- <i>enter details/ delete if not appropriate</i>
Reshaping our place, our economy and our future	- <i>enter details/ delete if not appropriate</i>
Building strong, safe and resilient communities	- <i>enter details/ delete if not appropriate</i>
Tackling inequality, ensuring	- <i>enter details/ delete if not</i>

opportunities for all	<i>appropriate</i>
Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy	- <i>enter details/ delete if not appropriate</i>
Working together to improve outcomes	- <i>enter details/ delete if not appropriate</i>

4. Legal
None.

5. Property/Assets
None.

6. Information Technology
None.

7. Equality and Human Rights

- (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only.

8. Health and Safety
None.

9. Procurement
None.

10. Risk
None.

11. Privacy Impact
None.

12. Cosla Policy Position
None.

13. Climate Risk
None.

List of Background Papers

- (a) Background Paper 1: Fostering and Adoption Annual Report.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within children's services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Clare Cuning 0141 618 6650

Author: Clare Cuning 0141 618 6650 clare.cuning@renfrewshire.gov.uk



THE FOSTERING AND ADOPTION PANEL

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

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- Commitment to permanency planning
- National and Local Context – The Care Review

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- Recruitment Activity
- Preparation Groups
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- Foster carers training
- NVR Intervention
- Best Trial
- Foster carers support group
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- Overview of Supported Carers Service

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- Birth parent support / Supporting Roots
- Letterbox Contact
- Future development of the adoption service 2021 – 2022

Conclusion

Foreword

Welcome to the annual report of The Fostering and Adoption Service. As Agency Decision Makers we are delighted to be invited to contribute this forward. The report is written by Cathie O'Donnell, service manager for fostering and adoption, and endorsed by Clare Cuning, Registered Social Work Manager, Fostering and Adoption Services and Joyce Gartshore, Chair of the Fostering and Adoption Panel. It takes a retrospective look at the previous year as well as looking to the future developments. Within Renfrewshire Children's Services we have continued to ensure that the needs of vulnerable children are met consistently and responded to as required. Services within Renfrewshire have continued to work and adapt throughout the pandemic to support children.

As at the 31.07.21, Renfrewshire Council had 598 'Looked After' Children. Of these 162 children/young people were looked after at home, 216 were looked after by Kinship carers/friends/relatives and 210 were accommodated with foster carers, pre-adoption or within residential placements.

A significant number of the children looked after in foster care/residential care will be unable to return home to birth parents or to live with relatives. The work of the Fostering and Adoption Service continues to ensure that children are placed appropriately and safely and that children who require permanent placements out with their birth families are moved to an appropriate alternative family at the earliest opportunity.

In March 2021 Renfrewshire Council Education and Children's Services Policy Board approved the policy "Keeping Brothers and Sisters together" which contains a pledge that "When children come into care Renfrewshire Council will place brothers and sisters together".

It is recognised that there will be times when brothers and sisters aren't placed together, and the policy requires Children's Services to report on this. In addition, the policy introduces a clear decision-making process for times when brothers and sisters can't be placed together, a commitment to family time between brothers and sisters and a commitment to regularly reviewing the appropriateness of placements of brothers and sisters placed in separate care settings.

The Fostering and Adoption Panels provide important quality assurance in ensuring that the work undertaken to assess children's long-term care needs and the assessment of their potential carers is carried out to the highest standards. The Panels roles are to make recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) who ultimately approves children's permanence plans or confirms that a household can adopt or become foster carers.

The Panels continue to be busy. Between 01.08.20 to 31.07.21, 16 children's permanence plans were approved by the Agency Decision Maker.

The Fostering Service has continued to shift the balance of children's placements being with our own internal foster carers rather than with external fostering providers. On 31.07.20 there were 48 children/young people in external fostering placements as opposed to 60 on 31.07.19. This is a substantial decrease over this period.

I hope that you enjoy reading this year's annual report.

John Trainer
Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice
Chief Social Work Officer

Michelle McCargo
Social Work Children's Services Manager

Introduction

This is the 14th annual report of Renfrewshire Council's Fostering and the Adoption Panels and Service.

Renfrewshire Council has a statutory duty to operate fostering and adoption panels. These are two separate panels with separate functions.

The Adoption and Fostering Panels have their statutory base in the Adoption Agencies (Scotland) Regulations 2009 (Part II) (AAS Regulations) and the Looked After (Scotland) Regulations 2009 (Part VI) (the LAC Regulations).

These regulations set out the basis of the composition of both types of panels, their meetings, the appointment of advisors and their respective functions.

Regulation 17 of the LAC Regulations requires each fostering panel to consist of at least six members. It is good practice for all panels to have regular planned business meetings to review their overall functioning.

Renfrewshire Council has an annual business meeting with panel members, advisors, and the Agency Decision Makers in attendance. The setting of the quorum for individual meetings of the panel at three is a minimum, and we ensure they include enough people with experience and a range of backgrounds to provide robust and independent scrutiny of the business presented.

The Panels provide a quality assurance role in ensuring that the work undertaken to assess children's long-term care needs and the assessment of their potential carers is carried out to the highest standards.

Responsibility for the functions and decisions rest with the Chief Social Work Officer and authority is delegated to a Senior Manager in Children's services to chair the panels with the Head of Service and the Children's Services Manager both holding responsibility as the Agency Decision Maker and alternate this task.

The purpose of the Panel is to consider prospective foster carers, prospective adopters, and supported carers. In addition, they consider individual children's needs for alternative permanent carers (i.e., where the care plan for the child is that they do not return home to their birth family), this includes considering the most appropriate legal action to secure this outcome. The Panels also consider the matching of a child with specific foster carers or adoptive parents to ensure that these are of a consistently high standard. The Panels make a recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker. The Agency Decision Makers for the Fostering and Adoption Panels are John Trainer, Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice/Chief Social Work Officer and Michelle McCargo, Social Work Children's Services Manager.

The Fostering and Adoption panels have continued virtually using Microsoft teams, and this has become a much smoother process since introducing this platform in June 2020. A positive outcome from this way of working has been that it has encouraged some young people to attend their foster carers panel as they have been able to remain at home and 'pop in' to the meeting.

For children unable to return to their birth family, activity within the fostering and adoption team continues to be high and the recruitment of foster carers and adopters is a prime objective, and this is reflected in the amount of permanence planning work within the social work locality teams.

Context

The work of the Fostering and Adoption Panels should be viewed in the context of the numbers of Renfrewshire Council's Looked After and Accommodated children.

Accommodated and Looked After Children/Young People

As of 31st July 2021, Renfrewshire Council had 588 Looked After Children/Young People.

30.09.20 31.07.21

	30.09.20	31.07.21
Independent Sector-Children - Foster Care	60	48
Local Authority-Children - Foster Care	125	110
Local Authority-Children – Houses	14	17
Independent Sector-Children - Residential Schools	13	11
Independent Sector-Children - Residential Special Needs	3	12
Pre-adoption	11	8
Independent Sector-Children - Secure School	3	4
Children looked after by kinship carers/friends/relatives	213	216
Children looked after at home	200	162
Total	642	588

Overview of the work presented to the Fostering and Adoption Panel 1.08.20 – 31.07.21

Business Item	Number	Comments
Child adoption plans and links	13	This figure included 3 sibling groups of 2
Approval of Renfrewshire adopters (households)	2	
Approval of adopters to increase household	1	
Approval of Adopters with a foreign element	1	
De registration of adopters	1	
Review of Registration (adoption)	1	Couple increased registration to adopt a younger sibling
Request/review of adoption allowance	4	
Children's Permanence Order plans	3	
Links with permanent foster carers	3	
Approval of new foster carers	3	
Approval of Renfrewshire interim foster carers as permanent foster carers (households)	3	
Deregistration of foster carer	5	2 fostering household retired. 3 fostering household resigned due to personal circumstances.
Approval of supported carers (households)	6	6 Renfrewshire Fostering households converted to becoming supported carers
Initial review of foster carer after their 1 st year	5	
Foster care reviews out with 1 st year	5	
Review of foster carers registration – due to change in registration/circumstances	4	This figure represents 1 fostering household who increased their age range, and 3 fostering households who had a change in personal circumstances
Total number of agenda items	60	

Panel Membership

We are fortunate to have a consistent and committed panel membership over the past year. We currently have 19 voting members of the panel which includes 2 chairs.

Panel membership continues to reflect a wide range of experience and expertise, from social work, education, health, and past and present practitioners from the independent sector. The Panel continues to be well supported by elected members. The Adoption and Fostering Alliance (AFA) Scotland also continue to provide an independent panel member who also acts as a second chairperson.

Our medical advisers continue to offer a valuable service and support to the panel in respect of provision and interpretation of information in relation to the children and adults being presented to panel. The medical advisor provides up to date written information regarding any health issues in relation to a child or a prospective foster carer or adopter.

We also have ongoing representation from Legal Services who provide written legal advice to the Panel in relation to adoption and permanence work, as well as attendance at the Panel as required.

Panel members attend appraisal meetings with the panel chair and panel advisor. Feedback from panel members is gathered from this meeting and ideas generated are incorporated into the business meeting agenda for consideration.

Staffing

The structure of the Fostering and Adoption Service is: -

Social Work Manager (Operations) Registered manager of the service. (also has responsibility for the kinship care service and the pre and post birth team).

Service Manager (responsible for operational management of the fostering and adoption service).

1 senior social worker (responsible for adoption and permanence service, and management of staff)

1 senior social worker (responsible for the fostering service and management of staff)

8 full time social workers

2 job-share social workers

2 job share social work assistants.

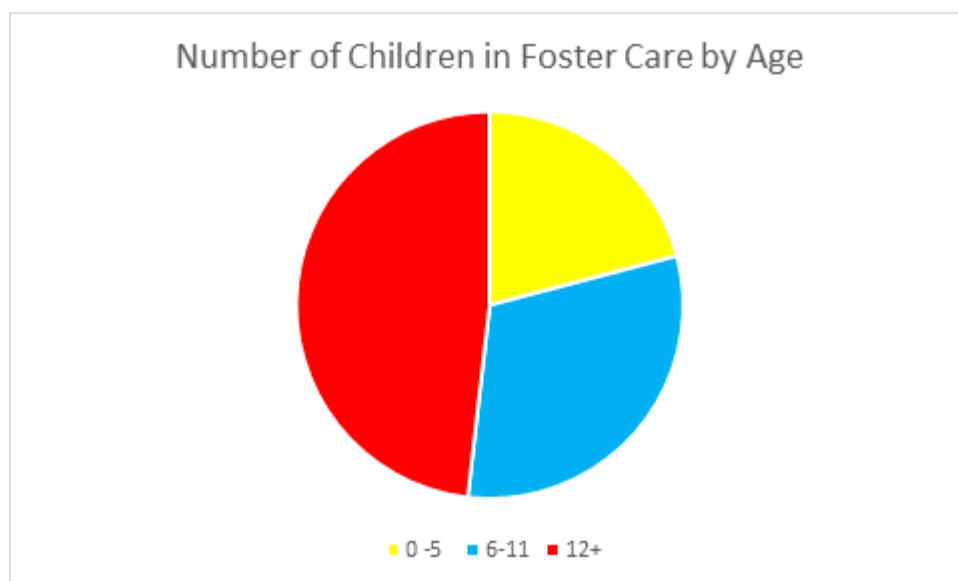
The fostering and adoption service now have a separate fostering team and an adoption and permanence team, this has allowed the development of more specialist skills regarding fostering and adoption. Both teams work closely together and share expertise and learning.

Commitment to permanence planning 1.08.21 to 31.07.21

Between 01.08.21 and 31.7.21 Renfrewshire has progressed adoption and permanence plans for 16 children. Renfrewshire Council recognises the importance in progressing plans for children within appropriate time scales. There are different initiatives being implemented by senior management to support and enable social work staff involved in permanence work to undertake both the direct work with the child and family and the necessary reports. These initiatives include training for social workers and carers on issues specifically relevant to permanence, working closely with social work staff with regards to the needs of the child and planning for adoption or permanency.

The decision to place a child permanently out with their birth family involves a high level of assessment and scrutiny. Throughout the process checks and balances are in place to ensure the best possible outcome for the child. Permanence planning work is complex; however, it is also highly rewarding when children find new families to care for them throughout their childhood and into adulthood.

The charts below provide a breakdown of ages of children (Chart 1) and those who have a permanence plan in progress or achieved (Chart 2).



Out of 110 children in Renfrewshire's fostering service at 31.07.2021:

There were 23 children (21%) who were 0 to 5 years old.

There were 34 children (31%) who were 6 – 11 years old.

There were 53 children / young people (48%) who were 12 – 18 years old.

Out of the 110 children in Renfrewshire Council foster care 77 children were fully assessed as not returning home and had either long term or permanence plans either in progress or achieved.

33 children had Interim status (30%)

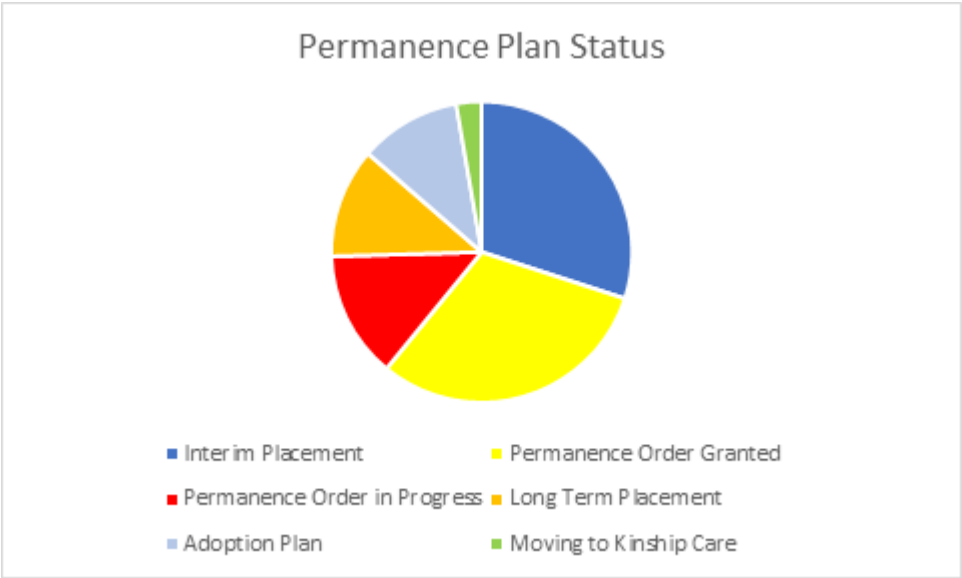
34 children / young people had Permanence Orders (31%) with 25 linked permanently to their foster carers.

15 children / young people had Permanence Plans in progress (13%)

13 young people had long term status (12%)

12 children had adoption plans (11%)

3 children were moving to permanent kinship care placements (3%)





the promise

The Children (Scotland) Act 2020 became law in 2021 and it places new duties on local authorities to place brothers and sisters together in care and promote contact between brothers and sisters who are looked after.

The issue of children who are accommodated by local authorities being placed in separate placements from their brothers and sisters was identified as an area which required attention by The Independent Care Review. Prior to this law being enacted Renfrewshire's Children's Services agreed to consider improvements in keeping brother and sisters together as part of the response to The Independent Care Review's Stop-Go campaign. The Stop-Go campaign highlighted areas where services would commit to addressing areas of concern identified by care experienced young people and find solutions to these.

The Renfrewshire Children's Champions Board carried out a survey to secure the views of care experienced young people in Renfrewshire and helped produce a policy called, "Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together". The policy contains a pledge "When children come into care Renfrewshire will place brothers and sisters together".

It is recognised that there will be times when brothers and sisters aren't placed together, and the policy requires Children's Services to report on this. In addition, the policy introduces a clear decision-making process for times when brothers and sisters can't be placed together, clear responsibility to make arrangements to maintain family time and a commitment to regularly reviewing brothers and sisters who are placed in separate care settings.

As of 31.07.2021 Renfrewshire Foster Carers had 19 sets of brothers and/or sisters in their care which was a total of 36 children and 33% percent of children in our foster care.

Inspection

The Fostering Service and Adoption Service continue to be inspected by the regulatory body, the Care Inspectorate. The last inspection took place in May 2017 where all aspects of service delivery in both the Fostering and Adoption Service remained Grade 5 which is 'very good' across all domains inspected. Whilst there has not been a full inspection since 2017 regular meetings have taken place between the Inspector and both the Registered Manager and Service Manager of the Fostering and Adoption Service to ensure robust communication between both parties about how our practice continues to function and any changes or improvements that we make. It is expected that the Service will be subject to a full inspection within this calendar year.

Update on Fostering Service

We currently have 80 active fostering households. The fostering service continues to offer a high standard of care to children in our care. Despite still working through the Covid pandemic we have over the reporting period worked through the issues that the pandemic presented. The fostering team has used a hybrid approach to visiting carers due to restrictions however by May 2021 all home visits announced and unannounced were taking place face to face. Foster carer reviews, panels, training, and other related meetings have continued to be online with regular review.

During the first lockdown at the start of the covid pandemic in March 2020, children's face to face time with their families was stopped by Renfrewshire Children's services. This was in line with government guidance and in keeping with other local authorities at this time. In these extreme circumstances some children were supported by their foster carers to keep in touch with their families using electronic means, such as video calls. In most situations each call was for a short amount of time and was to keep people in touch with each other where there was no other (covid) safe way to do this.

In June 2020 children and their birth families were able to meet face to face again and although this started off in a limited way, all supervised face to face contact is now able to resume.

The fostering service, along with locality teams was instrumental in creating a virtual contact guidance to be used by all staff teams reinstating contact with children and their families. This recognised the value of face-to-face contact as opposed to virtual and one of our foster carers was part of this working group

Developments within the Fostering Service 2020 – 2021

- Fostering service participation with Fostering Fortnight in May 2021, where the service made use of local media, social media, and articles from our foster carers
- We have continued to encourage participation with foster carers in service development e.g., being part of working group.
- Children in foster care continue to be involved in participation strategies through our own Break Through group, Who Cares? Scotland and the Champions Board
- The Managers within the Fostering Service continue to attend Social Work Scotland meetings and liaise with neighboring authorities
- We have raised the profile of the fostering team to ensure locality teams have a clear understanding of the work undertaken to develop the service and to ensure better outcomes for the children referred and placed in foster care
- We have held regular consultations with Foster carers using Microsoft teams.
- We have held foster carer reviews and Fostering and Adoption panels using Microsoft teams.
- We have identified Egress which is an electronic communication system to allow us to communicate electronically and securely with our foster carers

Recruitment activity

The Fostering Network report that in Scotland.

- Approx. 4,750 children were living with foster families on 31 July 2020.
- This is roughly three-quarters of children in care looked after away from home and family.
- There are approximately 3,620 approved foster care households in Scotland.
- Every year hundreds of new foster families are needed in Scotland.

The Service Manager and the fostering Senior Social Worker meet regularly with Renfrewshire Council's Communication team to continue to develop their recruitment strategy. It is recognised nationally that there is a shortage of foster carers and this strategy promotes the support that is needed and will be offered by a skilled fostering service.

From 01.08.2020 to 31.07.21 we have continued to receive enquiries in relation to fostering, although these have been fewer than the previous year.

If the person who has enquired wishes to take the next step, an initial visit is completed by a social worker from the fostering team. After the initial visit a discussion takes place between the visiting social worker and the senior social worker to consider whether the enquirers should be invited to preparation groups. (see appendix 1 for fostering criteria). Applications to be assessed as a foster carer are not submitted by applicants until after they have completed the preparation groups.

During the period 01.08.20 – 31.07.21 the service was assessing 6 households to become foster carers. 1 of these households wanted to be considered as interim carers while the other 5 wished to offer short breaks. While short breaks can be an extremely useful resource, this is often dependent on the carer's availability i.e., many short break foster carers work full time and matching a child with them can prove difficult. However, in the service there are several examples of carers who started off as short break carers and then became interim carers. The service will continue to monitor this trend.

Preparation groups

The Fostering Service ran two sets of preparation groups in the reporting period. The first set ran between September and November 2020 and included 4 households. This was particularly challenging as due to COVID restrictions they were run entirely virtually and were a steep learning curve for all. Despite this the participants did feedback that although they would have preferred face to face groups, they had found them useful and 3 out of the 4 households have since progressed to the next stage. In May 2021 the service ran another set of preparation groups and this time used a hybrid model of some sessions face to face and some virtual. The feedback was positive and 2 households out of four have progressed to the next stage.

This is the start of the assessment process and an opportunity for the participants to receive more in-depth information and discussion about the implications of fostering; as such it is important that all enquirers attend. Experienced foster carers come along to talk to the group about their different experiences of caring for foster children.

Our preparation groups cover a range of topics including managing challenging behaviour, brain development, attachment issues, safer care and working with birth parents. Participants

are asked to give written feedback on each of the sessions and on any issues that the discussions may have raised for them. At the end of the preparation groups the workers leading the group will also complete written reports on each of the participants and their contributions over the previous weeks. They will also highlight areas of concern or where further consideration may be necessary regarding the participants suitability to proceed to the formal application and assessment stage.

Preparation groups run for 5 evening sessions. The facilitators from the fostering team make use of the Fostering Network 'Skills to Foster' materials, as well as up to date research and our own recently developed training materials. Our social workers are skilled at leading these groups and current foster carers provide input regarding their experiences. There is also input by the senior social worker/service manager at the final session.

New foster carers and carers deregistered

In the period 01.08.20 – 31.07.21 an additional 3 fostering households were approved. 2 households were approved as interim foster carers and 1 household as a short break foster carer.

Between 01.08.20 – 31.07.21, 5 fostering households were deregistered for the following reasons:

3 fostering household resigned due to a change in their personal circumstances,
2 fostering household retired after being a fostering household for many years.

Foster carer reviews

Foster Carers are reviewed by the Fostering Panel at the end of their first year of fostering and every three years thereafter. Foster carers will also return to Panel if their registration has to be reviewed with regards to a change in registration.

Between 1.08.20 and 31.07.21 the Fostering and Adoption Panel reviewed 10 foster care households in total, 5 of these were first year reviews

5 fostering households were de registered due to the households either retiring or due to a change in personal circumstances.

Foster carer reviews are an opportunity for foster carers to talk about their experience, training, and support etc. Renfrewshire Council's foster carers expressed satisfaction with their experiences of fostering and their learning and remain enthusiastic and committed. They have found the support provided by their social worker during covid times to be beneficial and available as required, as well as finding the training offered informative and beneficial to the fostering task.

Foster carers are internally reviewed on an annual basis, by Social Work Managers (Operations). The foster carers provide written as well as verbal contribution to the review process, as well as written reports from their birth children. Reports by their supervising social worker and child's social worker are all part of the review process. Foster children are encouraged to contribute to the review process and this year there has been a development with regards to birth parents being encouraged to submit a report for the Foster Care Review regarding the care their child/children is receiving. To date we have had 1 birth parent report returned.

Within the reporting period 51 Foster carer Reviews took place in total including those at panel.

The duties of the supervising social workers from the fostering team are to keep regular contact with the foster carers, this includes home visits and telephone contact. Between January and May 2021 home visits were again suspended and all communication was virtual (in most cases by Microsoft teams). Visits or (supervision would) normally take place on a 4 to 6-week basis, depending on the placements and any issues arising. In reality contact and support has been much more frequent during the pandemic. Home visits consist of supervision, training, and development, as well as performing a range of duties including ensuring health and safety checks are carried out annually, annual medical information is received and PVG checks are up to date. Safer caring policies are in place for each fostering household which include a minimum of two unannounced visits annually. Supervising Social Workers will also attend Looked After Children review meetings and Children's Hearings with the carers. Joint visits by the child's social worker and the social worker from the fostering team takes places when a new placement is established and routinely thereafter.

Foster carer training

Changes to training provided to Renfrewshire Council foster carers had to be addressed due to the pandemic. The support provided to foster carers by their supervising social worker continued to address training needs and the development of skills etc.

Social workers and foster carers could also attend external training courses. The Fostering Network and AFA has provided training to new social workers within the Fostering and Adoption Team including Skills to Foster, the Role of the Supervising Social Worker and assessment of foster carers and adopters. Staff have also attended training relevant to their role. All training has been delivered virtually.

The fostering service also provided mandatory training on fire safety, first aid and safer caring. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service are looking to provide training on fire safety, online at this time, however, have offered home visit to provide advice, to foster carers. West of Scotland College provides first aid training; however, this has continued to be on hold due to the pandemic. Mandatory training should be updated every three years.

The table below shows webinars between 5th November 2020 and 16th February 2021

Webinar Title	Content	No Dates of	Total No of Registrations
Safer Care: Internet Safety	Keeping children safe online	2	11
Can you keep a promise?	Briefing on the Independent Care Review	1	3
Children's Hearing (Scotland) Act	The legislation protecting children, the workings of the Children's Hearing and the implications for carers	1	3
HRT for Kids	Stimulating helpful hormone production for wellbeing	1	6
Ask, Tell	Promoting good mental health and wellbeing	1	7
Autism Awareness	What autism is, how it might present and what carers can do to support children on the spectrum	4	22
Life Story Work	Helping children develop a coherent narrative	1	3
	Totals	11	55

Carers were slow to embrace the webinar format when first piloted in the summer. Reasons given for this included:
being too stressed by the pandemic to concentrate on learning,
being too busy with home schooling and
not feeling comfortable/competent in using the technology.

Interest and engagement have since improved and the overall feedback has been very good. Several carers have stated said that the format is more convenient for them than face to face training. Another advantage has been that several carers who would not normally be able to attend face to face training have engaged with the webinars. The format has been especially useful for newly registered carers who have been able to meet other carers. This being said however, carers look forward to the day face to face direct training can resume. The training programme is constantly under review and additional dates will be arranged in line with demand.

Non-Violent Resistance Intervention

Non-Violent Resistance, (NVR) is an approach to address children and young people's violent or controlling behaviours. It was developed by Haim Omer, a psychotherapist, academic researcher, and tenured professor of Psychology at Tel Aviv University. NVR is grounded in attachment theory and an understanding of the impact of early trauma. It builds on these theories by suggesting concrete actions carers can take in response to children's challenging behaviours. These responses, or techniques, include making 'announcements', relational gestures, and seeking support (Van Hollen and Vanderfaeillie, 2019). In announcements, carers clearly state they will no longer accept specific challenging behaviours from children. This differs from telling the child they can no longer do this as the locus of control is the carer, not the child. This is expressed in a supportive rather than shaming manner, acknowledges the child's positives, and recognises the difficulties the child faces. It occurs alongside relational gestures – small gifts or actions of love made regardless of the child's behaviour, without expectation of reciprocation (Heismann et al, 2019). This resistance coupled with relationship building increases 'parental presence'; a child's, "sense that their parent is there for them...can be relied upon...knows their whereabouts and cares what they are doing," (Heismann et al, 2019). Within NVR, the target for change is the carer rather than the child. It is anticipated that helping the carer change will help the child change, but the intervention is clearly aimed at the carer. Therefore, the child does not need to engage with this. It can take time for the child to change, but as the carer can change - by no longer accepting or accommodating the child's behaviour - long before that, the approach can be effective even without significant change in the child, as the carer is more able to cope. A carer using NVR is in control of whether or not it 'works', because it is about them changing, not them changing someone else. As such, it is also acknowledged within NVR that the model is not a quick fix; "changes happen over-time rather than over-night," (Brown, 2019).

The fostering service has heavily invested in this specialised training and now has a social worker who trained in NVR to Level 3 accreditation in 2019. We then co-facilitated a group with 10 foster carers (from 8 households) in January 2020; A key aim of NVR is to increase carers' sense of agency (Hicks et al, 2020). Moreover, many carers who experience coercive behaviours from children can have feelings of shame or reduced confidence (Lauster et al, 2014). Therefore, carers had a choice about participating in the group, as being 'made' to attend could reinforce these feelings. In keeping with NVR's non-judgemental approach, carers were also advised that the opportunity to attend the group was not criticism of the care they provided, but an attempt to recognise the challenging task they had as carers and to offer support. Therefore, significant work took place prior to the group commencing, to share information with carers and reassure them that their existing skills were recognised and valued. This is a vital element of the programme and it is unlikely the group would have been successful without it. Children's challenging behaviours can be a significant factor increasing the likelihood of foster placement breakdown (Oosterman, 2007). Therefore, only carers of children with particularly challenging behaviours were invited. This is an important aspect of NVR. NVR is not 'training', it is a targeted intervention – conducted in a group setting - which needs real time, practical application to be effective. It is not useful for carers to attend this with the idea that they may learn techniques for future use – participants need a specific child

in mind. Techniques are then applied and reflected and built on in each session. The group setting provides opportunity for carers to discuss their experiences in a way that reduces feelings of inadequacy or isolation – by learning they are not the only people having these challenges – and helping develop a network of ‘supporters’, which is another key component of NVR (Hicks et al, 2020). The group was successful. Carers’ verbal feedback was consistently positive in relation to peer support, new knowledge, and increased confidence. The group aimed to reduce placement breakdown, and this was achieved during the group and in the period immediately following it. NVR will remain a feature in the fostering service’s role in supporting young people and their carers sustain stable family life and, in many cases, prevent breakdown.

Best Trial

The BeST? trial is a research trial owned by Glasgow University which has been running in Glasgow since 2011. The trial had been increased to include involvement from four London boroughs and Renfrewshire Children’s Services. The trial purpose is to evaluate whether an infant mental health service offers improved outcomes for Looked After and Accommodated Children when compared to the mainstream social work services in each of the areas.

Glasgow Infant and Families Team (GIFT) derives from a model developed in New Orleans. It utilises a multi-disciplinary team of psychologists, psychiatrists and social work staff seconded or funded by the NHS GGC, Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP) and NSPCC and is run by the NSPCC. It uses an infant mental health perspective to assess and, where possible, offer treatment to parents and children who are looked after and accommodated or in kinship care to strengthen the parent/child interaction and caregiving.

Renfrewshire continued to be part of the Best trial until it stopped taking new referrals in June 2021. The trial was put on hold during the early part of the pandemic, but when it was resumed, until Renfrewshire’s input was completed, a further 6 children were referred to the trial.

Foster Carers Support Group

Our foster carers have their own support group which is an informal support group where foster carers can drop in as they wish, and issues raised within the group are fed back to the fostering team via the carers supervising social worker or the foster carers consultation group. Prior to the pandemic this was attended by approximately 12 households on a monthly basis which they suspended due to restrictions. This has been replaced by a social media group chat with currently over 40 members and the communications is now much more active. Carers report this as a very good support particularly during children’s transitions. It is hoped that the direct meetings will resume in the next calendar year.

Consultation Group

The Carers Consultation Group has met four times- November 2020, January 2021, March 2021, and June 2021. All Foster Carers are invited to this group and is attended by the Senior Social Worker Fostering, the Service Manager and on two occasions the Registered Manager. This provides an opportunity for foster carers to be kept updated with any changes within the service and discuss any issue that has arisen for them or other carers.

Again, this has been run virtually and although numbers are small, feedback has been positive. In a change to the process, questions are submitted in advance which allows for a timely response. There is also the opportunity for a more informal discussion. Feedback to carers who do not attend is through the newsletter, email, or discussion with their own Supervising Social Worker.

Breakthrough Group (group of children who live in foster care who create a newsletter, taking up issues and campaigns on matters that affect them)

The Breakthrough group has been running now for 6 years and over that time has seen many different young people participate, experience, and enjoy being involved. We continue to have a consistent core group of 8 young people who attend, 4 of whom are founding members of the original group that first met back in November 2015. This hints at how much the young people value this group.

Due to the continuing impact of Covid-19, the focus of the group over this past year has been about connection and ensuring that the young people meet together and have fun. During the early part of 2021, Covid-19 restrictions meant that the group had to continue to meet virtually. So, in anticipation of Spring and of all that it brings, the group enjoyed a bulb planting activity which they all really got into and enjoyed. This served as our last virtual get together for 2021 following the relaxing of the restrictions around youth work.

In April 2021, the Breakthrough group enjoyed their first face to face activity in line with the Scottish Government's Youth link Scotland guidance. They enjoyed a walk up and around the Gleniffer Braes before enjoying a picnic together. The group quickly picked up where they had left off and the sound of laughter and chat amongst the young people as they walked was lovely to hear. They have since enjoyed catch ups at Barshaw Park and Pollok Park as well as an activity together over the October break (tenpin bowling and lunch).

For some of the group they come because they enjoy the activities and have fun, for some it's about friendships and meeting new people, for others they get to see a brother or a sister, but they all have a shared sense of belonging and connectedness together. They are a fantastic group of young people.

Your Voice Your Way Project

The Your Voice, Your Way project was commissioned to improve communication between children and young people and practitioners in Renfrewshire Children's Social Work. The project commenced in early 2019 with the aim of ensuring that care experienced young people have their voices heard in the care they receive in ways, and at times, that work for them. Over two years, Renfrewshire Council worked with service designers to understand how to achieve this aim. Human-centred design was at the heart of the work, with the views of young people informing decisions and of output development. 20 Renfrewshire foster carers and 4 young people in foster were involved in the consultation. The research found that making conversations more meaningful was a key step to ensuring young people are active participants in the care they receive; by increasing their understanding of what's happening, autonomy to speak their views and ensuring respect for their opinions within formal review processes.

The final output from the project was a series of tools, called 'Your Voice Your Way', which support workers to have meaningful conversations with children and young people. Sitting alongside these are tools to support training, printed posters and flyers for practitioners and young people, and a young person friendly framework. This framework is designed to ensure service users know what they can expect from practitioners and have the necessary information to hold practitioners to account.

The implementation of the tools is being overseen by our 'Voice' Promise Pillar group and their impact will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Newsletter for foster carers

The fostering newsletter is produced in Spring, Summer and Winter editions and distributed to all foster carers by e-mail. The focus of the newsletter is about providing the carers with updates on legal or practice changes that affect them or the children they care for, providing some thought provoking articles about issues that affect fostered children, keeping them informed of changes within the child care team, and advertising training opportunities. Topics covered in the last year include updates on the implications of 'The Promise', protocols for children who go missing from placement, preparing children for children's hearings, therapeutic life story work, the importance of play in child development and the meaning of care records for young people. Much of the inspiration for the topic choice comes from the Carer's Consultation Group, the CELCIS website and the Council's 'Learning gone viral' newsletter.

The fostering quarterly newsletter continues to go out to all fostering households. Foster carers are encouraged to contribute to the newsletter in relation to their learning and experiences.

Future developments of the fostering service 2021 – 2022

1. To continue to recruit foster carers on an annual basis.
2. To continue to develop specific training for foster carers and peer led workshops.
3. To continue to develop participation of young people in foster carers reviews.
4. To continue to work with neighbouring authorities regarding shared services and development days.
5. To support the Breakthrough Group in relation to increasing their membership.
6. To consult with children/young people of foster carers in relation to future support, groups etc.
7. To improve the quality of information to children and their families about foster care.
8. Move towards electronic communication with carers by introduction of egress.
9. To involve carers in induction process for new social workers
10. NVR groups to be offered
11. Increase the number of support carers
12. Offer evening training again which also includes support carers

REPORT ON SUPPORTED CARERS SERVICE

Supported carers

Supported carers are carers who look after young adults (aged 18-21) who have remained in a continuing care placement. Most of our supported carers were previously the fosters carers for the child and transitioned to Supported Carers when the young person reached the age of 18.

Supported carer assessments are completed in advance of the young person turning 18 and are presented to Renfrewshire Council's Fostering Panel. Within the period 01.08.20 to 31.07.21 the Fostering Panel has approved 6 supported carers, all of whom were previously foster carers for Renfrewshire Council.

All young adults whose plan is presented at the Fostering Panel have Pathway Plans completed and a Throughcare Worker allocated to them. The outcome for young adults involved in the Supported Carers Service is reported to the Scottish Government twice a year. The outcomes for young people who are in these placements remain overwhelmingly positive and are evidenced below.

At present there are 22 young adults in supported carer placements with a further 2 expected to be presented to panel before the year end. All are in positive destinations. These range from university, college, training, and employment. There are 12 young people at college, 5 at University, 1 on a training programme and 4 who are working. The courses studied range from Law, Nursing, Geology to Social Care.

The service has continued to support carers during the pandemic. In addition to Microsoft Teams home visits have continued to take place in line with government guidelines. As part of a communication strategy newsletters are now regularly produced and sent out to carers. These provide an opportunity to detail service developments within the supported carers service and the wider Throughcare Service, detail upcoming training and detail young people's experience of supported care.

Other development for the service this year include the establishment of a supported carers forum and a bespoke training programme. Carer's forums are held quarterly and provide an opportunity for carers to have peer support and contribute to service development. A three-year training programme has been designed to allow for the different developmental needs of care leavers over the three years of the placement. This will be rolled out over the next year.

The service has also been working on a recruitment campaign with Queue Advertising and our internal communication team. This campaign will be launched early 2022.

REPORT ON THE ADOPTION SERVICE

Developments within the adoption service 2020- 2021

1. Continued training for adopters using Microsoft teams on thematic issues recognised by the families as priority areas
2. Distribution and development of a quarterly newsletter.
3. Continued development of the adoption support group by creating a new men's group.
4. Develop extended family member's participation in the adoption assessment process.
5. Development of support to birth parents with regards to understanding the plan for their child and supporting a birth parent with letter box contact.
6. Developing further the skillset within the fostering and adoption service to work with foster carers and adopters using Thera play strategies to assist a child with the transition from foster carer to an adoptive family.
7. Continued work with Scottish Adoption Support Services (SAAS - Barnardos) for young people, birth parents and adopters requiring additional support, where appropriate
8. Continued work with Scottish Adoption Register/Link maker.
9. Continue to work with colleagues in locality teams to raise the profile of the adoption service and to provide a clear understanding of the work being undertaken to ensure positive outcomes for children.
10. Develop specialist practice in the adoption service by working with our neighbouring authorities and Social work services.

Recruitment of Adoptive Parents

There continues to be a need for both adoptive parents and permanent foster carers for children of all ages who meet our adoption criteria. Nationally there is recognition that more adopters are also required for sibling groups and older children. Within the reporting period the Adoption team facilitated 3 sets of preparation groups to 8 households.

Renfrewshire Council's adoption service has continued to use the Scottish Adoption Register/Link maker. Once applicants are approved as adopters their information and what age of child, they have been approved for is added to this register. Adoption Social workers across Scotland are able to access this information should they be trying to place a child for adoption.

Family Finding

The year of 2020/21 has been a remarkable year dominated by Covid-19 restrictions. Scotland's Adoption Register has continued to support practitioners who have continued working hard to achieve permanence for children in Scotland in difficult circumstances. Despite such there was a small increase in matches for the year 20/21 with a total of 81 children

matched with adoptive families. Each and every one of these matches is a story of loss and change accompanied by love and hope for the future.

As face-to-face events could not proceed in the usual formats of Adoption Exchange Days and Adoption Activity Days the Register facilitated family finding through the delivery of online webinars where prospective adopters had the opportunity to see video profiles of children waiting for permanent homes and hear from their foster carers.

In February 2021, the Register celebrated its 700th match of a child through one of these events.

The number of families approved for three children or more continues to be extremely low – in the year 2020/2021 only two prospective adoptive families in Scotland were looking to adopt larger sibling groups (1 approved for 3 children, 1 approved for 4 children). This continues to have serious implications for children being enabled to stay together. The Register continues to have an overview of this issue and frequently asks questions of local authorities and voluntary agencies as to their focus on recruitment and approval remits.

The publication of The Promise and the Children (Scotland) Act 2020 highlights the importance of maintaining family relationships, with an emphasis on siblings. The Register, an active member of Stand Up for Siblings, continues to ensure this is a priority in all aspects of its work. We are pleased to report that in the reporting period Renfrewshire Council worked closely with another Local Authority to place a fourth full sibling with his three adopted brother and sisters through our Adoption Panel in March 2021.

The Service Manager meets approximately 4 times throughout the calendar year to update the recruitment portfolio for both the fostering and adoption service. Participation from adopters is key within our recruitment and we have examples of live case studies where adopters have allowed us to use their adoption story to encourage other families in the public domain to think about adoption but specifically so of older children and family groups. The Adoption service offered a range of training opportunities and events albeit online during adoption week in November 2020.

Adoption Plans and Links

During the period 01.08.2020 to 31.07.21, 13 children were presented to the Adoption Panel for consideration of their adoption plans and links. This was a significant rise from the previous year, and it included 4 sets of brothers and sisters' groups and 1 child who was joining his 3 siblings already in an adoption family. All cases the Agency Decision Maker accepted the panel's recommendations to approve the adoption plan and links between the child and their prospective adopters.

Transitions to a Better Future

Across the UK, adoption and fostering agencies have traditionally followed a similar formula for moving children from foster care to permanent families. The "traditional" transition model is based on practice wisdom and seems to have persisted on the basis that "we do it this way because we've always done it this way" rather than because it is research and/or evidenced based practice.

We have become much better informed by research about the impact of early years, experience on child development and what makes children cope in stressful situations. Making a transition from one family to another is probably the biggest transition a child will experience

and using a more child development, attachment and trauma focussed approach is likely to result in a better start for children moving to a new family.

To take this approach we help children. This involves drawing on attachment theory, the neuroscience behind how children can be helped to regulate their stress and fear response with evidence-based techniques for helping children form better relationships. The fostering and adoption team of social workers use this approach with social workers of the children, foster carers and adopters when transitioning children to adoption.

This involves integrating Thera play into the plan. Foster carers and adopters will consistently play Thera play games encouraging a sense of safety and care. Both sets of carers will use rhythm to help regulation. Everyone involved will attend planning meetings facilitated by a social worker from the fostering and adoption service to work out the right plan for that child. The joined-up approach continues throughout the transition and beyond and often becomes the routine for adopters well into the child's transition.

Permanent Foster Carers

3 children's plans for Permanence Orders were approved in the time period 1.08.20 - 31.07.21 all of whom were liked to their current foster carers for the purpose of permanent fostering. These children remained with their carers who were re-assessed as permanent carers by the fostering team.

Renfrewshire Council make good use of the Scottish Adoption Register by way of Link maker and Adoption Exchange days. The Scottish Government's GIRFEC strategy for Looked After Children and Young People (November 2015) identifies the achievement of 'early permanence' as one of its key strategic priorities. Legislation and guidance introduced in 2016 support that goal and reinforced the role of the Adoption Register for the relatively small number of children who are unable to stay with their own family and require an adoptive placement.

In the Independent Review of the Register by Thomas and Blackmore – one of the key messages for policy makers was to “explore the potential for the Register's services to be extended to other kinds of permanent placements in Scotland.” (2019 p29). Since the demise of 'Be My Parent' there has been no resource for workers seeking families for children registered for a Permanence Order. There is a continued struggle to find permanent foster placements for children. The Register has reached an agreement with the SAR Advisory Group and Scottish Government to develop a proposal for expanding the Register's role to incorporate permanent fostering. We look forward as a Council in this development as this is a key area of vulnerability within Renfrewshire although we do have a significant number of fostering households linked to children as permanent families.

Adoption Support Group

Our adoption support group had developed over the past few years and varies between a drop-in facility which the children can also attend with play activities available to the children, while their parents talk with other adopters and staff, drop in evenings for adopters only, to training events for adopters only. Whilst the past couple of years have been more challenging in reaching out to families, we have managed to provide a strong support to our adopters via groups using a hybrid model of both electronic and safely offering direct group support out with the office.

Support Groups during reporting period

Virtual book bug (Adoption week)	16.11.21
Family fun day (Adoption week)	18.11.21
Scavenger Hunt (Adoption week)	19.11.21
Coffee drop in (adoption week)	20.11.21
Drop in (virtual)	16.02.21
Family Fun Day (Rouken Glen)	19.06.21

The Adoption service has continued to offer meaningful learning workshops which has been specifically tailored to the needs of our adoption service. These continue to be delivered on Microsoft teams however were felt to be beneficial to those who attended

FASD Training/Support Group	6.10.20
FASD – Q&A (Adoption week)	17.11.20
Telling Workshop (Adoption week)	17.11.20
Attachment/Thera play (Adoption week)	19.11.21
Telling Workshop	28.01.21
Life story work	15.02.21
Autism awareness	11.05.21

Most adopters who attend the group meet other adopters in similar situations and hear about strategies and tips for managing different situations. The group has also been the starting point for the development of friendships and informal supports. Unfortunately, virtual groups do not always allow for the development of friendships in the same way as face-to-face groups.

There are over 30 adoptive families who have attended the Support Group in November and December 2020, and the feedback was very positive. The number attending the group can vary as it is a drop in, with some families choosing to attend at different times.

Introduction of Men's group

In July 2021, the service developed a new men's adoption support group as additional strand to the main support group. This was an idea generated by a couple of male adopters with whom there had been discussion about online sessions; activities with or without children, and that the sessions should be independently led by adopters, for adopters. We have a range of circumstances within our adoption pool such as single; married; heterosexual, same sex, and widowed males. The idea developed from discussions around reaching out to those adopters who may feel excluded from the regular adoption support groups. Our adoption support groups are predominately attended by females and children.

It is anticipated that moving forward, the men's group will now, grow and develop and become independently managed, as they have taken the first step towards building a supportive network of other male adopters.

Adoption Support to individual families

Throughout the year the adoption team have provided adoption support on an individual basis to 20 adoptive families who have approached the service for support.

Within Renfrewshire we have 100 adoptive families on our mailing list who receive our quarterly newsletter and notification of all support groups and training events.

Adoption Newsletter

The adoption newsletter is produced 4 times per year – Christmas, Spring, Summer and Autumn. Within this newsletter we include useful articles for national adoption websites and organisations. We encourage stories from adopters on any issues they have experienced. The feedback received is that the recipients benefit from reading about other adopter's stories.

Also, as the adoption support service has increased over the years, we have brought out various new leaflets, have summer activities with the children and support group feedback is usually included to encourage others to join. Each newsletter has an update on training information.

During the pandemic we shared a lot of useful articles on adoption/parenting and young people's mental health which were current issues for many families.

Birth parent support

Birth parent support to families whose children were being progressed to adoption was significantly affected by the pandemic due to difficulties in offering therapeutic support to individual families. The approach to this work is building direct relationships to birth parents over time to work together on maintaining a meaningful role to their children or with their own recovery of losing a child through adoption. The service has maintained this practise however this was reduced due to restrictions. We continue to offer support to birth families once the plan is made for their child/children to be adopted and to offer support to birth parents to reflect on why adoption has been recommended and to understand the legal process.

We have continued to engage with birth families where their child has been adopted and they now feel that they are at a place in their own lives where they would like to contribute information to the child's life work. Support to birth parents may be required at different stages of the adoption process. Our commitment to birth parents work will be a key development in the adoption service in the forthcoming year as we offer much more direct support to families.

Supporting Roots

The Scottish Government are funding a research project called 'Supporting Roots' which aims to improve the support available across Scotland for parents who have lost child(ren) to care. This project involves two distinct parts. First, AFA Scotland is working with the Scottish Government, supported by a practice group representing a range of organisations, to begin to map where and what support is available throughout Scotland. The aim is to address the current gap in knowledge about the services these mothers and fathers can access throughout Scotland from a range of statutory and third sector organisations. The second part of this project, led by Dr Ariane Critchley, aims to gather the views of mothers, fathers and wider family members who have been impacted by permanent separation from their child(ren) to care in Scotland. There is scope to link with the second part of this project in order to review and develop support offered to birth parents affected by adoption in Renfrewshire. This would ensure that Renfrewshire are in the position to lead on taking forward the learning from this research project and pilot good practice ideas which can then be monitored and evaluated as the service develops

Letter Box Contact

Letterbox contact provides contact between birth families and the adoptive parents or contact between siblings. The letterbox service can provide support in writing and replying to letters. Currently the letterbox service has a caseload of 107 which 65 are operational. Letterbox

contact varies on an individual case basis, mostly contacts are annual however we have some which are twice, three time or quarterly.

During the first months of COVID we were unable to exchange letters due to the risks posed. However, the service quickly picked up the backlog of letters and reintroduced normal running order of letterbox contact. We have now introduced and offered electronic methods of letterbox to support some participants to engage via email. This has encouraged a high uptake of participants

Future developments of the adoption service – 2020 - 2021

Over the next year we intend to strengthen our adoption service by developing the following:

1. A focussed recruitment drive for adopters who may consider assessment for brothers and sisters as opposed to one child
2. Further recruitment of new Fostering and Adoption Panel Members as required.
3. Increase opportunities to have more face to face, support groups to adoptive families and their children including the facilitation of the new men's group recently formulated.
4. Develop work with birth families work by offering direct support to all parents and family members where needed included brothers and sisters who are affected by adoption.
- 5 Development of extended family member's participation in the adoption assessment process.
5. Development of work with our linking process using the Adoption register
6. Support for Adoption Exchange days and Adoption Activity Days to maximise linking opportunities for adopters and children.
7. Development of joint work and training opportunities with neighbouring local authorities to share expertise.
8. Development of a training program regarding adoption support plans for social work staff to ensure all adopted children have a support plan in place and a later life letter.
9. 'Blocked Care' training to be offered to all staff in the Adoption Service and to Adopters commissioned by Adoption UK.

Conclusion

This report has highlighted the work of the Fostering, Adoption and Supported Carers Services and the work of the Fostering and Adoption Panels. The activity of the Fostering and Adoption Panel reflects the high number of children unable to return to live with their birth families within Renfrewshire.

The Report highlights recovery measures that are in placed using a hybrid model of both electronic platforms and direct work with foster carers and adopters, to ensure that children's plans are progressed by the Fostering and Adoption Panels and that children's needs have been met.

The Fostering, Adoption and Supported Carers Services are committed to safeguarding children's lives in Renfrewshire and to continual improvement.

As Chair of the Adoption and Fostering Panel and the Registered Manager for the we would like to take this opportunity to thank our Panel members for their commitment to Renfrewshire's most vulnerable children.

Our Foster Carers dedication to the children in their care means that we can ensure the best outcomes for them to a consistently high standard. We look forward to the coming year and to progressing our work with all partner agencies to continue to improve the outcomes and secure the future of Renfrewshire's most vulnerable children.

Cathie O Donnell
Service Manager Fostering and Adoption.

Joyce Gartshore
Chairperson of the Adoption Panel and Fostering Panel.

Clare Cunning
Social Work Manager (Registered Manager of both services).

Appendix 1 Renfrewshire Council Fostering

Criteria

Who Can Foster?

Renfrewshire Council accepts applications from different backgrounds as everyone has their own individual experience to offer.

Requirements to foster:

1. Are over 21 years
2. Are in good health
3. Have a spare bedroom.

You can be:

1. Single, married, cohabiting or in a civil partnership
2. Own or rent the property you live in
3. Be employed or unemployed
4. Be of any religious background or sexual orientation

Preparation Groups

Enquirers will be required to attend preparation groups before making a formal application. The purpose of these groups is to provide the opportunity to learn more about fostering, and the children who require to be in a foster placement.

If preparation groups are not available other means will be considered to provide and share information with enquirers.

Local Authority, Health and Police Checks

All applicants will be subject to stringent local authority, health, and police checks. These will extend to any other resident in the household over 16 years of age and to anyone who will have care of the child.

Appendix 2

Renfrewshire Council Adoption Criteria

Age

All applicants must be over 21 years of age.

Status

Applications will be considered from couples or single applicants irrespective of their sexuality.

A couple may be the same sex or unmarried. Same sex couples are not required to be in a Civil Partnership.

Joint applicants must be in an enduring family relationship.

Preparation Groups

Enquirers will be required to attend preparation groups, if groups are available, prior to making a formal application. The purpose of these groups is to provide enquiries with the opportunity to learn more about the children available for adoption, their backgrounds and the genetic factors adopters may have to consider when parenting adopted children.

If preparation groups are not available other means will be considered to provide and share information with enquiries.

Infertility

Prospective adopters should have completed infertility investigations at least 6 months prior to application.

Local Authority Health and Police Checks

All applicants will be subject to stringent local authority health and police checks. These will extend to any other resident in the household over 16 years of age and to anyone who will have care of the child.



To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 20 January 2022

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Renfrewshire's Promise: An update on the work within Renfrewshire to deliver "The Promise" to Scotland's children

1. Summary

- 1.1 In October 2016, following extensive lobbying by care experienced people and the organisations which advocate for them, Scotland's First Minister announced an independent, root and branch review of Scotland's care system. The independent Care Review began its work in February 2017 and looked at the underpinning legislation, practices, culture and ethos of the Care System. It was agreed that the Care Review would take up to three years to conclude.
- 1.2 The Independent care review was published on the 5th February 2020 and makes significant recommendations about the future of Scotland's Care system and the changes required to improve this. In addition to listening to care experienced people, the care review listened to the paid and unpaid workforce who deliver Children's Social Care in Scotland. In total the review engaged with over 5500 people. Over half of these were children, young people and adults with experience of the "care system".
- 1.3 The published findings of the review centred on '*the promise*' narrating a vision for Scotland, built on five foundations of voice, family, care, people and scaffolding. Making the promise that all children in Scotland will grow up 'loved, safe and respected'.
- 1.4 Elected members considered and approved a motion at Council on 4 September 2020 which was carried unanimously to support the development of a delivery plan for how Renfrewshire will deliver The Promise and that the involvement of the Champions Board should be central to this plan
- 1.5 In January 2021, the Education and Children's Services Board considered a report on how Renfrewshire planned deliver on the Promise. This report provides an update on the work undertaken over the course of the past 12 months.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to:

[a] note the working being undertaken within Renfrewshire to "Keep the Promise"

[b] note that regular update reports will be brought to Board which will outline members on implications for policy and practice in Renfrewshire as our Promise work progresses.

3. Background

3.1 The Independent Care Review was established as a root and branch review of the care system, covering legislation, practice, culture and ethos. It gathered evidence from a wide range of sources, with the voices of around care experienced people central to the evidence gathering. The findings of the review were published on 5 February 2020.

3.2 Following publication, it was recognised that delivery of the key findings and the recommendations contained within Scotland's Promise to its Children would be undertaken over a ten year period, with an accompanying programme of legislation this will be intended to simplify the current landscape but is also expected to introduce new duties for corporate parents.

3.3 The Promise is built on the foundation of five pillars; Family, Voice, Care, People and Scaffolding, which sets out the key areas of changes for how children and their families are supported across Scotland. The Promise also sets out a clear commitment for all corporate parents to have an enhanced understanding of the experiences of those who have spent time in care and to drive forward the findings and recommendations. Examples include separation from their brothers and sisters during their time in care, multiple placement changes and a lack of mental health support. The Promise challenges all of us to make the necessary changes are made across a wide range of areas to ensure that we #KeepThePromise to all Care Experienced individuals across Renfrewshire.

3.4 A national team was established to deliver on the Promise Plan and began work in July 2020. The Promise team facilitates and support change across the system, wherever that change needs to happen. The Promise team has published several updates and is working closely with many Local Authorities including Renfrewshire.

3.5 Renfrewshire has a Promise Strategic Oversight group with 5 subgroups sitting beneath replicating the 5 pillars of the Promise. More than 50 individuals are involved in this workstream from 9 different agencies. This includes all key strategic partners, frontline staff and care experienced people. Throughout 2021, Renfrewshire's Promise Strategic Oversight Group and Promise Sub groups met regularly. Our vision has been developed and agreed as follows.

Renfrewshire listened and we will deliver on the Promise:

Putting you first when we make decisions
Re-designing our services and approaches to ensure they support your needs
Offering you positive opportunities
Making sure you are safe, loved and respected
Investing in you, you have a bright future
Supporting families to stay together
Ensuring we are the best parent for you, when you can't be with your own parent

- 3.6 The Chairs of the subgroups meet frequently with each other to share progress, ideas and engage in collaborative planning. This is to reduce duplication of effort and to make relevant links between pillars. One of the first tasks for the subgroups was to develop a **BIG** ideas plan which brings together 2-3 priorities from each sub-group. Good progress is being made in relation to this BIG ideas plan. For example, work is underway to develop a training plan specifically related to the Promise and to support the workforce with the right knowledge and skills to Keep the Promise. Given the direct links with trauma, links have been made with the Alcohol and Drug Commission's group who are developing the trauma responsive organisation recommendation to ensure a coordinated approach to workforce development. This work also includes a small test of change focused on training through digital VR goggles as well as an audit of to review what each partner is currently offering in terms of learning, which links to the Promise details.
- 3.7 Renfrewshire applied to The Promise Partnership fund which is managed by the Corra Foundation for a £50,000 grant to create a Promise Ambassador. This application was successful and the postholder took up post in late June. The Promise Ambassador will help Renfrewshire and its planning partners to make changes which reflect what is important to care experienced children, young people, and families. The post-holder is involved in all workstreams related to the five pillars of The Promise and will design and undertake a range of consultation activities with children, young people and families who have experienced care, cascading the learning across the system.
- 3.8 While it is understood that consultation was undertaken as part of the national Care Review, in Renfrewshire, we recognise the importance of our local data and using this to drive forward improvement. With this in mind, work has taken place to gather local data which will support the development of actions and activities. In particular, data has been gathered on placements and transitions between children and adult services to provide insight into these thematic areas. A survey will be shared with social work practitioners, in the first instance, to gather information and their views on training needs, quality and quantity of contact with children and young people etc.
- 3.9 In addition to our local work we have engaged extensively with the National team and in August 2021 the strategic oversight group and other Council service representatives met with the national Promise team to develop the role of the Promise Keeper. Partners discussed the importance of the Promise and the organisational wide focus that is required to support system change. Themes which were discussed included:

- whole family support
 - supporting the workforce
 - promoting the core principles of the Promise
 - building capacity (integration of services, collaboration, and community planning) and
 - ensuring children and young people have a good childhood (brothers and sisters)
- 3.10 A communications plan is being developed to ensure that key messages and progress related to the Promise is shared across the organisation. A workshop was held in November in collaboration with the communications team to ensure that the plan is organisational wide. Our Promise vision will be shared widely across the organisation as part of this communications strategy so all services, children, young people and families are aware of the vision and commitment to deliver on the Promise in Renfrewshire. A Promise newsletter has been created and shared with staff which outlines key developments. Our Promise Ambassador is currently exploring the development of an i-Learn module which all services can access. Furthermore, the Promise Ambassador has been meeting with different service and teams to raise awareness of the Promise and how it is relevant to all.
- 3.11 Embedded in the Promise is the use of language and the importance of positive framing of care experience. To develop this action, The Each and Every Child team have initially met with the Strategic Oversight Group to discuss their approach to framing and how this can be used throughout the organisation. Training will be delivered in the first instance to the Strategic Oversight group with this being cascaded to other teams within the Council. As a first activity, senior leaders participated in an exercise which is designed to challenge perceptions of care experienced children and young people at the Leaders Forum in November.
- 3.12 The Promise recognises the importance of keeping families together and quality family time. The Brothers and Sister policy was approved at Board and then launched during the Summer. This ground-breaking policy was co-produced with the Champions Board. It is a robust, rights-based policy starting with a pledge to keep siblings together, where possible, when they come into care. To support this policy, the Promise Ambassador has designed a series of age-appropriate Family Time plans which children and young people can complete with the support of a practitioner. These plans capture the voice of children and young people to ensure their needs, views and wishes are met in relation to spending quality time with family.
- 3.13 While it is understood that consultation was undertaken as part of the national Care Review, in Renfrewshire, we recognise the importance of our local data and using this to drive forward improvement. With this in mind, work has taken place to gather local data which will support the development of actions and activities. In particular, data has been gathered on placements and transitions between children and adult services to provide insight into these thematic areas. A survey will be shared with social work practitioners, in the first instance, to gather information and their views on training needs, quality and quantity of contact with children and young people etc.

- 3.14 As part of the Life Changes Trust Digital Skills fund, Renfrewshire Council was successful in a partnership bid to support care experienced children and young people. The partners include YMCA Scotland, YMCA Paisley, Barnardo's Scotland and Youthlink Scotland. This work directly links with the Promise pillars and the funding will be used to:
- Provide opportunities for young people with care experience to develop their digital skills, improving their educational and employment opportunities and increasing their ability to exercise their right.
 - Develop peer-to-peer resources and/or peer mentoring to improve digital confidence and build relationships amongst young people.
 - Put people with lived experience at the heart of planning and developing resources (based on but not limited to the Trust's learning) that help to promote positive change across the care sector.
- 3.15 Similarly, an Art and Culture Participation and Engagement Officer post was approved through the Futures Paisley fund. The post holder will work directly with our Promise Ambassador to support vulnerable young people to broaden their horizons through participation in arts and culture and more broadly to deliver the Council's Corporate Parenting strategy.
- 3.16 Our Aberlour Attain service recently provided all young people with the Pinky Promise on a USB stick which is a child friendly version of the Promise and what it means for young people. This has started to raise awareness of the Promise amongst children and young people with the Promise Ambassador working to further promote key messages through different groups of children and young people.
- 3.17 Recruitment features predominately in the Promise. We want to ensure we get their right people, with the right skills, experience and values. As part of our recruitment process, Keeping the Promise will feature in our adverts going forward and will also form part of interviews, where relevant. Some progress has been made in relation to this however the next steps is to discuss a more holistic approach with HR.
- 3.18 In conclusion, there has been good progress made in relation to the Promise over the course of the last year. Activity has focused on getting strong foundations in place regarding our partnership approach and securing multi-agency, multi-disciplinary commitment. A number of service / practice developments are underway and links have been made with other major projects and programmes which are related to care experienced children and young people. The next steps will be to review the landscape to ensure efforts are not being duplicated and we are maximising resources effectively for all care experienced children and young people.

Implications of this report

1. Financial

It is likely that there will be financial implications as services undergo a redesign process to address the issues identified in The Promise. It isn't yet clear what the financial implications will be.

2. HR and Organisational Development

As the plan for the delivery of The Promise becomes clearer the implications for staff and organisational development will become clearer.

3. Community/Council Planning

Building strong, safe and resilient communities

- Providing families and children with support to remain together will ensure our communities are supportive places for children to grow up in.

Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all

- Providing families and children with the help they need at the earliest point possible will ensure our communities are inclusive for all.

Working together to improve outcomes

- Providing good quality care is central to ensuring that the most vulnerable children and families in Renfrewshire are provided with an opportunity to achieve their potential.

4. Legal

Unknown at this time, it is likely that legislation will follow.

5. Property/Assets

None.

6. Information Technology

None.

7. Equality and Human Rights

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety

None.

9. Procurement

None.

10. Risk

None.

11. Privacy Impact

None.

12. Cosla Policy Position

None.

13. Climate Risk

None.

List of Background Papers

None.

Children's Services

MMcC/KO/JT

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Author: Michelle McCargo, Children's Service Manager, email - michelle.mccargo@renfrewshire.gov.uk

